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SEARP&DC ANNUAL REGIONAL MEETING, SEPTEMBER, 2010

Daleville Convention Center
Daleville, AL

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ANNUAL MEETING Photos 2010



Cogongrass: An Aggressive Invader

Cogongrass (*Imperata cylindrica*) is an invasive, non-native grass that is spreading across Alabama. The plant is native to Asia and was accidentally brought into Grand Bay, Alabama in 1912 by shipping crates.

Cogongrass is extremely fast growing and is found in a wide range of soil types. It has invaded nearly 500 million acres worldwide. It is known as the perfect weed because it thrives in full sun, but is also

able to survive in deeply shaded areas. Cogongrass is fire tolerant and also imposes a severe wildfire risk due to the intense heat generated.

All professionals that deal with land management issues should be aware of the devastating effects of Cogongrass. Horticulturists, turf grass growers, farmers, right-of-way crews, and foresters should report infestations to their county AFC office because of the damage it can cause. Once it infests an area recreational value is lost. Other obvious problems are that it inhibits productive land use and destroys wildlife habitats. It causes other detrimental issues as well, such as degrading ecosystems and diminishing biodiversity. In order to correctly identify the nuisance you should be able to learn to recognize its leaves, seed heads, and rhizomes.

The leaf blades can grow up to 6 feet long and are approximately 1 inch wide. Cogongrass has a prominent



mid-rib/vein with a whitish hue that is often off center. The edge of the blade is finely serrated like the blade of a saw. Some leaves stand very erect, while others may droop or lie flat. The blades are often light yellowish-green in color, but could have a reddish cast in fall and winter. They turn brown after a frost or freeze.

The seed head has a cylindrical shape that can range from 2-8 inches in length. Cogongrass flowers appear to be silvery white in color and are light and fluffy like dandelions. Blooms appear from late March to mid June. This unique plant has the uncanny ability to bloom even when its leaves are brown.

The rhizomes or roots have a dense mat, as well as a rapid regenerative capacity. The central core resists breakage. They also have sharp points and are strongly segmented. Multiple buds appear in each rhizome section, and it is covered in flaky scales. The roots can penetrate soil to a

depth of 4 feet, but most are found in the top 6 to 10 inches of the soil.

In order to control the infestation of Cogongrass a certified herbicide applicator will apply sufficient herbicide to the root mat. This is often the most difficult part of Cogongrass eradication because the mat is so dense that it makes it hard for the herbicide to reach

the roots. Infestations require multiple treatments over a 2-3 year period to completely eliminate the rhizomes.

If you would like to report a Cogongrass infestation, have any questions, or would like more information contact your local Alabama Forestry Commission office or visit our website at www.forestry.alabama.gov.

Article submitted by Nicholas Granger, Coffee County Forester AFC



SaeHaeSung Alabama, Inc, Expansion: New Jobs for the City of Andalusia



Pictured in front of the new state-of-the-art stamping machine are (L to R): Emily Waters, SEARP&DC; Jeong-Hwan Bae, CFO -SaeHaeSung Alabama, Inc.; Mayor Earl Johnson, City of Andalusia; John Thompson, City Clerk-City of Andalusia

The City of Andalusia and the Utilities Board of the City of Andalusia were recently awarded a \$1,515,000 Economic Development Administration (EDA) Public Works grant and a \$560,000 Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) Economic Development Infrastructure grant to support the expansion of SaeHaeSung Alabama, Inc. at the Andalusia Industrial Park.

EDA funds in conjunction with ADECA funds and local funds of \$955,000 being provided by the Utilities Board of the City of Andalusia will allow for a \$3,030,000 investment in water and sewer improvements at the Andalusia Industrial Park and the construction of a new well. Project improvements will assist in SaeHaeSung's expansion plans including the addition of

new jobs at the Andalusia facility bringing total employment to 230.

SaeHaeSung Alabama, Inc. is an automotive industry tier two supplier of automotive parts to Hwa Shin in Alabama and Korea, and to Hyundai and Kia motor manufacturing and has been in continuous operation in Andalusia since 2006. The company is growing and expanding due to new contracts within the automotive industry and the addition of additional stamping lines to be installed in the Andalusia manufacturing plant. This growth is requiring the relocation of its operational base from its current location in the Andalusia Industrial Park to a new larger 85,000 sq. ft. facility adjacent to the current facility. "This new

150 plant is allowing SaeHaeSung to expand their production to include a major metal stamping operation," stated Mayor Earl Johnson.

