HOUSE BILL NO. 1269

AN ACT TO CREATE THE SOUTHERN ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT CENTER; TO PROVIDE THAT THE CENTER SHALL BE ADMINISTERED BY THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES AND PARKS; TO CREATE A SPECIAL FUND FOR THE CENTER, MONIES IN WHICH SHALL BE USED FOR THE CONSTRUCTION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE CENTER; TO AMEND SECTION 49-4-9, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, IN CONFORMITY THERETO; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

SECTION 1. (1) There is created the Southern Arts and Entertainment Center located in Meridian, Mississippi. The purpose of the center shall be to provide an educational, entertaining and interactive facility to illustrate the unique culture of the State of Mississippi and other southern states; to illustrate the outstanding contributions of Mississippian to the arts and the field of entertainment; and to provide family-oriented attractions in the delivery of an educational experience to citizens of, and visitors to, Mississippi.

(2) The Southern Arts and Entertainment Center shall consist of a conference center, a performing arts theater, an amphitheater and an artists' village. The center shall conduct ongoing events such as induction into an arts and entertainment hall of fame, seminars, workshops and demonstrations by guest artists.

(3) The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks shall administer the Southern Arts and Entertainment Center and may acquire land and property in order to construct and administer the center. The department may hire a director of the center, who shall serve at the will and pleasure of the Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks. The director shall administer
the center in accordance with the policies established by the commission.

(4) For the construction, operation, support and administration of the center, the center may receive contributions, donations of land or other property, gifts, bequests of money, other forms of financial assistance and property, equipment, materials or manpower from persons, foundations, trust funds, corporations, organizations, and other sources, public or private, to be expended and utilized in carrying out the mission of the center.

(5) All expenditures for the center shall be paid by the State Treasurer on warrants issued by the State Fiscal Officer, and he shall issue his warrants upon requisition signed by the director of the center.

(6) The duties and objectives of the center shall be:

(a) To stimulate and encourage throughout the state the study and presentation of the performing, visual, and literary arts and public interest and participation therein;

(b) To encourage participation in, appreciation of, and education in the arts to meet the legitimate needs and aspirations of persons in all parts of the state;

(c) To take such steps as may be necessary and appropriate, to encourage public interest in the cultural heritage of Mississippi and the South, to expand the state's cultural resources, and to promote the use of art in the state government's activities and facilities; and

(d) To encourage excellence and assist freedom of artistic expression essential for the well-being of the arts.

SECTION 2. (1) The Southern Arts and Entertainment Center, under the direction and administration of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, is authorized and empowered to hold public hearings, to enter into contracts within the limit of funds available therefor, with individuals,
organizations and institutions for services furthering the objectives of the center's programs; to enter into contracts, within the limit of funds available therefor, with local and regional associations for cooperative endeavors furthering the objectives of the center's programs; to accept gifts, contributions and bequests of unrestricted funds from individuals, foundations, corporations and other organizations or institutions for the purpose of furthering the objectives of the center's programs; to make and sign any agreements and to do and perform any acts that may be necessary to carry out the purposes of Sections 1 and 2 of this act. The center may request and shall receive from any department, division, board, bureau, commission or agency of the state such assistance and data as will enable it properly to carry out its powers and duties under Sections 1 and 2 of this act.

(2) Any monies made available by public or private transfers of property, public or private donations or bequests, public or private foundation grants for the benefit of the Southern Arts and Entertainment Center shall be deposited into the Southern Arts and Entertainment Center Fund, a special fund which is created in the State Treasury. All funds deposited in this fund shall be used exclusively for the construction, operation, support and administration of the Southern Arts and Entertainment Center. Unexpended amounts remaining in the special fund at the end of a fiscal year shall not lapse into the State General Fund, and any interest earned or investment earnings on amounts in the special fund shall be deposited to the credit of the special fund.

SECTION 3. Section 49-4-9, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

49-4-9. Effective July 1, 1979, the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks shall have the following powers and duties:

(a) To formulate the policy of the department regarding wildlife and fisheries within the jurisdiction of the department;
(b) To apply for, receive and expend any federal or state funds or contributions, gifts, devises, bequests or funds from any other source;

(c) To commission or conduct studies designed to determine alternative methods of managing and conserving the wildlife and fisheries resources of this state in a manner to insure efficiency and sustained productivity;

(d) To receive the advice and counsel of the advisory committees created for the Division of Parks and Recreation and the Division of Wildlife and Fisheries; * * *

(e) To administer the Southern Arts and Entertainment Center and take any action authorized in Sections 1 and 2 of House Bill No. ___, 2001 Regular Session; and

(f) To discharge such other duties, responsibilities and powers as are necessary to implement the provisions of this chapter.

SECTION 4. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage.