



Arkansas State University

## DELTA STUDIES CENTER

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## A Message From the Center Peggy R. Wright

This year has been one of surprises and sorrows across our country with the September 11th tragedy. We, at the Center, send out our condolences.

Happy Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, and Merry Christmas, and a Happy New year to all of our friends across the country.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the friends and supporters of the Delta Studies Center.

Our Accomplishments have been numerous this year, and we are looking forward to another great year.

Because of the Support from the East AR RC&D and the NRCS, we will be able to continue our Oral History efforts in the Delta Region. Our appreciation to Representatives Boyd and Dangeau and to Burr Swann for their lobbying on our behalf for additional funding.

A recent forum on the

Delta Regional Authority hosted by DSC gave us the opportunity to see how important our information clearinghouse development is to the communities we serve. Plans are in place for two more forums and a regional conference on Tourism in the Spring.

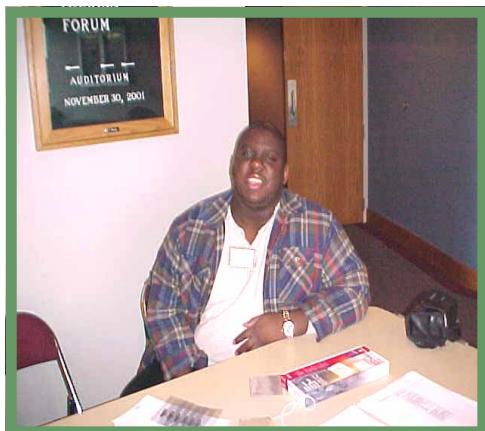
The forums and conference are all made possible through our Ford Foundation funded grant "Project to Build the Delta Tourism Industry."

# Merry Christmas

### Special points of interest:

- *East Arkansas RC & D Annual Meeting "Partnership in the Delta"*
- *DRA Federal Co-Chair Swearing in Ceremony*
- *Lakeport Plantation - Preserving the Past*
- *1st Arkansas Black Mayors Conference*
- *The Delta Regional Authority: Roles in African-American and Multicultural Tourism Economic Development Forum*

# Happy Holidays



The Delta Studies Center would like to take this opportunity to welcome our newest member to the DSC family, Mr. Stephen Carroll

Mr. Carroll is a long time resident of Malvern, Arkansas who came to ASU to obtain a degree in Journalism from the College of Communications.

He will be working closely with the Oral History Staff as a student Assistant/Oral History Interviewer.

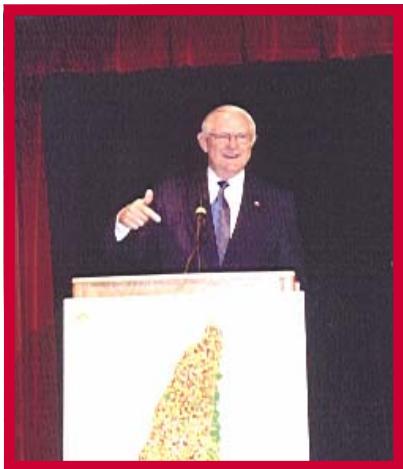
Welcome Aboard!

Stephen Carroll, Delta Studies Center  
Oral History Student Assistant

Stephen!



## East AR RC&D Annual Meeting “Partnership in the Delta”



Rep. LeRoy Dangeau  
President of the East AR RC & D

On Wednesday, October 31, 2001, the Annual Meeting of the East AR RC&D Council was held at the ASU Convocation Center. The theme,

“Partnership in the Delta” was timely and appropriate as we look at the Delta today. Rep. LeRoy Dangeau, Council President gave the opening remarks followed by a welcome from Dr. Les Wyatt, President, Arkansas State University.

There were two panel discussions presented, the first, *Partnerships: Local, State and National* with panelists, Bill Rainwater, Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts, Randy Young, Arkansas Soil & Water Commission, Peggy Wright, ASU-Delta Studies Center and Doris Washington, USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service. The second panel, *Projects: Local, Multi County & Statewide* panelists included: Mayor Mike Wood, Cherry Valley, Arkansas, Shirley Ball, Cross County Conservation District, Bart Rowe, Western Greene

County Fire Department and Charles Gangluff, Arkansas Association of RC&D Councils.

The morning speaker was Bruce Campbell, Director, Department of Rural Services, Little Rock, Arkansas who gave information on programs and funds available for communities and how to apply. Congressman Marion Berry was the scheduled luncheon speaker but due to national matters had to return to Washington and was unable to attend. Jason Willett of his Jonesboro office gave remarks in his absence on issues affecting our communities and the work that the Congressman was presently engaged in. He stated that, “If you look around this room you can definitely see the advantage of partnerships among local, state and national governmental agencies that have resulted in a number of projects that benefit rural Arkansas.”

