

# Mississippi Songwriters Festival Names Natchez the Capital-River Region Annual Host

*2026 Inaugural Event on January 30-31  
Features Nashville Talent Showcase.*

NATCHEZ, MS, UNITED STATES,  
December 30, 2025 /

EINPresswire.com/ -- The Mississippi Songwriters Alliance (MSA) proudly announces the launch of its newest annual event location for the

[Mississippi Songwriters Festival](#): The Capital-River Region, debuting in [Natchez, Mississippi](#) on January 30-31, 2026. The two-day celebration brings Nashville and Mississippi songwriting talent together in one of the most historic and picturesque locations in the South.

"Come see how we write and roll!" proclaims Natchez native, career Nashville songwriter, and local event coordinator Tommy Polk. "I could not be more excited to share the talents of my Nashville songwriting connections with our local writers, musicians, and fans at our first annual Capital-River Region Mississippi Songwriters Festival event here in Natchez." Polk's songs "Look What Followed Me Home" and "I Don't Want You To Go" performed by David Ball and Carolyn Dawn Johnson, respectively, became Top Ten Billboard hits on the country charts.

Founded in 2010 in Ocean Springs and Gautier, the Mississippi Songwriters Festival has expanded its flagship Coastal event into a network of permanent regional festivals:

- Delta Region – Cleveland
- Pines Region – Meridian



The first Capital-River Region Event will be held on Friday, January 30, and Saturday, January 31, 2026 in Natchez, MS.



This two-day celebration brings Nashville greats and Mississippi songwriting talent together in one of the most historic and picturesque locations in the South!

- Hills Region – Oxford
- [Capital-River Region – Natchez](#)

Natchez Mayor, Dan M. Gibson, attended the Ocean Springs festival last year—an experience he describes as transformative. "I knew of the great work of the Mississippi Songwriters Festival but had not attended an event until last year, when our home-grown songwriting hero Glen Ballard—known for hits like Michael Jackson's 'Man in the Mirror' and scores for productions including 'The Polar Express'—was inducted into the Hall of Fame. It was such a fantastic event that it deserved a fantastic place like Natchez to become the permanent host city for the Capital-River Region festival. There could not be a better backdrop for a songwriter's festival than our centuries-old and storied city."



The Under-The-Hill district along Silver Street in Downtown Natchez will be one of the many locales with Live Music on Friday, Jan. 30, 2026.

"The Mississippi Songwriters Alliance keeps music alive year-round throughout the state through its four regional festivals and extensive outreach programs. MSA connects songwriters, fans, and communities to honor Mississippi's musical legacy while supporting the artists shaping its future," explains George Cumbest, President of the Mississippi Songwriters Association. "We also support schools by inspiring kids through music and donating instruments to classrooms. Natchez is the perfect host city and we are so thankful to the Taco Bell area franchise for sponsoring the great talent in this years line up!"

## 2026 FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

**FRIDAY: January 30 , 2026**

6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. —"Local Restaurants & Dives Live"

Live music throughout 11 various locations in Downtown Natchez and Under-the-Hill. Regional writers will showcase original work and stories behind their songs. Cover charges may apply.

**SATURDAY: January 31, 2026 — Natchez Civic Center • 215 Franklin Street**

All presentations are free and open to the public.

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. — "Songwriting Workshops & Presentations" Topics and presenters include:

- Eric Schmidtt — Professor of songwriting at LSU
- Odie Blackmon — Grammy-nominated; his compositions include "I May Hate Myself in the Morning" (Lee Ann Womack), "She'll Leave You With a Smile" (George Strait), and "Nothing On but the Radio" (Gary Allan). Professor of songwriting MTSU.
- Jim "Moose" Brown — Writing songs for Kevin Costner's new movie
- Wendy Buckner — Nashville music publisher and songwriter speaks on Music Row's take on AI.
- Writers Contest — 20 songs will be chosen for review by Buckner, and the top two will be considered for publication.
- Shane Paul — Singer Songwriter speaks on using Suno AI: The Revolutionary Music Generation Platform

6:00 p.m. – 7:15 p.m. — "Local/Regional Songwriter Highlights"

Brint Anderson, Hanna Belle, Shane Paul, Eric Schmidtt, Mary Alice Vanderwaters

7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. "Nashville Songwriter Showcase"

- Roger Cook — British-born but Nashville-based co-writer of hits such as "Long Cool Woman In a Black Dress" (The Hollies) and "I'd Like To Teach The World To Sing," which was later used in a popular Coca-Cola campaign in 1971. His later country music successes include such hits as "Talking in Your Sleep" (Crystal Gayle), "I Believe in You" (Don Williams), and "I Just Want To Dance With You" (George Straight).
- Jim "Moose" Brown — A Grammy-winning songwriter, musician, and producer, co-writer of "It's Five O'Clock Somewhere," among many other hits recorded by Martina McBride, Willie Nelson, and Steve Wariner.
- Carolyn Dawn Johnson — Canadian country singer-songwriter who's co-written track "Single White Female" (recorded by Chely Wright) reached No. 1 on the U.S. Billboard Hot Country chart.
- Verlon Thompson — His songs have been recorded by Tracy Byrd ("The First Step," No. 1 U.S. Country) and Suzy Bogguss ("Cross My Broken Heart"), among many others.

Festival itineraries and lodging information can be found online at:

<https://songwriters.onenatchez.com>.

For more information about the Mississippi Songwriters Alliance visit [www.msafestival.org](http://www.msafestival.org)

#### ABOUT THE CITY OF NATCHEZ

The City of Natchez, Mississippi, founded in 1716, is one of the oldest continuous settlements in the United States and a centerpiece of Southern history and culture. Renowned for its Southern hospitality, eclectic sophistication, and breathtaking sunsets from the mighty Mississippi River's highest bluffs, Natchez has become one of the nation's most sought-after cultural tourism and lifestyle destinations.

Natchez reflects the full arc of America's story—from its namesake, the Natchez Native American tribe, and early European settlers, to the grandeur of the Cotton Era, the Injustices of slavery, the

devastation of the Civil War, and the achievements of the Civil Rights Movement. Today, the city is recognized for its progressive spirit and diverse community. Visitors and newcomers from around the world come to enjoy beautifully preserved historic homes, rich storytelling, cultural history tours, and a lively social scene that includes festivals, local music, arts events, riverfront gatherings, and a mix of shops, cuisine, and creative spaces. Natchez continues to earn national media acclaim for its exceptional quality of life, unique charm, and cultural vibrancy.

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