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**Pascagoula Highlights 2019 Legislative Successes**

*April 18, 2019 (Pascagoula, MS)* – The City of Pascagoula is celebrating a number of legislative successes, as Governor Phil Bryant has now signed into law the following measures directly related to assisting the City in continuing its emphasis on economic development and job creation, recreation, tourism and infrastructure improvements.

The list below highlights the 2019 Legislative successes directly benefiting the City of Pascagoula:

**House Bill 1648**

This bill provides \$1,500,000 for a new Lowery Island/Pascagoula River Park access road. This area has been identified as one of the primary economic development opportunities in the City. This funding helps alleviate the main obstacle to this development, that being direct access to the island from Highway 90.

**Senate Bill 3049**

This bill provides funding for two entities in Pascagoula that are doing vital work in economic development and tourism. The Pascagoula Redevelopment Authority (PRA) will receive \$650,000 to continue its work to offer assistance and incentives to attract businesses to invest in the City. To date, the work of the PRA has resulted in investments of upwards of \$20 million in the City, with more plans in the works thanks to these funds. The bill also provides \$650,000 to the Mississippi Maritime Museum to allow its continued development and expansion at the old Pascagoula High School, creating a space where our local maritime history can be preserved and where generations to come can learn of our rich heritage here on the Gulf Coast.

In addition, the bill added \$1,250,000 to the Port of Pascagoula's ongoing project related to the north connector rail line. When completed, this project will move the intersection of the Mississippi Export and CSX rail lines from its present location near Market Street out east of the City. This will free up 26 rail crossings in Pascagoula and Moss Point, alleviating the train congestion from Downtown Pascagoula.

**House Bill 1646**

This bill provides \$1,000,000 to the LaPointe-Krebs Foundation's efforts to continue to restore the structure and provide a truly unique cultural heritage experience in the City. The LaPointe-Krebs house, built in 1757, is the oldest structure in Mississippi and is the oldest confirmed building in the entire Mississippi Valley.

### **House Bill 983**

This bill provides \$45 million in state funding to help improve the competitiveness of Ingalls Shipbuilding. This brings the state's total investment in Ingalls to \$200 million over the last 5 years. The current expansion on the East Bank is expected to bring at least 1,000 more workers into the City on a daily basis, helping buoy the local economy and revitalizing an area that has been abandoned for years.

### **Senate Bill 2570**

This bill creates a specialty license plate for Ingalls Shipbuilding, and provides that \$24 of every license plate sold will go to benefit Main Street Pascagoula and support their work in the community. This unique partnership will allow a new funding source to Main Street Pascagoula as they continue to be a vital City partner in providing events, festivals, and economic development opportunities in the City.

### **Senate Bill 3074**

This bill reinstates the Pascagoula Hotel/Motel Tax, which voters authorized in 2005 with 72% voting in favor. The 3% tax on the gross proceeds of all room rentals at the City's hotels, motels and bed-and-breakfasts will once again be used to promote recreation, economic development and tourism. The Hotel/Motel Tax will now expire in July 2023, at which time the City Council could seek an extension of the levy in the Legislature. The unexpected failure for this levy to be reauthorized in the Legislature's 2017 session had an adverse impact on the City's revenues. Its reauthorization by the Legislature simply restores the City's status quo in terms of anticipated revenues under this special levy. Hotels, motels and bed-and-breakfasts within the City of Pascagoula will resume collecting this tax starting June 1, 2019. Any affected businesses with questions should contact the Mississippi Department of Revenue at (601) 923-7015.

Mayor Maxwell expressed his appreciation for the Legislature acting on these items this session to benefit the City.

"We have a strong local legislative delegation who work together to bring positive results back to this community," Mayor Maxwell said. "I sincerely appreciate the direct efforts of Sen. Wiggins and Rep. Busby on these bills which provide nearly \$51 million this session alone in direct benefit to the City of Pascagoula's efforts to further economic development, tourism, recreation, infrastructure, and support job creation."

"The leadership of Governor Bryant, Lt. Governor Reeves, and Speaker Gunn in making this happen for the people of Pascagoula cannot be overstated and should also be commended," Maxwell added.

