



# Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission

## REGIONAL NEWS

VOL. 25 ISSUE 1

DOTHAN, ALABAMA 36302

WWW.SEARPCDC.ORG

WINTER 2013

### 2013 SEARP&DC ANNUAL REGIONAL DINNER MEETING

SEPTEMBER 12, 2013

Speaker: Mr. Jim Byard, Jr. ADECA Director

DALEVILLE CONVENTION AND CULTURAL CENTER, DALEVILLE, AL.



#### 2013 SEARP&DC Annual Regional Dinner Platinum Sponsors

Standing left to right:

**Vann Bradshaw**, Alabama Power Company

**Randy Brannon**, Pea River Electric  
Cooperative

**Mark Parker**, Covington Electric Cooperative

**Deanna Albritton**, Wiregrass Electric  
Cooperative

**Andy Kimbro**, South Alabama Electric  
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**Mickey Simmons**, PowerSouth Energy  
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**Jeff Williams**, BBVA Compass Bank



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- SSE Equipment Supply
- Goodwyn, Mills & Cawood, Inc.



**Mark Moore**, V.P. Sales  
AngelTrax Video

# New Board Members

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Executive Committee\*

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 Thomas E. Crossley  
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 Roy Crow  
 Henry Franklin

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 Mickey Murdock\*  
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 Sammy Glover  
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Steve McKinnon\*               **DALE**  
 West Etheredge\*  
 Claudia Wigglesworth  
 Charles Gary  
 Billy Blackwell  
 Dr. Diane Flournoy

William Birdsong               **GENEVA**  
 Fred Hamic\*  
 Rob Hinson  
 JoAnn Lindsey  
 Vann Bradshaw  
 Gwen Bruner  
 Joe Paul

Henry Grimsley               **HENRY**  
 David Money  
 Mary Ethel Williams\*  
 Gregory Reynolds  
 Edwin M. (Butch) Glover  
 John Glover

Mike Schmitz                   **HOUSTON**  
 Lori Wilcoxon  
 Matt Parker  
 Mark Culver\*  
 Addie Buze  
 Tol Dozier

### STAFF

#### THOMAS B. SOLOMON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT-** Emily Waters, Director; Rachel Armstrong; Glenda Chancey

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT-** Scott Farmer, Director; Andrew Windham, Glenda Chancey

**HEAD START-** Ronald Holliman, Director; Martha Lisenby, Pat Nobles, Jackie Daniels, Stephanie Dawsey, Carolyn Conley

**SENIOR EMPLOYMENT-** Barbara Knight, Director; Richard Devore

**WIREGRASS TRANSIT AUTHORITY-** John Sorrell, Manager; Tony Knight, Roberta Simmons, Lisa Studdard

**FISCAL DEPARTMENT-** Faye Moring, Director; Mark Williams, Natalie Cook, LaKisha Williams

**HUMAN RESOURCES-** Carla McClinton

**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY-** Abiezer Soto



**Ms. Addie Buze,**

Town of Columbia Councilmember

Ms. Addie Buze was recently appointed to the SEARP&DC Board of Directors. Ms. Buze is a council member from the Town of Columbia and was appointed to the Board in November 2012. Ms. Buze is very active in church activities at First Missionary Baptist Church in Columbia and served as the Missionary Departments past president. In addition to her church activities Ms. Buze is also active in the Women's Club of Dothan and was selected in 2010 as the Wiregrass Woman of the Year. Currently Ms. Buze is employed with HealthSouth in Dothan as a respiratory therapist. Ms. Buze is also the proud mother of 4 grown children as well as 14 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren.



**Mr. Mark Culver,** Chairman  
 Houston County Commission

Mark Culver was recently elected as the Chairman of the Board of SEARP&DC. He is a lifelong resident of Dothan graduating from Dothan High School and Auburn University. He was elected to the Houston County Commission in 1986, the first Republican elected to local office and re-elected again in 1990 and 1994. He was appointed Chairman of the Houston County Commission in 1997 and elected Chairman in 1998 and re-

elected unopposed in 2002, 2006 and re-elected again in 2010. He is a member of numerous local civic and government Boards and associations. Mark is an active member of the Auburn University Alumni Association, Business Council of Alabama, Dothan Area Botanical Gardens Board, Dothan Landmarks Board (Past President), Dothan Rotary Club (Past President), National Peanut Festival Board, Spirit of Service Day (Chairman) and the Wiregrass Rehabilitation Center Board among others. He is married to his wife, Tami Culver and has 3 children, Stephanie, Robert and Cannon.



