

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Museum of Appalachia  
PO Box 1189, Norris, TN 37828  
Phone: 865-494-7680  
E-mail: [museum@museumofappalachia.org](mailto:museum@museumofappalachia.org)  
Website: [www.museumofappalachia.org](http://www.museumofappalachia.org)

## Celebrate a Springtime Rite with the Annual Shearing of the Sheep *Sheep Shearing Day at the Museum of Appalachia, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015*

Norris, Tennessee: In keeping with the traditions of Southern Appalachia, the Museum welcomes the warmth of spring with a renewal of the annual ritual of "Sheep Shearing", a day of hands-on activities surrounding the trimming of a winter's growth of heavy fleece from its flock of free-range sheep.

In settlement days, Appalachian farmers sheared their sheep each spring to garner the wool, an important staple used in many ways. The Museum of Appalachia, a Smithsonian Affiliate, will host this annual practice on **Friday, April 24, 2015, from 10am to 2pm**. This year, the wooly animals will be trimmed by Kentucky native John Cooper, an experienced shearer who takes time to explain the process to onlookers, demonstrating with vintage, hand-cranked and hand-held shears, powered by enthusiastic student participants.

In old Appalachia, a man and his dog were an integral team in the process of collecting the sheep for shearing, and, in keeping with tradition, Mr. Philip Lakin of Strawberry Plains, Tennessee, and his trusted companion Kelso, a 6 year old Border Collie, will join the activities for the day. Lakin and Kelso, with the assistance of their flock, will demonstrate the art of herding. Guests will be able to view these demonstrations in the Museum fields throughout the day, garnering the intricacies of how a man and dog work closely together to guide and protect their herd.

On Sheep Shearing Day at the Museum, craftsmen, trained in traditional arts, will provide informative programs on cleaning, carding, and spinning fleece into yarn and thread, using the same tools and techniques as their ancestors. These talented demonstrators provide one-on-one opportunities in spinning, weaving and quilting, illustrating the many valuable ways the pioneers used their wool.

The sounds of porch picking musicians will fill the air, guests will enjoy old-time music programs designed to entertain and engage guests of any age, and additional old-time craftsmen will operate the historic sawmill and blacksmith shop. All demonstrations and programs fulfill the Museum's educational mission to preserve the past and pass along the Appalachian culture to future generations, by providing individuals with the up-close and personal chance to see, smell and touch a little piece of history, creating lasting memories.

The event offers something of interest for everyone. School groups, home-schooled students, families, and individuals, are all welcome to participate in the day's interactive and hands-on activities. Special student and group rates are available. **For additional information, or to schedule a group, please call Kate Campbell at 865-494-7680.**

The Museum, a non-profit organization, includes some three dozen authentic log buildings, display halls filled with thousands of Appalachian artifacts, and multiple gardens, all surrounded by hand-split, cedar rail fences, in a pastoral setting. It is home to a variety of free-range, farm animals, including sheep, chickens, guineas and peafowl; with mini-donkeys, Scottish Highland cattle, and goats roaming adjacent pastures. This time of year, children will be delighted to see frolicking lambs, kids and mini-horses.

The Shop at the Museum of Appalachia features crafts from Appalachian artisans, books authored by regional writers and one-of-a-kind "Made in America" gifts. The Museum's quaint restaurant offers hot country style lunches, fresh-from-the-garden vegetables, and mouth-watering home-made desserts. Facilities are available for weddings, reunions, meetings and other events.

Museum memberships are available, providing a year of visits and other benefits; join now and attend Sheep Shearing Day free! As an official affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, the Museum also includes Smithsonian memberships in conjunction with its own program.

The Museum is located 16 miles north of Knoxville, one mile east of I-75, Exit 122.

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