



ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Delta Studies Center

**“A MESSAGE FROM THE CENTER”
 PEGGY R. WRIGHT**

New projects and new collaborative partners identified have made things pretty busy at the center the last few months. We are excited about this and have been engaged in several meetings to start the process.

Discussions continue with the Foundation for the Mid-South regarding collaborative initiatives with the Communities of Opportunity Project in St. Francis County. Our new Rosenwald School Project has really taken off in Crittenden County, AR and we look forward to working with the City of Sunset at this pilot site in the Delta region. Planning for the Center’s Community Outreach Partnership Project continues as well.

The Lower Mississippi Delta Grassroots Caucus’ next Annual Conference has been scheduled for Thursday, January 26 and Friday, January 27, 2006 at the Clinton Library in Little Rock, AR. Along with state co-chair of the Caucus Mayor Barrett Harrison of Blytheville, we are very excited as our list of speakers and partners in this initiative continues to grow. More information will follow in the next edition of our newsletter.

**SUNSET, ARKANSAS
 ROSENWALD SCHOOL**

ASU - Delta Studies Center (ASU-DSC) supports and conducts research that focuses on rural development through the use of sustainable Cultural Heritage Projects. As a part of ASU-DSC’s African-American Cultural Heritage Tourism Project, the Rosenwald School Preservation and Adaptive Reuse Project in the City of Sunset, Crittenden County, AR, serves as the pilot for similar initiatives in several other Delta counties.

The African-American Cultural Heritage Tourism Project stimulates equity and representation for, by, and with African-Americans in existing federal, state and university sponsored cultural heritage tourism initiatives. One aspect of the Center’s tourism component focuses upon the preservation and adaptive reuse of Rosenwald Schools along the two Arkansas Scenic Byways in the Delta: the Crowley’s Ridge Byway and the Great River Road.

Following this directive, on September 21, 2005, ASU-DSC Director, Peggy R. Wright toured the Sunset Rosenwald School, Robert Sebastian Phelix School, formerly known as the Marion Colored High School. She visited with city officials concerning the cultural significance of the school and the options available to the city for its development.

After the meeting, the Sunset city officials agreed that the first plan of action would be to preserve the property. Funds would be raised towards this endeavor and upon completion the building could be utilized as a museum along with other educational possibilities such as a computer lab or library. The exact function of the building will be decided upon at a later date.

More planning meetings have been scheduled for the Fall and information will be made available on the ASU-DSC website as more steps are taken to preserve this piece of Delta heritage and culture.

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THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1955 HOXIE, ARKANSAS SCHOOL INTEGRATION



L/R Fayth Hill-Washington, Hoxie 21 student, Charlene Trotter, Teacher at the segregated Hoxie School, Peggy R. Wright, Director, ASU-Delta Studies Center, and Attorney Chris Mercer.

Photo by Christine Perry



Audience awaits the beginning of program "The 50th Anniversary of the 1955 Hoxie, Arkansas School's Integration" held at the Darrah Building in Little Rock.

Photo by Christine Perry



Attorney Chris Mercer, Little Rock, AR, Former Co-Director, Arkansas Council on Human Relations.

Photo by Christine Perry



L/R Dr. Russell Wigginton, Assistant to the President, Rhodes College, Fayth Hill-Washington, Hoxie 21 Student, and Minniejean Brown-Trickey, Little Rock Nine.

Photo by Christine Perry

The Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, Central Arkansas Library System, and the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site presented "The 50th Anniversary of the 1955 Hoxie, Arkansas School's Integration" program on Thursday, August 18th, at the Darrah Building in Little Rock, Arkansas.

The program featured the video "Hoxie: The First Stand" introduced by the producer Dr. David Appleby from the University of Memphis, as well as a panel discussion.

Panel guests included: moderator Dr. Russell Wigginton, Special Assistant to the President of Rhodes College, Mrs. Peggy R. Wright, Director of the ASU-Delta Studies Center and Geography professor, Mrs. Charlene Trotter, former Hoxie segregated school teacher, Mr. Christopher Mercer, Jr., former attorney with the NAACP, and Ms. Fayth Hill-Washington, Hoxie 21 student.

Dr. Wigginton opened the panel portion of the program by introducing the guest panelists and requesting the audience to "stick with him and to stick with the panel," as they presented their stories concerning the Hoxie Desegregation.

