



“A Message From the Center” Peggy R. Wright

I just returned from Washington, DC where I led a press conference announcing the release of a new national publication, “Race, Place and Housing: Housing Conditions in Rural Minority Counties” by the Housing Assistance Council. The release of this publication was in conjunction with the 2004 National Rural Housing Conference held last week. More information on the report is included in this publication and I hope that you will enjoy reading it.

With the elections a few months behind us and as we look at the next 1600 + days with anxiety and a sense of the unknown, it was an opportunity for me to try and get a sense of what might be on the horizon. In a conversation with a good and long time friend of mine, Congressman Bennie Thompson of Mississippi, his words were that we can expect to see some lean and mean times. What this means for each of us is different and we can only hope that better days are ahead in the coming year.

As we approach the end of 2004, I would like to thank all of our many supporters and friends for all that you do. We look forward to working with you and others across the region as we continue to try and make a positive difference here at the Center. Happy Holidays to everyone.

2004 Arkansas Delta Byways Award Winners

The Arkansas Delta Byways Promotional Association held its annual Tourism Banquet on October 15, 2004 at the University of Arkansas, Phillips County Community College in Helena, Arkansas.

The Association, which promotes tourism in a 15 county region located in Eastern Arkansas, presented awards in 10 categories Friday night.

Winners include:

- Media Support Award: *Katie and Thomas Jacques, Brinkley Argus, Monroe County*
- Hospitality Award: *Forrest City Advertising & Promotion Commission, St. Francis County*
- Entrepreneur Award: *Gene’s Barbaque, Brinkley, Monroe County*
- Tourism Support Award: *Matilda and Karl Pfeiffer Foundation, Piggott, Clay County*
- Festival/Event of the Year Award: *King Biscuit Blues Festival, Helena, Phillips County*
- Bootstrap Award: *Judd Hill Memorial Scholarship Inc., Trumann, Poinsett County*
- Promotional Award: *“Find it On Main Street,” Marianna, Lee County*
- Outstanding Member Award: *Kim Williams, Helena, Phillips County*
- Cultural Heritage Award: *West Memphis Advertising and Promotion Commission & West Memphis Chamber of Commerce, Crittenden County*
- Tourism Person of the Year: *Paula Oliver, Helena, Phillips County.*

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Delta Regional Authority (DRA) Holds Conference in New Orleans



Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco
Photo by: Christine Perry



Congressman Artur Davis, Alabama
Photo by: Christine Perry

Over 400 people convened in New Orleans, LA, Wednesday, October 20th through Thursday, October 21, 2004 for the 1st Annual Delta Regional Authority Conference. It was a very important one that focused on ways that higher education, tourism and health care initiatives can be utilized to help drive local economies in the delta region.

Federal Co-Chairman Pete Johnson gave the opening address and welcome. He began by saying that this will be the 1st of many conferences and that many studies he has seen shows that, "in all economies they all started out with healthy, motivated people."

Johnson talked about recognizing that the people who make up the region are the same ones who came in and cleared the land. With shackles, they became dependent... and even though the shackles are removed, economic shackles still remain. Questions posed to the group as he concluded his opening remarks were:

How do we develop systems to address the concerns facing our people? How can higher education institutions work with us to help? These are questions he hoped to answer during this conference. He charged each of those attending to "set aside own selfish interests so that we can expand the pie and understand that people working together can make a difference."

Jim Clinton, Executive Director of the Southern Growth Policy Board, gave the 2004 *Report on the Future of the South* that focuses on Competing in the Global Economy at the end of the first day of the conference. Key components included:

- DRA 2003 Regional Initiatives
- Comprehensive Action Plan
- DRA Highway System Plan
- Adult Literacy and Employment Readiness
- Annual Conference
- LDD Trainers Conference
- Delta Leadership Institute

Clinton stated that it is "important to have regional solutions for regional problems, and that the historic challenge is with minority populations that are disenfranchised."

Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco, LA was the keynote speaker at the Plenary Session on the second day of conference. In her speech, Gov Blanco began by saying that the "Delta will rise and shed the weight of systemic poverty," stating that our problem is how do we take the needs and deliver to people action plans for the future.

Quality affordable health care is needed. We need more rural health centers with more adequate funding and DRA is the engine for expanding clinics across the region. Gov. Blanco said, "Sick children can't learn, and sick parents can't earn."

She continued by saying that we can work better and smarter when we

work together. We must fight for Congress to recognize the Delta as they did the Appalachian Regional Commission. Recently selected by her peers as the new State Co-Chair of the Delta Regional Authority replacing Gov. Mike Huckabee, Gov. Blanco in her concluding remarks, stated that she was pleased to take over as State Co-Chair and that it was an honor and challenge and we have much work cut out for us.

There were three tracks held with panelists during the conference; Health as an Economic Engine, Higher Education and Economic Development and Economic Development and Tourism. Dr. Ruth Hawkins, Director of Delta Heritage Initiatives at Arkansas State University was one of the panelists on the Economic Development and Tourism panel that looked at next steps for tourism in the region.

An added highlight of the conference was the keynote address by Congressman Artur Davis, Alabama 7th Congressional District on Thursday. He talked of the two central aims of DRA:

1. It is bringing everybody in the South with vision and ambition into a place of "parity."
2. Not to be a part of false choices, education without decent salaries for teachers and environment vs. jobs.

Congressman Davis also talked about the 1st terrorist attack in America that is forever in his mind and that was, September 15, 1963 when four little girls became victims of a bombing in a black church.....

As he ended, he said, "I leave you with simple hope and a challenge to each of you, go back to your communities committed to moving forward because progress will prevail and it can be said, you stood on its side."

Our congratulations to Mr. Johnson and the DRA for a great conference!!!!

Former U.S. Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders Spoke at the 3rd Annual Delta State Development Network Conference

Former U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Joycelyn Elders, spoke at the 3rd Annual Delta State Rural Development Network Conference - "Strategies and Techniques Affecting Rural Success" on Wednesday, October 13, 2004 at Phillips Community College in Helena, Arkansas.

Dr. Elders was the first person in the state of Arkansas to become board certified in pediatric endocrinology. She was also the sixteenth Surgeon General of the United States, the first African American and only the second woman to head the U.S. Public Health Service.

Dr. Elders addressed the conference attendees on the final day of the three day event.

She discussed the general healthcare issues that face the Lower Mississippi Delta Region, explaining that 20% of our population and 459 out of 500 of the poorest counties in America are in these rural areas.

She noted that the current U.S. healthcare system costs 1.5 trillion dollars to maintain which is consequently the highest in the world. We have 759,000 doctors in America but there still are "too many specialists and not enough generalist and they are all in the wrong places." Most

practicing doctors have become simply sick care physicians instead of healthcare providers.

Some factors affecting the ever rising cost of healthcare include an aging population, improved technology, and a change in socioeconomic status.

We as Americans are simply "paying an awful lot more for poor people because they are sicker, less educated, and spend more time in the hospital."

So how do we go about changing our current healthcare system? Well, according to Dr. Elders, we should simply begin with education. It's important that we not only educate those residents that live within these rural areas but also the physicians that treat their medical needs, understanding that you "can't teach what you don't know and you can't lead where you don't go."

We need to be culturally competent, looking at health as "more than just the absence of disease." Focusing on a more holistic approach that includes education, churches, and communities within these rural areas.

In her closing remarks, Dr. Elders reminded the participants that "not to know is bad. Not to



L/R Former U.S. Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders and Dr. Creshelle Nash [UAMS] (Photo by Christine Perry)



Former U.S. Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders Speaks at the Delta State Rural Development Network Conference. (Photo by Christine Perry)

want to know is worse. Not to hope is unthinkable. Not to care is absolutely unforgivable."

