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Local White Oaks for Whiskey and Wine Barrels



According to Kyle Lovern, the Mingo County West Virginia Redevelopment Authority has a potential client exploring the use of a local building.



It is the saw mill near Holden in Wood Park at the Harless Industrial Park. While authority officials did not reveal the name of the client, Barry Cook, director of West Virginia's Division of Forestry, attended the meeting for the purpose of providing some input and acting as a mediator.

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Cook's roots are in East Williamson. Cook, a Williamson High School graduate (Class of 1967), said the potential investor is considering the possibility of building a saw mill at the former wood flooring plant utilizing the plant's existing equipment.



While the plant is owned by Mohawk Flooring, the land is owned by the MCRA. If a deal goes through, the plant would make whiskey and wine barrels out of local white oak trees. *"I would encourage the board to actively pursue this,"* Cook said of the business, adding *"the longer the plant and equipment sits, the harder it will be to get it back up and running."*

The wood plant closed in May 2017. MCRA Executive Director Leasha Johnson said that this business opportunity had the possibility of bringing 50 new jobs to the region.

Before the meeting started, Johnson gave the oath to new board member Brandon Sammons. Johnson also announced the addition of Greta Curry as deputy executive director for the MCRA. Curry previously worked for the Robert C. Byrd Institute as an outreach specialist. Among her duties, Curry will be working on small business retention and development.

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press releases called Flooring Updates.

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