



Arkansas State University

Delta Studies Center

Volume 1, Issue 1

December 15, 2000

Student Spotlight: Eric Fort

Eric Fort is a Masters of Public Administration graduate student at Arkansas State University, Jonesboro, Arkansas, and is one of five participants of the HUD Community Development Work Study Program (CDWSP). He is the only African American male in the program. This program is designed to introduce students to the public, private, institutional, and non-profit sectors so that they may gain valuable (real world) experience and secure solid jobs upon completion of the program.

Eric said he chose ASU after learning of the benefits and the costs that the program would cover, and he realized it was simply an offer he couldn't

turn down.

Assigned rotations have included:

- Crowley's Ridge Parkway
- Jonesboro Central Planning Association
- College of Arts and Sciences (Dean's Office)
- His last rotation involves working in the non-profit sector with a coalition of area churches known as Beacons and Bridges.

The CDWSP also gave him the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C. to attend a Public Administration Conference Sponsored by HUD. This gave Eric the opportunity to interact with fellow



Eric Fort, Arkadelphia, Arkansas Graduate Intern CDWSP Arkansas State University

CDWSP participants from around the country. He has also created a web site since starting with the CSWSP. The address to the web site is www.geocities.com/mr.fort316/index.html. For more information about this program contact, Dr. Patrick Stewart, Department of Political Science. (870) 972-3048.

Special points of interest:

- * Student Spotlight
- * Senator Lincoln taking steps to Improve the Delta.
- * Tourism Forum
- * Rural Development Project
- * Deep South Regional Humanities Initiative
- * The HPPI Project

From the Center.....



At this joyous time of the year, I would like to thank all of you for making this the best year yet at Delta Studies Center. As we approach a new year, we hope that the Holidays will only bring joy and happiness to each of you. We wish you peace, love, and good tidings.

Peggy Robinson Wright

Sen. Lincoln taking more steps to improve the Delta.....

By: Peggy Robinson Wright

In her continued commitment to improving the quality of life and the economic future for the Arkansas Delta, Sen. Blanche Lincoln formed a Delta Development Advisory Committee in December, 1999. At the first meeting held Tuesday, December 14, 1999 at Arkansas State University, Sen. Lincoln brought Dr. Bill Strickland, re-

nowned Social Advocate in Pittsburgh, PA to talk about the Strickland Manchester Craftsmen's Guild and Bidwell Training Center. The purpose was to let eastern Arkansas leaders hear of the success that the guild and center have had in elevating kids from poor inner-city neighborhoods into college and/or meaningful jobs in business and industry.

In follow-up to an invitation by Dr. Strickland to visit his facilities in Pittsburgh in 2000, a delegation of twenty-three representatives lead by Sen. Lincoln paid a visit to Pittsburgh on Monday, October 23, 2000. The delegation, which consisted of Asu representatives, mayors, county judges, and representatives of service agencies across the state, met at the Memphis Airport and took a 6:00 a.m. flight to Pittsburgh.

Peggy R. Wright of the Delta Studies Center and Benita Walker, Arkansas Delta Byways made this historic early morning trip.

The trip was very beneficial in looking at an urban model that could be replicated on a rural basis for improvement in workforce training an economic development in the Delta. I applaud Sen. Lincoln and look forward to working with her and others in this effort.

"To see such practical methods used at the workforce training center was outstanding. What impressed me even more was not only

"The purpose was to let eastern Arkansas leaders hear of the success the guild and center have had in elevating kids from poor inner-city neighborhoods into college and/or meaningful jobs in business and industry."

the economic impact in the city, but more importantly, the social impact that was being made within each of the student's

lives. I can visualize that effort being done in the Delta," said Benita Walker. "Hats off to Sen. Lincoln and her efforts. It is with great anticipation, that I look forward to the fruition of this project becoming a reality in the Delta."

A Follow up meeting was held on Friday, December 1, 2000 in Brinkly, AR, by Sen. Lincoln to discuss impressions and suggestions for a future course by those who made the trip.

We will give more information about this effort as the dialogue continues.



Benita Walker waiting to tour the Bidwell Center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



**Bidwell Training Center
Pittsburgh,
Pennsylvania**



**Peggy Robinson Wright touring the Bidwell Center
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**



Delta Health Education Partnership (DHEP) Delta Regional Summit - 2000

The Delta Health Education Partnership (DHEP) hosted our Delta Regional Summit, September 21-22, 2000, at the Embassy Suites Hotel in New Orleans, LA. The theme of this year's program was "Community Networking: Expanding Opportunities for Health Care Access & Promoting Positive Practice Environments."



