

WILLIS THOMPSON
MAYOR

THOMAS "T.J." MAYFIELD
WARD 1 ALDERMAN



VICKIE BAILEY
WARD 2 ALDERWOMAN

City of Vicksburg

1401 WALNUT STREET | VICKSBURG, MS 39181 | (601)636-3411

August 5, 2025

Mississippi Development Authority
Community Services Division
ATTN: Ms. Lisa Maxwell, Bureau Manager
P. O. Box 849
Jackson, MS 39205-0849

RE: City of Vicksburg - Grant Agreement No.: DIP-426
Period of Performance: October 2, 2020 to October 2, 2024 extended to October 2, 2025
Request for Time Extension #02

Dear Ms Maxwell:

The City of Vicksburg respectfully submits this letter to request your consideration and hopeful approval of a second one (1) year no-cost time extension regarding the above-referenced Agreement.

While the Benefiting Business, Vicksburg Forest Products, LLC (VFP), successfully exceeded the required financial investment outlined in the Agreement, they have, despite their continued and best efforts, been unable to meet the commitment to recruit and retain 60 net new permanent full-time positions.

We believe that this additional time will provide VFP with the necessary opportunity to fulfill its employment obligations, and we remain committed to ensuring the success of this initiative. Please see attached VFP's letter dated July 29, 2025 outlining their ongoing activities to increase employment.

Should you have questions or need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact the City's Grants Financial Administrator, Nancy Allen at 601-634-4521 or via email at nancya@vicksburg.org.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Willis T. Thompson".

Willis T. Thompson, Mayor

cc: Pablo Diaz, President & CEO Warren County Economic Development
S. Aaron Samuels, CFO, VFP, LLC

Incorporated 1825

City Website: <http://www.vicksburg.org>



July 29, 2025

Mayor Willis Thompson
Board of Alderman
City of Vicksburg
1401 Walnut Street, Vicksburg MS 39180

Dear Mr. Mayor and The Board of Alderman,

This letter is related to Mississippi Development Authority DIP Grant Agreement #426. In accordance with the grant, Vicksburg Forest Products, LLC ("VFP") committed to create 60 net new, permanent full-time jobs, or 185 total jobs, beginning on or after the effective date through the fourth anniversary date or October 2, 2024, and to maintain such jobs created for at least 12 months.

As previously communicated in our extension request dated July 31, 2024—which the city graciously granted—as of March 31, 2023, VFP had created 62 net new, full-time jobs for a total employment of 187 employees. However, due in part to the difficult employment and retention environment immediately post-COVID, our total employee count had fallen to 153 by June 30, 2025, despite our best effort to maintain the full workforce from the City of Vicksburg and the surrounding community.¹ Nonetheless, VFP maintains a demonstrated need for a workforce of 185 employees to run the lumber mill—for example, as of today, our payroll consists of 160 full-time VFP employees and we are supplementing our workforce with approximately 32 "full-time" independent contractors, for a total headcount of 192.

Our long-term goal remains permanently hiring 185 employees, and we are making every effort as a Company to achieve this goal. Some of the ongoing activities to increase employment include:

- Held a job fair on July 12, 2025 which had over 254 applicants;
- Partner with MDES to ensure all applicants are directed to our career site;
- Community Outreach in Vicksburg/Jackson area which includes the Vicksburg Chamber and other businesses/churches;
- Indeed Paid Campaigns;
- Partner with Hinds CC on referrals from student graduates; and
- Partner with Accelerate MS to ensure we are taking advantage of all recruitment resources available in Mississippi

¹ This includes having had to terminate 44 employees during 2025 for various policy and procedure reasons.

We are hopeful that the energy and financial resources being expended on the activities above, along with countless other efforts, will allow us to increase our employment to 185 in the next 12 months. In the interim, we respectfully request a one-year time extension. The City of Vicksburg has always been very supportive of Vicksburg Forest Products, and our Company has made every effort to give back to the Community in every way possible.

We appreciate your consideration of this matter.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "S. Aaron Samuels", written over a horizontal line.

S. Aaron Samuels, CFO
Vicksburg Forest Products, LLC

P. O. Box 5327
Jackson MS 39296
601-982-8728