



Thank you SBA Administrator McMahon for Igniting the American Dream across the Southeast and here in Mississippi



By [Ashley D. Bell](#)

U.S. Small Business Administration's Southeast Regional Administrator, serving Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee

When Linda McMahon, head of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and advocate for the nation's 30 million small business owners, visited the SBA Mississippi District Office last year, she was in the midst of her nationwide listening tour to ensure she heard from each SBA district directly and met with entrepreneurs to capture the true entrepreneurial essence of each region.

Administrator McMahon's *Ignite Tour* featured visits to SBA's 68 district offices, including the one here in Mississippi, in 50 states, D.C. and Puerto Rico. She met with more than 800 small business owners; from a fly fishing company in Montana, to a craft brewery in Oregon all the way to a bed and breakfast here in Jackson, Mississippi. She met with small business champions, including those powered by the SBA, to get a full picture from entrepreneurs and to listen to their local concerns, knowing that every business, industry, state, and community has its own unique needs. Administrator McMahon listened to the challenges and successes of our districts and of our small business communities across the Southeast in order to create and direct the best small business policies to drive economic growth. I was honored to join the Administrator on the Southeastern tours which touched every state in our region.

During Administrator McMahon's tour across the Southeast and the nation, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act became law – giving these entrepreneurs and the rest of America's small businesses some welcome relief. We were able to witness a "tax truck" purchased by Liberty Landscaping, the Florida Small Business Person of the Year in Jacksonville, FL. The owners were able to purchase a new delivery truck, because of their tax savings. Opportunity Zones were also designated, to encourage investment, development and job creation in economically-distressed areas. President Trump created the Executive Order of the National Council for the American Worker in which Administrator McMahon was named to be a part of and she had the opportunity to listen to what this meant for our growing businesses. Workforce development has been a top priority for many conversations during her *Ignite Tour*.

Small business creation and expansion truly has been ignited in the last two years and there couldn't be a stronger ally for them than the SBA. Stories like those we heard from real entrepreneurs and real businesses, with real successes and challenges, inspire action. Take, for instance, the story of Old Capitol Inn in Jackson. Mende Malouf Alford, Owner of Jackson's Old Capitol Inn who provided us with a tour of the repurposed YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) which rented dorm style rooms

to young women who had relocated to Jackson from small rural Mississippi towns to work. Today, after the approval of an SBA 504 Loan, the beautiful property was converted into a bed and breakfast and is Jackson's Premier location for receptions, proms, weddings, reunions, seminars, and a host of other activities. Also while in the area, Administrator McMahon took time to tour another SBA business loan recipient, Lou's Full-Serv, and enjoyed a scrumptious meal to boot!

This is just one of the many stories the Administrator and I have heard here in the Southeastern Region. And, it is important that the more than 800 small business owners the Administrator has met with know they were heard, and the President has heard them, because of her dedication to advocacy. We will continue to listen to America's small businesses and to work toward their continued success.

I encourage small business owners and their champions to continue igniting the region and to tap the SBA for information on how we can help them to start, grow, expand and recover after a disaster. Visit www.sba.gov and follow us on Twitter [@SBASoutheast](https://twitter.com/SBASoutheast) for more detail.