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“SWEET HOME ALABAMA” CELEBRATES MARDI GRAS IN NYC

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (June 15, 2017) — The Alabama Tourism Department is taking over New York City streets for the second year with one-of-a-kind experiences. They kicked off their activations this year with a celebration, right in the middle of Times Square. New Yorkers and tourists were thrown a Mardi Gras celebration on a custom-built float.

“Many people believe that Mardi Gras originated in Louisiana, but it began in Mobile, Alabama, in 1703, 15 years ahead of New Orleans,” said Lee Sentell, director of the Alabama Tourism Department. “Mobile’s Mardi Gras has its own spin on the festivities, throwing out MoonPies with beads and being just a little more family friendly.”

The float began construction in Mobile, making the 1,200-plus-mile journey to a warehouse in the Bronx, where float designers from the Mirth Company, in collaboration with the Mobile Carnival Museum, spent three full days getting it ready. At 5 a.m., the float made its way to Times Square, where construction was completed right in front of passersby.

A Mardi Gras-style pop-up parade kicked off at noon and sounded the trumpets, quite literally. The Jambalaya Brass Band entertained with music as costumed revelers threw out beads and MoonPies.

“Times Square is known for being lively, but a Mardi Gras celebration right in the middle of New York takes it up a notch,” said David Clark, CEO of Visit Mobile. “Mobile is a city that is Born to Celebrate so bringing all the sights, sounds and tastes of Mobile is just a sample of what visitors will get when they visit us!”

One more event is set to take place on Friday, June 16, in Flatiron Pedestrian Plaza, where visitors will be able to walk up to the top of an Alabama mountain, with the help of some virtual reality and a 20-foot-tall “mountain.”

The New York City activations are a complement to the award-winning “Take It All In” campaign, aimed at educating potential tourists about what truly makes the state a place you can take in all the sights, sounds, smells, flavors and sensations. For the first time this year, Mobile’s Mardi Gras and other experiences are being offered online in a 360 Video experience. Visit SeeAL360.com/MardiGras to learn more.

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About “Sweet Home Alabama”

In 2016, the Alabama Tourism Department saw more than 25 million travelers spend a combined \$13.3 billion in the state, contributing more than \$836 million in state and local tax revenues. The growth allowed for each Alabama citizen to save \$444 in taxes. The Alabama Tourism Department has won top national and regional awards from the United States Travel Association, the National Council of State Tourism Directors, “Travel Weekly” magazine, the Southeast Tourism Society and the Southern Public Relations Federation. For more information, please visit: www.Alabama.Travel