

# USMNEWS.net Readers Think "Major"

*by* Duane Cobb

On 6-Mar-09, the Martha Saunders administration of USM sent the following "Media Advisory" to local/statewide media:

## **Media Advisory: Southern Miss to Make Major Announcement**

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Friday, March 06, 2009

Contact Jana Bryant, 601.266.4497

Southern Miss President Martha Saunders and other university officials will be on hand to make a major university announcement. Faculty, staff and students also are invited to attend.

**TO:** News Editors, Directors

**WHAT:** Announcement from President Martha Saunders. ***Media invited to attend for photo/interview opportunities***

**WHERE:** Front steps of the Thad Cochran Center, The University of Southern Mississippi - Hattiesburg

**WHEN:** 10:30 a.m., Tuesday, March 10, 2009

**CONTACT:** Jana Bryant, 601.266.4497 or 601.549.1124

As you can see, the advisory is cryptic. Some of USMNEWS.net readers also caught the cryptic advisory. What is the "major" announcement that Saunders plans to make at 10:30am on 10-Mar-09? Our readers have made some interesting guesses about the subject matter of the major announcement. Here are a few:

- a large, private contribution to the institution
- the university's share of the federal stimulus package -- it will cover all of USM's cuts thus far
- the "resignation" of USM men's head basketball coach Larry Eustachy
- another capital campaign begins
- more funding for the Cross Creek campus in Biloxi/Gulfport
- kickoff of USM's 100th birthday party
- a new College of Osteopathic Medicine
- a new, record grants/contracts procurement total
- USM (and other IHL schools) gets its own Board of Directors
- Saunders has extracted USM from the \$2 million airplane lease

These 10 guesses are interesting for sure. Of course, the first one is always a stand-by in situations like this one. It's a safe bet. I really like numbers 2 (USM's share of federal stimulus) and 6 (100th birthday party kickoff). The former would alleviate the budget crisis, at least until next year. Saunders will love being able to "save" the University community. The latter would be a way for Saunders to pretend that USM's real problems don't exist, a move expected from a communications specialist. As for a wild card option, number 9 (own BoD) is intriguing. What do you think? Let us know.