

Volume 8, Issue 2

July 31, 2006

Published 4 times a year.



ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY Delta Studies Center

“A MESSAGE FROM THE CENTER”

PEGGY R. WRIGHT

As we end our fiscal year at the Delta Studies Center, we prepare for a rigorous and productive fundraising year. The Center is embarking on this fundraising agenda because this will be the last year of financial support from the university. In order to continue the mission and work that the center has become known for in the Delta region it is necessary.

There are a couple of grants that we anticipate applying for but due to cuts in programs and funding in Washington, the picture looks bleak at this time, but we will continue our efforts. We will keep you abreast in the next few months of our progress. Thanks to all of you for your continued support of our work here at the center.

MSDI SEEKS PARTICIPANTS FOR DESIGN WORK GROUPS

The Mid South Delta Initiative (MSDI) next phase of work is called “A Culture of Possibilities.” It will focus on bringing together community-minded individuals to assist MSDI in their efforts to engage and impact change at the Delta grassroots level.

The first step, of this new phase, will be to design and organize three work groups - youth, grassroots, and leadership - in the Delta regions of Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

The Initiative is currently requesting applications, for this phase, to be submitted by individuals and/or groups who would like to participate.

Accepted members of these work groups will be asked to: promote activities that have a regional focus; deepen and expand positive change across the region that will impact current and future generations; support the values and culture of the region so that new programs and activities reflect the region’s commitment to family, faith and community; engage people and groups who are often missing from community change efforts such as people who are young, elderly, disabled, and people of all races; and to develop plans and recommendations for “Lifting Up the Delta”.

For more information on “A Culture of Possibilities” and to apply, please visit their site at <http://www.msdi.org/LiftingUpTheDelta>.

Inside this issue:

DELTA BLUES SYMPOSIUM XII: DELTA DIVERSITY	2
FORMER ARKANSAS TREASURER JIMMIE LOU FISHER SPEAKS AT THE 2006 DELTA BLUES SYMPOSIUM	2
ASU 2006 WOMEN'S CONFERENCE FEATURE FORMER SURGEON GENERAL JOYCELYN ELDERS	3
DELTA STUDIES CENTER'S DIRECTOR ATTENDS THE MISSISSIPPI GRASSROOTS CAUCUS D.C. INITIATIVE	4-5
AFRICAN-AMERICAN HONOR STUDENTS RECOGNIZED BY THE S-TAC AND THE ASU OFFICE OF MINORITY AFFAIRS	5
MADISON, AR PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBIT - FROM WHENCE WE CAME	6
DELTA REGIONAL AUTHORITY CONFERENCE	6
NEWLY RELEASED REPORTS	7

DELTA BLUES SYMPOSIUM XII: DELTA DIVERSITY



(L/R) Writer Grif Stockley and College of Humanities and Social Sciences Dean Dr. Gloria Gibson.
Photo by: Peggy R. Wright



Audience members listen to distinguish guest during the 12th Annual Delta Blues Symposium
Photo by: Christine Perry

The Department of English and Philosophy at Arkansas State University Jonesboro Campus hosted its twelfth annual Delta Blues Symposium on March 30 – 1 April, 2006.

This years Symposium theme was “Delta Diversity” and featured presentations from such artists as writers Tom Piazza, Grif Stockley and Sterling Plump; historian Keith Wilson; and blues musician Kenny Neal.

Also featured during this two day event were presentations from various scholars and students of the humanities and social sciences--especially anthropology, art history, economics, folklore studies, geography, history, literature, musicology, political science, and sociology.

The theme also included the natural and physical

sciences which examined how the seven-state Mississippi River Delta provides a varied physical and cultural environment for a range of cultural responses from diverse groups defined by ethnicity, class, religion, gender, and other factors.