For more information about this or any upcoming conferences please contact:

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Continuation of a Three-Part Series on the Judd Hill Plantation

This is the second installment of a three-part series on the sharecropping life of the Judd Hill Plantation presented by the ASU-Delta Studies Center Clearinghouse. These articles are written by the former residents of the Judd Hill Plantation and are based on their standpoint of life growing up on the Plantation. This second article is written by the Secretary of the Judd Hill Memorial Scholarship Inc., Ms. Elaine Williams. The article is entitled "A Judd Hill Story: Lessons Learned." The last segment will be published in the March 05 edition of the ASU-DSC Clearinghouse Newsletter.

“A Judd Hill Story: Lessons Learned” By Elaine Williams



Sandy and Emma Slaughter (Paw Paw and Maw Maw) Elaine Williams Great-Grandparents
Photo provided by: Elaine Williams



Top L/R LaQuita Williams, Elaine Williams, Ronald Williams, Debbie Williams, Howard Williams. Bottom L/R Greg Williams, Willie Williams Burns, and Vanessa Williams
Photo provided by: Elaine Williams



Back Row L/R Elaine Williams, Ronald Williams, and Wilbur Williams. Front Row L/R Howard Williams, Vanessa Williams, Willie Williams Burns, and LaQuita Williams
Photo provided by Elaine Williams

Judd Hill has become the one place that I still consider home. My mother and four children moved to the plantation in 1959. We moved in with my great-grandparents, Sandy and Emma Slaughter. They are the two people that I give credit to for teaching me to be the independent person that I am today. Their daily practice of hard work and determination and pride in a job well done has been my salvation.

My great-grandparents were blessed with only one son, who became the father of five daughters and four sons. James Porter Slaughter, whom we called “Jackrabbit,” was so cool. I used to think he looked so much like a black Clark Gable. He lived on Judd Hill for a time and later moved to Bay, Arkansas.

My great-grandparents were sharecroppers and they moved to Judd Hill from the Newport, Jackson County, Arkansas area in 1932. They sharecropped from 1934 until 1969. You see I know this because for a time we were the field hands. But to be perfectly honest, I did not make a very good field hand. I was too worried about walking in a field of cotton that was still wet from the previous night dewfall. I think my mother called me “prissy,” or it could have been “lazy.” Well either one worked for me, because I knew something was going to have to give.

It was soon decided that I would take care of my two year old baby sister and my two month old baby brother. At this time I was about seven or eight years old myself. I took over the running of the house which included washing, cleaning and cooking for nine family members.

I remember wash day. Since I knew nothing of running water at this time, I had to pump water and carry it out to the three big black kettles in the back yard. Then I would build a fire, all by myself, to heat the water for the washing and rinsing of the clothes. I don’t begrudge that time now, but you can rest assure that I did back then.

Another duty that I had to do was to make sure all the farm animals were fed. I remember one-day in particular. My grandmother had warned me that her favorite hen had new baby chicks, and that she wasn’t letting anyone get close to them. Well, I was always one who had to try something before I believe what anyone said. So I decided to save feeding the

chickens for last and after seeing that the mother hen was occupied with eating, I decided to sneak a peak at the new baby chicks. I got down on my hands and knees and peeped into the corner of the chicken coup. I reached in to touch one when out of the corner of my eye I saw this hen charge after with me just a clucking away with her wings just a flapping.

She had caught me off guard and I fell backwards onto my back with her on my stomach. You would have thought that I was an ear of corn because she pecked me all up and down my legs and stomach. She was going for my face but I was able to protect it with my hands.

When my family came home that evening from the field, my grandmother took one look at my messy hair and dirty clothes and smiled. She never said one word to me that day. There wasn’t anything to say, for you see, that was a lesson learned. You know, the wrath of a mother and their young and heaven help anyone that comes between them.

When I look back on the time spent on Judd Hill, I can recall all my memories the good ones as well as the bad. When I am asked about those times, the questions are usually “What was that like living on a plantation? or “Did you like that?” With little hesitation, I say with the innocence of a child “Yes, what’s not to like. It was the only thing I knew. We were pretty much in the same boat trying to survive.”

