This nationally significant area is eligible to apply for nomination as a National Historic Landmark preserving the sites of heartbreaking and pivotal events surrounding the kidnapping and murder of Emmett Till and the subsequent trial where the murderers were acquitted. These sites include the Tallahatchie County Courthouse in Sumner (restoration and exhibit development), the funeral home in Tutwiler where his body was prepared (acquisition and stabilization), the site on the Sunflower River near where his body was found (acquisition and boardwalk/platform development), the James Milam home site in Glendora where Emmett’s belongings were burned after the murder (acquisition, clearing and monument erected), the site of the murder of Clinton Melton and the King Place in Glendora (acquisition, clearing and erection of a new interpretive pavilion), significant to the interpretation of the events related to the Emmett Till murder and the trial and the cotton gin / Emmett Till Historic Interpretive Center in Glendora (repair and environmental enclosure). Tallahatchie County has committed to the project through the acquisition of the former Woolworth store directly across from the entrance to the Courthouse in Sumner. The building will be redeveloped as an annex to the courthouse and as the interpretive (orientation) center for the Emmett Till Historic Trail and for the restored Courthouse. The Emmett Till Memorial Complex (a redeveloped industrial property on highway 49) is being developed as a site for tourism events, for local workforce training (through alliances with regional colleges), and educational and recreational events for local children. It is also recommended that the remains of the store in Money (in Leflore County), where the events began, be acquired, stabilized and developed as part of the trail.
EMMETT TILL NATIONAL SITE DEVELOPMENT
TALLAHASCHIE COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

EXPECTED PROJECT BENEFITS

Investment in Tallahatchie County to establish this National Landmark area will create jobs, jumpstart the region’s economy and prepare the people of the area for the 21st Century by spurring private investment potential for the area and job growth. This project is such a cultural heritage site, it did not develop as a result of tourism, but tourism itself could be a byproduct of this project. The project will increase job creation and retention, allowing for new employment opportunities and provide an educational opportunity for 21st Century living. This project will work with Delta Regional Authority and the State of Mississippi to develop heritage/cultural tourism in the Mississippi Delta and play an important role in the development of the Delta Heritage Region and the African American Heritage. Economic stimuli applied to this project will also encourage economic development in the southern region of the US.

EMMETT TILL MEMORIAL COMMISSION (ETMC) established by the Tallahatchie County Board of Supervisors for the purpose of fostering racial harmony and conciliation is endowed with the mission to seek federal, state and private funds and grants to establish and promote development of the National Landmark Area reflecting the events surrounding the murder of Emmett Till and the trial of Roy Bryant and J. W. Milam in 1955 in the Tallahatchie County Second District Courthouse. In addition to the initial task to restore the Courthouse in Summer, the Commission is charged with the restoration of other buildings and sites of historical value and promotion of the educational tours of the courthouse and other sites in Tallahatchie County, Mississippi. The Emmett Till Memorial Day of Reconciliation at the Courthouse in Summer in 2007 was initiated by the ETMC. The day began with the unveiling of the historic marker, inscribed with information regarding the murder of Emmett Till and the subsequent trial of Roy Bryant and J. W. Milam. The marker is poignantly placed just outside the doorknob to encourage reflection, study and personal assimilation of all that took place at this site. Following the ceremony, participants were invited to take a bus tour of the sites significant to the Emmett Till story. Website: www.etmctallahatchie.com

EMMETT TILL NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL

Heritage tourists traveling from near and far are already reflecting upon the events and their place in history as they follow the designated trail of the Tallahatchie County Civil Rights Driving Tour. Markers placed along the tour at pertinent sites focus on the historic events and places related to the Emmett Till story. Visitors from across the nation and the world hear about the tour and travel to the region to see for themselves and learn from the “galvanizing event” that “galvanized the civil rights movement.” Tour groups make advance reservations are treated to southern hospitality and are accompanied by tours guides, viewing personal and community experiences, making their trip more meaningful. A major goal of the ETMC is the acquisition, stabilization and expanded interpretation of these sites to provide a National Historic trail. Approximately $50,000 is needed to accomplish the immediate goal with $4.5 million accomplishing the goal it’s entirety.

ADDITIONAL TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES RELATED TO EMMETT TILL

The Emmett Till multi-purpose building in Sumner and the Emmett Till Memorial Park in Glendale provide additional opportunities to develop events and programs related to Civil Rights Tourist. $2 Million in funding is needed to prepare these properties to become a valuable part of this overall focus on heritage tourism development in the Delta region.

TALLAHASCHIE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Tallahatchie County is deeply committed to this project. The Restoration of the Tallahatchie County Second District Courthouse in Summer to its near-exact state during the trial of 1955 has been awarded a local civic service grant from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, and a structural stabilization project funded by a 2008 federal appropriation. Emmett Till National Historic Trail signage will be placed in the courthouse in Sumner, Mississippi and the development of an interpretative center across the street from the front door of the Courthouse are the first priorities of the Trail development. An additional $8 million is needed to complete these projects.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

EMMETT TILL NATIONAL SITE DEVELOPMENT
TALLAHASCHIE COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EVENTS - EMBODIED IN THE REMAINING SITES IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT TO THE HISTORY OF AMERICA. THE WORLD WATCHED AS THIS INJUSTICE UNFOLDED - AND THE WORLD CHANGED BECAUSE OF THIS GALVANIZING EVENT.


THREE MONTHS AFTER THE TRIAL ROSA PARKS REFUSED TO GIVE UP HER SEAT ON THE BUS IN MONTGOMERY. IN ROSA PARKS MEMORIAL SERVICE JESSE JACKSON QUOTED HER AS SAYING “I THOUGHT ABOUT EMMETT TILL, AND I COULDN'T GO BACK”.

“I HAVE A DREAM THIS AFTERNOON I HAVE A DREAM THAT THERE WILL BE A DAY THAT WE WILL NO LONGER FACE THE ATROCITIES THAT EMMETT TILL HAD TO FACE OR MEDGAR EVERS HAD TO FACE, THAT ALL MEN CAN LIVE WITH DIGNITY.”