For more information on the Delta Blues Symposium please contact the:

Delta Blues Committee
Department of English & Philosophy
PO Box 1890
State University, AR 72467-1890
<http://www.clt.astate.edu/blues/>
PHONE: (870) 972-3043
Email: blues@astate.edu

FORMER ARKANSAS STATE TREASURER JIMMIE LOU FISHER GIVES LECTURE DURING 2006 DELTA BLUES SYMPOSIUM



Jimmie Lou Fisher, Former State of Arkansas Treasurer
Photo by: Peggy R. Wright

Former Arkansas State Treasurer Jimmie Lou Fisher presented a preliminary lecture on “Yes, Delta Girls Can do Math! My Experiences in County and State Government” in the Auditorium of the ASU Student Union.

She was the first speaker of the three day Symposium that focused on “Delta Diversity.”

In her presentation, she related how she became interested in politics and how she

handled being the first woman Treasurer for the State of Arkansas.

Mrs. Fisher encouraged those present to engage in the political process no matter what party you are aligned with by:

1. registering to vote;
2. and going to the polls to voting.

HIGH TEA AT ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

On March 29th, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, directed by Jerrod Lockhart, sponsored the 2006 Arkansas State University Women's Conference "High Tea Address" with special guest speaker, Dr. Joycelyn Elders.

Dr. Elders, former U.S. Surgeon General under President Clinton, spoke about women's issues.

Elders speech focused on empowering women to make a change. She said it was important that we as women "make sure that we do what we can, the best way we can and then we will be able to get the job done."

We need to "honor and thank all those before us whose shoulders we had to stand on to get here." She explained how women have come a long way "but there is still a huge unfinished agenda left to do." "Regardless of what we have done, we've not done it all. We've still have more to do."

This university, according to Elders, is preparing young women to go out into the community and learn to be servant leaders. The only reason for education is to learn how to lead and learn how to serve."

We, as women, must learn to serve the community but before you can serve, you must learn who you are and what you have to offer.

Elders discussed the huge agenda needing to be addressed by women. She said women need to become more involved in

education, health care system, poverty reduction, and the prevention of crime and abuse.

The more women become involved in these issues the more nurturing the health care system will become. The system will begin to focus on education and women health issues giving every person the right to a doctor.

In the end, Dr. Elders closed with these final remarks:

- "we've got to begin to empower our young people with the knowledge to make good decisions;
- we've got to have courage to stand up and we need to always remember that one person with courage makes the majority;
- and finally we've been silent for to long. We've got to communicate, to cooperate, to collaborate and to form partnerships to get the job done."

For more information about this program and any upcoming programs associated with the Multicultural office, please contact Jerrod Lockhart at (870) 972-2055.



Dr. Joycelyn Elders, former U.S. Surgeon General
Photo by: Peggy R. Wright

"We've got to communicate, cooperate, collaborate and form partnerships to get the job done."



Audience listens to Dr. Joycelyn Elders during ASU's 2006 Women's Conference.

Photo by: Peggy R. Wright



L/R Dr. Joycelyn Elders and Dr. Lonnie Williams, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

Photo by: Peggy R. Wright

ASU-DSC DIRECTOR ATTENDS THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA GRASSROOTS CAUCUS (MDGC) D.C. INITIATIVE



L/R Congressman Marion Berry and Michael Jones.
Photo by: Peggy R. Wright



Senator Mark Pryor—Arkansas
Photo by: Peggy R. Wright



L/R: Congressman Artur Davis of Alabama and Peggy R. Wright, Director of ASU-DSC.



Attendees at the MDGC Reception
Photo by: Peggy R. Wright

On Wednesday, May 24 through Friday, May 26, 2006, the Mississippi Delta Grassroots Caucus held its annual DC Initiative in Washington D.C. with over 220 in attendance for the eight state region.

Sponsors for this annual event included:

- Nucor Yamato Steel Company and Nucor Steel of Arkansas;
- Southern Bankcorp;
- Housing Assistance Council, Washington D.C.;
- ASU - Delta Studies Center (ASU-DSC);
- Heifer International;
- G.A. Wildman, Alabama;
- Entergy Corporation;
- Susanna Wesley Family Center;
- Merchants and Farmer bank of Dumas, Arkansas;
- and Mississippi County Equal Opportunity Commission.