But being the type of person not to be misleading or lie about that time, I say “even though we worked hard, life was hard, but it was a magical time to be a kid. We had the luxury and the freedom to be kids without our parents having to worry for our safety, corruption by drugs, alcohol, and gangs.”

We played outside in the fresh air, ran through cotton fields and bean fields, played baseball, hide and seek, and on a good day we would invent our own games, with our own rules.

But like many people who think of plantation and sharecropping life they tend to think of slavery and slave owners. They can’t imagine there could be anything

Continued on next page (5)

A Judd Hill Story: Lessons Learned Continued

good about living and being raised on a plantation. They are skeptical. I like to try and convince those skeptics to at least try to come to an understanding of those times and understand why I call it a magical time.

When I explain my life on Judd Hill, I fondly refer to it as a time of "Lessons Learned."

In addition to being sharecroppers, my great-grandparents both had a "green thumb," so to speak. Before we go any further, I have to tell you that we called both our great-grandparents Maw-Maw and Paw-Paw.

We had probably one of the biggest gardens on Judd Hill. We grew things like, strawberries, blackberries, grapes, and potatoes. There were also beans, onions, okra, basically you name we grew it. There were also fruit trees such as apple, peach, and cherry. We had livestock such as hogs, pigs, chickens, and turkeys. Paw-Paw raised hunting dogs while Maw-Maw was more partial to cats. This is to be where I got my love of cats - Good Lord, I have nine.

When we went to town, the nearest being Trumann, Poinsett County, Arkansas. We went for things like clothes, flour, meal, and salt. However we didn't need to buy butter because we always churned our own.

There was a certain time to can or "put up" the fruits and vegetables we raised. The only time I truly got upset was during "butchering season." You see, our Maw-Maw always cautioned us not to name any of the animals. But as a young girl that was hard for me to do, until one year it was time for "Betty, a pig that all the kids played with, to go away." It was then that I realized that you don't name what you one day may eat."

Then there was quilting time. This was one of my favorite times of the years because during these times Maw-Maw would tell me stories of when she was a little girl doing the same things with her mother. I remember the colors of fabrics we used. There wasn't a pattern or anything uniform about our quilting. We just used whatever fabric we had around our house to quilt.

We would use the, because I can't remember the name we'll call them, "cotton combs" to get rid of the cotton seeds that

would be in the cotton. Then we would comb the seedless cotton until it was soft and fluffy.

When it came time to actually start sewing, Maw-Maw would put the younger kids underneath the quilt rack. So that when Maw-Maw got close to the center the kids would pass the needle back through the fabric from underneath. From those past experiences, I learned to can and quilt which is what many of my friends and family received for the holidays each year.

I remember as a child attending the Judd Hill School which also served as our church. Learning wasn't the only responsibility some of us older kids had. The school was one big room with a room divider used to separate the younger kids from the older ones. There were two teachers: Mrs. Josie Hammond who taught the older kids, grades 6-8, and Ms. Marie McClain who taught the younger group grades 1-5. Mrs. Hammond's was also my great aunt or sister to my great grand mother.

With the class being made up of several grades it was impossible to teach us all at the same time. I recall being taught the subjects that were needed such as: writing, reading, spelling, math, and history. The one thing that attending school at Judd Hill taught me was the value of a good education and that through education I could achieve anything in life that I wanted. It helped me to instill in my son that "anything worth having is worth working for!"

Make no mistake, I, like most kids living on Judd Hill could only think of one thing and one thing only, getting away. We wanted to get away from the pumping of water, the chopping of cotton, beans, corn, outside bathrooms and you name it, the list can go on and on. Many of us ran hard and fast away from Judd Hill, wanting to leave it all behind.