SEARP&DC prepared and submitted the EDA Public Works and ADECA Economic Development Infrastructure grant applications on behalf of the City and Utilities Board and will be providing the administration. Engineering design and inspection services are being provided by the Andalusia office of Goodwyn, Mills and Cawood, Inc. This project is a continuing example of local, state and federal agencies partnering together to fund economic development infrastructure, support new jobs, and to build development capacity in Southeast Alabama.

"The investments made into this project by SaeHaeSung, the city of Andalusia, the Utilities Board, the state of Alabama and the Economic Development Administration is having and will continue to have a tremendous impact on the city of Andalusia and Covington County."
Earl Johnson, Mayor



Emily Waters, Economic Development Director
Emily can be reached at 334-794-4093 ext. 1414 or ewaters@searpc.org

SEARP&DC Conducting Water Mapping Planning Effort in Henry County

Regional councils in Alabama are currently assisting local governments in mapping their existing water infrastructure. The Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (SEARP&DC) is participating in this process to partner with regional communities in the mapping process. Most rural water systems in Alabama rely on experienced employees' knowledge of the systems to locate water infrastructure. If map products exist for the systems, they are usually outdated and inaccurate. SEARP&DC is partnering with local water systems and the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) in developing standardized water system data sets and map products. Utilizing sub-meter Global Positioning Systems (GPS), SEARP&DC is collecting features of water systems such as water mains, fire hydrants, and valves. The GPS collection utilizes a combination of satellites orbiting in the sky and a handheld receiver utilized on the ground. In a process called triangulation, the satellites and ground receiver pinpoint precise locations of assets on the ground. The data that are collected with the GPS are required to meet accuracy standards of less than one meter. This means that all of the data collected with the GPS are required to be represented on the map or in the dataset as one meter or less from its actual location on the

ground. The field data is then transferred into a Geographic Information System (GIS) where it can be edited and manipulated in order to create a digital map product. The digital map products will not only be accurate, but also have the ability to be updated as changes are made to the water system. This ability to update the dataset and maps makes GIS a powerful



Pictured above are SEARP&DC Regional Planner Andrew Windham and Abbeville Mayor Ryan Blalock.

asset management and inventory tool for use by our local governments.

Over the past year,

SEARP&DC has been working in Henry County with the Henry County Water Authority and the Abbeville Water Works and Sewer Board. Other water systems within Henry County to be mapped include the municipal systems in Headland and Newville, as well as areas in the Baker Hill Water Authority and the Wills Crossroads Water Authority service areas. Employees of the local

water authorities have been cooperating with this process by using their knowledge of their water systems to assist in locating the water infrastructure to be mapped. Working together, SEARP&DC staff and water system employees are locating and mapping all pumps, tanks, hydrants, and valves on the system. After all of these entities are mapped, work begins on collecting the locations of water mains. Once the field work phase is complete, SEARP&DC staffs download the data into the GIS software and begin the process of creating a complete dataset for the water system. Once the data has been compiled and edited, regional water systems will have a comprehensive inventory of its water system assets. Abbeville Mayor Ryan Blalock says he expects the system to provide faster response times for the fire department in emergencies. The coordination and support of local leaders and water authority personnel has been critical to the success of this project. The mapping of these water systems will ensure that rural water systems are no longer vulnerable to uncontrollable circumstances such as employee attrition and inaccurate maps. At the completion of this project, water systems throughout the state and within our region will have access to accurate maps to assist them in asset inventory and infrastructure management.



Andrew Windham, Regional Planner
Andrew can be reached at: 334-794-4093 ext. 1409 or awindham@searpc.org

TEAMWORK + EFFORT = EMPLOYMENT



Pictured above L to R - Barbara Knight, Senior Employment Program Director; Penny Rotolo, Human Resources Manager SEARP&DC; and Thomas Solomon, SEARP&DC Executive Director.

For Faye Moring, the decision to hire Ms. Eleanor Flippo was a no brainer – she needed an individual possessing clerical and customer service skills and a willingness to learn. Not only did Ms. Flippo possess the necessary skills, she showed drive and initiative - traits valued by any employer in today’s workplace. Ms. Moring is Fiscal Director with Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission, one of five host agencies recognized for employing Senior Trainees during the past program year. Agency representatives were presented plaques by Executive Director Tom Solomon during the annual Host Agency Supervisor’s meeting sponsored by the Senior Employment Program during the month of October.

The decision to accept the part-

time position was not very difficult for Ms. Flippo either.. After submitting countless applications - throughout the community, she was finally being given an opportunity to prove that she could not only do the job, but do it well. Having searched unsuccessfully for two years for a permanent position, Ms. Flippo stated she gave up

looking and went back to school to refresh her skills. Being a prior business owner, she admits enrolling in the Senior Employment Program was a humbling experience and the last straw however, she was assured if she was willing to do her best, project staff would do their best to place her in a position where she could prove herself and possibly be hired.