A reception was held on Wednesday, May 24th at the Rayburn House Office Building with over 150 in attendance. The reception featured Senator Mark Pryor and a panel discussion on the Delta's Future.

Panel speakers included: Congressman Artur Davis, Alabama; Bill Triplett, Senior Advisor to the Federal Co-Chair of the Delta Regional Authority; Dr. Moses Newsome, Vice President, Research, Planning, Community and Economic Development, Mississippi Valley State University; Steve Southard, Nucor Yamato Steel, and Mayor Carl

Redus, Pine Bluff, Arkansas.

Wright, ASU-DSC Director and co-chair of the Delta Caucus cited remarks from Rep. Artur Davis of Alabama on Wednesday night. She talked about how Davis highlighted just how far the Delta is behind the rest of the country. "Here it is in the year 2006, and we talk about people (in the Delta) who don't have good water to drink and housing," Wright said. "Why is it that we cannot get the resources?"

The next two days of the Caucus focused on many of the issues discussed during Wednesday nights reception. Those issues included: rebuilding the region after Hurricane Katrina, the Delta Regional Authority (DRA) budget, transportation improvements, affordable Delta health care, and relief for financially struggling farmers.

Four panel discussions were held on current Delta issues and they included:

- Rebuilding the Delta Region after Hurricane Katrina;
- Economic and Psychological rebuilding after Katrina;
- Rural Development, Alternate Fuels, Transportation, and Infrastructure, Farm Programs;
- Hunger and Nutrition, Small Farmers.

Key individuals in attendance were: Congressmen Artur Davis, Alabama; Charles Melancon and William Jefferson, Louisiana; Marion Berry, Mike Ross and Vic Snyder, Arkansas; Jerry Costello, Illinois;

Continued on Page 5

MDGC D.C. INITIATIVE CONTINUED

Ed Whitfield, Kentucky; Jo Ann Emerson, Missouri; Harold Ford, Tennessee. Senators Blanche Lincoln and Mark Pryor, Arkansas; and Mary Landrieu, Louisiana; Robyn Boerstling, U.S. Department of Transportation - Transportation Policy; Deputy Secretary Chuck Connor; Deputy Under Secretary

for Rural Development Allan Johnson; Deputy Assistant Secretary for Higher Education, Susan Beaudoin; and Under Secretary of Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services, Kate Coler.

For more information on the Mississippi Delta Grassroots

Caucus (MDGC) D.C. Initiative, please check out their Web Site at

<http://www.clt.astate.edu/dsc/MSDeltaGrassrootsCaucus.htm>

or contact MDGC Director Lee Powell at leepowell2@cs.com or (202) 360-6347.

AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR ACADEMIC EXCELLANCE

On Thursday, April 18, 2006, the Strong-Turner Alumni Chapter (S-TAC) and the Office of Multicultural Affairs hosted the S-TAC 4.0/3.0 Program.

Over 300 plus African American students received certificates for their outstanding academic performances during the 2006 school term.

The program speakers for this event were Strong-Turner Alumni Chapter President Dariel Johnson and University of Arkansas at Fayetteville Law student and ASU Alumnus Darryl Spinks.

S-TAC President Dariel Johnson discussed the history and mission of the Strong-Turner Alumni Chapter.

The Strong-Turner Alumni Chapter (S-TAC) was formed in 1982. The chapter is named after the first ASU African American graduates Walter Strong and Fred Turner.

S-TAC conducts fundraising events, helps with the retention of African American students, puts together Homecoming activities for returning African American Alumni, and participates in a quarterly newsletter.

Victor Hill, ASU Assistant Director of Financial Aid and S-TAC member, introduced the featured speaker Mr. Darryl Spinks.

Mr. Spinks, a May 2003 Arkansas State University Radio/TV graduate and University of Arkansas at Fayetteville Law Student, who will graduate in May 2006, talked with the honor students about his time at ASU and his goals and ideas for the future.

