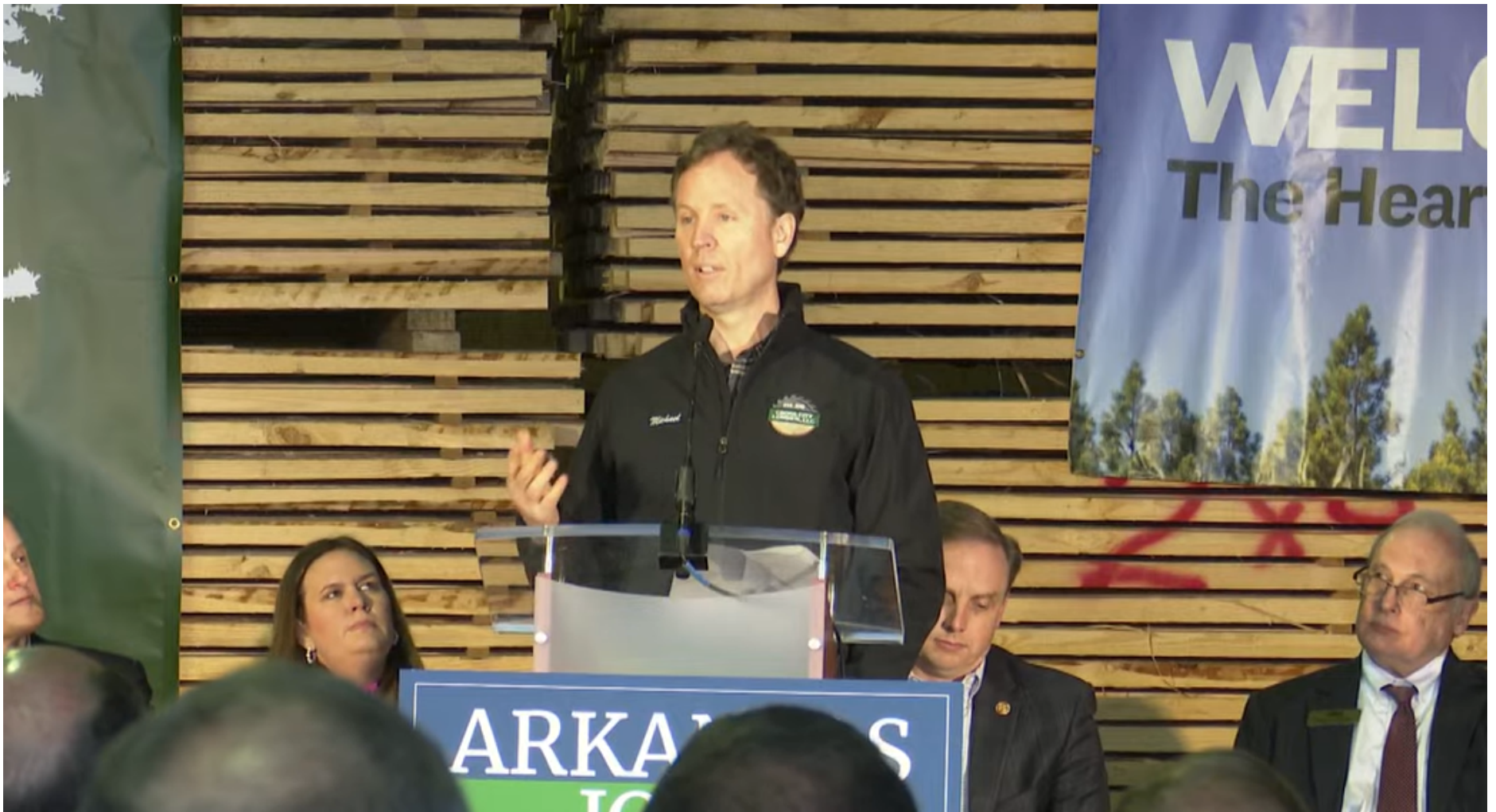


Camden Timbers Opens at Former Victory Sawmill Site

by **Scott Carroll**

Friday, Feb. 10, 2023 10:51 am 2 min read



Michael Ranson, managing partner of Astara Capital LLC, speaks at an event marking the opening of Camden Timbers on Feb. 10, 2023 (Arkansas Economic Development Commission)

The former Victory Lumber site in Camden has officially reopened as Camden Timbers after a \$20 million investment by New York-based Astara Capital Partners LLC.

The privately held company expects the sawmill to produce more than 50 million board feet of timbers and dimensional lumber through its sawmill, kiln, and planer operations.

The project is expected to create more than 50 jobs. Michael Ranson, managing partner at Astara, said Friday that about 35 positions are currently filled and the mill has an annual payroll of \$2 million.

Ranson said the mill workforce could double or triple in the coming years as the plant expands.

Astara announced last May that it had acquired the assets of Victory Lumber with plans to restart the mill. It's the firm's second sawmill investment, following its acquisition of Cross City Lumber LLC in Florida in April 2021.



Arkansas Inc Live Stream



Ranson is a former partner at Blue Wolf Capital Partners LLC of New York, which was involved in [restarting the sawmill](#) in Glenwood formerly operated by Bean Lumber. The mill closed in 2011, reopened in 2017 as Caddo River Forest Products and was [later sold](#) to Canada-based Conifex Timber Inc.

Brett Bray, a Pine Bluff native who [played in a key role](#) in reviving the Greenwood mill, partnered with Astara on the Camden project.

"We keep coming back to Arkansas for a few reasons," Ranson said. "First, Arkansas is a state that supports its industries ... it's a state that has chosen to create an environment where responsible businesses can operate freely."

Astara isn't the only investment firm with an interest in Arkansas timber.

J.P. Morgan Global Alternatives this month announced it had [acquired 250,000 acres](#) of timber across Arkansas, Oklahoma and Mississippi for a reported price of \$500 million. On Wednesday, Domain Capital Group LLC of Atlanta announced it had [purchased 22,000 acres](#) of timberland in the South, including acreage in Arkansas, for an undisclosed price.



In This Story

[investments](#), [manufacturing](#), [Brett Bray](#), [timber](#), [Camden Timbers LLC](#), [Astara Capital Partners LLC](#), [Michael Ranson](#), [forest products](#)

More On This Story

- Aug 15, 2022

[Timber Surge Fuels \\$309M in Mill Updates](#)
- Jul 10, 2018

[Conifex Completes Acquisition of Arkansas, Florida Sawmills](#)
- May 15, 2017

[Pine Bluff Native to Manage Reopened Sawmill at Glenwood](#)
- Jun 22, 2016

[Caddo River Forest Products to Restart Glenwood Sawmill, Employ 136](#)