**Mr. Arlin Davis,**  
 City of Opp Councilman

Mr. Arlin Davis was recently appointed to the SEARP&DC Board of Directors. Mr. Davis currently serves on the Opp City Council where he has served for three terms. Mr. Davis attended Opp High School and is an Army veteran. He is retired from the State of Alabama ABC Board after 30 years employment. Mr. Davis coached the same Babe Ruth baseball team for 34 years and has been a football and basketball referee for over 46 years. Mr. Davis was an exceptional athlete playing several sports and in 2009 he was elected to the Wiregrass Sports Hall of Fame. He has served on the Board of the Southeast Alabama Gas District and the PowerSouth Cooperative and Opp City Utilities Boards. Mr. Davis has been married to his high school sweetheart, Patsy Clark Davis for 57 years and they have 3 children, 5 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren.

# The City of Abbeville Sees Great Improvements Due to Grant Funds

The City of Abbeville received Community Development Block Grant funds from ADECA in the amount of \$350,000 for street and drainage improvements, sewer improvements, and demolition in one of their neighborhoods. The City committed to approximately \$71,000 in local funds to bring the project to fruition. As seen in the pictures, four dilapidated homes have been demolished thus far and more are expected in order to rid the neighborhood of some of the slum and blighted structures. Also, street and drainage improvements have been made along

a portion of East Alabama Street and along Gilliam Street. These streets had never been resurfaced and were badly deteriorated. Some of the homes on East Alabama Street were experiencing flooding during heavy rainfall due to improper drainage facilities, which is eliminated now. Lastly, the sewer improvements portion of the project, which consists of installing new out-flow lines to replace existing extremely antiquated sewer lines, will be bid soon. These improvements are needed due to cracked sewer lines from severe root intrusion and partially blocked sewer lines that cause sewage

backups in homes at times and on personal property posing health risks. The CDBG project will benefit at least 290 people, of which 51% are of low and moderate income status. These improvements will create a better quality of life for the residents in the neighborhood. The estimated completion date is the end of January 2014.



**Rachel Armstrong**  
Economic Development  
Specialist II

Rachel can be reached at 334-794-4093 ext 1411 or [rarmstrong@searpcdc.org](mailto:rarmstrong@searpcdc.org)



**114 Hall Street (Before)**



**105 Jordan Street (Before)**



**West Street (Before)**



**114 Hall Street (After)**



**105 Jordan Street (After)**



**West Street (After)**



**103 Girard Street (Before)**



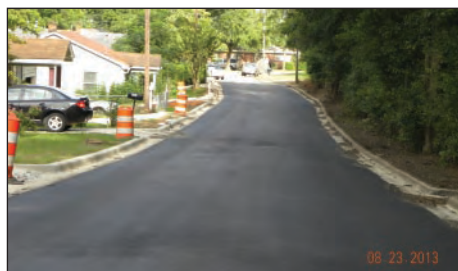
**East Alabama Street (Before)**



**Gilliam Street (Before)**



**103 Girard Street (After)**



**East Alabama Street (After)**



**Gilliam Street (After)**

## Tri-State Commercial Tire, LLC Opens with Assistance from SEARP&DC Revolving Loan Fund

The Revolving Loan Fund program recently assisted a new commercial tire business in Dothan. Tri-State Commercial Tire, LLC will provide service in all aspects of the tire industry, primarily commercial transportation companies. They will also provide services to refuse haulers and construction companies as well as agriculture-related businesses. Tri-State Commercial Tire will offer alignments for commercial trucks and trailers, bead blasting and powder coating of commercial truck wheels, as well as on-site tire installation and repair along with 24-hour emergency roadside assistance.



Pictured: Joey Watkins, Owner/Operator and Emily Waters, SEARP&DC

The business is owned by Mr. Joey Watkins and his wife, Stacey. Mr. Watkins stated that he was glad programs like the Revolving Loan Fund exist to help small businesses. The total project cost was over \$450,000

and approximately 12 jobs will be created as a result of the project.

Tri-State Commercial Tire is located at 2324 Ross Clark Circle, in close proximity to The Barn and Toyota of Dothan. You can contact Joey at 334-678-TIRE or [tristatecommercialtire.com](http://tristatecommercialtire.com).

SEARP&DC staff wishes the best of luck to Tri-State Commercial Tire!