I cannot speak for anyone else, but God had other plans for me not to forget. You see, for over 20 years, every single night I had dreams of Judd Hill. I had dreams of all the people that I had known and some of these people had already passed on. I could not understand why I could not stop dreaming about Judd Hill. But as time passed, I would get a chance to figure it out. When Mattie Wortham started trying to recruit me to be



Mrs. Josie Hammond, Great Aunt of Elaine Williams, sister to Emma Slaughter and Judd Hill School Teacher for the 6-8 Grades.
Photo provided by Elaine Williams

apart of the Judd Hill Memorial Scholarship Inc. program she and other former Judd Hill residents were setting up. At first, I didn't know if I would be able to help.

You see it wasn't that I was not interested it was just that I was a single mom working various shifts and I just didn't see how I could manage anything else. But you have to know Mattie, she was a woman on a mission. We met to discuss the scholarship and I ended up joining in 1999. I would then become secretary and editor of our newsletter.

What really made me want to be a part of this endeavor was when I saw the condition of the Judd Hill Cemetery. I was ashamed to know that the final resting place in which the people that I loved and respected most in this world was a disgrace and I knew I had no one to blame but myself. So I made a promise to God and myself that I would do whatever was needed to change things and to protect both cemeteries from further vandalism. And I have to tell you, as God as my witness, those dreams have stopped. I have not had a single dream of Judd Hill since the day I joined in 1999.

Many of us in the group feel that for many things, we came back to late. The School/Church is gone. This was for many of us not just a place of educational learning but a place in which we learned about God and his wondrous miracles. Also, gone forever are the history of those Judd Hill friends and family members who are no longer with us.

Many people think and say that you can never go home. I disagree. I say you can go home, just don't wait too long and always remember that nothing and no one stays the same.

Therein ends the lesson of Judd Hill.

Hoxie 21 Student speaks at FedEx Metro Women's Forum



Fayth Hill Washington, Former Hoxie 21, stands in the middle of FedEx Forum Attendees

ASU-Delta Studies Center supporter Fayth Hill Washington, a former Hoxie 21 student, recently had the opportunity to speak at the FedEx New York Metro Female Forum held on October 20, 2004 at their Brooklyn terminal.

She spoke to female service managers, clerks, and secretaries that represented the NYME region. Her speech was inspirational as she encouraged those in attendance to face and rise above challenges.

While recounting her story, Fayth's message was both powerful and relevant. Her theme was 'Success Against

the Grain." She encouraged the group to understand that everyone has a perspective which makes sense to them. Fayth gave an example of how employees sell themselves by how they communicate. She also stressed to the group the importance of learning from others through the understanding of other perspectives.

Fayth is currently the Founder and CEO of the Hill Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to educating the public about the history and story of the "Hoxie 21." Fayth was one of the 21 Black students who in 1955 desegregated into Hoxie School District 46, an all-white school district located in Hoxie, Lawrence County, Arkansas.

Jonesboro Rotary Club Invites Hoxie 21 Students to speak



L/R Peggy R. Wright, Fayth Hill Washington (Hoxie 21 Student) Photo by: Christine Perry

Hoxie 21 Students Fayth Hill-Washington, Ethel Tompkins and Hoxie School District 46 Superintendent Dennis Truxler spoke at the December 7th Jonesboro Rotary Club meeting held at the St. Bernard's Auditorium.

The presentation focused on the history of the desegregation of the Hoxie School District 46 in 1955 and the Hoxie 21 Community Reunion held this past September.

For more information about this story contact Fayth Hill Washington at hoxie21story@yahoo.com.



L/R Mitchell Pruitt, 5th grade student at Hillcrest Elementary School, Jonesboro, Fayth Hill Washington (Hoxie 21 Student) Photo by: Christine Perry

Judd Hill Memorial Scholarship Inc. wins "Bootstrap Award"



L/R Aaron Jones, Elaine Williams, Merlyn Jones, Frances Perry, and LaQuita Williams. Photo by: Christine Perry

The Judd Hill Memorial Scholarship Inc. won the Arkansas Delta Byways Bootstrap Award at the 2004 Byways Banquet in Helena.

