



Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission

REGIONAL NEWS

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DOTHAN, ALABAMA 36302

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FALL 2009

SEARP&DC 3rd Annual Meeting



Guests gathered at the Daleville Convention Center on September 24, 2009 for the 3rd Annual Meeting of SEARP&DC. Mrs. Doni Ingram, Director of ADECA was the guest speaker. The meeting was made possible by the following sponsors: Alabama Power Company, CDG Engineers, Covington Electric Co - Op, Northstar Engineering Services,

Pea River Electric Co-Op, Praestare Engineering, South Alabama Electric Co-Op, Wiregrass Electric Co-Op Inc., Polyengineering, David Hicks & Associates, DMD Engineers, Goodwyn Mills, and Cawood Inc., Covington County Economic Development Commission, Peters Municipal Associates, and the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce.



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Penny Rotolo, Human Resources
Sarah Hesters, Information Technology



Tom Solomon,
Executive Director

"Fiscal Year 2008-2009 In Review"

Looking back on a few highlighted activities of the Commission over the past fiscal year.....

The Community and Economic Development Departments had a record setting year submitting fifty-five (55) projects for regional community and economic development. A total of \$15,800,000.00 in grant applications was submitted to various federal and state agencies.

This represents an increase of 57% in grant volume over the FY 2007-2008 total of \$6,758,373.00. Over \$4,000,000.00 of these grants have been approved and we are awaiting additional announcements on a number of others. This sets a new record total for grant applications submitted in one fiscal year by the Commission in its 40-year history. Congratulations to Economic Development Specialist II, Rachel Armstrong, who completed her certification through the National Development Council as an Economic Development Finance Professional.

The Wiregrass Transit Authority has been selected by the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) as a recipient of a national 2009 Excellence in Regional Transportation Award for the Dixie Depot. Winning projects will be announced in the *NADO News*, the *Rural Transportation Newsletter* and in future NADO publications and events. Also, SEARP&DC and the other 11 members of the Alabama Association of Regional Councils won a NADO national award for the *Human Services Coordinated Transportation Planning Project*. John Sorrell, WTA Manager and I will go to Savannah, Georgia to the NADO National Rural Transportation Peer Learning Conference in late October to accept the awards. The Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) assessment phase has been completed. This planning study has been ongoing for the past 18 months conducting a long range land use planning assessment of Fort Rucker's military base facilities and surrounding land use patterns. A final report on this project will be completed and submitted to the Office of Economic Adjustment in the U.S. Department of Defense next month. SEARP&DC will begin the implementation phase of this project this fall working with regional communities and Fort Rucker officials on project strategies for compatible growth for Fort Rucker to support its important military and economic mission in Southeast Alabama.

The Head Start program continued its important service delivery activities within the six Head Start centers in Andalusia, Eufaula, Florala, Geneva, Headland and Opp. This past year this program provided educational, health, nutritional and social services to 337 pre-school children, ages 3 to 5 enrolled in this program.

SEARP&DC paid gross payroll wages in excess of \$2.9 million to 316 employees.

Best Wishes,



STATE OF ALABAMA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT FUNDS STREET IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE TOWN OF GRIMES

The Town of Grimes is completing work on a State of Alabama Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) project funded through the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) for street improvements in the Canterbury Subdivision, County Road 25 and J. Steele Road.

According to Grimes Mayor Frankie Adkins, the Town of Grimes utilized the CDBG grant and local funds totaling \$274,500 to completely revitalize streets in the Canterbury Subdivision, that will directly benefit about 400 residents in Grimes. "This project is a tremendous improvement for the residents living in our town. The streets that are being resurfaced in the Canterbury Subdivision have not been properly improved since the 1970's. We are also installing new safety features including speed humps, new street signs and traffic markings for the safety of our residents there. This project will greatly enhance the quality of life for our residents for many years to come" said Mayor Adkins.

The Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (SEARP&DC) assisted the Town of Grimes with the development of the CDBG grant funding application and provided grant administration. Lewis Inc. of Headland was the general contractor and project engineering services were provided by Praestare Engineers of Dothan.



Pictured above is Friar Road before the paving project.



Town of Grimes and Local Officials gather to view the new street improvements in the Canterbury Subdivision along Old Town Road on September 3.