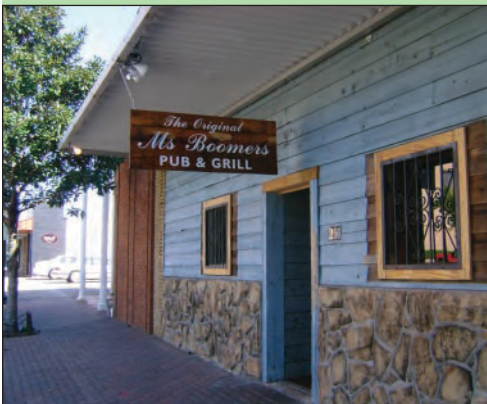


**Emily Waters**  
Economic Development  
Director

Emily can be reached at 334-794-4093 ext 1414 or [ewaters@searpc.org](mailto:ewaters@searpc.org)

## Dothan-Houston County Microloan Making a "BOOM" in Downtown Dothan

With assistance from the Dothan Houston County Microloan program, the once-



popular Ms. Boomer's is back open on Foster Street in downtown Dothan. Ms. Boomer's was famous for funny hats hanging from the ceiling and

the "Boomer Burger". Terry Bullard and his business partner, local chef/caterer Shann Mann reopened the eatery/hangout this summer with the vision of giving it the "old" Ms. Boomer's feel, with hats and food. Mr. Mann oversees the day-to-day operations of Ms. Boomer's.

According to Mr. Bullard, "We're going to work hard to make Ms. Boomer's a place where people want to come again for a good time." The total project cost was over \$160,000 and approximately 20 jobs will be created as a result of the project.

The Original Ms. Boomer's Pub and Grill is located at 256 North Foster Street. Mr. Bullard and Mr. Mann have worked hard to remodel the building, which offers a relaxed, comfortable, fun atmosphere with music and televisions. The owners envision live entertainment Thursday, Friday and Saturday as well as monthly block parties with live music. If you live in Dothan or are just visiting, we encourage you to try them out and support a locally owned business.



**Emily Waters**  
Economic Development  
Director

Emily can be reached at 334-794-4093 ext 1414 or [ewaters@searpc.org](mailto:ewaters@searpc.org)

## Seniors Accepting Challenge to Further Education

For Ms. Willie Mae Freeman, the decision to further her education was driven by a passion for helping people. Now attending classes full-time at Wallace Community College, she states she is about half way there in her quest to earn a degree in



Pictured from left to right: Helen Dowdy, SCSEP Participant; Delores Bradley, SCSEP Participant; Barbara Knight, SCSEP Project Director; Dr. Linda Young, President, Wallace Community College; Vincent Vincent, Wallace College Center for Workforce Development; Richard DeVore, SCSEP Job Placement Specialist

Human Services. Although surrounded by younger students, she is determined to reach her goal. "I've seen 70 and 80 year olds earning their doctorates", said Ms. Freeman. "If they can do it, I can do it". Ms. Freeman received assistance in her efforts to further her education through a program offered by Wallace College called the Senior Citizens Program where the tuition is waived for individuals age 60 and above who meet all criteria for eligibility. Ms. Freeman learned of the program through the Senior Community Service

Employment Program (SCSEP) sponsored by the Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission.

After being encouraged by project staff to register for classes to improve her skills, Ms. Freeman finally decided it was time. "I'm doing this for me" she stated "Because I just love helping people." After receiving her degree, Ms.

Freeman states she plans to seek a position in Social Work where she can continue her passion of helping those in need.

Ms. Jodie Jones did not meet the Age limit for the Senior Citizens Program but received assistance to further her education via a Pell Grant. Her decision to return to the classroom was born of necessity due to outdated computer skills. Like older job seekers everywhere, she discovered that "...computers are everywhere and there is no getting around them." She also found that good computer skills are required in job searching

as many companies require completion of online applications. Like Ms. Freeman, she too was encouraged by SEARP&DC staff to register for computer classes to improve her skills. Finally, in the month of February 2013 she decided "...to bite the bullet and apply for assistance through Wallace College." Ms. Jones is currently attending night classes at Wallace. "Returning to the classroom after 35 years with all those young students was terrifying," stated Ms. Jones "however the instructors and staff have gone above the call of duty throughout the entire process to help me get started."

Vincent Vincent, Director of Adult Education with Wallace Community College, Center for Workforce Development has seen a recent trend

of older adults returning to the classroom either due to career changes or to improve skills simply to keep up with technological advancement. During the month of October, the college will present a series of informa-

tive sessions to educate individuals 50 years or older on steps to further their education. Titled "Gateway to College", the sessions will include information on financial aid options, the registration and admissions process, academic and career counseling services and a virtual tour of the Wallace Community College campus. "Our experience with the Senior Employment program is a positive one," said Mr. Vincent. "Through years of partnership with Ms. Barbara Knight, and the SCSEP Program, many older adults have been assisted with skills training to help them transition back into the workforce. Wallace Community College could not be happier with our partnership with



Vincent Vincent and Nadine Wilson, SCSEP Participant

the Senior Employment program."