The first panelist to speak was, Mrs. Peggy R. Wright. Mrs. Wright spoke on the geographical makeup and differences found in Hoxie, Lawrence County, Arkansas area during the time of the 1955 desegregation. Her explanation of the these dynamics helped the audience to understand the factors that went into the decision to desegregate the Hoxie School District.

The next presenter was Mrs. Charlene Trotter. Mrs. Trotter began her teaching career at the Hoxie African American School prior to the desegregation of 1955. She explained that her overall experience at the

Hoxie school "...was simply great and she enjoyed it." The only thing that she truly hated and felt was a disadvantage "was the fact that they had to go so far after eighth (grade) to Jonesboro...but then in 1955 with the integration, that settled that as well."

At the end of her speech she shared with the audience the advice she gave to all her children during her tenure at the school. She taught them "to be the best of whatever they are. If they can't be a pine on a top of a hill then be a shrub in the valley."

Attorney Chris Mercer Jr. spoke next. During the time of the 1955 Hoxie desegregation, Attorney Mercer was the Co-Executive Director of the Arkansas Council on Human Relations and through his involvement and research Attorney Bill Penix would be brought on board to defend the Hoxie School Board.

The strategy used for this case focused on constitutional obligation. Therefore, according to Mercer, "if you have a constitutional obligation to do something. There ought to be an inverse of that, a constitutional right to be protected in carrying out that duty." This would ultimately be the defense argument that would propel the Hoxie School Board to win their case.

The final speaker for the event was, Hoxie 21 student, Fayth Hill-Washington. Ms. Washington asked the audience to put themselves "...in the position of the African-American families who woke up that morning and saw the paper that said that you would now be going to a school across the tracks. Remember you have no voice, you're not voting, you can't vote, so you have no influence on what this decision is."

Even though the Hoxie School District chose to desegregate many other schools in the area refused. Creating yet another obstacle for the Hoxie School District to overcome

Continued on Page 3

50TH ANNIVERSARY CONTINUED

which focused on participation for the new students within extracurricular activities.

Many of the African-Americans students were not allowed to participate. So according to Washington we were “a part of the Hoxie District School,” but as far as being involved in extracurricular activities. We were not allowed to do that because the other children... the other schools did not open their doors to us.”

She went on to explain that “had there been neighbors around us that had done the same thing it would

have opened up more of an opportunity for us as it relates to the enhancement or the enrichment of such an integration or a move such as that one.”

But this would not be the case leaving many African-American students feeling alone and isolated because they were not allowed to participate in extracurricular activities due to the fact that many of the schools around them chose not to desegregate.

In closing, Hill-Washington said it “took a lot of courage to go through what we went through. I’m talking about the five board members and of course the rumors that went

around about the killings and the lynchings and the intimidations all of that happened. And it was remarkable for them to stand together as indicated in the documentary, Hoxie First Stand.” But remember as for the African-American men, who chose to testify at the Court of Injunction, to them “this was a way of life.”

Thus, in the end we want to pay tribute, as we did at the reunion in 2004, to all the people who played very vital and supportive roles in the success of this Hoxie Desegregation.” “Hoxie is a successful story...that we’ve blended all together to make it work.”

DELTA CULTURAL CENTER AND ASU-DELTA STUDIES CENTER HOSTS RECEPTION FOR ORAL HISTORY EXHIBIT



L/R Dr. Brady Banta, Archivist, ASU - Special Collections, and Peggy R. Wright, Director, ASU - Delta Studies Center. Photo by Christine Perry

“...no one really talked about rationing of Black Pepper, but I remember how scarce it was and when you finally got it, it was so diluted you almost didn’t know it was Black Pepper.”



Guests discuss the Oral History Exhibit at the Reception held at the Delta Cultural Center Depot in Helena, Arkansas. Photo by Christine Perry

The Arkansas Delta, Agriculture and Community in Transition 1920 - 1980: An Oral History traveling exhibit is being displayed at the Delta Cultural Center [DCC] in Helena, Arkansas.

The exhibit which features 31 of the 106 interviews from various Eastern Arkansas counties covers Delta experiences over a 60-year period. The exhibit captures the heart of the Delta region through the voices of its people.

On September 29th, at the Delta Cultural Center Depot, a reception was hosted for the exhibit by DCC and the ASU-Delta Studies Center to honor project sponsors, managers, interviewers, and interviewees.

