**COASTAL MISSISSIPPI RESIDENT SENTIMENT TOWARDS TOURISM**

This project was sponsored by Coastal Mississippi and prepared by The University of Southern Mississippi, Gulf Park

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**SURVEY RESPONDENTS**

2,138

- Average age: 54 years old
- Range: 18-87 years
- Average years living on the Coast: 28 years
- Range: 2 months-83 years
- 82% White
- 59% Women
- 58% Bachelor’s degree or higher
- 49% Employed full-time and 28% Retired
- 62% Married
- 40% Living in 2-person household
- Average annual income of $75,000 to $99,000
- 88% Do not work in tourism industry

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**REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE**

- **U.S. Census Data (2019)**
- **Respondent Distribution**

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**RESPONDENT DESCRIPTIONS OF TOURISM ON THE MS GULF COAST**

- **93% of respondents** are aware of Coastal Mississippi
- **73% of respondents** support opening the Coast community to visitors

- **92%** of respondents say tourism can be improved by...
  - COVID-19
  - U.S. Census Data (2019)
  - Respondent Distribution

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**KEY TAKE-AWAYS**

- Overall, residents report that the positive benefits of tourism outweigh any negative impacts.
- "Impact of tourism growth is more positive than negative."
- "Coastal Mississippi should advertise more often."
- COVID-19 does not appear to be a deterrent to tourism for the majority of MS Gulf Coast residents.

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**CONCLUSIONS**

- Residents are enthusiastic about the impact of tourism and tourism growth on the MS Gulf Coast.
- Perceptions that tourism on the MS Gulf Coast enhances quality of life are strong.
- Generally, residents of the MS Gulf Coast report that the benefits of tourism outweigh negative impacts.
- The majority of residents report awareness of Coastal Mississippi and that they are doing a good job.
- Regarding COVID-19, residents report an eagerness to welcome visitors to the MS Gulf Coast.
- Overall, perceptions of tourism on the MS Gulf Coast are positive, but residents offer opportunities for improvement.

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**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Diversify activities
- Increase opportunities
- Increase and enhance marketing awareness
- Build infrastructure and policy alignment
- Consistently monitor progress and identify emerging issues