



State of Alabama

Unified Command Joint Information Center Mobile, Alabama

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TOURISM LAUNCHES \$1.5 MILLION CAMPAIGN TO ATTRACT VISITORS TO ALABAMA'S GULF COAST

Tourism representatives today announced a \$1.5 million marketing campaign to assure visitors that Alabama's beaches are clean and open for business despite reports of isolated tar debris along the Gulf coast.

State tourism director Lee Sentell said two television spots promoting beaches and charter boat fishing will begin airing Saturday, May 15 on approximately 50 stations in the Southeast and Texas. The campaign will include an ad on the front page of the Atlanta Journal Constitution on Thursday.

"State and local agencies are closely monitoring environmental conditions and specific water quality monitoring is being performed at more than 20 public beaches. Visitors should visit www.gulfshores.com for updated information," Sentell said. "The Alabama Department of Environmental Management continues to serve as the lead state agency and is coordinating efforts for a wide range of state agencies that are providing response efforts."

Local tourism officials expect 30,000 visitors for the inaugural Hangout Beach Music Festival this weekend at the south end of state highway 59.

"We are expecting crowds starting on noon on Friday," said Gulf Shores tourism director Herb Malone. "Between room reservations for Memorial Day weekend and the music festival, we anticipate hotel bookings to be on par with last May," Malone added.

Headliners include John Legend, the Zac Brown Band, Jakob Dylan, the Blind Boys of Alabama and Alison Krauss. Tourism officials noted that families can also enjoy Alabama's attractions on the coast such as Bellingrath Gardens, the Estuarium on Dauphin Island, The U.S.S. Alabama Battleship and the Exploreum in Mobile.

Check out these Gulf Coast Tourism Web sites for updated information:
www.gulfshores.com, www.mobile.org.

To view the television spots visit www.alabama.travel and click on the YouTube icon at the top of the page.

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