He stated that as human beings "we always make mistakes but one thing about it is that we know how to recover and we don't give up. When they said things couldn't be done, we would put through the extra effort and got it done anyways."

He ended by reminding the honor students that they were the talented ten and as the talented ten it is their "responsibility and their duty as an African-American citizen to help uplift our people to greater heights."

For more information on this program or any other programs sponsored by the Strong-Turner Alumni Chapter or the Office of Multicultural Affairs, please contact them at:

Strong-Turner Alumni Chapter
<http://alumni.astate.edu/strongturner/>

Office of Multicultural Affairs
Jerrod Lockhart, Director
(870) 972-2055



Mr. Darryl Spinks, featured program speaker.
Photo by: Peggy R. Wright

"...reminding the honor students that they were the talented ten and as the talented ten it is their responsibility and their duty as an African-American citizen to help uplift our people to greater heights."



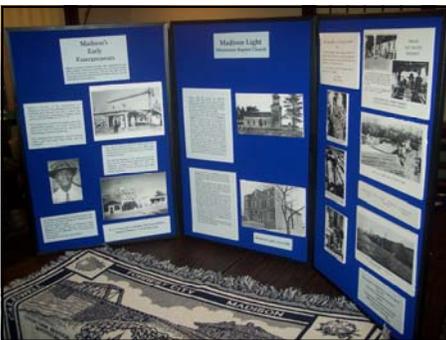
2006 4.0 Scholars and 3.0 Club Members
Photo by: Peggy R. Wright

MADISON: 1930-1950 PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBIT MOMENTS IN HISTORY - FROM WHENCE WE CAME



L/R: Mrs. Annie Winfrey, Mrs. Charlene D. Sykes, Mrs. Carolyn Williams Deal, and Mrs. Armenthia Henderson
Photo by: Christine Perry

“The exhibit highlights photographs and other documents that depict the history of Madison.”



“Madison: 1930-1950 Photographic Exhibit Moments In History - From Whence We Came”
Photo by: Christine Perry

An exciting exhibit was unveiled in Madison, Arkansas on Saturday, May 27, 2006. The exhibit, “Madison: 1930-1950 Photographic Exhibit Moments in History”. This project was supported in part by a grant from the Arkansas Humanities Council and the Madison Community Outreach Center.

The exhibit highlights photographs and other documents that depict the history of Madison. It would not have been possible without the hard work of Madison residents, Mrs. Annie Winfrey, Project Director, Mrs. Charlene D. Sykes, Research Scholar and Principal Researchers, Mrs. T. W. Moorehead, Mrs. Carolyn Deal, Mrs. Elna Shannon, Mrs. Armenthia Henderson and Mrs. Barbara Brown. who spent numerous hours on the project. Resource support was provided by Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Hanna of the St. Francis County Museum in Forrest City.

Mrs. Sykes commented on the importance of Madison in the history of St. Francis County and that many people still do not know that Madison was the original County Seat. She also stated that there is an effort to find a building in Madison to house the historical item’s from the city’ past.

The Delta Studies Center hopes to bring this wonderful exhibit to the ASU campus so that others can view.



“Choctaw Bridge, at Madison, St. Francis River”
Photo by: Christine Perry

WRIGHT ATTENDS THE DELTA REGIONAL AUTHORITY CONFERENCE HELD IN LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

The Delta Regional Authority (DRA) held it’s annual conference in Little Rock, Arkansas.

ASU-DSC Director, Peggy R. Wright attended the conference which focused on three important Delta Issues:

- Rural Health;
- Transportation;

- and Information Technology.

The conference, which was a three day event, began with a reception on Monday, April 3rd and ended on Wednesday, April 5th with a tour of the William Jefferson Clinton Presidential Library.

Wright commented about how “it is very important to support the DRA in its endeavors to help the Lower Mississippi Delta.”

For more information on upcoming events associated with the DRA please visit their Web Site at <http://www.dra.gov> or call them direct toll free at 1 (888) 468-6372.

