

MDA E-News January 26, 2010**Shuqualak Lumber Expands Operations, 5th Annual Festival and Event Coordinators Workshop, MDA to Host Propane/Natural Gas Vehicle Conversion Information Webinar****In this issue:**

- [Shuqualak Lumber Expands Operations](#)
- [MDA Tourism Division and Mississippi Arts Commission to Host Workshop for Event and Festival Planning](#)
- [MDA to Host Webinar to Provide Information on Converting Fleet Vehicles to Propane and Natural Gas](#)

Shuqualak Lumber Expands Operations

Shuqualak Lumber, one of the largest producers of yellow pine in the Southeast, is expanding its operations by adding a new wood shaving mill, which will produce bedding for livestock. The company is retaining its existing workforce and plans to add 15 new jobs as a result of the expansion. Shuqualak Lumber operates two plants in Mississippi - a planer mill in Shuqualak and a nearby sawmill. MDA assisted the company with the purchase of the wood shaving mill by providing \$1.607 million through the Mississippi Existing Industry Productivity Loan Program (Existing Industry Loan Program).

The Existing Industry Loan Program is designed to provide loans to existing industries or local governmental entities to deploy long-term fixed assets through new technology, which will improve productivity and competitiveness. To learn more about the program, please contact MDA's Existing Industry and Business Division at (601) 359-3593.

MDA Tourism Division and Mississippi Arts Commission to Host Workshop for Event and Festival Planning

On **Tuesday, January 26, in McComb** and on **Thursday, January 28, in Tupelo**, MDA's Tourism Division and the Mississippi Arts Commission will present the **5th Annual Festival and Event Coordinators Workshop**. The McComb workshop will be held at the McComb Sports Park, and the Tupelo workshop will be held at the Link Centre. Both will run from 8:45 a.m. to 4 p.m.

This year's workshop theme is community identity: creating festivals that

reflect a community's distinctive characteristics, traditions and history. The workshop will show festival and event coordinators where to look in their own communities for the partnerships, sponsorships, programming and support needed to produce a successful event. Anyone actively involved in the production or promotion of a Mississippi-based arts or cultural festival, including festival directors, board members and others involved in the planning or production these events, should plan to attend. Volunteer-led festivals are especially encouraged to send representatives to one of the workshops.

Each workshop is free of charge, but reservations are required. To register or for more information, call 601-359-3297.

MDA to Host Webinar to Provide Information on Converting Fleet Vehicles to Propane and Natural Gas

On **Thursday, February 18 at 10:00 a.m.**, MDA's Energy Division, on behalf of the Mississippi Clean Cities Coalition, will host a Webinar to provide beneficial information regarding retrofitting or converting fleet vehicles to propane and natural gas, both of which produce lower emissions than petroleum while helping to reduce dependence on foreign oil.

Speakers at event will be **Mark Denton, vice president of Business Development for Blossman Gas** and **Bill Calvert, vice president of Sales for BAF Technologies**. Denton will discuss the options for converting vehicles to accept propane, the most accessible alternative fuel. Calvert will discuss the options for converting vehicles to accept natural gas and establishing natural gas fueling stations.

The information to be covered in this event will benefit anyone overseeing a fleet of vehicles, including fleet managers, county supervisors, school officials and more. Mark your calendars, and make plans to participate in this informative event today! Registration information will be made available in the coming days. MDA encourages its partners to share this information with their communities. For more information, please contact MDA's Energy Division at (601) 359-6600.

MDA is a member of the Mississippi Clean Cities Coalition, a government/industry partnership created to help reduce petroleum consumption in the transportation sector by advancing the use of alternative fuels and vehicles, idle reduction technologies, hybrid electric vehicles, fuel blends and fuel economy measures.

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