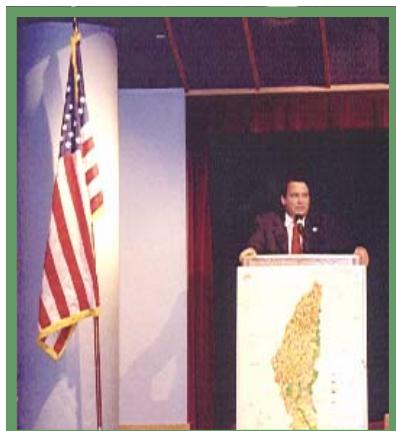
Closing remarks made by Rep. Dangeau to those in attendance was that, “Cooperation is the Key to Partnerships and that “we must pledge to be faithful to our partnerships.”



[Left to Right]  
Doris Washington,  
USDA, NRCS  
Asst. State  
Conservationist and  
Ruby Henderson,  
Sen. Tim Hutchinson's  
Office



[Left to Right] Willard Ryland,  
District Conservationist,  
Forrest City Field Service  
Office and Mayor James  
Brooks, City of Madison



Bruce Campbell, Arkansas  
Department of Rural Services



## DRA Federal Co-Chair Swearing In Ceremony

Mr. Pete Johnson was sworn in on Tuesday, October 23, 2001 as the Delta Regional Authority Federal Co-Chairman. The ceremony was held in the Federal Building in Clarksdale, MS.

It was a very impressive ceremony attended by many across the region. We look forward to working with Mr. Johnson as he begins the task of pulling together representatives from the eight states to

remedy the severe and chronic economic distress in the communities throughout the region.



Mr. Pete Johnson with his wife taking oath as the DRA Federal Co-Chair at the Swearing in Ceremony



Mr. Pete Johnson delivering his acceptance speech.

## Lakeport Plantation - Preserving the Past

The Lakeport Plantation home, located in Lake Village Arkansas, is one of the few remaining remnants of antebellum architecture in Southeast Arkansas. The Sam Angel family deeded it to Arkansas State University on October 16, 2001. The home placed on the National Historic Register in 1974 will serve as an educational classroom and labora-

**Lake Village, Arkansas, is one of the few remnants of antebellum architecture in Southeast, Arkansas.**

tory for ASU, as well as museum for heritage-minded tourists traveling the Arkansas segment of the Great River Road, which traverses the ten states along the Mississippi River. A luncheon was held in November to honor

the Angel Family for their contribution. It is not only a story of slaves who had no education or formal building skills but were able to build the magnificent home that has lasted for years, but also of the agricultural development of the region and changes

witnessed by those who lived on the plantation. For more information contact: Dr. Ruth Hawkins, Delta Heritages Initiatives at 870-910-8080.



Early Stove in the Lakeport Home.



Cistern that still remains on the Lakeport home grounds.



# 1st Annual Black Mayors Association Conference, Forrest City, Arkansas

On November 18, 2001, the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Arkansas Black Mayor's Conference took place in Forrest City. The theme of the conference was: "Mayors Coming Together As One, Working For a Better Future For Their Cities." Over 19 Black mayors from all around the area were in attendance. Larry Bryant, Mayor of Forrest City and President of the Arkansas Black Mayors Association, hosted the event. The conference featured three main panels: Community Resources, Legislative Issues, and Housing Development.

Paulette Bailey, the Executive Director of the Louisiana Chapter of National Conference of Black Mayors, was the first speaker of the day. She stressed how it was important for all black mayors to come together; regardless of where they're from. She said that there were 43 African-American mayors in the state of Louisiana, and that it was her first time in the state of Arkansas.

On the Community Resources Panel, Jim Smith talked about the Federal Surplus Property; Charlie Wood, from the East Arkansas Planning and Development District, talked about recycling. He pointed out that one of the reasons we produce so much garbage here is because we're so wasteful. Diane Norman also from the EAPDD, talked about developing our communities. Keith Hinch talked about transportation, and the importance of wearing a seat-belt.

After the Community Resource Panel, Henry Golatt, who works at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, spoke on the subject of economic development, and more specifically, small business development. He said that most of America is driven by the engine of small business. "You don't have to be a rocket scientist to start a small business," he said. "You don't have to have a Ph.D. to own a small business. You do have to provide a good quality service or a good quality product."

