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2017 Mountain State Maple Day Set for March 18

Charleston, W.Va. – It's time to think maple! March is National Maple Month. The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) and the West Virginia Maple Syrup Producers Association are pleased to announce the 2nd Annual Mountain State Maple Day, Saturday, March 18. Maple houses across the state will open their doors so visitors can see first-hand how maple sap is collected from the tree, processed into maple syrup and bottled into the finished product, ready for sale.

Eleven maple houses are taking part in this year's Mountain State Maple Day along with seven local businesses who will showcase maple products. No matter where you live in West Virginia, you'll find a maple operation within driving distance.

"Maple is a growing industry here in West Virginia," said Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt. "Our state has more available maple resources than Vermont which allows West Virginia producers to create a world-class product. There's no reason why the Mountain State can't become an industry leader."

Maple Day is a family-friendly event. Children and adults alike will enjoy watching the maple process in action. Once you've toured a maple house, you can stop at several different locations for a pancake dinner or a farmers' market featuring WV-maple products.

"The 2016 maple season was tough for many of our members," said Ed Howell, president of the West Virginia Maple Syrup Producers Association and owner of Sweetcreek Sugarworks in Sistersville. "However, 2017 got off to a running start in early February with cold temperatures at night, warming up in the daytime. That got the sap flowing."

Some West Virginia maple houses have been collecting hundreds of gallons of sap during a day's time. "We could hardly keep up," explained Rachel Taylor of Frostmore Farm in Pocahontas County. "My husband had to go check our collection system at 4 a.m. to make sure it wasn't running over. That's a good problem to have."

For more information about Mountain State Maple Day and where you can visit a maple operation, log on to <https://www.facebook.com/wvmaplesyrup> or contact Cindy Martel at 304-558-2210 or wvmaplesyrupproducers@gmail.com.

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