

MDA E-News June 2, 2009**New Verge™ Plant in Ripley; NASA's A-3 Test Stand Milestone; Third Annual Mississippi GRAMMYS®; Silver Finalist in 2009 sofi™ Awards; 2009 Mississippi Market On-Site Registration; Recovery Workshop Deadline Extension****In this issue:**

- [Oil-Dri to hold Grand Opening, Ribbon-Cutting for New Verge™ Plant in Ripley](#)
- [Construction of NASA's A-3 Test Stand at Stennis Space Center in Hancock County Reaches Milestone](#)
- [Third Annual Mississippi GRAMMYS® Held at Harrah's Horseshoe Casino in Tunica; Event Honors Mississippi GRAMMY® Winners and Nominees](#)
- [Mississippi Market Exhibitor Chosen as Silver Finalist in 2009 sofi™ Awards; On-Site Registration Welcome for 2009 Mississippi Market](#)
- [Deadline Extended Until June 2 for Gulf Coast Economic Recovery Workshop](#)

Oil-Dri to hold Grand Opening, Ribbon-Cutting for New Verge™ Plant in Ripley

A grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony will be held Thursday, June 4th, for the new Verge™ plant at Oil-Dri Production Company in Ripley. The plant represents an approximately \$7 million capital investment and will create up to 30 new jobs. Oil-Dri utilized MDA's training resources and has also worked closely with the Tippah County Development Foundation and Northeast Mississippi Community College. The company will continue to work with the three organizations as they grow and hire new employees.

Oil-Dri has been operating in Ripley and Tippah County for more than 60 years, providing quality products in the areas of oil absorption, cat litter, agricultural carriers, animal health and sports field and turf products. The new facility will focus on the production of engineered granular products, and the Verge™ product line will allow Oil-Dri to market these products to new and existing clientele that require precision products in their applications. The company has developed a proprietary process for this new plant that will produce precision granules to meet these market demands.

To learn more about Oil-Dri, please visit the company's website at www.oildri.com.

Construction of NASA's A-3 Test Stand at Stennis Space Center in Hancock County Reaches Milestone

Stennis Space Center engineers recently celebrated the completion of the A-3 Test Stand's structural steel work, a key milestone in the construction of the test stand. During a ceremony attended by over 100 workers and guests, employees from

Lafayette Steel Erectors, Inc. fastened into place the final structural steel beam for the test stand. Signatures of those who worked on the project adorn the beam, which was also topped with an American flag, a NASA flag and a pine sapling.

The A-3 Test Stand is the first one built on the Stennis campus since it first opened in the 1960s. The stand will be used to test the J-2X engine that is being constructed to help power the Ares I and Ares V rockets, which will eventually land humans on the moon again and possibly send them further into space. The A-3 Test Stand will provide engineers the opportunity to test the J-2X engines at virtual altitudes of up to 10,000 feet.

Third Annual Mississippi GRAMMYS® Held at Harrah's Horseshoe Casino in Tunica; Event Honors Mississippi GRAMMY® Winners and Nominees

Governor Haley Barbour and First Lady Marsha Barbour held the third annual Mississippi GRAMMYS® on May 28th at Bluesville, a part of Harrah's Horseshoe Casino and Hotel in Tunica. Sponsored by MDA and Peavey Electronics, the event is designed to celebrate Mississippi as the "Birthplace of America's Music," and it is the state's celebration of its GRAMMY® legacy. Actress Joey Lauren Adams and country music artist Paul Overstreet hosted the event. Headlining performers included country music stars Marty Stuart and Charley Pride, R&B star Dorothy Moore and blues musician Pinetop Perkins. In addition, co-host Paul Overstreet, gospel musicians The Williams Brothers, Nanette Workman, one of French Canada's most celebrated vocalists, blues and jazz pianist Eden Brent and Brandon Bennett, renowned Elvis impersonator, performed during the celebration.

Proceeds from this year's Mississippi GRAMMYS® event benefit the Mississippi Blues Commission's Blues Trail. The Blues Trail honors the people and places that contributed to the history and growth of the blues by placing markers at significant locations throughout the state.

For more information and to see a list of GRAMMY® winners from Mississippi, please visit www.msgrammy.com. To learn more about the Mississippi Blues Trail, please visit www.msbluestrail.org.

Mississippi Market Exhibitor Chosen as Silver Finalist in 2009 sofi™ Awards; On-Site Registration Welcome for 2009 Mississippi Market

Magnolia Honey Company, a regular Mississippi Market exhibitor, was recently selected as a Silver Finalist in the 2009 Specialty Outstanding Food Innovation (sofi™) Awards from the National Association for the Specialty Food Trade, Inc. The company's Raspberry William Honey Jelly was chosen as one of 111 finalists selected from a field of over 1,400 contenders nationwide. Gold winners will be announced June 29th at the Summer Fancy Food Show in New York.

Shan Miller founded Magnolia Honey Company in Woodville in 2003, setting out to create a jelly using honey as an alternative to refined sugar. Miller began showcasing her products at the Mississippi Market Wholesale Show in 2004, and according to co-owner Raven Lewis, the Market has been beneficial to the company as a gourmet food producer from the south, as it attracts buyers from many states who are looking for items they may not see at other shows - particularly items that are "southern." Lewis also stated that the Mississippi Market shows have given a boost to the company's holiday profits. Magnolia Honey Company products can be found at numerous retailers across the south and at www.magnoliahoney.com.

Mississippi Market was created in 1996 by MDA's Existing Industry and Business Division to assist small Mississippi business owners and artists in marketing their products to credentialed retail buyers from around the region, in turn generating sales for participating vendors. A typical mix of products that can be found at the show includes: gifts, jewelry, home accents, personal accessories and gourmet foods.

Mississippi businesses looking to retail southern products should attend this year's Mississippi Market, which will be held June 4-5 at the Mississippi Trade Mart in Jackson. On-site registration is available. The event is not open to the general public. For complete details, please visit www.mississippimarket.org, or call 1-888-886-3323.

Deadline Extended Until June 2 for Gulf Coast Economic Recovery Workshop

The deadline to register for "Building Resilient Economies: A Free Workshop on Accessing Funding and Resources for Gulf Coast Economic Recovery" has been extended until Tuesday, June 2. The International Economic Development Council, in partnership with MDA, the Economic Development Administration and Louisiana Economic Development, will be hosting the workshop June 10, from 7:15 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside in New Orleans, La. The event is designed to provide communities, chambers of commerce and economic development organizations in Mississippi and Louisiana with important information regarding state and federal funding programs that can benefit long-term economic recovery. The workshop is geared toward public- and private-sector representatives in the field of economic development, and it is free to attendees from Mississippi and Louisiana. To learn more or to register online, please visit http://www.iedconline.org/?p=Resilient_Economies_Workshop.

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