

Ring of the Hammer Beckons Young and Old to Visit Hagood Mill's Volunteer Blacksmith

Griz Hockwalt is an Artist Blacksmith who volunteers as the Blacksmith at Pickens County's Hagood Mill Historic Site & Folklife Center. Every Third Saturday visitors can hear the ring of the hammer on the anvil "calling" them toward the Blacksmith shop. Griz answers questions, demonstrates traditional Blacksmithing techniques, and forges historical style items. He particularly enjoys sharing stories and making those "special" nails he often gives to children.



Griz Hockwalt
Blacksmith

Griz started his quest to become a Blacksmith in the 1970s in Indiana. At first he was self taught but soon sought out opportunities to work with any Blacksmith who "would put up with him". He learned early the benefits of attending seminars, conferences, and workshops to learn from Master Blacksmiths. Griz is proud to be a member of local, state, and national Blacksmith guilds. Today, Griz Hockwalt is an award-winning Artist Blacksmith.

When Griz retired from General Motors, his wife, Helen, left her position as an executive with Ameritech and they moved to the Table Rock area of Pickens County. Helen soon began working at the Pickens County Museum of Art & History. When a plan for a small Blacksmith shop at the Hagood Mill site was considered; it depended on getting a Blacksmith to volunteer. Helen said "my husband can do that" and the rest is history. Ralph Perry built the "Ole Bear Blacksmith Shop" and Griz started volunteering. That was over ten years ago and the mill site continues to grow.

June 18, 2011 was the Grand Opening of the new two-man Blacksmith shop at Hagood Mill. This shop was almost entirely built by volunteers. This new shop is located on the side of the creek with the moonshine still and shares a beautiful building with the cotton gin. The Blacksmith shop has a brick forge and a large restored original wood and leather bellows. The new space will allow Blacksmith, Griz Hockwalt to extend invitations to guest Blacksmiths to join him on a project or feature their unique skill.

Griz said he can never say "thank you enough" and wants to again list the amazing people who made this new Blacksmith shop possible. Ed Bolt, the Mill Site Manager; Mr. Harold Welborn for the donation of the lumber for the project; Alan Warner for the donation of the bellows and Gale McKinley for the help its restoration; Bill Rose for the antique brick; the Lutheran Men in Missions for their construction skill; Reed Severance for the design of the building and his son Ethan for his support; Ken Nabors who is an exceptional wood-worker; Wayne Kelley who is Chair of the Pickens County Cultural Commission; Bob Martin and Jim Bay for their work in the construction; Roger Marcengill from MH Forge in Westminster for the anvil silhouette, and Joy Evans for the hand-painted "Blacksmith" sign. Griz Hockwalt is proud to be the Blacksmith at the Hagood Mill.

The original Blacksmith shop is now the new Potters Shed featuring the beautiful works of artist and demonstrator Lou Peden. Griz would like to invite you to "step back in time" during a visit to the Hagood Mill at one of the monthly Third Saturday events. Stop and talk with each demonstrator, enjoy some music, take home a bag of stone-grounded grits, and savor a bit of the sweet Appalachia culture.

The Hagood Mill operates, rain or shine, the third Saturday of every month and is located just 3 miles north of Pickens or 5 ½ miles south of Cherokee Foothills Scenic Hwy 11 off SC Hwy 178 at 138 Hagood Mill Road. Hagood Mill is open Wednesday through Saturday from 10:00 until 4:00, to tour the buildings and grounds and to visit the Mill Site Gift Shop.

For additional information please contact the Hagood Mill at (864) 898-2936 or the Pickens County Museum at (864) 898-5963.