Mr. Ben Davis, Dr. Elders, and Dr. Phyllis Skorga (DHEP Program Director)

Featured speaker was Dr. Joycelyn Elders, former United States Surgeon General who addressed the topic of "Health Care Access in the Delta." Another featured speaker was Dr. Dennis LaRavia, Director of Rural and Community Medicine at Louisiana State University Medical Center in Shreveport. Dr. LaRavia spoke on "Community Networking." Dr. Michael Carter, Distinguished Professor of the University of Tennessee College

of Nursing - Memphis, addressed "Opportunities in Practice and Education."

In addition, health care professionals representing primary health care practice in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee

spoke about "Practice Challenges and Collaborative Practice Opportunities in the Delta."

The theme of this year's evaluations from the Summit were overwhelmingly positive. One hundred percent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the Summit addressed professional learning needs and issues, was personally and professionally very satisfying and a great learning environment. The evaluations included comments such as "Great Job," "Good interactions," "Stimulating speakers," and "Please

send copies of videotapes to participants, students, faculty, etc."

There were also helpful comments offering suggestions for improvement such as "Need to allow more time for exchange and networking," "Need to obtain CEUs," "Need more multi-racial presentations," and "Need more students in attendance." These recommendations will be incorporated in the next DHEP Summit conference in 2002. Hope to see you there!

"The theme of this year's program was "Community Networking: Expanding Opportunities for Health Care Access & Promoting Positive Practice Environments."

Tourism Forum Held in the Delta.....

By: Peggy R. Wright

A two and a half day forum, "Mississippi Delta Initiative Tourism Development Forum," was held in Memphis, Tennessee recently.

The meeting, October 18-20, 2000 held at the Peabody Hotel was in the follow up to the announcement by Vice President Al Gore at the May Delta 2000 Conference of an upcoming meeting.

A few hundred people from across the region were in attendance. Sec. Slater was the guest at an opening reception hosted by Mayor Herrington

and the Memphis Chamber of Commerce on Wednesday evening.

The Forum to discuss tourism strategies and ways to improve the efforts in the small rural communities of the Delta was very beneficial. Success stories from panelists across the region was on the program. Dr. Ruth Hawkins, Arkansas Delta Byways and John Matthews, Delta Cultural Center were among the panelists.

A summary of all information

the forum is now being reviewed by the Dept. of Transportation staff outlining further steps needed in development of a strategy outlining the culture and history of the area in order to boost the image of the Delta as the place to visit.

Rural Development Project

By: Burr Swann

This rural development position was set up to meet the need to accelerate conservation of our natural resources and development of essential infrastructure, as it relates to soil and water issues, in the East Arkansas Delta.

Stabilization of the depletion of groundwater is a major part of my position. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the USDA, Natural Resource Conservation Service are now my major Sponsors.

Some of the things this project has been able to accomplish in the last six months include:

- Identifying a pool of over thirty projects to date. The estimated cost for these Projects are around \$1.1 Billion.
- Responsible or partly responsible for receiving \$0.8 Million and ASU has directly received over \$200 thousand of that money.

Here is a list of significant projects that have been worked on this past six months:

- Arkansas Delta Oral History Project;
- Rural Development Projects for Eastern Arkansas;
- Boydsville Lake;
- Grant Search Center for Regional Delta Studies Center;
- Bayou Meto Basin Water Use Analysis Report for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers;
- L'Anguille River, received an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA Grant);



Burr Swann
Project Manager
Rural Development Project

- Lower Cache River, Logjam, one project meeting has been held and others are scheduled;
- Working with Natural Resources Conservation Service and Ducks Unlimited to provide best management practices to control sediment out of streams and rivers;
- NLEAP, a field-scale computer model development to provide a rapid and efficient method of determining potential nitrate leaching associated with agriculture practices;
- Whittaker Park Improvement, Madison, AR, I have worked with Samuel Mohammed on developing a topographic map and a land-rights agreement for the property;
- City of Jennette Improvement. I worked very close with Mayor Plez Lucas on City drainage, installation of drain culverts, extension of water lines, a recreation park, improvements for Jennette Day, that includes picnics, a parade, and prizes. Also, worked with Mayor Lucas on extension of rural water systems for Mildred Patterson;
- Town Creek in Wynne will provide flood protection and other benefits to minorities and limited resource individuals. Plans are to develop a recreation area along the works of improvements;
- Birdsong, AR, a small incorporated town in Mississippi County.