Stated SCSEP Project Director Barbara Knight, "We are consistently encouraging SCSEP participants to get out there, be life-long learners and take advantage of every opportunity to improve their skills through our local colleges. Otherwise, they are going to be left behind. All program participants in adjoining counties were encouraged to attend the Career Fair as this is a wonderful opportunity for older adults to see that help is available when they finally make up their minds to further their education."



**Barbara Knight,  
Program Director**  
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## Regional Congressional Offices Participate in 2013 SEARP&DC Regional Project Tour

SEARP&DC hosted its annual Regional Congressional Project Tour on May 23rd for staff members from U.S. Representative Martha Roby and Senator Jeff Sessions' Dothan and Montgomery offices. This tour consisted of a full day van tour of eight (8) successful regional projects to highlight the benefits of federal and state grant and loan funded projects that were provided to several Southeast Alabama communities and businesses. The following projects were visited:

- City of Headland Wiregrass Transit Authority Public Transit Connection Project
- Headland Head Start and Early Head Start Programs
- Town of Newville CDBG Municipal Water Tank Project
- Houston–Love Memorial Library - Senior Aides

- City of Ozark CDBG Housing Rehabilitation and Street Improvements Project
- Wiregrass 211 Call Center Assistance Program
- Alabama's Organic Dairy Farm Loan Project
- City of Slocomb CDBG Fire/Rescue Building Project

Taking part in the tour were local representatives from Representative Roby's Dothan office: Joe Williams and Lori Ward and Senator Sessions Montgomery and Dothan offices: Cecelia Meeks and Lindsey Grubbs. Also participating were Houston County Commission Chairman Mark Culver, District 87 State Representative Donnie Chesteen, Slocomb Mayor Rob Hinson, Newville Mayor Kent Whiddon and Ozark City Clerk Melissa Robinson.



**City of Ozark**



**Houston–Love Memorial Library**



**Wiregrass 211 Call Center**



**Town of Newville**

## New SEARP&DC Board Members, cont.



**Mr. Charles W. (Chic) Gary,**  
Dale County Commissioner  
District 3

Dale County Commissioner Charles W. (Chic) Gary was recently appointed to the SEARP&DC Board of Directors. He is the owner of Gary Mercantile, LLC and managing partner in Rosehill Landfill LLC. Mr. Gary is an active member of the Midland City United Methodist Church and served three terms on the Midland City Town Council. Mr. Gary is Vice-Chairman of the Board for the Vivian B. Adams School in Ozark. He was elected to the Dale County Commission in 2010 representing District 3.



**Mr. Bill Godwin,** Chairman  
Covington County Commission

Mr. Willie L. (Bill) Godwin Jr., Covington County Commission Chairman was recently appointed to the SEARP&DC Board of Directors. Chairman Godwin was elected to the Covington County Commission in 2012. He is a 1962 graduate of Pleasant Home High School and graduated from Auburn University with a B.S. Degree in Agricultural Engineering. Upon graduation from Auburn University, he was commissioned as an officer in the U.S. Army Reserve. After serving one tour in Vietnam and completing 27 years of commissioned service, he retired at the rank of Lt. Colonel. He has owned and operated a diversified farming operation for 45 years. He is also a graduate of

Auburn University Agricultural Leaders Program. Chairman Godwin is involved in other activities that include 35 years as a supervisor for the Covington County Soil and Water Conservation District. He also served on the Alabama State Soil and Water Committee. He has served on the Covington County School Board. Chairman Godwin is married to Judy; they have 4 children, 11 grandchildren, and one great grandchild. He and his wife are active in their church and he has been a member of Gideons International for 28 years.



**Mr. Steve McKinnon,**  
Dale County Commissioner,  
District 2

Mr. Steve McKinnon was recently appointed to the SEARP&DC Board of Directors. Mr. McKinnon was born and raised in Coffee County and currently resides in Dale County. He is the owner/operator of L&M Cleaners in Daleville. He was appointed to the Dale County Commission (District 2) by former Governor Bob Riley following the death of Commissioner Glenn Grantham and was elected to a full term in 2010 and re-elected again in 2012. Commissioner McKinnon serves on the Dale County and State Republican Party Executive Committees. Mr. McKinnon also serves on the Executive Board of the Wiregrass Regional Economic Development Corporation; Dale County Solid Waste Authority and the Daleville Chamber of Commerce. In his spare time, he is an avid outdoorsman.