The committee is a charitable organization 501 (C) (3) formed in 1995. All seven volunteer members were born on the Judd Hill Plantation which is located just outside of Trumann, Arkansas in Poinsett County.

After recognizing the need for enrichment programs and finding these areas lacking the committee began implementing programs to encourage and reward African American youth of the

community. Giving former Judd Hill Plantation residents a stake in their youths future and allowing them to pass on the legacy of the Judd Hill Plantation experience.

The "Bootstrap Award," which honors a community group or individual who demonstrate great drive and determination in the development and promotion of an idea or story, was accepted by committee members Elaine Williams, Aaron Jones, Merlyn Jones, and LaQuita Williams.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Wright attends Racial Reconciliation Forum in Little Rock



L/R J'Bunta Washington, Linda White, Fayth Hill-Washington, (Hoxie 21 Student), and Peggy R. Wright.

Photo by: Clarence E. Wright Jr.

On Tuesday, November 16, 2004 to commemorate the opening of the William Jefferson Clinton Presidential Center, the UALR College of Professional Studies, the National Conference for Community and Justice and SBC Foundation presented a panel discussion, "Bridging the Divide: Racial Reconciliation for the 21st Century." The distinguished and diverse panel moderated by Deborah Mathis, National Syndicated Columnist and Assistant Professor of Journalism at Medill School of Northwestern University, featured several national leaders in Race Relations who examined former President Clinton's focus on racial reconciliation as well as their thoughts on a successful agenda for progress. I, along with Clarence E. Wright, ASU-Heritage Studies Ph.D. Student, Fayth Hill Washington, Linda White and J'Bunta Washington, all members of the Hoxie 21 were fortunate to join the hundreds of others in attendance at the UALR Center for Performing Arts for this event.

UALR Chancellor Joel E. Anderson in opening remarks said, "I have an educator's faith that we stand a chance of addressing any problem out there if we work together. Differences between people are few but can be strength to each of your organizations."

Those sentiments were echoed

next by Ruth Shepherd, Executive Director, Arkansas Region, National Conference for Community and Justice in her welcoming remarks. She stated that all people should be respected and able to sit at the table. Race is multi-layered.

Ms. Mathis, Moderator for the evening began in her introduction of the panel by quoting from a Washington Post article recently that said, "Race is a cultural concept, and race is a lived reality that we made up and have paid for every since."

Panelists were:

Sanford Cloud Jr., *President and Chief Executive Officer, National Conference for Community and Justice*; Robert Evans, *Executive Director, Plowshares Institute*, Janet Murguia, *Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer, National Council of La Raza*; Rose Matsui Ochi, *Los Angeles Police Commissioner*, and Feisal Abdul Rauf, *Founder of American Sufi Muslim Association Society and Imam of Masjid Al-Farah in New York*.

After brief introductory remarks by each of the panelists, Janet Murguia spoke first and said. "We still don't have a level playing field yet and there is still a lot of work to do. Underlying tensions are in our local communities that are pitting folk against each other for limited resources. We must make the dream of success a reality for everyone."

Feisal Abdul Rauf gave one thought on this notion of a monocultural society- "if you are different from the way we are (skin color, language), then you do not belong in our society- has created conflict throughout our history. This must change."

Robert Evans talked about conflict transformation and that we must use energy of conflict to address the schematic causes of conflict that face us. To address roots of conflict we must have:

- the ability to deeply and really listen;

- empathic identification, what does it mean to stand in the feet of others?
- The willingness to work at mutually beneficial and structural problem-solving.

One of his friends, Desmond Tutu, in one of his many books said that, "There is no future without forgiveness." Tutu talked about when missionaries came in 1984 to his homeland with their prayers and we had the land, they said "let's pray" when we closed our eyes and opened again they had the land.

He ended by saying that "Racism is a sin, problem of the heart, and an evil that needs to be eradicated. We must bring this country together as we become more diverse."