I have worked very close with Mr. Robert Johnson and Trey Johnson on a community building and fire protection;

- Rural Fire Protection in Crittenden County. I worked with Ricky Milam and Mozell Williams and the Black Oak/Hafer Fire Station;
- Hog Tusk is a flood protection project near Moro, AR in Lee County. Worked with Level Foote and Julius Broadway;

The above things are what we are currently working on but this is what still needs to be done. Partnerships need to be expanded to better focus on water resource needs of Eastern Arkansas. The most critical issue facing Eastern Arkansas in the 21st Century is depletion of groundwater. Over a million acres of agriculture land west of Crowley's Ridge, will soon be a critical groundwater depletion problem that threatens municipalities and the agricultural production of some of the richest farmland in the world. Central and Eastern Arkansas produces 50% of the rice grown in the United States. By 2015,

"By 2015, best estimates are, areas in Central Arkansas will be unable to irrigate one-half million acres of cropland."

best estimates are, areas in Central Arkansas will be unable to irrigate one-half million acres of cropland.

All aquifer data indicates that this trend will continue throughout the Delta area.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone who has participated in this program and especially to the many volunteers and project sponsors.

DEEP SOUTH Regional Humanities Initiative Underway

By: Vaneta Williams Harvey

The National Endowment for the Humanities plans to establish ten Regional Studies Centers across the nation. The new centers will coordinate and form partnerships with other institutions across several states making up a specify region for research and enhancing cultural heritage tourism of the region. It will link people of the region together as they explore the culture of many different groups that share their region by allowing states, communities, schools, and the general public to use these centers for educational and economical development. One will be able to enjoy the diverse background of each group as new programs will be developed to serve anyone from kindergarten to post-graduates and beyond.

Each institution will have to complete a two phased juried competi-

tion. In the first phase, twenty planning grants in the sum of \$50,000 were awarded to two universities within each of the ten regions (see map insert). Ole Miss and Tulane were the institutions within the Deep South that received the planning grants. In return, these universities will devise a plan for the creation of a Regional Headquarters within their region.

Phase two of the project will only be open to the institutions that have received the planning grants for the center. The ten institutions chosen will receive up to one million dollars annually for a five-year period. With a three to one match each institution will be required to raise fifteen million dollars, which will give them a total of twenty million dollars by 2005, and the ability to financially

continue the work independently.



NEH Regional Humanities
Center Regions
Source:

www.neh.gov/whoware/regional.htm

Health Profession Partnership Initiative (HPPI)

By: Jacquelyn Gilbert

The W.W. Kellogg foundation awarded Arkansas State University a 5 year \$350,000 grant to support Project 3000 by 2000. The Association of American Medical Colleges in Washington, DC, administers Health Professions Partnership Initiative. The purpose of this project is to increase minority enrollment in the health professions. Arkansas State University, College of Nursing and Health Professions is the lead institution called the Delta C.L.A.S.S. (College-ground Leaders Achieving Success in the Sciences). Dr. Susan Hanrahan, Dean, is the Principal Investigator and Jacquelyn Gilbert, Assistant Professor of Physical Therapy, is project director.

The Delta C.L.A.S.S. HPPI at Arkansas State University is up and running. During the spring of 2000,

the project began by exposing over one hundred 7th and 8th graders from five school districts in the Mississippi Delta region: Earle, Turrell, Osceola, Forrest City, and Marianna. These young prospective students were able to participate in a "Health Camp" sponsored by the College of Nursing and Health Professions. This one day camp gives the students a hands on experience with college students and professors within the various disciplines in the college. Each student spends 30 minutes participating within a discipline and gets the opportunity to acquire a faculty mentor from Arkansas State University.

"The purpose of this project is to increase minority enrollment in the health professions."

The project is to address some

of the educational issues common to the secondary schools and link them with post-secondary schools for appropriate supplemental teacher and student programming. The linkages of these school districts with the junior colleges in the region should bring the number of underrepresented minorities in the healthcare workforce closer to parity with the population and establish a lasting framework which will benefit students, faculty and the community alike for years to come.

For more information concerning this project contact Ms. Jacquelyn Gilbert at: Phone: (870) 972-3591, email: jbilbert@astate.edu, or visit their website at www.geocities.com/HPPI_2000.

**Arkansas State
University**

Delta Studies Center
PO Box 245
State University, AR 72467-0245

Phone: 870-910-8034

Fax: 870-910-8036

Clearinghouse Information:

1-877-731-3020

Email: dsc@choctaw.astate.edu

We're on the Web!
www.clt.astate.edu/dsc