**Mr. Dean Smith,**  
Coffee County Commissioner,  
District 1

Mr. Dean Smith was recently appointed to the SEARP&DC Board of Directors. Mr. Smith was elected to the Coffee County Commission District 1 in 2008 and re-elected in 2012 unopposed. He is retired from Alatec Apparel Corporation as an Industrial Engineer and also retired from Covington Industries and Shell Oil Company. He is a graduate of Elba High School and Troy University. Mr. Smith spent seven years on active duty with the Alabama National Guard. He is married to Pam Davis Smith a teacher with the Elba City School System and they have two children, Dina and Dusty and 3 grandchildren.



**Mr. Jack Tibbs, Jr.**  
Mayor, City of Eufaula

Mr. Jack Tibbs was recently appointed to the SEARP&DC Board of Directors by the Barbour County Commission. Mayor Tibbs has over 35 years of business management and marketing experience most being in Barbour County. He spent 20 years with Boyd Transportation and served as Director of Operations. He is the founder and owner of StrikeZone Lure Company, 1999 to present. He is married to Suzann Suddath Tibbs and they have 5 children and 4 grandchildren. Mayor Tibbs is an avid outdoorsman and enjoys hunting, fishing and golf. He is serving as the 32nd Mayor of the City of Eufaula.

## New SEARP&DC Board Members, cont.



**Ms. Claudia Wigglesworth**  
Mayor, City of Daleville

Ms. Claudia Wigglesworth was recently appointed to the SEARP&DC Board of Directors by the Dale County Commission. She is the newly elected Mayor of Daleville. She served one term on the Daleville City Council. She is a career military officer, retiring from the Army as a Lieutenant Colonel in 2005. Her military career spanned 22 years with a wide variety of assignments both in the United States and abroad. She is a life member Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6020 and a life member of the Military Officers Association of America, Fort Rucker Chapter. Mayor Wigglesworth has a strong sense of community. She is a member of the Daleville Lions Club, where she received the Melvin Jones Fellow in 2011. She serves on the board of the Alabama Lions High School Leadership Forum. She also serves on the board of the Tri-State Community Orchestra.



**Mr. David Money**  
Probate Judge and Chairman,  
Henry County Commission

Mr. Money was recently appointed to the SEARP&DC Board. He was elected Chairman and Probate Judge in November, 2012; Former Owner/President of David Money Ford, Abbeville, AL.; Abbeville City Council 1976-1864; Mayor of Abbeville 1984-1988; Past President of Abbeville Kiwanis Club; Abbeville Chamber of Commerce; Abbeville Recreation Board;

Board Member and Past Chairman Wallace College Foundation Board; Past President of the Year, University of Alabama Alumni Association; Lay Leader, Worship Leader and Member of Board of Trustees, Abbeville United Methodist Church and Dothan District of Alabama-West Florida Conference UMC; Married to Karen C. Money; 2 daughters and 2 sons and 5 grandchildren.

### Town of Newton Completes CDBG Project for New Sidewalks and Bike Lane

The Town of Newton recently received a 2012 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) from the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) to construct new sidewalks and a bike path to enhance public safety for Newton's citizens. The \$74,616.00 grant with local funds extended new concrete sidewalks on Highway 134 from the Hartford Street intersection to the Dollar General store. This area was heavily used by elderly pedestrians and others that wanted to walk to access shopping and homes in the neighborhood. The new sidewalks will allow all residents of Newton the ability to safely walk in this area without being in danger from traffic on this portion of heavily traveled State Highway 134. In addition children in Newton also bike and walk to the nearby Newton Elementary School each day. The project designated a bike path along Hartford Street which gives those riding bikes a safe area to ride on Hartford Street. The Town of Newton provided \$8,291.00 of local funds to the project. SEARP&DC assisted with project administration and Praestare Engineering of Dothan served as the project engineer. According to residents in Newton many people have already been spotted enjoying the new sidewalks and bike path made possible through this State of Alabama grant project.



**Andrew Windham,**  
Regional Planner

Andrew can be reached at 334-794-4093 ext. 1409 or [awindham@searpdc.org](mailto:awindham@searpdc.org)



## Geneva County Partners with the City of Taylor for Extension of Public Water

For the last several years, the Geneva County Commission has partnered with local water systems to provide new or improved water service to rural areas within the county. The most recent partnership has been with the City of Taylor to provide new water service to residents in the Newton Creek Road area in northeastern Geneva County.

