# American Cruise Lines, City of Natchez Break Ground on Major New Mississippi River Cruise Dock

*Investment advances Natchez's vision of becoming a port of embarkation and builds on new air service and downtown hospitality investment*



Podium: Charlie Robertson, President and CEO of American Cruise Lines Right: Dan M. Gibson, Mayor of Natchez with Mayors of the Mississippi River cities.

NATCHEZ, MS, UNITED STATES, September 17, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- American Cruise Lines and the City of Natchez broke ground on a major new cruise dock on the Mississippi River on Wednesday, September 16, 2026, marking American Cruise Lines' largest port infrastructure project to date and a significant investment in the future of tourism in Natchez and along the Mississippi River.

"Natchez is a highlight of our Mississippi River cruises and has been a wonderful partner since we started sailing on the Mississippi more than a decade ago," said Charlie Robertson, President and CEO of American Cruise Lines. "This is an investment in Natchez and in Mississippi River tourism. We believe in the continued growth of tourism on the river and want to continue investing in port communities from Louisiana to Minnesota."

Robertson said the project represents a broader commitment by American Cruise Lines to the future of Mississippi River tourism.

"This is a groundbreaking for a new era of tourism on the Mississippi River," Robertson said. "We are ready to partner with communities along the river to build more docks and grow tourism throughout the Mississippi River corridor."

For Natchez, the new dock will make it possible to accommodate more cruise passengers while advancing a long-term vision: positioning Natchez not only as one of the Mississippi River's premier destinations, but ultimately as a port of embarkation where passengers can begin and end their river cruises.

"Today's groundbreaking is significant not only for Natchez, but because it represents a new level of commitment by America's largest cruise company to tourism along the lower Mississippi River," said Natchez Mayor Dan Gibson. "This new dock moves us closer to a vision we have worked toward for a long time — for Natchez, the jewel of the Mississippi, to join New Orleans and Memphis as a port where river cruise passengers can begin and end their journeys."

The project comes during a period of significant investment in Natchez's transportation and hospitality infrastructure.

Regular commercial air service returned to the Natchez-Adams County Airport in July, connecting Natchez through Houston to the United Airlines network via United Express service operated by SkyWest Airlines. Plans are also underway for the renovation and reopening of the historic Eola Hotel as a Marriott Tribute Portfolio property in the heart of downtown Natchez.

Together, air access, expanded river cruise infrastructure and nationally



Natchez Mayor Dan M. Gibson gives a well deserved thumbs up.



Celebrating groundbreaking teamwork that made this all possible.

branded downtown lodging create the foundation for Natchez to attract more overnight visitors and make the city increasingly accessible to travelers from across the United States and beyond.

“When you put these pieces together — commercial air service, major new river infrastructure and the redevelopment of the Eola — you begin to see a much larger picture,” Gibson said. “We are creating the connectivity that allows people not simply to visit Natchez, but to arrive here, stay here, begin their journeys here and experience more of Natchez and Southwest Mississippi.”

Lance Harris, Executive Director of Visit Natchez emphasized the broader economic impact of the investment.

“Tourism is economic development, and infrastructure is what allows that economic development to grow,” Harris said. “This investment strengthens Natchez as a destination while creating opportunities that extend beyond the riverfront and throughout Southwest Mississippi.”

Investing in infrastructure that connects visitors to our communities helps turn our river asset into lasting economic opportunity for Natchez, Southwest Mississippi and the state.

Chesney Doyle, Executive Director of the Downtown Natchez Alliance, pointed to the significance of continued investment along the Mississippi River.

“The new dock further strengthens a partnership between Natchez and American Cruise Lines that dates back more than a decade. Natchez has become a featured stop on Mississippi River itineraries, bringing visitors directly into the city’s historic downtown, attractions, restaurants, shops and cultural sites. The Mississippi River is one of our greatest assets, and Natchez occupies an unrivaled place along it,” Doyle said.

Mayors from lower Louisiana to Minnesota were on hand for the groundbreaking as part of the 2026 Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative Fall Meeting hosted by Natchez.

“This is about more than building a dock,” Gibson said. “It is about connecting Natchez to the country and the world — by river, by air and through hospitality — and positioning our city for the next generation of tourism growth.”

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