L-R: Mayor Frankie Adkins, Councilman Ted Guthrie, Jody Solomon, Praestare Engineers, Councilman Ray Adkins, Councilman Grady Bryant, Councilman James Andrews, Grimes Town Clerk Phillip Horne, Tom Solomon, SEARP&DC, Alan Parker, Praestare Engineers, Calvin Knighton, Lewis Inc., Councilman Samuel Hollis.



Pictured above is Friar Road after the completion of the paving project.

***HOT DOG!...*Another business locates in Downtown Dothan**

The Revolving Loan Fund Program recently assisted a new business locating in the Downtown Dothan Business District. 3 G's Girls Gone Green, Inc. is a small environmentally friendly dine outside/carryout restaurant. Their specialty will be hotdogs shipped from Buffalo, New York. The hotdogs will be made from the cuts of pork and beef in an all-natural casing. The menu will consist of chargrilled hotdogs and hamburgers, homemade coleslaw, sweet potato fries, curly fries, onion rings, seasonal brownies, beverages and much more.



The business is owned by Ms. Betty Tomlin. According to Ms. Tomlin, "the restaurant will open in mid-October. This has been a long process, but we can finally see the light at the end of the tunnel." The total project cost was over \$130,000 and approximately 3 to 4 jobs will be created as a result of the project.



3 G's is located at 184 South Oates Street (the corner of Oates and Crawford Street). The recently remodeled building offers a

very nice and inviting outdoor atmosphere with beautiful landscaping including benches and a waterfall. The hours of operation will be Monday through Saturday 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. If you live in Dothan or are just visiting, we encourage you to try them out and support a locally owned business. SEARP&DC wishes Ms. Tomlin the best of luck!

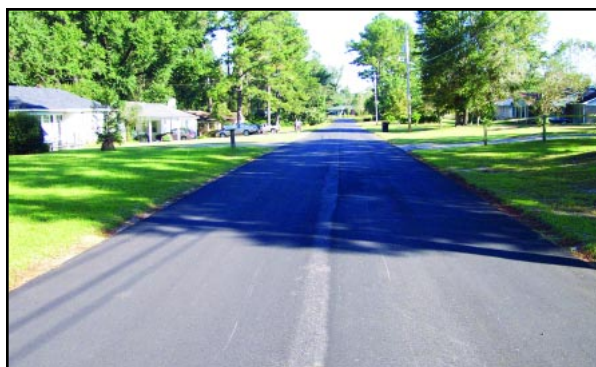
Emily Waters, Economic Development Director

Emily can be reached at 334-794-4093 ext. 1414 or ewaters@searpdc.org



Several Streets Get Repaved in Elba

The City of Elba is in the process of completing a street paving project along the following streets: Brown Street, Edgewood Street, Fuqua Street, Taylor Street, Clark Street, Ellenburg Street, Gordon Street, Carver Street, Stoudemire Street, Caroline Street, Drayton Street, Sunset Boulevard, Morrow Avenue, and Johnson Avenue. The project included the paving of a total of fourteen streets. Total project costs were \$526,355. This project would not have been possible without funding assistance from the Alabama Department of Economic and Community



Affairs. The City of Elba received a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program award of \$410,100. Elba provided the balance of the project cost through local matching funds. The SEARP&DC staff assisted the City of Elba with the development of the CDBG grant application and provided grant administrative services. Peters Municipal and Associates, Inc. from Dothan served as the project engineer and APAC-Southeast, Inc. was the general contractor for the project. Congratulations to the citizens along these streets in Elba on the completion of this successful community development project!

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For more information

Rachel can be reached at 334-794-4093 xz 1411 or email her at ramstrong@searpdc.org

Growth of Our **Head Start** Program Depends on Partnerships

The SEARP&DC Head Start Program is dependent upon local and regional community partnerships to meet our 20% grant requirement of non-federal match. From the very inception of our program local partnerships that provided facilities, utilities, and maintenance for our Centers have been our very foundation. However, future growth will necessitate new sources of support for our Head Start program. While we are dependent on the continued support of local units of government of our Head Start program, we must expand support from all sources if we are to continue to provide vital services to Head Start children and families. Herein we will focus on three important services provided by volunteers to our Head Start children. Such services provided at no cost must continually increase as a requirement of our non-federal in-kind base of support.

come to our Head Start Centers three times a year to read to our Head Start children. Reading is Fundamental, known to us as RIF, negotiates bulk purchases of books from major publishers. Kiwanis Club members read and distribute these books to the children. In many cases our Head Start children receive their first book from a Kiwanis Club member. RIF illustrates to children that reading is not only fundamental but reading is fun. RIF also provides a link between civic leaders and elected officials to our Head Start Program as illustrated in the picture of Mayor Jay Jaxon read-

performs a routine dental exam on a Head Start child.

