



Mississippi Forestry Association

Legislative Bulletin

The Voice of Forestry

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MFA Online

www.msforestry.net

MFA Member

Question of the Week

Q: *When is the MFA/CFA Legislative Luncheon?*

A: March 4th in Jackson. All CFA leaders and CFA government affairs liaisons are encouraged to make plans to attend.

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2009 Legislative Session Begins

The 2009 session of the Mississippi Legislature kicked off Jan. 6 at the Old State Capitol. The former statehouse was used from 1839 until the current Capitol opened a few blocks away in 1903. The Old Capitol had extensive water damage from Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and has undergone a \$16.5 million facelift. Legislators met briefly at the Old Capitol before moving over to the 106-year-old "new" Capitol for the rest of the three-month session.



The tight state budget will dominate debate this year. Tax collections are falling short of expectations because of the struggling economy, and legislators expect to deny many of the spending requests from state agencies. MFA will closely monitor legislation that impacts landowners and the Mississippi forestry community, particularly regarding taxation, transportation, land use and the environment.

Your MFA Legislative Bulletin will keep you informed throughout the 2009 legislative session. Available by email during the legislative session, both MFA and CFA members may subscribe for free by sending an email titled "Subscribe me to MFA's Legislative Bulletin" to membership@msforestry.net. Please forward this free newsletter to interested individuals and potential MFA members.

Lt. Governor Bryant's Common Sense Agenda



Lt. Governor Phil Bryant announced his 2009 Common Sense Agenda in late December. This agenda outlines many of the priorities that he plans to pursue in the legislative session including a forestry equipment sales tax cut.

Lt. Governor Bryant said, "There will be numerous issues facing the legislature during this session such as balancing the budget and finding a long term funding solution for Medicaid. At the same time, I think it is important to get back to the basics. This is why I have outlined a common sense agenda for this legislative session. We will continue to tackle issues such as a fair election process, education for our children, and targeted tax relief to spur economic growth."



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MFA's Mission is leading diverse forestry groups to promote landowner rights, environmental stewardship, member prosperity, and community understanding.

Common Sense Agenda continued from page 1

Tax Issues

Opportunities for Targeted Tax Cuts to Spur the Economy:
-Income tax cut for working Mississippians, introduced by Sen. Lee Yancey

-Phase out the inventory tax, without cutting revenue to local governments, to encourage further investment in Mississippi.

-Increase the Homestead Exemption for seniors to \$100,000 and increase the maximum tax credit for Mississippians under the age of 65 by \$102, introduced by Sen. Dean Kirby.

-Reduce the state sales tax on purchases of forestry equipment (currently 3%), to 1.5%, introduced by Sen. Perry Lee

Other items on the Common Sense Agenda include: Protecting the integrity of Mississippi's elections with voter ID legislation, improving education, fighting drug abuse, protecting children against abuse, continuing government ethics reform, and continuing to secure Miss. borders. Please visit <http://www.ltgovbryant.com/news/Dec/09CommonSenseAgenda.html> for the full Common Sense Agenda.

Watch your Representatives and Senators at work!

For the second year, Mississippians can observe the state House and Senate sessions in action via Mississippi Public Broadcasting's web site <http://www.mpbonline.org/Legislative2009/index.htm>. Viewers can also watch the legislative action directly from the Mississippi State Legislature web site, http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/ls_webcast.htm.