

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local officials met Wednesday April 2 with Marty Stuart and architect Skip Wyatt at the former Coca Cola building in downtown Philadelphia. A \$1 million grant from the State of Mississippi was committed to the project in 2013. Since those monies were received earlier this month, work has begun to convert Industrial Development Authority of Neshoba County owned facility for storage of memorabilia from Marty Stuart's extensive collection of country music treasures. Architect Skip Wyatt was retained by the county to perform design work for the storage facility renovation as well as for the museum project, for which a specific site is still being discussed.

"We are pleased to be the Architects for the initial project in what is likely to be a transforming experience for Neshoba County and Mississippi," said Skip Wyatt.

Planning for the project continues, but the receipt of monies from the state is a major first step in an investment in bringing the attraction to downtown Philadelphia. Marty Stuart, Philadelphia Mayor James Young, Neshoba County Board of Supervisors President Keith Lillis, Neshoba County Administrator Benjie Coats, Industrial Development Authority of Neshoba County President Stanley Salter, Philadelphia-Neshoba County Partnership President David Vowell, and Architect Skip Wyatt were present to show their support of the project.

Marty Stuart addressed the group by stating, "There's no doubt in my mind that the day will come when a ribbon will be cut and the doors of this center will be open to the world. I will count it a joy when Philadelphia takes its rightful place along side of the other Mississippi towns on the museum trail, opening day will be a great day. But April 2, 2014 is also a great day for me personally. I'll always consider it to be the day my dream of the Marty Stuart Center and Congress of Country Music Hall started to become a reality – I thank the state of Mississippi, the city of Philadelphia and all the Neshoba County officials who have worked so hard to bring this to pass."

Officials also welcomed the news that more funding progress was made last week when the Mississippi legislature approved an additional \$500,000 for the project.

Senator Giles Ward, Mississippi Senate, District 18 commented, "It was an honor to work with Representative Bounds in helping secure the \$1.5 million in bonding authority to begin this exciting project in Neshoba County. I also thank Lt. Governor Tate Reeves, Speaker Philip Gunn and Governor Phil Bryant for their support of this project. I'm not sure that everyone realizes how many requests there are each year for this type funding. These requests are submitted by members of the Legislature from all across the state. And while most, if not all, of those projects are worthy of consideration, it's simply impossible to include them all within the omnibus bonding authority. It is a testament to Marty Stuart and the residents of Neshoba County that the leadership of this state recognizes the remarkable contributions of our native son and what this magnificent center will mean to our area and, indeed, the entire State of Mississippi. I couldn't be more excited and feel honored to have played a part in helping get this project underway."

C. Scott Bounds, Mississippi Representative District 44 commented, "It's great to see the progress that is being made on the Marty Stuart Center in downtown Philadelphia. Marty's commitment and involvement in seeing this project come to fruition is a testament of dedication to his hometown. Myself, Senator Giles Ward, the members of the Mississippi Legislature, Governor Phil Bryant, Lt. Governor Tate Reeves and Speaker Philip Gunn have seen that this will be a venue that will attract people from all over America and the world, and are proud to have provided \$1 million dollars in the 2013 legislative session and \$500,000.00 in the 2014 legislative session toward its completion. I am honored to be working with Marty and the community leaders in seeing that it becomes a top notch addition to our city and county. "

The proposed center would be a combination of museum, theater, and classroom space and could be constructed with private, local, and state funds.

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Photo: from left to right

In front of the old Coca Cola Plant are: Marty Stuart, Stanley Salter, Mayor James Young, Keith Lillis and Skip Wyatt