The Human Resource Development Corporation, Wiregrass Adult Care, LLC, Town of New Brockton, and the Town of

Gordon also received plaques for employing Senior Trainees during the past year. Ira Brown and Peggy Bess of Enterprise, Alabama were employed after training with Coffee County Adult Day Care in Enterprise, Alabama. Mona Meadows of Wiregrass Rehabilitation Center stated “Senior Trainees have been a great benefit to our agency.” “They love the clients and the clients love them, which makes the centers a good fit for seniors desiring employment in this type of work.”

After training with the Town of Gordon, Mr. Ozell Smith was employed as a part-time City Worker. Mayor Charles Dismukes stated “Showing the qualities desired in an employee led to the Town of Gordon hiring him (Mr. Smith) on as a part-time employee. His per-



Pictured above L to R -Barbara Knight, Senior Employment Program Director; Gwen Howard, Town of Gordon; and Thomas Solomon, SEARP&DC Executive Director.



Pictured above L to R - Meria Nelson, Human Resource Development Corporation; Barbara Knight, Senior Employment Program Director; and Thomas Solomon, SEARP&DC Executive Director.



Pictured above L to R - Barbara Knight, Senior Employment Program Director; Alberta King, Wiregrass Adult Care, and Thomas Solomon, SEARP&DC Executive Director.

formance proves the contributions that senior citizens can bring to employers and society.” These sentiments were echoed by his supervisor Gwen Howard who stated “Mr. Ozell Smith is the perfect example of quality workmanship in the workplace. Serving as Mr. Smith’s supervisor has been a delight. He is very conscientious of his job. His motto is, “any job worth doing is worth doing right.”

With the aging of the Baby Boomers, more employers are learning the value of older workers who are known for their patience, stability and a strong work ethic. Project Director Barbara Knight stated “the Senior Employment Program is an excellent opportunity for older workers who need help getting back into the workforce. Program participants are constantly reminded to view their

assignments as potential jobs. We constantly encourage them to do their best because they never know when positions may become available with their host agency. If they have done their best, there will be no hesitation on the part of their supervisors to go to bat

for them and recommend them for those positions. We have seen it happen time and time again for those individuals willing to work hard and be a team player. As stated by Mrs. Ms. Flippo, “No matter where you are or where you have been, you can always start over, but you must be willing to start at the bottom”. “It is important to be a team player - you have to be humble and say yes, I’ll try.”



Pictured above L to R - Barbara Knight, Senior Employment Program Director; Mayor Lenwood Herron, Town of New Brockton, and Thomas Solomon, SEARP&DC Executive Director.



Barbara Knight, Program Director
call (334) 794-4093 ext. 1422 or 1-800-489-7606 or email bknight@searpc.org

Staff Members Attend Economic Development Conference in Atlanta

Emily Waters and Rachel Armstrong from the Economic Development Department attended the Southeast Workforce and Economic Development Conference, "Beyond the Storms: Achieving Competitiveness in a Changing World", sponsored by the U. S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration, U. S. Department of Labor, and Southern Economic Development Council, Inc. on October 24th through October 26th in Atlanta, Georgia. Ms. Waters and Ms. Armstrong received training on EDA's new grant application submission and processing requirements and new reporting requirements due to the Transparency Act recently passed by Congress. EDA will now have quarterly funding cycles with more timely feedback and notification of decisions. In addition, as a result of the new Transparency Act, entities are required to report any Federal grant of \$25,000 or more received on or after October 1, 2010. The grant information will be made

available on the publically searchable website www.USASpending.gov.



Pictured L to R: Phil Paradice, Regional Director Atlanta EDA; Emily Waters, Economic Development Director SEARP&DC; and Rachel Armstrong, SEARP&DC Economic Development Specialist.

The Conference focused on best practices and current thinking of what can be done to help our nation's economy recover during this critical economic time. Ms. Jane Oates, Assistant Secretary of the U. S. Department of Labor and Mr. John Fernandez, Assistant Secretary for Economic Development of the U. S. Department of Commerce, opened the Conference with a discussion on Vision for Global Competitiveness followed by a round table discussion on Surviving Major Economic

Dislocations. Participants in the round table discussion included Mayor Karl Dean of Nashville, Tennessee and Frank DiBello, President of Space Florida, Kennedy Space Center. Other sessions focused on Building Research and Innovation Clusters, Building Competitiveness through Global Trade, and Big Ideas Supporting Entrepreneurial Development. Mr. Rajeev Dhawan, Director of Economic Forecasting Center at Georgia State University's J. Mack Robinson College of Business, made a presentation on the Economic Outlook for the Southeast. Mr. Dhawan's forecast stated the economic recovery was slowly progressing and job growth would remain slow for the near future. Ms. Waters and Ms. Armstrong also networked with many area representatives from the EDA Atlanta Regional office about current and future projects.