In 2012, Geneva County was awarded \$137,630.25 in Community Development Block Grant funding for the City of Taylor to extend public water service from the northern end of Newton Creek Road, near County Road 68, along populated areas of Newton Creek Road and Man Hall Road. The City of Taylor has pledged \$15,292.25 in local matching funds. The water improvements will allow for safe access to water to approximately 19 households and the area will have better fire



Pictured left to right: **ANDREW WINDHAM**, SEARP&DC; **TOBY SEAY**, Geneva Co. Commissioner District 3; **GARY SHIELDS**, Geneva Co. Commissioner District 2; Probate Judge **FRED HAMIC**, Geneva County Commission Chairman; **LARRY WHIDDON**, Mayor City of Taylor; **JOHNNY WINDHAM**, Geneva Co. Commissioner District 4; **HENLEY HICKS**, Geneva Co. Commissioner District 1

protection, with five (5) fire hydrants installed in the project area. Taylor Mayor Larry Whiddon stated that “anytime we can extend our water system, it is a wonderful thing. It is very important to the City of Taylor to help service water needs in rural areas. Also, our water system is the primary source for our revenue, as is the case for most small towns. We are very aggressive in expansion of our water system. Any time we can get a grant to assist in this process, we like to explore those opportunities.” Mayor Whiddon also commented on the support of Geneva County and SEARP&DC, “the

City of Taylor is very appreciative of the support provided by the Geneva County Commission with partnering in the Newton Creek project. I also appreciate everything SEARP&DC does for us, as they keep us small towns in line through assisting us properly with grant regulations. We have had a great relationship with SEARP&DC in my almost 30 years of being an elected official.”



**Scott Farmer,**  
**Community Development Director**  
Scott can be reached at 334-794-4093 ext. 1412 or [sfarmer@searpc.org](mailto:sfarmer@searpc.org)

## Columbia's James N. Green Senior Citizens Center Completed with Community Development Block Grant Funding

The senior citizens of Columbia are enjoying a highly anticipated new senior citizens center thanks largely to a 2011 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) award to the Town of Columbia. On September 17th, many local officials and grateful citizens gathered together to dedicate the new facility, named in honor of former longtime Columbia Mayor, James N. Green. The new center spans 2,070 square feet and contains a new kitchen with all new appliances as well as an activity room and several smaller meeting rooms. The new senior center also contains a safe room with concrete reinforced walls where citizens can gather in severe weather events. The James N. Green Senior Center is located at 301 South Main Street on land that was donated to the project by the Town of Columbia. The SEARP&DC assisted the Town of Columbia in securing and administering the \$250,000.00 CDBG grant. Senior Citizens in Columbia have been without a senior facility to gather since June of 2010 when the old senior center was damaged in a severe storm in



Shown in the photo at the James N. Green Sign are L-R: Mrs. Sandy Lancaster, Mayor Lanny Lancaster and Center Director, Ms. Cecelia White

May of 2010 and was subsequently condemned in June of 2010. The seniors were temporarily meeting in the old town hall in downtown Columbia, however the temporary location was not handicap accessi-

ble and presented a multitude of safety problems for the town's seniors. There are currently 79 very active seniors involved in Columbia's senior center activities and they were very excited to see this project come to fruition. The project architect was Polyengineering, Inc. and the general contractor was Lewis and Associates of Dothan. The Houston County Commission assisted in supporting the project by preparing and leveling the site before construction began as well as paving the parking lot at the end of the project. Construction of the project is complete and the 79 active seniors are enjoying this new activity facility by participating in daily lunches, as well as nutritional, health, safety and educational programs offered by the center.



**Andrew Windham,  
Regional Planner**

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## Rural Planning Organization Holds Semi-Annual Meetings

The Rural Planning Organization (RPO) is a transportation planning process that serves as an interface between the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) and rural local governments that are located outside of a metropolitan area. SEARP&DC is the facilitator for the RPO that covers the seven counties in southeast Alabama. During the months of August and September the RPO held countywide meetings in each of the seven counties. Also during

September the RPO's Technical and Policy Committee held meetings. Local officials are encouraged to attend these meetings in order to communicate their needs and questions to ALDOT. ALDOT representatives will be present at these meetings and are eager to answer any questions that local officials may have. The RPO holds meetings semi-annually in the spring and fall. The meetings are typically held at the Daleville Convention Center located on the corner of

Daleville Avenue and Highway 84 in Daleville. If you have any questions regarding the RPO process please feel free to contact Andrew Windham, Regional Planner at 334-794-4093, [awindham@searpc.org](mailto:awindham@searpc.org).



