

# **OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD, AND FORESTRY**

2800 N. Lincoln Boulevard Oklahoma City, OK 73105-4912

**PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Wood turning competition to provide toys for kids in need**

Have you ever wondered how a piece of wood is turned into a work of art? Visit the annual Masters at Work woodturning competition and watch the artists create beautiful toys for children in need. In addition to the competition, the event offers an art exhibit and a variety of other festivities at the Oklahoma Forest Heritage Center in Beaver's Bend State Park, near Broken Bow, Sept. 11- 13. This year's beneficiaries include organizations that provide toys to children who are undergoing difficult situations.

"The Masters at Work competition is a great time to visit the Forest Heritage Center Museum and enjoy watching the artists at work," said State Forester George Geissler. "We're excited that the artists will be creating toys this year for kids who need help."

Toy Makers of Hugo, Oklahoma, will receive the toys created through the competition, as well as hundreds of toys that the participants have been working to make over the past six months. The toys will be distributed by Toy Makers to organizations that use them to provide comfort and help children in challenging situations better cope.

Additionally, each of the competitors' local woodturning clubs has been working to make spin tops that will be donated to Doctors Without Borders through the Central Oklahoma Woodturning Association. Several thousand tops are expected to be donated to the organization, which uses them to help put children who are undergoing medical procedures at ease.

Master woodturners who are competing in this year's event represent multiple states. Participants are Les Brandt, Woodturners of Southeast Missouri; Hayes Copeland, River Valley (Oklahoma) Woodturners; Richard Duval, Dallas Area Woodturners; Fred Groves, Hunt County (Texas) Woodturners; Roger Tipton and Don Barfield, Ark-La-Tex Woodturners.

The woodturners will participate in two competitions on Friday, Sept. 11 and two competitions on Saturday, Sept. 12. The winner will be announced at a reception on Sunday, Sept. 13 at 1 p.m. which kicks off the exhibit opening.

Other activities that will take place on Sept. 11 and 12 include a basket-weaving workshop, Dutch oven cooking demonstration and an outdoor painting class. Oklahoma Forestry Services will have foresters on hand both days to visit with people about their tree and forest concerns.

The exhibit, which opens on Sept. 13 and runs through Oct. 18, will feature toys from the competition and toys donated by the competitors' woodturning clubs. Also featured will be part of the Jim and Barbara Wilkerson Collection of Wagon Master Originals detailed hand-carved miniature houses. Gallery hours are Wednesday – Saturday, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. and Sunday, 1 – 4 p.m.

For more information about all of the events, call the Forest Heritage Center at (580) 494-6497 or email at [fhc@beaversbend.com](mailto:fhc@beaversbend.com). Additional information can also be found at Oklahoma Forestry Services' website [www.forestry.ok.gov/fhc](http://www.forestry.ok.gov/fhc). This event is made possible through the Oklahoma Arts Council, Oklahoma Forestry Services and Oklahoma Tourism & Recreation Department.

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### **About Oklahoma Forestry Services**

Oklahoma Forestry Services, a division of the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, is committed to conserving, enhancing and protecting Oklahoma's 12.5 million acres of forests and woodlands. Since 1925, Oklahoma Forestry Services has worked with individuals and communities throughout the state to create resilient landscapes, fire-adaptive communities and provide wildfire response. Headquartered in Oklahoma City, the division also has regional offices in Goldsby, Broken Bow, Wilburton and Tahlequah. For more information, visit <http://www.forestry.ok.gov>.

**Photo caption:** Wooden toys, miniature houses and spin tops will be on display at the Forest Heritage Center in Beaver's Bend State Park, near Broken Bow, Sept. 11- 13 during the Masters at Work woodturning competition.