The SEARP&DC Head Start Program participates in the Focus First Alabama Student Vision Initiative to receive free vision screenings for our Head Start children. These screenings provide for early detection of vision problems that would impair the ability of children to learn and progress in school. Again, these are important services that are required to meet our federal regulations.

Head Start appreciative of the services provided by the local Kiwanis Clubs, Sarrell Dental & Eye Clinic, and Focus First Initiative of Vision Research Corporations. The services provided in every case enhance the ability of our children to learn and provide important non-federal in-kind contributions to our Head Start program. As we look to the future



ing to our children.

Recently we partnered with Sarrell Dental & Eye Centers of Enterprise, Alabama to provide dental screenings to Head Start children. These screenings, at no cost, will provide children with important services and assist




The Jean Dean RIF Program of the Kiwanis Club of Alabama provides literacy services to our Head Start Centers. Kiwanis Club members

our program in meeting the regulatory requirements of the Head Start Performance Standards. Dr. Andrew Mills is featured in the picture as he

growth of our Head Start program, there will be a need to seek new partnerships and volunteers to provide in-kind services.

IT Administrator Receives Certification



Sarah Hesters, IT Administrator for SEARP&DC has received three IT certifications: A+, Network+ and Security + through the Computer Technology Industry Association (CompTIA) which is the IT industry's largest developer of vendor-neutral IT certification exams. These certifications are recognized worldwide as a trusted indicator of qualified and competent professionals in the IT industry. The A+ certification is the industry standard for computer support technicians. The CompTIA Network+ certification is the sign of a competent networking professional. The CompTIA Security+ certification designates knowledgeable professionals in the field of security. Mrs. Hesters is tasked with keeping the Commission's computer network operational and safe.

Stimulus Funds Showing Results!



Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Stimulus bill), Wiregrass Transit Authority (WTA) was granted almost \$1.34 million dollars. WTA is beginning to see the benefits of this grant.

On October 6, 2009 WTA received the first of twelve medium sized busses to begin replacing a very aged fleet of vehicles. When we receive all of our new busses we should have a "new look" and have a fleet that our drivers and our passengers can be proud of.

WTA will also order one smaller modified van to give us some flexibility in specialized situations.

In addition to these vehicles, WTA will also be upgrading their technology with GPS receivers, mobile data terminals and video surveillance systems on all of the busses.



John Sorrell
WTA Manager

John can be reached at
334-794-4093 ext. 1431
or transit@searpc.org

Floralia Honors Utilities Board Members



The Floralia Utilities Board honored three dedicated board members at a lunch reception held on Thursday, September 24, 2009 at the Alabama Power Building in Floralia. Former chairman William H. (Billy) McDaniel and former board members Mr. Horace Bell and Mrs. Pearl Smith served many years assisting the Floralia Utilities Board and the City of Floralia in maintaining and expanding the services provided to the area.

SEARP&DC has partnered with the Floralia Utilities Board and the City of Floralia on multiple utilities projects over the past 35 years. We at SEARP&DC appreciate the support of the Floralia Utilities Board during the leadership of Mr. McDaniel, Mr. Bell, and Mrs. Smith.

Pictured above: (Seated) Mrs. Pearl Smith, (Standing from L-R) Mr. Glen Zorn, Deputy Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries; Mayor Robert Williamson, City of Floralia; Mr. William H. (Billy) McDaniel; Councilman Marvin Williford, Chairman of the Floralia Utilities Board; Alabama Senator Jimmy Holley; Mr. Scott Farmer, SEARP&DC; and Mr. Horace Bell.