Rose Ochi gave a very passionate and emotional discussion of her experiences and of her first trip back to Arkansas after being one of the thousands of persons of Japanese ancestry who had been interned during WWII here. Recalling one day how she and others were lined up to be renamed, Arkansas teachers gave her the name Rose, but she feels lucky in some ways, she could have gotten the name Petunia. Over the years she came to understand to be viewed as an outsider can be a powerful asset and considered it a "Badge of Honor."

Deborah Mathis pointed out as the panel discussions drew to a close that, "People don't get this race thing; we called them in the old days, "educated fools." People with degrees behind their names but not a lick of sense. Her question, how do you break through idiocy out there to get to the truth?"

Sanford Cloud said, "it's alright to start with the choir in communities but go to the grassroots, if we can gather around some with common ground, that's where you and I should be."

We are all proud of President Clinton's legacy, his ideals and commitment to diversity.

Newsletter Layout: Christine Perry Newsletter Editors: Peggy R. Wright, Terry Johnson

Race, Place, and Housing: Housing Conditions in Rural Minority Counties Report



Peggy R. Wright, HAC Press Conference

Washington, D.C., Dec. 9, 2004—Counties with consistently high concentrations of racial or ethnic minorities are the last bastions of poor quality housing in this nation, according to a Housing Assistance Council report released today. The geographic isolation and relative segregation of rural minorities living in counties with high minority populations combine with history and economics to increase abusive credit practices, increase substandard housing, and lower home values, HAC found.

"HAC's study of rural minority counties reveals a form of rural segregation that perhaps has been hidden and is not very well understood," said Moises Loza, the Housing Assistance Council's executive director. "Similar to urban segregation, rural segregation has

both ethnic and class components and has significant impacts on access to decent, affordable housing."

While rural minority counties share high poverty rates and poor housing conditions, they also have distinct histories and unique needs. The analysis separately examines three concentrations of these counties. Many African-American residents of counties in the Mississippi Delta and the southern Black Belt bear housing costs that are disproportionately high compared to their incomes. For Native Americans in the West and Alaska, homeownership and asset-building are complicated by the trust status of Native lands. A different land ownership scheme makes it difficult for Hispanic residents of counties near the U.S.-Mexico border to refinance their homes or obtain equity loans.

"We generally think the basic human needs of everyone in the United States are taken care of," Loza stated. "But for the minority populations covered in this study that's too often not the case. Housing policy choices have to take into account the historical and economic realities of these communities."

Race, Place, and Housing: Housing Conditions in Rural Minority Counties is available free at the Housing Assistance Council's website, www.ruralhome.org or for \$6 (including

shipping and handling) from Luz Rosas at HAC, 202-842-8600, luz@ruralhome.org.

A national nonprofit corporation headquartered in Washington, D.C., and founded in 1971, the Housing Assistance Council publishes numerous reports, program manuals, and other materials on rural housing topics. HAC helps local organizations make affordable homes available in rural America by providing below-market financing, technical assistance, research, training, and information services. HAC's programs focus on local solutions, empowerment of the poor, reduced dependency, and self-help strategies. HAC is an equal opportunity lender.

The work that provided the basis for this publication was supported by funding under a grant with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The substance and findings of the work are dedicated to the public. The author and publisher are solely responsible for the accuracy of the statements and interpretations contained in this publication. Such interpretations do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government.

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Newly Released Reports

New Traditions: Options for Rural High School Excellence

This report highlights state and local policies proven to improve rural education. The report was released by the Southern Governors Association.

To view this report go to:
<http://www.southerngovernors.org/indexPDF/SGANewTraditions.pdf>

Beyond Cows and Corn: Rural America in the 21st Century

This article focuses on key trends in the rural economy, including rising agricultural productivity, the emergence of services as a vital economic sector, and a move away from commodity production. It was published by the Center for the Study of Rural America, Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City's, The Main Street Economist.