For more information Rachel Armstrong can be reached at 334-794-4093 ext 1411 or email rarmstrong@searpc.org

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SEARP&DC LOAN PROGRAMS

SEARP&DC'S Revolving Loan Fund and Microloan Funds are seeking qualified new and expanding businesses for the loan programs. If you are a business person, lending institution, or know someone with interest in these programs, please contact Emily Waters or Rachel Armstrong at 334-794-4093. For more information, or to download our application, visit www.searpc.org.

SEARP&DC Assists with Successful Regional Grant Awards

Several Southeast Alabama local governments 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: Ten (10) Southeast Alabama communities recently received great news of funded 2010 proposals from the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA).

Community	Project Type	Grant Amount
Coffee County	Water System Rehabilitation	\$400,000.00
Dale County	Water System Extension	\$372,494.00
City of Elba	Street Improvements	\$250,000.00
Geneva County	Water System Extension	\$400,000.00
Town of Lockhart	Sewer System Improvements	\$400,000.00
Town of Napier Field	Sewer System Rehabilitation	\$144,217.00
Town of Newville	Water Tank	\$400,000.00
City of Opp	Sewer System Rehabilitation	\$499,239.00
City of Samson	Sewer System Rehabilitation	\$400,000.00
City of Slocomb	Fire / Rescue Building	\$249,058.00
CDBG Total		\$3,515,008.00

Delta Regional Authority (DRA) State Grant Funding Program: This federal program, eligible for Barbour County communities, recently announced their 2010 awarded projects.

Community	Project Type	Grant Amount
City of Eufaula	Drainage Improvements	\$250,000.00
DRA Total		\$250,000.00

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Program: Two (2) Southeast Alabama communities recently received notices of award from the ADECA Recreation Programs office.

Community	Project Type	Grant Amount
Town of Clayhatchee	Park Improvements	\$12,528.00
City of Daleville	Park Improvements	\$48,900.00
LWCF Total		\$61,428.00

2010 CDBG/DRA/LWCF Grant Award Total **\$3,826,436.00**

SEARP&DC congratulates these regional local governments and is excited about the improvements to be implemented through the assistance of these valuable grant funds.



**Scott Farmer,
Community
Development Director**

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

SEARP&DC Head Start Completes Historic Facility Changes

As we near the end of year 2010, we are completing major facility changes that will define the future of our Head Start Program. Those changes provide for improved facilities for our Head Start Centers in Andalusia, Headland, and Opp. Changes in Andalusia and Headland will provide Center based services for Early Head Start Children ages 0 to 3 year old. The relocation of our Opp Head Start Center provides our Head Start children and staff with a much improved facility.

but required frequent and costly maintenance. Upon the relocation of the South Highland Elementary School, Mayor H.D. Edgar led the effort to make that facility available to our Head Start Program. With Mayor Edgar's leadership, the support of the City Council, and cooperation of Opp City School Superintendent Michael



Pictured L to R: Brandi Wallace, Early Head Start Director and members of the Andalusia SEARP&DC Early Head Start Staff.



Opp Head Start Center

Opp Head Start opened its doors over 34 years ago in the old school building on Hardin Street. The building originally constructed in 1935 served our program very well

Smithart, the relocation to the old South Highland facility has been completed. This high quality facility provides us a modern classroom and lunch-room building that will be adequate for current and future expansion. As we are expanding our Head Start

In the spring of 2009 we submitted our application for stimulus (ARRA) funds that were being offered for Early Head Start Expansion. We received approval of our Early Head Start expansion funding in late December of 2009.



Mayor Edgar celebrates the new center with Staff and Parents.

In June of 2010 we opened our Early Head Start Program to provide home based services. After experiencing unexpected planning, development, and construction delays we recently completed our classroom renovation at Andalusia and Headland. Our Andalusia Early Head Start classroom recently passed the Department of Human Resources (DHR) license



Program to include Early Head Start services in some of our Centers, we believe future expansion will include our Opp Head Start Center and other Centers in our service area.

inspection and we anticipate transitioning our Early Head Start children from home based services to these classrooms in the very near future. Presently we are awaiting DHR's license inspection of our



Headland Early Head Start classes and expect to open them soon.