After lunch, Mayor Bryant spoke briefly before introducing Senator Hutchinson, the first speaker on the Legislative Issues Panel. He addressed many topics in his speech, including the "War on Terrorism". He said he would

never forget going to Ground Zero and the Pentagon, and that he saw the power of hate. He told the touching story of when he visited the mother of a 27-year-old black man from Pine Bluff who lost his life in the Pentagon that day. She said her son's lifelong dream was to serve in the U.S. Pentagon. He reminded the audience, however, that the war on terrorism doesn't begin and end in Afghanistan. He called it "the start of what's going to be a long struggle against those who would destroy what we hold dear." On the issue of economic development, he said the Senate needs to get an economic stimulus package bill passed before the end of the session, which is December 14. He ended his speech by saying, "We want to serve you, we want to work with you, we want to help you, God bless you."

Others who spoke on the panel were: Kevin Dedner, representing the Arkansas Democratic Party; Renee Bullock, Attorney General for Mark Pryor's office; Lucretia Norris, who read a letter from Governor Mike Huckabee office, in which he congratulated the majors on their historic first meeting; Representative Steve Jones; and Tommy Davis, representing Congressman Marion Berry's office. Raymond Frazier from Senator Blanche Lincoln's Office, spoke briefly toward the end of the meeting.

## "Mayors Coming Together As One Working For a Better Future For Their Cities."

After the Legislative Issues Panel came the Housing Development Panel. Debra Brown, Deputy Director of Memphis Housing, spoke to

the mayors about having affordable housing available for their communities. To illustrate her point, she started off by having everyone do an exercise where everyone put a piece of paper on their heads and tried to blindly draw a house. Her point was that "you cannot plan housing off the top of your head."

Fred Toney of the Housing Assistance Council in Washington, D.C., a national non-profit community development organization also spoke on the panel. Their mission is to provide housing-related services to poor people throughout the nation. He said, "Our job is to work with the non-profits to help you find solutions to housing problems in your community. What we need you to do is just to say, "We need your assistance." Toney pointed out that a home is the most valuable

asset a family will ever own, as well as the basis for wealth creation. Renee' Wilburn, from the DRED, also spoke as part of the panel.

After the Housing Development Panel, T.K Roberson and Earl Anthes gave a presentation to show mayors how to redistrict their cities.

Mrs. Peggy Wright, director of the Delta Studies Center, spoke on behalf of the Delta Studies Center Programs. "The Center focuses on projects and initiatives within the seven state Delta region utilizing faculty and student resources," she said. She talked about the DSC newsletter - mentioning it was sent all across the country, and she called for unity among black office - holders and in the black community. "We will never get anywhere...until we com together," she said. Wilbur Hawkins was the featured speaker at the evening dinner sponsored by the Delta Studies Center. Mr. Hawkins is the former Secretary of Commerce, as well as the former Executive Director of the Lower Mississippi Delta Commission. He is currently with Greenbelt Development Corporation out of Memphis, Tennessee. He commended the people at the conference for coming together and making the region what it is today, while also recognizing that the region has room for improvement. For instance, he talked about the vital importance of technology in today's environment. His goal is for the Black Mayors Conference to have its own website next year. "You can't at the local level....realistically plug into all the available resources out there without the help of the internet." He also talked about issues such as grants, funding, and retooling the Delta. Overall, he urged the audience to arm themselves with knowledge and information. "The smarter we are as citizens, the smarter our elected and appointed officials have to be," he said.

Overall the conference was successful and very informative. Senator Hutchinson highlighted the Conference, but everyone who spoke had something important to say. Hopefully, the Arkansas Black Mayors Association can put together conferences like this for many years to come.



# The Delta Regional Authority: University Roles in African-American and Multicultural Tourism Economic Development Forum



**Delta Regional Authority County**

city campus on November 30, 2001. The Delta Regional Authority [DRA], a newly created federal-state government agency, is a new resource for planning and funding economic development in the Arkansas and Lower Mississippi Delta Regions. It will serve a 236 county area in an eight state region.

The purpose of this forum was to discuss the university's role in the operations, planning, and funding programs of the Delta Regional Authority, particularly in the area of African-American Multicultural Tourism Economic Development.

Delta Studies Center sponsored the forum as a part of the Center's Ford Foundation funded "Project to Build the Delta Tourism Industry." The main presenter and facilitator for this forum was Mr. Les Range. Mr. Range is a planning policy, and development consultant with over twenty-five years experience in Delta regional community planning and economic development. He is the Principal in the firm, Pro-Mark, Inc.