See the report at:
http://www.kansascityfed.org/RuralCenter/mainstreet/MSE_1004.pdf

Tracking Metropolitan America into the 21st Century

Report includes comparisons of metro areas under old and new definitions, describes newly defined "micropolitan" areas, and discusses the policy and research implications of the new system.

To learn more visit:
http://www.brookings.edu/metro/pubs/20041115_metrodefinitions.htm

Arkansas Soil & Water Education Conference

The Annual Arkansas Soil and Water Education Conference will be held on Thursday, January 13, 2005 at the Convocation Center, Arkansas State University, Jonesboro. Registration begins at 8:00 a.m., and the registration fee is \$15.00

The program will feature The Honorable Marion Berry, U.S. Congressman, 1st Congressional District as the Luncheon Speaker.

Session I Presiding: David Fowlkes, USDA/NRSC, Jonesboro

- 8:45 *Welcome* - Dr. Gregory Phillips, Dean, ASU College of Agriculture
- 9:00 *Groundwater Status in Northeast Arkansas* - Danny Goodwin, Watershed Specialist, USDA, National Water Management Center, Little Rock.
- 9:15 *The Bayou Meto and Grand Prairie Projects - A Prelude for Future Programs in NE Arkansas*, Jim Bodron, Army Corps of Engineers, Memphis.
- 9:35 *An Update on Water Projects in Eastern Arkansas* - David Weeks, Assistant Arkansas State Conservationist, USDA/NRCS Little Rock.
- 9:50 Break - Refreshments (Meeting Room A)

Session II Presiding: Alec Farmer, former Chairman, Arkansas Soil & Water Conservation Commission and Craighead Conservation District, Jonesboro

- 10:20 *Riparian and Appropriation Laws Across the U.S.* - Professor Ken Gould, University of Arkansas at Little Rock School of Law, Little Rock.
- 10:50 *Arkansas Water Law* - Alan Perkins - Perkins & Trotter, PLLC, Little Rock
- 11:20 *Arkansas Soil and Water Conservation Commission Issues in Water Law* - Crystal L. Phelps, Associate General Council, Arkansas Soil and Water Conservation Commission, Little Rock.
- 12:00 LUNCHEON

Session III Presiding: Dr. Bert Greenwalt, ASU College of Agriculture

- 1:20 *Water Conservation in Midsouth Agriculture* - Phil Tacker, Agricultural Engineer, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service, Little Rock and Dr. Earl Vories, Agricultural Engineer, USDA-ARS Portageville, MO.
- 1:50 *On Farm Surface Water Storage - Practical or Not?* - Dr. Jennie Popp and Dr. Eric Wailes, Department of Agriculture Economics and AgriBusiness, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.
- 2:10 *Water Conservation practices in Arkansas - Reservoirs and On-Farm Storage*, - Tony Stevenson NRCS State Conservation Engineer, Little Rock.
- 2:30 *Water Issues on the Farm - Environmental Quality of Rice Irrigation Relift Water* - Dr. Richard Grippo, Environmental Sciences Ph.D. Program and Department of Biological Sciences, Arkansas State University, Jonesboro.
- 3:00 *Water Management in Rice Production* - Dr. Paul Counce, University of Arkansas Rice Research and Extension Center, Stuttgart.
- 3:45 *Tour of the New Agriculture and Environmental Research Facility* - Located at the corner of Aggie and Stadium, accessed off Longhorn Drive - hosted by ASU Environmental Sciences Director, Dr. Jerry Farris and ASU College of Agriculture Dean, Dr. Gregory Phillips.

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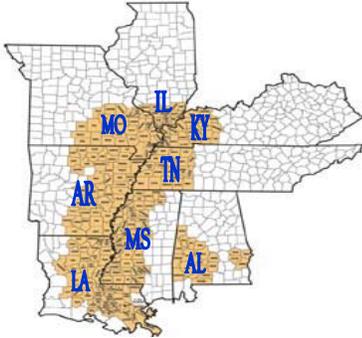
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