**Andrew Windham,  
Regional Planner**

Andrew can be reached at 334-794-4093 ext. 1409 or [awindham@searpc.org](mailto:awindham@searpc.org)

## New SEARP&DC County Loan Administration Board Members

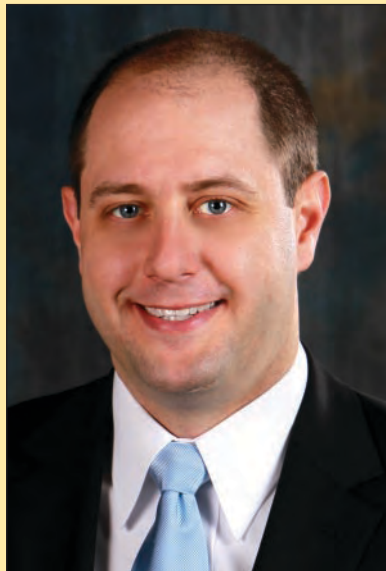
**H**arry Grier, Loan Administration Board Member from Houston County, is the owner of Arch Business Consulting, Inc. Arch Business Consulting concentrates on advising management and owners of businesses with fewer than 25 employees or \$3 million in annual revenues. Prior to starting Arch Business Consulting, Harry was the Controller for Sanders Security, Inc. for 8 1/2 years; was a commercial lender for Regions Bank in Dothan for 4 years, and a consumer banker



for Wachovia Bank in Atlanta for 9 years. He graduated from the University of Georgia in 1990 with a BBA

in Finance and a concentration in Economics. He also currently serves as the Treasurer of the Alabama Alarm Association and is on the Advisory Board of the Alabama Small Business Development Center Network. Harry lives in Dothan. When not working, he enjoys camping with his family, following NASCAR, and antiques. Harry can be reached at ArchBusinessConsulting@gmail.com or by phone at 334-714-3199.

**J**onathan Tullos, Loan Administration Board Member from Coffee County, is a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, where he earned a B.S. in Business Management. Upon graduation, he was stationed at Fort Rucker, Alabama, where he attended and completed helicopter flight school. He served as an active duty aviation officer in the United States Army before he was honorably discharged. He transitioned into Federal Employment as a Department of the Army Civilian, working



for Aviation Technical Test Center, Redstone Test Center, and The Directorate of Simulation. During this time, he earned a Master's in

Business Administration from Auburn University and completed the required courses to later sit for the state exam to earn his real estate salesperson's license in the State of Alabama. He currently works for the Wiregrass Economic Development Corporation as the Executive Director. He is an active member of the First United Methodist Church of Enterprise and many other professional and charitable organizations. He also serves as the President of the West Point Society of the Wiregrass.

# SEARP&DC Head Start Steadfast in Serving Children and Families

Head Start opened the 2013 – 2014 school year to face major challenges of sequestration and a federal shut-down. While the SEARP&DC Head Start program continues to be impacted by the funding reductions of sequestration, the federal shut-down has thus far not affected our program operations.

However, sequestration cuts have resulted in employee layoffs and a short furlough causing a brief closure of classes. Beyond these challenges our Head Start program continues to provide services to children and families.

In our continued effort to provide Head Start children with a high level of school readiness, we recently added Teaching Strategies GOLD assessments. Teaching Strategies GOLD offers a revolutionary approach to early childhood assessment. It is a user-friendly and inclusive assessment tool that enables teachers to increase the effectiveness of their assessments while having more time to spend with children. It's easy to use, it's effective, and will work well with our current Creative Curriculum. Teaching Strategies GOLD is founded upon research-based objectives that include predictors of school success. It is aligned with our state's early learning guidelines and the Federal Head Start Child Development Early Learning Framework. This will help our teachers focus on what matters most for our children's success.



Classroom scene at Headland Head Start



Geneva Head Start Children

As part of the local community, our Head Start Centers receive visits from local law enforcement and fire department

personnel to provide information pertaining to their responsibilities along with helpful personal safety tips. In recognition of Fire Safety Week our Head Start Centers were recently visited by local firemen that provided the children with fire safety activities and a fire safety check list to take home to their parents.



Florala Head Start learning about fire safety with Florala Fire Department



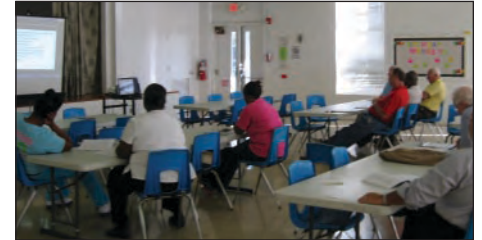
Opp Head Start Fire Safety Day with the Opp Fire Department

Although we can not provide bus transportation for our Head Start children, the federal regulations require us to provide general transportation training. This training is a vital part of our transition from Head Start to public schools where bus transportation safety is of the utmost importance. As part of our transportation training, local public schools provide onsite training where Head Start children have an opportunity for their first onboard school bus experience.



