



**JOHN DEERE**

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **John Deere Historic Site Hosts “*Hammer In*’ 2008” on August 2-3**

### **Blacksmiths and Other Pioneering Tradesmen Will Provide Demonstrations and Sell Hand-Wrought Crafts and Art**

**(Grand Detour, Illinois)** – When most people hear the name “John Deere,” it typically brings to mind large green and yellow machinery with the iconic leaping deer logo. However, John Deere is not only a company name; it is also the name of the gifted blacksmith who founded the company. To celebrate the blacksmithing trade, the John Deere Historic Site in Grand Detour, Illinois, is hosting *Hammer In 2008*, a two-day event expected to be one of the largest of its kind in the region. On August 2-3 2008, many blacksmiths from the Midwest will fill the grounds of the John Deere Historic Site to provide demonstrations, sell their work, and introduce the public to one of the oldest trades in our country.

The John Deere Historic Site held its first *Hammer In* event in 2004, with 75 blacksmiths, attracting thousands from around the country. A replica of John Deere’s 1837 self-scouring plow was constructed for that event using traditional tools and techniques. The plow is now displayed in the Historic Site’s archaeological exhibit area.

This year, with a theme of *The Partnership Between the Blacksmith and Woodwright*, event organizers are adding additional pioneer-era crafts including coppersmiths, wood turners, woodwrights, wheelwrights, spinning, tating and glass workers. All are related to blacksmithing in the tools or equipment they use and make.

“The variety of trades represented during the *Hammer In* will offer an educational opportunity unlike anything seen before at the John Deere Historic Site,” said Lynn Timmerman, manager of the John Deere Historic Site. “We look forward to bringing the pioneering-era to life and celebrating these important and historic skills on the grounds of John Deere’s home.”

Starting at 9:00 a.m. daily, visitors will see how blacksmiths mold and craft steel into works of art and household goods by using fire, hammer and anvil. Many of the products for sale during the event will be made on location. “I can’t wait to hear what 75 anvils working at once will sound like,” said Rick Trahan, the John Deere Historic Site Resident Blacksmith. “The *Hammer In* is a truly unique experience because it is one of the few opportunities the public has to learn about the trade and art of today’s blacksmith.”

Special demonstrations will be conducted by Roy Underhill, from PBS’s *The Woodwright’s Shop*. Other displays will include a Little Giant Hammer, a belt-drive hammer weighing over 500 lbs. that will be powered by a John Deere engine. This display commemorates the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Little Giant Company’s 25 lb. hammer.

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## **Hammer In 2008, Add 1**

Also on display, visitors will see a replica of the Master Myer Chest, a 1,000-year-old Viking tool box found in 1936 on an island near the coast of Sweden by a farmer plowing a field. The traveling replica was created by blacksmiths from the region.

Food vendors and a charity auction will also take place. The auction, scheduled for 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, August 2, will offer ironwork donated by the participating blacksmiths including a replica of the Master Myer Chest on display. Proceeds from the auction will be divided between the Upper Midwest Blacksmith and Illinois Valley Blacksmith Associations, both event sponsors.

A special raffle during the event will offer one lucky winner a week-long course of their choice at the John C. Campbell Folk School in North Carolina. The prize includes guaranteed class registration, course fee and room and board for the week.

Admission is \$3.00 for 12 years and older, children under 12 are free. For more information, please contact the John Deere Historic Site at 815-652-4551. The Site is located seven miles north of Dixon on Hwy 2 (Between Dixon and Oregon).

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### **About the John Deere Historic Site**

The John Deere Historic Site in Grand Detour is the original Illinois homestead of John Deere and is the location where he built his first “self-polishing” steel plow. The Historic Site was designated as a Registered National Historic Landmark by the National Park Service, and a Historic Landmark of Agricultural Engineering by the American Society of Agricultural Engineers. The home Deere built still stands and is now accompanied by a replicated blacksmith shop, an exhibition hall covering an archeological dig, and a visitor center and gift shop. In the atmosphere of a friendly 19<sup>th</sup> century prairie village, informed tour guides provide an entertaining and educational perspective of life on the prairie. The John Deere Historic Site is open to the public April through November and is funded and managed by the John Deere Foundation. For more information, please call 815-652-4551 or visit [www.JohnDeere.com](http://www.JohnDeere.com).