Residents from across the Delta area attended the event which featured two Phillips County residents, Mr. Ernest Cunningham and Mr. Willie Fears, as program speakers.

Cunningham, “I remember rationing of sugar and how my mother made a Chocolate Pie and my friend Don Hudson ate it and how I thought there would not be another one, I stayed mad at him a long time about that but my mother did make another one.”

Fears, “no one really talked

about rationing of Black Pepper, but I remember how scarce it was and when you finally got it, it was so diluted you almost didn’t know it was Black Pepper.”

Both stressed how important telling the stories of how it was in the delta in the early years is especially for the younger generation and how pleased they were to share their stories and be participants in the oral history project.

The exhibit will be displayed at DCC through October. Funding for this project was provided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, under the auspices of the Eastern Arkansas Resource Conservation and Development Council, with additional support from Congressman Marion Berry.

For more information on how to book this traveling exhibit, please contact:

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TECHNOLOGY CENTER FOR THE DELTA HOLDS GRAND OPENING



Technology Center located in Wynne, Cross County, Arkansas.

Photo by: Peggy R. Wright

“...a coalition gives more clout to a region, encouraging everyone to work together instead of separately.”



L/R Mayor Larry Bryant, Forrest City, AR, Ruby Henderson, S-TAC Member, and George Bingham, Phillips County Workforce Alliance.

Photo by: Peggy R. Wright

ASU - Delta Studies Center's Director, Peggy R. Wright was invited to the grand-opening of the Crossroad Coalition “Technology Center of the Delta,” held on August 24, 2005 in Wynne, Cross County, Arkansas.

The Crossroads Coalition organization focuses on economic development within these nine counties, St. Francis, Crittenden, Cross, Lee, Mississippi, Phillips, Monroe, Poinsett, and Woodruff, in the Arkansas Delta. It was formed through a partnership with the Cross County Economic Development and the University of Arkansas in 2001.

Over 100 people were in attendance at the grand-opening along with various representatives from Cross, Mississippi, St. Francis and Poinsett counties. The keynote speaker for the evening was Ronnie Bryant, president and chief executive officer of the Charlotte Regional Partnership, a group of 23 counties in North Carolina which formed a group similar to the Coalition.

Bryant discussed his working experiences with several economic development groups in North Carolina,

Shreveport, LA, St. Louis, MO, and Pittsburgh, PA.

He explained that for this nine county region to exceed it will need to begin:

- to think as a region, instead of as individual counties;
- to work together as a single unit;
- to maximize resources, such as education, existing industry and people; and
- to understand that businesses look at regionalism when making choices on bringing industry to a certain area.

In the end Bryant said, “a coalition gives more clout to a region, encouraging everyone to work together instead of separately.” With teamwork the counties can begin focusing on how industry can affect the entire region, no matter which county it may be located.

For more information, please visit the Crossroads Coalition’s website at:

<http://www.CrossRoadsCoalition.org>

MS DELTA GRASSROOTS CAUCUS HOLD MEETING IN LITTLE ROCK

On August 24, 2005, members of the Delta Caucus held a meeting at the Arkansas Municipal League in Little Rock to share information on successful projects in the Delta and to announce their expansion efforts in the eight-county Delta Region.

Successful Delta projects announced during the meeting include:

- funding of the Interstate 69 corridor, which will stretch from Canada to Mexico, with Delta

States receiving \$330 million for completion;

- funding for the Delta Regional Authority being increased from \$6 million to \$12 million;
- and raised awareness of the drastic budget cuts planned for agriculture, rural development and health care.

With the Delta in the spot light a couple of expansion efforts are being planned for 2006. These include:

- the development of another

meeting in Washington DC, May 2006;

- and an event scheduled on January 26-27, 2006 that will showcase special Delta projects that will be held at the Clinton Presidential Library.

For more information concerning these projects, please contact Lee Powell at (202) 360-6347 or visit the ASU-Delta Studies Center Information Clearinghouse website <http://www.clt.astate.edu/dsc/MSDeltaGrassrootsCaucus.htm>.

1ST ANNUAL DELTA DIALOGUE CONFERENCE GREENVILLE, MISSISSIPPI

As a part of the ASU-Delta Studies Center (ASU-DSC) mission to study, develop, and celebrate the Lower Mississippi Delta Region, ASU-DSC staff attended the 1st Annual Delta Dialogue held in Greenville, Mississippi on September 16, 2005.