Mr. Range began the forum by presenting the four priorities set up by the Delta Regional Authority legislation which are: (1) Basic public infrastructure in distressed counties and isolated areas of distress; (2) Transportation infrastructure for the purpose of facilitating economic development; (3) Business development with an emphasis on entrepreneurship; and, (4) Job training or employment-related education with an emphasis on use of exiting public education institutions located within the region. The DRA will have to spend at least 50% of the funds on projects focused on transportation and infrastructure. These specifications have already been set up by the Legislature and now the only thing left for the DRA to do is to develop its own policies and procedures. It is during this crucial time that universities within the Lower Mississippi Delta

The Delta Regional Authority: University Roles in African-American and Multicultural Tourism Economic Development Forum was the first of three forums hosted by the Delta Studies Center at the Convocation Center located on the Arkansas State Uni-

region need to decide what part they are going to play in this development state of the DRA. Some successful models presented by Mr. Range as potential avenues that can be used by universities to help them define their role with the DRA are: The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Initiatives which focuses on facilitating the development of several consortia based within the region, the Mid South Delta Initiative (MSDI) which focuses on "strengthening the Delta communities by connecting them with regional economic systems and support structures to create positive social and economic impact," and the Mid South Delta Consortium (MSDC) whose goal centers on assisting "colleges and universities in the Mid South Delta to increase their capacity to serve the needs of the people of the region." These are successful programs that could possibly be used by local universities to help the DRA address such Delta concerns as: healthcare, community renewal, children, youth and families, transportation, enterprise development, workforce development, housing, telecommunications, small town development, and cultural and heritage tourism.

It is no secret that universities traditionally revolve around three major goals and those are teaching, conducting research, and providing service to communities. A good way to accomplish all of these goals is through the development of service-learning opportunities with university students. These opportunities can help prepare students "for the challenges they will face in life by integrating the community with their academic experiences," as well as help the community

## "Mayors Coming Together As One Working For a Better Future For Their Cities."

build needed economic infrastructures while allowing universities to fulfill their perspective mission statements. So the question proposed to the forum participants was how could this university and others like it partner with the DRA to address the problems facing the Lower Mississippi Delta? What ideas and issues come to mind when thinking about the information presented by the forums facilitator, Mr. Les Range? Listed below are some of the ideas, suggestions, and points presented by the various participants at this forum.

- Advance current and develop new partnerships within the Lower Mississippi Delta. Partnership is one of the keys to successfully disbursing DRA funds.
- Targeting education and schools. Being strong proponents of education starting from preschool on up. Helping young people in these

depressed areas develop problem-solving skills as well as work experience. The university can definitely take the lead in this area.

- Create more focus on healthcare issues.
- Realize that some communities do not want to be engaged. The university setting could help in the situation by bringing people together and teaching them about the DRA and what it can do for them.
- Motivate faith-based organizations to stay within these poverty stricken areas.
- More grassroots involvement. Go into the communities and learn first hand what they need. Be personable and involved.
- Bring together federal designee's and agencies together with the federal co-chair to discuss their involvement with the DRA.
- Citizen Engagement: engaging these people and getting information back. Help them help themselves by motivating them to volunteer within their own communities to bring about change. Make them believe things change.
- DRA needs to take an active role in the building process of these communities.
- Federal Program - Extension Agencies need to be expanded beyond the current land grant model.
- DRA needs to be very active in lobbying for Congressional support and more monies to be given to the Lower Mississippi Delta Region. An office needs to be put in Washington DC to help the DRA to be visible to congress, but it also needs to be visible in the area it serves.
- The university could bring various Community Development Corporations (CDC's), Chamber of Commerce, and other Higher Education Institutes together to facilitate a meeting of collaboration at the local level to discuss building capacity.

In closing, all the participants agreed that there needs to be a clear time frame set up for assessment of the issues raised prior to the February 24, 2002 meeting of the governors from this eight state region in Washington DC. A meeting with the Secretary of Education Ron Paul could possibly serve as the forum to establish a clear statement of university involvement with the DRA as well as meeting of other Higher Education representatives to form a consortium. Two more forums will take place over the next few months



**Arkansas State University  
Delta Studies Center**

PO Box 245  
State University, AR 72467-0245

Phone: 870-910-8034

Clearinghouse Number: [Toll Free] 1-877-731-3020  
Fax: 870-910-8036  
Email: dsc@astate.edu

We're on the web  
**[www.clt.astate.edu/dsc](http://www.clt.astate.edu/dsc)**