Subject to available and continued funding from the Department of Health & Human Services, the Early Head Start expansion will provide needed resources to the most vulnerable children and families. These classrooms provide an enhanced early learning environment and continuity of services for children that come from families in poverty. We believe this earlier approach toward learning will ultimately improve program outcomes and better prepare the Head Start children for public school.



**Ron Holliman,
Head Start Program
Director**

Ron can be reached at
334-794-4093 ext.1404

Citizen Helps Make A Difference – GoL Comes To Elba



Pictured L to R: Louise Hornsby, Penny Rotolo, Jack Mullinax, and Everette Kelly.

It was an unusual phone call about 6 months ago when an enthusiastic man called and said, “I have this paper in my hand about computer training for seniors. How do I go about getting it for my town – Elba?” It took a few moments to realize he didn’t want to go to the Enterprise Senior Center. According to him it was too far for Elba citizens to travel. I told him there was not a current location in Elba, but that SEARP&DC was applying for more site licenses and if he found a place where we could operate the program, we would see what we could do if the grant came through in June. I didn’t honestly expect to hear from this man again; I was wrong! He was determined.

June 2010 thankfully brought the award of more site licenses through Senior Services America just days prior to the return phone call from Everette Kelley

as he had promised. Once he realized we had more site licenses, he went into action and contacted several locations to find a perfect location for the Generations on Line (GoL) computer training program for Elba citizens. He found support through the City of Elba and the

National Insurance Company. Jack Mullinax, City Clerk ran additional lines and set computers up that were donated by the National Insurance Company to the Elba Senior Center. When these individuals were asked why they were such strong supporters of this project they gave the following answers: Jack Mullinax stated “The computer age has left our seniors behind and they didn’t have the luxury of having it in school which means it left some of them afraid of it. There is nothing to be afraid of and this program will show them how useful it is.” Louise Hornsby, Center Director, commented that “It is going to mean a lot to the seniors. They will be eventually be able to pay their bills on line. I, myself, want to be in taking it. I can’t wait.” Mr. Kelley naturally had plenty to say. He personally knows and

Continued on page 12

sees at his business, Kelley Foods, how useful the computer is in life. Mr. Kelly stated that he knows enough to get lost on the Internet but knows he wants to know more. He started his quest for this program began when his son gave him a newsletter article, like this one. He stated that he doesn't want credit for bringing the program to Elba. He just believes it is wise for everyone to know how to use it and be able to go on the Internet and receive emails. From where I sat, I could see a man that knows how to step up to "Generations on Line" and we thank Mr. Everette for your community spirit.

Generations on Line is not a class, it is opportunity to learn how to handle the very basics of the computer, use the mouse,

send an email, and travel the Internet with a friendly peer coach named Don Hudson. To earn the certificate each participant completes the very basic segments during several one hour sessions at their own pace with the assistance of a coach that is available Monday through Thursday 8:00 AM through 1:00 PM by calling the Senior Center and scheduling a session at 897-3019. This is open to all seniors age 55 and older in the Elba and surrounding area.

More general information is available by contacting Penny Rotolo, Project Coordinator at 334 794-4093 X 1410 or protolo@searpdc.org. To reserve a session, call the closest location to you: Dothan: Rose Hill Senior Center 334-797-1261 or Houston Library 334-793-9767; Enterprise

Senior Center 334-347-3513; Mary Berry Brown Library at Midland City 334-983-9999; Geneva Senior Center 334-684-3625; Abbeville Senior Center 334 585-5900; Daleville Public Library 334-503-9119; Elba Senior Center 334-897-3010; Slocomb Senior Center 334-886-3115; or Taylor Senior Center 334-677-5536. You only need to be 55 years or older. Don't hesitate, this opportunity won't last forever. Do it now! Encourage parents, grandparents, great-grandparents to come out and actively participate! *They will be pleased and amazed!*



Penny Rotolo
Human Resources
Manager

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

Connecting ALABAMA

ConnectingALABAMA is a multi-year initiative promoting the availability and adoption of broadband internet access throughout the state of Alabama. •The ConnectingAlabama initiative is working with governmental, community and industry leaders from across the state to articulate a clear vision for Alabama's broadband future –



and to develop (and fund) regional technology adoption and growth strategies addressing the needs of communities in all sixty-seven (67) counties through 12 regional action teams. Over the next two years, efforts will focus on encouraging private investment for high-speed internet deployment, and on promoting consumer adoption. Through this effort, ConnectingALABAMA will develop a roadmap for the most efficient approach to realizing broadband accessibility and usage throughout the state. More information can be found at www.connectingAlabama.gov.

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