



**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE
MISSISSIPPI AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY MUSEUM**

CINDY HYDE-SMITH
COMMISSIONER

Press Release

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MS Ag Museum Officially Opens Small Town Sawmill's New Amenities

JACKSON, Miss. – The Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum officially opened the Small Town Sawmill's new amenities to the public Thursday, March 16. The new features to the exhibit include an observation deck and educational signage, among other improvements to the operational aspects of the sawmill.

The event recognized the Mississippi Forestry Association and the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum Foundation for their contributions to the project. John Jacobsen spoke on behalf of the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum Foundation as a board member and Anna Kendall spoke on behalf of the Mississippi Forestry Association as the director of education and outreach. Both speakers stressed the importance of forestry education to all ages of people, especially youth, and agreed that the sawmill's new features would aid in that endeavor.

Jacobsen and Kendall cut the ribbon in front of the sawmill, signaling the official dedication of the new features. Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum Director Aaron Rodgers walked the program attendees through the sawmill's history, before firing it up for a live demonstration.

Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Cindy Hyde-Smith said the new amenities will enhance the visitor experience at the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum.

"We are thrilled and extremely grateful to the Mississippi Forestry Association and the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum Foundation for their efforts in making these new features to the Ag Museum possible," she said. "Although the sawmill has been a part of Small Town for many years, it is wonderful to see new details added that will enhance the way we tell the story of the forestry industry in Mississippi."

The sawmill, originally donated by Howard Berry, was moved to the museum from Jefferson Davis County in 1986. It uses a circular saw with replaceable teeth and is run by a diesel motor. Taylor & Jeanes, Inc. restored and repaired the sawmill to working condition the same year it was donated.

Mississippi Forestry Association Executive Vice President Tedrick Ratcliff said he is extremely proud to be a part of improving the sawmill, which serves as a large part of Mississippi history.

"We are happy to have partnered with the museum to showcase the importance that forestry and sawmills have had on our rural communities in Mississippi, including both their historical significance and modern day economic impact," he said.

For up-to-date information on the museum, its progress or events, "like" the Mississippi Agriculture & Forestry Museum on Facebook, visit msagmuseum.org or call 601-432-4500.

Photos attached.



Anna Kendall, the director of education and outreach of the Mississippi Forestry Association, and John Jacobsen, a board member of the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum Foundation, cut the ribbon Thursday at the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum’s Small Town Sawmill ribbon cutting, which celebrated the exhibit’s new amenities.



Several Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Foundation board members and Mississippi Forestry Association members, including Harold Anderson (left), Keith Ward, Zach Pardue, Jamie Wier, Diane Hawks, Dr. Bill Herndon, John Jacobsen, Aaron Rodgers, Casey Anderson and Anna Kendall, attended the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum’s Small Town Sawmill ribbon cutting Thursday.



Sawmill program attendees watch as Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum volunteers operated the Small Town Sawmill at the museum's ribbon cutting Thursday.