NEWLY RELEASED REPORTS

Whatever It Takes: How Twelve Communities Are Reconnecting Out-of-School Youths

The American Policy Board and authors Nancy Martin and Samuel Halperin released this report which profiles 12 public-private partnerships that have effectively reduced high school dropout rates within their perspective communities. These partnerships produced amazing results by sharing data across public sectors, requiring a higher level of parental and community involvement and providing customized and hands-on learning opportunities. To review this report, please go to: <http://www.aypf.org/publications/WhateverItTakes/WITfull.pdf>.

American Higher Education: Does It Measure Up for the 21st Century?

Governor James Hunt and Thomas Tierney release a new report on strategies to increase higher education enrollment and retention rates among minorities and low-income students. According to the new report the American labor force witnesses a 50% increase of Baby Boomers and women in the 80's and 90's. The GI Bill expanded higher education access to the middle class fueling the nation's demand for skilled workers. In the future, however, the majority of America's workers will come from minority and low-income backgrounds, populations traditionally served by poor quality schools and excluded from higher education. For more information on this latest trend visit the report at: http://www.highereducation.org/reports/hunt_tierney/

New Clues to Reaching Very Young Children and Families in Rural America

The article "New Clues to Reaching Very Young Children and Families in Rural America" appears in the recent issue "Zero to Three," a journal published by the National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families. According to this article, early childhood data from the National Center for Education Statistics suggests significant disparities in early learning experiences for rural children, particularly rural black children. Young African-American children in rural areas were found to be at greatest risk. For more information go to: http://www.zerotothree.org/ztt_journal.html

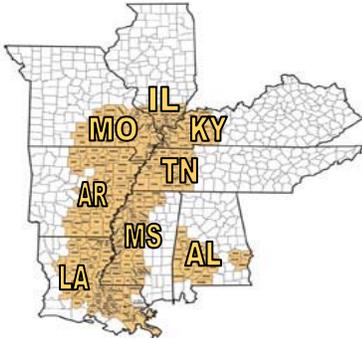
An Empirical Approach to Characterize Rural Small Business Growth and Profitability

The U.S. Small Business Administration has released a new study that examines the factors that lead to small business growth in rural areas. Some key findings are: a higher percentage of high school graduates means an increases in the number of rural small businesses; natural amenities means a positive influence on business growth; workforce and infrastructure concerns translate into difficulties in attracting high-tech businesses; and rural development centers and non-profit organizations are vital to rural economic development. To download this report go to: <http://www.sba.gov/advo/research/rs271tot.pdf>

Newsletter Layout: Christine Perry
Newsletter Editor: Peggy R. Wright

ASU - Delta Studies Center
PO Box 245
State University, AR 72467-0245
Phone: (870) 972-2325
Fax: (870) 972-2022
Information Clearinghouse:
1 (877) 731-3020
Email: dsc@astate.edu

Lower Mississippi Delta Region



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

UPCOMING EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

**Clinton School, Foundation to host symposium in celebration
of President Clinton's 60th Birthday
Little Rock, Arkansas * August 19, 2006**

Tickets for the symposium are \$15.00 per person, including lunch and desert.
Limited Seating. For more information contact: Nikolai DiPippa at publicprograms@clintonschool.uasys.edu,
or call 501-683-5239

**White Elephant Workshop: Alternate Strategies for Saving Historic Structures
August 29, 2006 * 9:00 - 3:00**

Phillips County Community College * 2807 Hwy 165 S - Seminar Room * Stuttgart, AR
Registration Fee is \$10.00 per person
To register contact Beth Wiedower at (870) 816-0774 or elizabeth_wiedower@nthp.org

**The 13th Annual Affordable Housing Conference
Meydenbauer Center, Bellvue, Washington * September 11-12, 2006**

This years conference will focus on the changing faces of housing. The event is structured to stretch participants minds with in-depth factual analysis, fresh concepts, a roundup of the latest trends, and controversial perspectives and forums for open debate. Each session will address the theme of diversity. For more information on this conference, please check out the information on our Web Site: <http://www.clt.astate.edu/dsc>.