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Mississippi Senate to Honor Creators of *Mississippi, Believe It!*™

Jackson, MS – The Mississippi Senate will formally honor The Cirlot Agency, a Mississippi-based, full-service, marketing, public relations and corporate communications firm, for creating the *Mississippi, Believe It!*™ campaign. The Agency designed the pro bono campaign to directly combat the negative stereotypes often associated with the state of Mississippi with public service announcements in the form of print ads and posters.

The commendation, Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 612, will occur on Friday at 10 A.M. in Senate chambers. The resolution commends and thanks Liza Cirlot Looser, CEO, and Rick Looser, COO, and The Cirlot Agency for developing the public service campaign, recognizing the “energy and civic dedication of these ‘citizen ambassadors’ for the State of Mississippi, who have donated their time and talents to educate residents and non-residents and promote a positive image for our state.”

The *Mississippi, Believe It!*™ campaign includes fourteen public service announcements – 11 original ads plus three new ads debuted in late 2006 – created to run in both newspapers and magazines, which feature many of the wonderful people, aspects, stories and facts associated with the state of Mississippi. A full set of the *Mississippi, Believe It!*™ posters will be sent to every public and private K-12 school and every college and university in the state this year. The campaign also includes a website, www.mississippibelieveit.com, that houses the posters in a downloadable format, as well as an online store.

Since the campaign’s nationwide launch in December 2006, the campaign has received a long line of coverage, including: *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *U.S. News & World Report*, *International Herald Tribune*, *Chicago Sun Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Associated Press*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *The Washington Post*, *The Washington Times*, *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, *Dallas Morning News*, *Detroit Free Press*, *Seattle Post*, *St. Petersburg Times*, *Nashville Tennessean*, *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, and the *New Jersey Herald News*. National Public Radio, Fox News Radio, Voice of America Radio and numerous talk radio shows across the country have featured the campaign. It will also be featured in an upcoming segment on NBC’s *Today Show*.

Mississippi, Believe It![™] takes common Mississippi stereotypes and twists them to reveal the truth about the state. For instance, the headline of one the newly added posters reads, “Meet a few of our new good ole boys.” The ad explains that Mississippi has more black elected officials than any other state in the country. Women in high-ranking positions are featured, as well as Chief Phillip Martin of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. In the other newly added posters, one features the success of Hartley Peavey and Peavey Electronics. The third new PSA features the late Dr. Arthur Guyton, who is world-renowned for his physiology textbook, which he wrote in 1956 while at the University of Mississippi Medical Center.

“Throughout the 189 years of Mississippi’s statehood, untold numbers of the state’s citizens have made marvelous medical advances, entertained the masses, and invented products that do everything from make lives better to improve space travel,” said Rick Looser, COO of the Agency. “That’s just to name a few of the state’s successes. But all too often, Mississippi is only thought of regarding a short period in her history in which civil rights atrocities took place. In many parts of the country, this is all Mississippi is known for and, unfortunately, this negative perception has greatly affected how Mississippi’s own citizens view their state.”

Looser believes that until Mississippi’s own citizens are proud of its successes, the rest of the country cannot be expected to change their perceptions about Mississippi. The ultimate goal is to create “citizen ambassadors” for the state. After the initial launch in 2005, the Agency simply hoped that these “citizen ambassadors” would visit the website, www.mississippibelieveit.com, download the posters and email them from coast to coast. To date, through the website and emails, an estimated 20 million people have seen the posters, making *Mississippi, Believe It!*[™] a success.

The cost of the *Mississippi, Believe It!*[™] campaign is estimated at over \$315,000 to date. The Cirlot Agency has donated over \$275,000 in time and resources to bring this campaign to fruition. Service Printers, Inc., of Flowood, MS, donated over \$40,000 in printing services and paper costs for the posters.

For more information on the campaign, please visit www.mississippibelieveit.com.