The conference was “designed to launch a collaborative process involving community, cultural and economic developers as well as philanthropy and government in making the delta’s culture and heritage a foundation for building new and lasting assets and increasing income.”

The conference goals were:

- to develop conceptual strategies for using the Delta’s voice and culture to increase residents’ assets and incomes;
- to identify internal and external assets, stakeholders and resources;
- to formulate a process to create collaborations among them;
- and to discuss ways to sustain these collaborations.

The dialogue of the conference was divided into three sessions: Development Practitioners Panel, Philanthropy and Government: Fuel for Development Panel, and small groups session.

The first session focused on assessments and experiences made by community practitioners within the rural areas of the Lower Mississippi Delta Region. Each panelist discussed the needs facing their particular communities. The needs addressed included:

- home ownership as a stability factor for rural families;
- prevent “brain/talent drain” by keeping educated and trained individuals within the Delta;

- develop and engage youth to become more civic minded;
- and develop better healthcare and technology.

After listening to the practitioner’s panel, the philanthropic and governmental representatives had a chance to present their ideas and views on helping rural communities within the Lower Mississippi Delta Region.

Some of their comments included:

- foundations want to have partners that are working together for a common goal;
- there is a need to pay more attention to the assets of the region;
- understanding that many people give where they live and most philanthropists live in metro areas;
- the need for communities to begin to hold public schools accountable for teaching of their children;
- and many communities need to begin focusing on and teaching area heritage. Most people within these communities don’t know their own heritage.

The conference ended with small group reports and strategies that covered such topics as changes in the Delta by 2010, activities that nonprofits, activists, colleges and universities, and philanthropies need to get done within the next year, and the types of systems that need to be in place to monitor the Hurricane Katrina funds.

For more information on this conference, please contact MACE at 119 S Theobald St, Greenville, MS 38701, (662) 335-3523, email: mace@techinfo.com, or visit their website at <http://www.deltamace.org>.



Mr. Howard Boutte', President of the Mississippi Action for Community Education (MACE)

Photo by: Christine Perry



L/R Denise Jennings, Southern Partners Fund, Luther Brown, Delta Center for Culture Studies, Delta State University, Debby Warren, Southern Rural Development Initiative, Beverly Divers-White, Vice President, Foundation for the Mid-South Communities of Opportunity Project, and Gloria Dickerson, W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Photo by: Christine Perry

“...involving community, cultural and economic developers as well as philanthropy and government in making the delta’s culture and heritage a foundation for building new and lasting assets and increasing income.”



1st Annual Delta Dialogue Attendees

Photo by: Christine Perry

CONGRATULATIONS TO JAJUAN JOHNSON



JAJUAN JOHNSON

Former ASU - Delta Studies Center (ASU-DSC) Student Intern JaJuan Johnson, who received his Bachelors in Radio/TV in 2002 from Arkansas State University and his Masters of Divinity Degree in 2005 from Oral Roberts University has been hired as Oral History Coordinator for the Butler Center at the Central Arkansas Library System.

We here at ASU-DSC are extremely proud of JaJuan and look forward to working with him in his new capacity at the Butler Center in Little Rock.

NEWLY RELEASED REPORTS AND SURVEYS

LIFELONG LESSONS: NONTRADITIONAL BECOMES THE NORM AS ADULTS BLAZE NEW TRAILS TO COLLEGE

This article, which is found in the Lumina Foundation's latest *Focus* magazine, profiles adults who are returning to or beginning college after the age of 30. To learn more go to:

<http://www.luminafoundation.org/publications/FocusWinter2005.pdf>

RECREATION, TOURISM, AND RURAL WELL-BEING

This report published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service focuses on the socioeconomic development impacts of rural tourism and recreational development. For more information go to:

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/ERR7>

INCOME, POVERTY AND HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE IN THE UNITES STATES: 2004

The percentage of the nation's population in poverty increased from 12.5 percent in 2003 to 12.7 percent in 2004 according to new figures just released by the U.S. Census Bureau. The report is available at:

<http://www.census.gov/prod/2005pubs/p60-229.pdf>

THE SOUTHERN COMMUNITY INDEX

The report is being released by the Southern Governor's Association. It is a working plan that tracks the Southern states' progress in building healthy and vibrant communities as part of an integrated economic development strategy for the region. Download the report at: <http://www.southern.org/pubs/communityindex/Community%20Index.pdf>

REPORTS AND SURVEYS CONTINUED

GETTING SERIOUS ABOUT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) reports that in the last two decades the percent of Southerners finishing high school has declined. This report highlights state policies that act as barriers to high school graduation for low-performing students.