Opp Head Start Bus Transportation  
(Courtesy of Opp City Schools)

We are appreciative of the participation and involvement of local education agencies, and municipal and county governments in support of our Head Start Program. Special recognition is given to our Board of Directors for their support and interest in Head Start. Board Members' recent participation in program governance training is vital to meeting Federal Head Start Regulations.



Head Start Policy Council Training at Opp Head Start Center

Our Head Start program is also dependent upon continued support of our Congressional Delegation. We are appreciative that representatives of our Congressional Delegation visited with us to observe the activities and services provided in our Headland Head Start Center. As is evident by ongoing federal funding challenges, we are always in need of some help from our friends.



Opp Mayor John Bartholemew (4th from left) and Opp Head Start Center Director, Lisha Jackson (2nd from right) with Opp City maintenance workers performing work at Opp Head Start Center



Headland Mayor Ray Marler (seated) Standing L-R: Mary Ethel Williams, SEARP&DC Board Member; Minnie Vickers, Headland Head Start Center Director and Headland Council Member Kendrick Spurling. Thanks to City of Headland for the Head Start Center roof replacement.



**Ron Holliman,**  
**Head Start Program Director**  
Ron can be reached at  
334-794-4093 ext.1404 or  
rholliman@searpc.org

## SEARP&DC Staff Attends Troy University Southeast Community Development Institute

Rachel Armstrong, Economic Development Specialist, and Andrew Windham, Regional Planner, recently attended Year 1 of Troy University's Southeast Community Development Institute (CDI) at the Troy University-Montgomery campus. The Southeast CDI is designed to train those engaged, or wishing to engage, in community development. Techniques taught are beneficial to all in the community and revolve around management, leadership, and basic community development principles, which include economic, workforce, and leadership development. A few of the topics discussed were Community Development Principles, Site Selection and the Role of Data in the Process, Community Assessment and Asset Mapping, Visioning, Identifying and Working with Stakeholders, Workforce Development, Community



Rachel Armstrong and Andrew Windham

Development Funding, Tax Incentives, Marketing Your Community to Drive Economic Development, Branding Your Community, and Entrepreneurship and Community Development. One presenter expressed that the three major components of Economic Development are Recruit, Business Retention and Expansion, and New Business

Start-ups. Another presenter expressed the five major categories to look at when performing a SWOT Analysis of your community are Business Development, Workforce Development, Physical Infrastructure, Social Infrastructure, Heritage Preservation, and Civic Infrastructure. Yet, another expressed that the Vision of a Community should be an ideal and unique view of the future, an attractive and desirable target, a clear and perceived one that is attainable, one that gives sense of purpose, and lastly a vision that comes from the heart of the community. Three key components of Workforce Development discussed were Recruiting, Retaining, and Renewing businesses in your community. If you would like to know more about the Southeast Community Development Institute, please visit <http://trojan.troy.edu/continuing-education/cdi.html>.

## SEARP&DC Assists With Successful 2013 CDBG Grants for Regional Local Governments

Several Southeast Alabama communities have recently received notification of approved grant proposals from multiple federal and state agencies. Listed below are recently awarded projects that were assisted by SEARP&DC Community and Economic Development departments.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program: Nine (9) Southeast Alabama communities recently received great news of funded 2013 proposals from the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA). These grants were developed by SEARP&DC Staff.

Community	Project Type	Grant Amount
Coffee County	Water System Improvements	\$350,000.00
Town of Ariton	Street Improvements	\$184,300.00
City of Ashford	Water & Sewer Improvements	\$289,941.00
Town of Black	Recreation Improvements	\$95,880.45
Town of Gordon	Senior Center	\$249,382.00
City of Headland	Street Improvements	\$119,860.00
Town of Heath	Water System Improvements	\$250,000.00
Town of Malvern	Water System Improvements	\$317,000.00
Town of River Falls	Street Improvements	\$250,000.00
<b>CDBG Total</b>		<b>\$2,106,363.45</b>

SEARP&DC congratulates these local governments and is excited about the improvements to be implemented with the assistance of valuable programs, such as CDBG.

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## SEARP&DC WELCOMES NEW EMPLOYEE LaKisha Williams



Ms. LaKisha Williams joined SEARP&DC in May 2013 as a Fiscal Assistant in the Accounting Department. LaKisha is a native of Headland and graduated from Headland High School and Wallace Community College. She is attending Troy University, Dothan and is nearing completion of her degree in accounting. She comes to SEARP&DC after working for 10 years with Twitchell Corporation in Dothan. We welcome LaKisha to our staff!

*In Memory:*

*Mr. Robert Graham Stephens*

*Coffee County*

*December 29, 1922-August 30, 2013*

*SEARP&DC Boardmember: 1991-2010*



*And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. REV 21:4*