

Crossroads Coalition

8th Annual Dinner

Cultivating Progress: Homegrown Success in the Arkansas Delta

The Crossroads Coalition 8th Annual Dinner was held on Thursday, February 7th at the Technology Center for the Delta in Wynne, Arkansas, with a special spotlight on success stories from all over the Crossroads region. The evening began with a private sponsor reception featuring music from local blues musician Buddy Nemenz.

While the focus of the Annual Dinner is always on progress, accomplishments, leadership and planning for the future, this year's event was particularly special, as Crossroads Coalition had the opportunity to recognize and highlight significant accomplishments of some Crossroads partners. Guests were welcomed by Crossroads Coalition Board Chairman Joy Lynn Bowen, and dinner began with an invocation given by LeRoy Dangeau. The presentation of the colors and the pledge of allegiance were led by the Wynne High School ROTC, and dinner was served while guests continued to enjoy blues strains from Buddy Nemenz.

A staple for the annual event, the annual Crossroads Coalition Regional Leadership Award winners were announced. Nominations were accepted from across the region and the recipients are chosen because of their involvement in their communities, their crucial economic impact on the region's workforce, and their dedication to creating a better economic climate for their communities and our region. The Crossroads Coalition Regional Business Pacesetter



Crossroads Director Heather Maxwell presenting the Leadership Awards

award was presented to two regional businesses this year; Enviro Tech Chemical Services of Phillips County and Southland Gaming and Racing of Crittenden County. The Pat Audirsch Community Advancement award was awarded to Donnell Hill with the Cross County Special Workshop in Wynne. The ADTEC Education Innovation award was given to the Trumann School District. The Honorable Charles Nix, Poinsett County Judge received the Bill Thomas Vision award and the LeRoy Dangeau Servant Leadership award was presented to the Honorable Keith M. Ingram, Arkansas Senate District 24. "I am truly surprised and honored by the award for service to the Delta. It is especially meaningful for whom the award is named in honor of, LeRoy Dangeau who is the epitome of a true public servant," said Ingram.

Following the annual award presentation, Denisa Pennington from Arkansas Economic Development Commission made a special presentation to leaders from Forrest City. "Just yesterday, Forrest City completed the final phase of a three-phase certification through our Prospect Readiness Education Program," Pennington announced. "And I'm told, they were one of the best-performing communities yet to come through program." Forrest City joins less than a dozen other Arkansas

communities to become PREP-certified and is the first community in the Crossroads region to achieve the designation.

The spotlight presentation featured highlights of Southern Bancorp Community Partners' Delta Bridge Project in Phillips County; Arkansas Delta Training and Education Consortium's (ADTEC) university center and workforce training model; ARcare's work in community-based healthcare and education; the Delta Regional Airport; and the Arkansas State Veterans Cemetery at Birdeye. Crossroads Director, Heather Maxwell said there were many more examples of organizations and projects that are reshaping the region. "We could be here all night," Maxwell said of the many projects in the region. "There are a lot of cool things going on. People are working together to create change all over the region and it's really making a difference."

A recurring theme throughout the night was the region's workforce. Maxwell credited the improved workforce to ADTEC and other regional efforts. "In 2007, our region lost a major economic development project because of the perception that we didn't have a good

workforce. Just two weeks ago, the largest ED project in the state's history (Big River Steele, Mississippi County) cited our outstanding workforce as a prime factor in locating in eastern Arkansas. Other recent economic development announcements have also listed the high-quality workforce as a deciding factor." Maxwell went on to say, "Our ADTEC colleges are the national model for workforce training and education. National! They're doing things other people haven't even thought of to make training and education available and affordable to the communities, citizens and businesses of our region. ADTEC is opening windows of opportunity that were once closed to the Delta."

Before bringing the evening to a close, Maxwell previewed some of the projects the Coalition is currently working on, including a regional marketing campaign; the development of a regional business retention and expansion program; continued enrollment in the Imagination Library program; and the Delta Young Professionals leadership development program. Maxwell extended an open invitation to attendees to join in the regional effort. "If you're not involved, I encourage you to get involved - in your own community or with the Coalition. The next generation is going to inherit a very different Delta than we know today because of the hard work and determination of so many in our region who are willing to work together to make things happen."



Forrest City PREP Certification

Pictured: Carl Horton, Woodruff Electric; Chris Heigle, EACC; Florine Milligan, Department of Higher Education Coordinating Board; Kirk Billingsley, Capital Financial Services Group/Forrest City Chamber of Commerce; Katherine Holmstrom, Arkansas Economic Development Commission; The Honorable Larry Bryant, Mayor of Forrest City; Denisa Pennington, Arkansas Economic Development Commission; Heather Maxwell, Crossroads Coalition.



Pat Audirsch Community Advancement Award
Donnell Hill, Cross County Special Workshop



ADTEC Education Innovation Award
Trumann School District
Accepted by Trumann Assistant Superintendent David
Rutledge and Trumann Superintendent Myra Graham



LeRoy Dangeau Servant Leadership Award
The Honorable Keith M. Ingram, Arkansas Senate



Regional Business Pacesetter Award
Southland Park Gaming and Racing
Accepted by Jim Wilson



Regional Business Pacesetter Award
Envirotech Chemical Services
Accepted by Martin Chaffin, Phillips County Port
Authority/Helena Harbor



Bill Thomas Vision Award
The Honorable Charles Nix, Poinsett County Judge