Scott Farmer
Community
Development Director

Scott can be reached at
334-794-4093 ext. 1412 or
sfarmer@searpc.org



Regional Seniors Making a Difference in Their Communities

20 hours per week may seem insignificant to the average wage earner but to participants of the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), 20 hours represents opportunities for training, work experience, and financial independence. For the non-profit and government agencies and communities where they are assigned, 20 hours means additional services, longer hours and more days of access for the public. At a time when local governments are being forced to streamline budgets through layoffs and reduced services, seniors are making a difference through their SCSEP assignments.



Ms. Newman and Ms. Hawk

Ms. Lisbeth Baxley's assignment with Wiregrass United Way 2-1-1 allows her to provide information and referrals to callers seeking information on services available in the Wiregrass Area. Ms. Baxley states she finds her position especially rewarding because at one point, she herself was in need of information. During the period October 2008-September 2009, the center received a total of 5,552 calls and made 11,972 agency referrals.

Ms. Chrisana Hawk, a former SCSEP participant, is now employed with Hawk-Houston Boys and Girls Club as a Receptionist and Membership Clerk. Ms. Hawk greets visitors to the Club and keeps track of daily attendance of Club members. Ms.

Hawk assists with fundraising for the Club and is relentless in her efforts to recruit volunteers and secure donations which help to support Club programs and daily operation. During the Club's annual meeting and recognition banquet held during the month of April 2009, Ms. Hawk was chosen as Volunteer of the Year.

Ms. Willie Mae Smith, also a former SCSEP participant, was employed by the Hawk-Houston Boys and Girls Club as Office Manager. Utilizing her strong organi-



Ms. Altha Newman, Director of Hawk Houston Boys and Girls Club and Ms. Willie Mae Smith.

zational and administrative skills, Ms. Smith assists with the day to day management of the Club including finances and general operation. During the annual meeting and recognition banquet, Ms. Smith was selected as Staff Member of the Year. She was also Pacesetter for the Club's United Way campaign, improving pledges 137 percent over last year's contributions.

Other seniors making a difference in their communities are Mr. James Pierson, Mr. Harold Lane and Mr. Rufus Sanford who are assigned to

The Ark. The Ark is a faith-based organization providing food, clothing and other assistance to the needy. Assigned as Store Clerks to The Ark, Mr. Lane and Mr. Sanford assist with pick-up and repair of items donated to the organization. Mr. Pierson's computer and data entry skills will assist the organization with their database of donated items. He is also assisting with a new project promoting these items to the public for purchase via the internet.

According to Department of Labor statistics, over 60 million hours of community service was performed by participants of the Senior Community Service Employment

Program (SCSEP) during the past project year. These hours represented over \$1 billion dollars in services provided by workers in their local communities all across America.

Sponsored by SEARP&DC under contract with the Alabama Department of

Senior Services and Senior Service America, Inc., the Senior Employment Program employs approximately 83 senior trainees in various public and non-profit agencies throughout Barbour, Coffee, Covington, Dale, Geneva, Henry and Houston Counties. Individuals or agencies interested in participating in the program should call (334) 794-4093 or 1-800-489-7606 ext. 1422.



In Memoriam



Mr. William T. "Bill" Cathel passed away on May 27, 2009. Mr. Cathel served as the first Executive Director at SEARP&DC, from 1969 until his retirement in 1987. Mr. Cathel laid a solid foundation for the Commission in its early years and he remained a good friend of the Commission even in his later years. He is missed by the Commission.

Mr. Glenn Grantham passed away August 18, 2009. Mr. Grantham served as a Board Member for Dale County from 2002-2008. Mr. Grantham served as Dale County District 2 Commissioner for 21 years. He was a dedicated SEARP&DC Board member and his presence on the Board is missed.



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The Town of Clayhatchee Applies For Recreational Grant



The town of Clayhatchee is in the process of applying for a Land and Water Recreation Fund (LWCF) grant to help renovate the tennis and basketball court at the Clayhatchee Recreational Park. Numerous interested citizens attended a public hearing on August 10 to discuss the project.

Penny Rotolo
Human Resources Manager



Penny can be reached at 334-794-4093 ext. 1410 or protolo@searpdc.org

Praestare Engineering is providing the engineering services and SEARP&DC is preparing the grant. LWCF grants are due February 1.

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OCTOBER 2009

NATIONAL CYBER SECURITY AWARENESS MONTH

Our Shared Responsibility

STAYSAFEONLINE.org
National Cyber Security Alliance