To learn more visit: <http://www.sreb.org/main/Goals/Publications/05E06-Graduation.pdf>

HOUSING AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION WEBSITE DEVELOPED

The Fannie Mae Foundation has developed a one stop source website for housing and demographic information that includes data on population, income, education, and housing. This website will allow users to develop custom charts, maps, and rankings that can incorporate data from multiple sources.

To check out this new website go to: <http://www.dataplace.org>.

“THE PUBLIC’S ATTITUDES TOWARDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS”

The 37th national survey on public education has been released by the Phi Delta Kappa. This report shows that Americans for the most part support Public Schools. It found that 69% of survey participants gave their public schools an A or B.

The survey also shows that the public supports more testing at higher grade levels and that they disapprove of standardized testing.

To view this report visit:
<http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/k0409pol.pdf>

“AN OFF-KILTER EXPANSION”

A brief published by the Economy Policy Institute highlights the economic recoveries and trends in worker compensation over the last decade.

The Institute found that wages grew slower than productivity grew by more productivity.

To learn more visit:
<http://www.epinet.org/briefingpapers/164/bp164.pdf>

“PARENTIAL ATTITUDE AND FREQUENCY OF INITIATING CONTACT”

The American School Counselor Association released a survey that identifies what parents believe is the counselors most important role.

The report also shares information from the experts concerning the parents perceptions and actual school conditions.

To read this survey visit:
http://www.fhede.com/asca/downloads/ASCA_SurveyReport.pdf

“PROFILE OF TEACHERS IN THE US 2005”

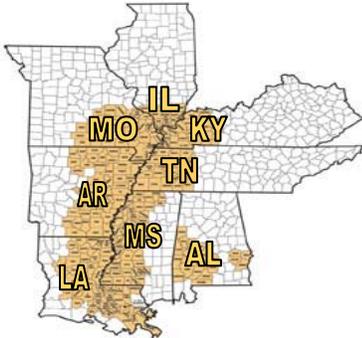
According to the National Center for Education Information (NCEI) survey, the teaching workforce is becoming older, increasingly female, and more diverse. NCEI also found that forty percent of current teachers are planning on leaving the profession in the next five years. The main reason for the departure is the lack of career advancement opportunities.

For more information visit: <http://www.ncei.com/POT05PRESSREL3.htm>

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Lower Mississippi Delta Region



We're on the web
<http://www.clt.astate.edu/dsc>

UPCOMING EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

**SOUTHERN DEMOGRAPHIC ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE
UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI (OLE MISS) * NOVEMBER 3-4, 2005**

The conference will focus on presentations of research in both applied and academic demography as related to topics in economics, sociology, geography, political science, public health, epidemiology, and psychology. For more information, please visit their website at: <http://www.fsu.edu/~sda>.

**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF AMUSEMENT PARKS & ATTRACTIONS EXPO 2005
NOVEMBER 14-18, 2005**

GEORGIA WORLD CONGRESS CENTER * ATLANTA, GA

Six days of incredible events, workshops, site visits, networking—and an exhibit floor like nothing else in the world. Learn how to make your facility the “Star Attraction” in your market. Become a stronger competitor in your area. Create a fun-filled experiences for your visitor. More information is available at <http://www.iaapaexpo.com>

**PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR PRESERVING ROSENWALD SCHOOLS
NOVEMBER 18,-19 2005**

THE CENTRE, HALIFAX COMMUNITY COLLEGE * WELDON, NORTH CAROLINA

Mark your calendars and pass the word about this workshop on organizing, funding, and carrying out successful rehabilitations of Rosenwald schools. Friday afternoon, 11/18, there will be a tour of area Rosenwald schools led by rehabilitation specialists. **Saturday, 11/19**, is a full day of sessions at **The Centre at Halifax Community College**, located near I-95. For more information call them at 1-800-767-9111 or go to their website at

<http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/cpe/rosenwald.cfm>