

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

ALUMNUS



A DESTINATION IN THE MAKING

Crossroads District sets the tone for a walkable,
connected gateway between university and community

p. 28

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Jim (left) and Tommy Duff sit in the lobby of the newly dedicated Jim and Thomas Duff Center. One of the largest academic buildings on MSU's campus, it unites under one roof the Department of Kinesiology and key programs of the Mississippi Institute on Disabilities—including the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Clinic, ACCESS Program, and Specialized College Services—creating new opportunities for research, learning and compassionate service. *Photo by Grace Cockrell*

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From left, MSU Foundation President and CEO John Rush, Starkville Mayor Lynn Spruill and MSU President Mark E. Keenum celebrate the groundbreaking of Hotel Madelon, a 122-room Marriott Tribute Portfolio hotel anchoring the new Crossroads District between campus and the Cotton District. *Photo by Grace Cockrell*

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MSU BREAKS GROUND ON HOTEL MADELON, ANCHOR FOR NEW CROSSROADS DISTRICT

By Kevin Tate, Photos by Grace Cockrell & Submitted



Mississippi State representatives celebrate the groundbreaking of Hotel Madelon, the 122-room Marriott Tribute Portfolio hotel that will anchor the Crossroads District development between the university and Starkville's Cotton District. Standing from left are Luke Chamblee, CAP Development; Saunders Ramsey, MSU executive director, Campus Services; Clay Scruggs, CAP Development; Jud Skelton, MSU Foundation, head of real estate strategy; John Rush, MSU Foundation president and CEO; Janet Carraway, MSU Foundation executive director of finance; MSU President Mark E. Keenum; Richard Puckett, West Side Funds, Inc. board; Jerry Toney, West Side Funds, Inc. board; Tommy Nusz, West Side Funds, Inc. board; and Rodger Johnson, MSU Foundation board president.

Construction is underway on a new addition that will reshape the gateway between Mississippi State University and the Cotton District. Hotel Madelon will be a 122-room Marriott Tribute Portfolio hotel, which will include a full-service restaurant, rooftop bar and dedicated underground parking. The hotel, located at 910 University Dr., is set to open in the summer of 2027. The district it will anchor, including entertainment, restaurant, housing and additional parking venues, will be developed over several phases.

"This ceremony signifies so much more than a construction milestone. This groundbreaking represents the vision we have for our university and our hometown to be the very best they can be. Hotel Madelon will provide guests and visitors with an unmatched experience and be the catalyst that drives the development of future phases of the Crossroads District," MSU President Mark E. Keenum said.

"What we are embarking upon today will enhance quality of life and create new and exciting economic opportunities for decades to come. I'm very proud that our university is once again leading the way as

**"This groundbreaking represents the vision we have for our university and our hometown to be the very best they can be."
~ Mark E. Keenum**

we strive to serve this community and the great state of Mississippi."

Hotel Madelon, named in honor of the university's original fight song, will be a boutique hotel, celebrating the legacy

of MSU and the culture of Starkville. The hotel is being positioned on a prime site that will offer stunning campus views and an overall design that will attract both visitors and locals.

Tribute Portfolio hotels are known for their story-driven designs, offering experiences rooted in the personality and history of their destinations. Hotel Madelon will combine MSU's traditions, Starkville's arts and culinary scenes, and the region's rich cultural heritage into its design and guest experiences.

The hotel will be managed by Charlestowne Hotels, a leading hospitality management company known for operating distinctive, award-winning properties across the country. Charlestowne brings decades of experience in collegiate hospitality to the role.

The Crossroads District will lie between the university campus and the Cotton District, bounded approximately by





Set atop Hotel Madelon, the rooftop bar offers sweeping views of Mississippi State's campus and the surrounding Crossroads District, pairing local character with a signature gathering space for guests and visitors.



The Hotel Madelon's full-service café brings together university tradition and Starkville's creative energy, offering a warm, welcoming spot for dining, conversation and community within the new Crossroads District.



University Drive on the north and Highway 12 on the east and south, blending seamlessly into the Cotton District along Colonel Muldrow Avenue and Adkerson Way. It will feature a pedestrian land bridge connecting guests to campus across Highway 12 and create a smooth transition between the university and city communities.

"It will be a brand new place that feels like home to a guest from the moment they arrive."
~ John Rush

"Hotel Madelon is the anchor that will set the tone for the Crossroads District," said John Rush, president and CEO of the MSU Foundation. "It will share some of the most familiar parts of our story, the parts that bring people here and bring people together. It will be a brand new place that feels like home to a guest from the moment they arrive."

Restaurants, retail and residential developments along University Drive have long made the area attractive. Increasing the number of businesses in those economic sectors and doing so along a street that joins the campus to the city make for an ideal fit.

The project is being spearheaded by West Side Funds Inc. in partnership with CAP Development Group, Brasfield & Gorrie General Contractors, Cooper Carry Architects, KTG, The Saturday Crowd, U3 Advisors, CBRE Hotels Advisory, CPLA Design+Planning, Thompson Placemaking, Charlestowne Hotels, Neel-Schaffer Engineering, Rich Perspectives and Walker Consultants. ■



FUTURE PHASES: A HUB FOR INNOVATION, CULTURE, COMMUNITY

As development of the Crossroads District progresses, future phases will establish a zone offering year-round amenities for students, faculty, staff, residents and visitors. Key highlights include:

- **ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT:** A hub with local restaurants, curated retail shops and dynamic entertainment venues that seamlessly connect the campus, Cotton District and downtown Starkville, bridging the town-and-gown relationship.
- **CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL LANDMARKS:** The development's cultural centerpiece will include a new home for the Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library, bolstered by an ongoing private fundraising effort through the MSU Foundation. This facility will showcase MSU's distinction as one of only six universities nationwide to host a presidential library, further enriching the cultural significance of the district.
- **SEAMLESS CONNECTIVITY:** A planned pedestrian land bridge over Highway 12 will provide direct and safe access between the university and the development and city beyond, enhancing walkability for students, residents and visitors.
- **RESIDENTIAL LIVING:** On-site housing options, including faculty and staff residences, will add energy and year-round vibrancy to the district while supporting adjacent retail and dining establishments.
- **INNOVATION AND RESEARCH HUB:** State-of-the-art office and innovation spaces will attract researchers, startups and businesses, leveraging proximity to MSU's world-class Thad Cochran Research, Technology and Economic Development Park.
- **CONVENIENT PARKING:** A 700-space parking garage is planned to be located on the north side of University Drive near the district.

The district's location ensures unparalleled proximity and walkability to the MSU campus. It also creates a premier destination for the 3.5 million visitors drawn to Starkville annually for events, conferences and tourism. ■