

Businesses encouraged to join trafficking initiative

Special to Pelahatchie News

Secretary of State Michael Watson recently announced the launch of a new initiative, Mississippi Businesses Against Trafficking (MBAT), which currently includes partnerships with several notable Mississippi organizations.

MBAT is a statewide initiative to raise awareness and empower Mississippi businesses to combat human trafficking. It is open to any business, nonprofit organization, or association in the state of Mississippi that is interested in promoting human trafficking awareness both internally and externally.

"Through partnership and collaboration with other Secretaries of State, we researched how to utilize our current role with the business sector to educate and raise awareness through grassroots efforts," said Sec. Michael Watson. "All Mississippi business owners are invited to join our fight to coMBAT human trafficking in our state."

According to the Mississippi Department of Health's most recent statistics at <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/state/mississippi>, a human trafficking case is reported every other day in the state of Mississippi. Per the U.S. Department of State at <https://www.state.gov/>

humantrafficking-about-human-trafficking/, at any given time, an estimated 24.9 million people worldwide fall victim to human trafficking.



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"Sadly, human trafficking is more common in our state than people realize. I personally know victims and met with several during my time in the state legislature. Our goal is to rescue victims and ensure all Mississippians are safe from

this heinous crime," Watson said.

Businesses and organizations that have already agreed to be MBAT partners include the Mississippi Braves, Sprint

MBAT because we recognize the critical role convenience stores and travel centers can play in the identification and reporting of suspected human trafficking," said Matt Bogue, Vice President, The Dutch Group.

The new MBAT website provides more information on how to get involved as well as educational resources and materials to help better understand the issues surrounding human trafficking and how to recognize it in the workplace.

"The Mississippi Braves are proud to partner with Sec. Watson as a member of MBAT. Through this initiative, we hope to raise awareness of the warning signs of human trafficking to our wide demographic of fans and their families," said Pete Laven, General Manager, Mississippi Braves.

Businesses can apply for membership at www.sos.ms.gov/mbat. Upon joining, MBAT members will receive a window decal with the MBAT logo to place in their business, MBAT materials for distribution, a certificate of membership, and ongoing information on Human Trafficking news and initiatives in the state.

To access a brief video detailing the MBAT program, visit <https://youtu.be/FhHfZm3dawe>.

Mart (The Dutch Group), Mississippi State Board of Massage Therapy, and the Mississippi Hotel and Lodging Association.

"Sprint Mart is proud to partner with



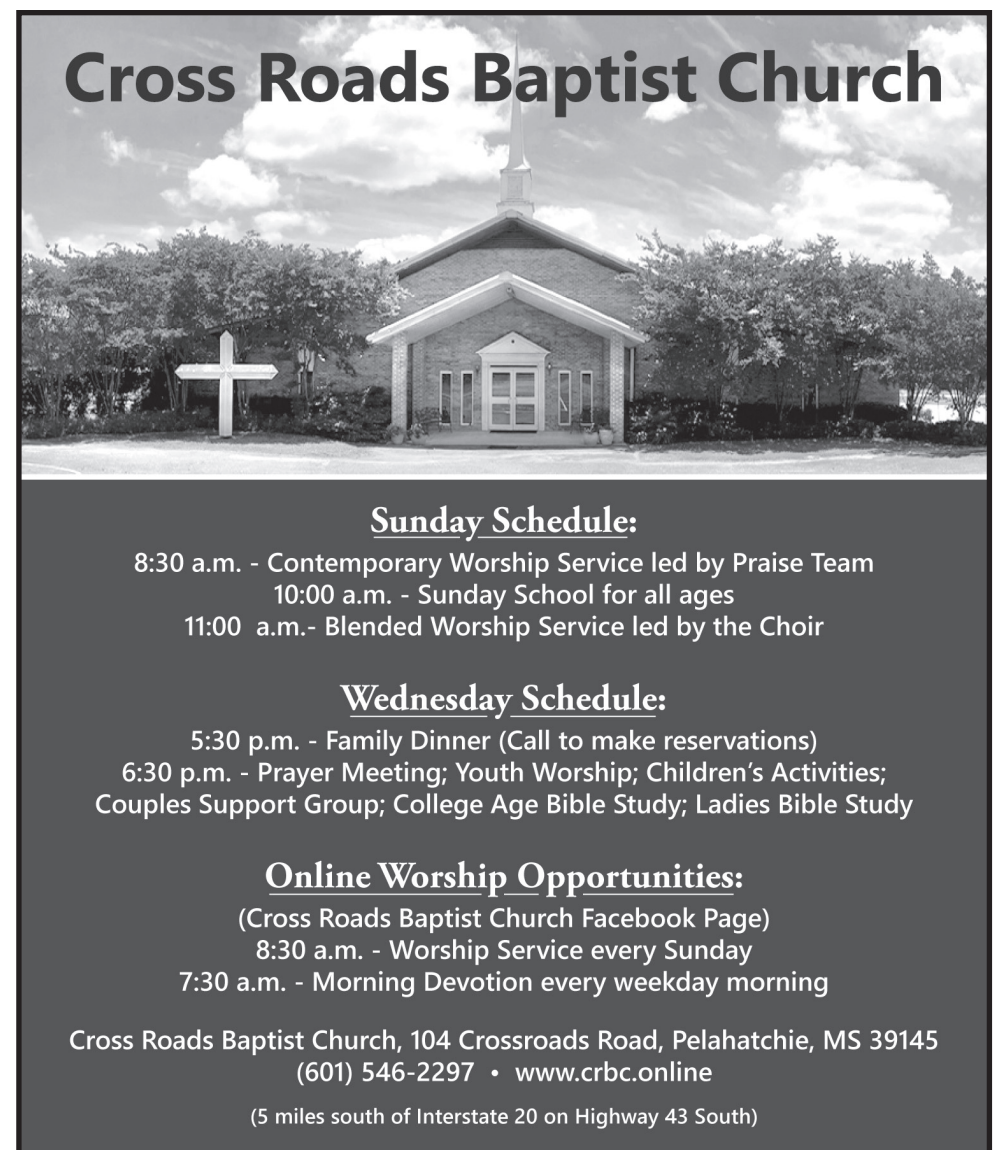
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Cross Roads Baptist Church

Sunday Schedule:

- 8:30 a.m. - Contemporary Worship Service led by Praise Team
- 10:00 a.m. - Sunday School for all ages
- 11:00 a.m. - Blended Worship Service led by the Choir

Wednesday Schedule:

- 5:30 p.m. - Family Dinner (Call to make reservations)
- 6:30 p.m. - Prayer Meeting; Youth Worship; Children's Activities; Couples Support Group; College Age Bible Study; Ladies Bible Study

Online Worship Opportunities:

(Cross Roads Baptist Church Facebook Page)

- 8:30 a.m. - Worship Service every Sunday
- 7:30 a.m. - Morning Devotion every weekday morning

Cross Roads Baptist Church, 104 Crossroads Road, Pelahatchie, MS 39145
(601) 546-2297 • www.crbc.online
(5 miles south of Interstate 20 on Highway 43 South)