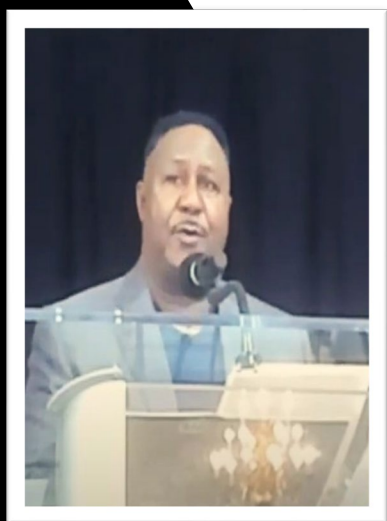


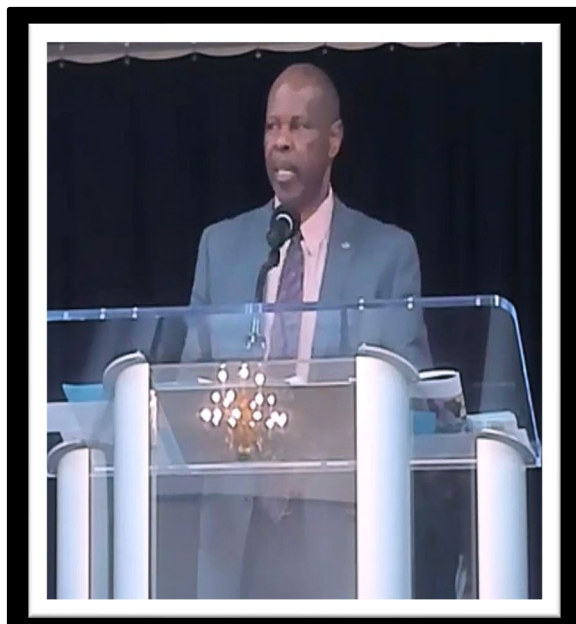
ADVANCER

November 2024

The Legacy of Inheritance of Prosperity with Disparity



Dr. Abraham Carpenter Jr.



James Tillman Sr.



Harvey Williams Jr.

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OUR DEDICATION

With a dedicated team of Board, Staff and Members we leverage our expertise

PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

Establishing partnership with local organizations, businesses, government agencies, under-served and underrepresented farmers, families, ranchers and veterans to expand access to Resources and support.

EDUCATION and TRAINING OUTREACH MEETINGS

Planning and executing successful events, workshops and initiatives that bring together under-served and underrepresented farmers, families, ranchers and veterans and community stakeholders to foster trust, collaboration, and support. Utilizing various communication channels, including social media, newsletters, and community networks, to effectively communicate our message and engage our audience.

On behalf of Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation, we want to take the opportunity to wish our readers, members, partners, and supporters a very Happy Holiday Season. We are successful because of your continued support and encouragement around shared values and goals.

Talk of the Land

Story by Pastor Keith Ross

Samie and son Pastor Keith



SAMIE AND RUTHIE ROSS FARMS

Samie and Ruthie Ross (deceased) started their farm in 1970 based in Aubrey, Arkansas, and just like most family farms all the children, some grandchildren and other relatives have worked on the farm. They have three children Cordette, Brigette (deceased) and Keith as well as six grand and nine great grands.

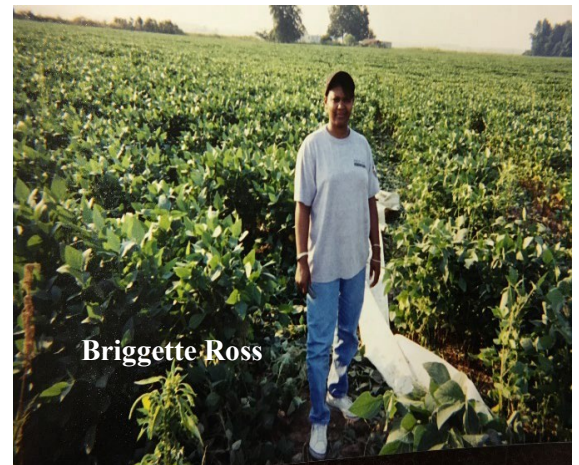
They experienced all the racial bias and discrimination other Black farmers did, however with the help of God and organizations like ALFDC they were able to hold on to their homestead and farmland.

At the height of their operation, they farmed 700+ acres owning 245 acres 235 in cultivation. They farmed soybeans, rice, wheat, sorghum and cotton in the 30 years of their operation. In the 1990's Samie and Ruthie also opened S&R Laundry Mat in Aubrey, Arkansas that helped sustain the small community for many years.

In the 2000's, after USDA stopped financing them, their daughter

Brigette (deceased) farmed the land for a few years until her operation succumbed to the same USDA discrimination. Brigette passed away in 2013 and she also worked on the ALFDC staff for many years. Since that time, the rental of the cropland to local farmers provided their living.

Samie's wife Ruthie passed away in 2019, she also served many years on the ALFDC Board of Directors. Their struggle with ownership of their homestead and farms from the USDA ended in 2023. Now Samie owns all his property and is seeing a dream come true, passing everything they worked for on to their descendants.



Mr. Ross and Ruthie have always been considered good people in the community by providing for their family, as well as feeding and helping anyone they could with their resources. And to this day Samie, at the age of 78, is still doing good.

Proverbs 13:22 Says "A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: ..."



The Ross Family with Grandchildren

Southern Farmers Financial Association Established to Help Farmers

With a focus on 12 states in the Southeast, new institutions will help those interested in farming access low-interest loans, gain technical support to begin farming and stay in operation

ATLANTA, Ga., October 31, 2024— The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and partners announced the launch of the Southern Farmers Financial Association (SFFA), a new cooperatively-owned institution created to increase access to capital for its member-owners to begin farming or strengthen existing small farming operations and agriculture-based businesses in high poverty areas in the Southeast. The organization is supported with \$20 million in initial funding from President Biden and Vice President Harris’s Inflation Reduction Act, which will be used to leverage private sector capital, recruit full-time staff, and begin outreach and lending efforts.

The Southern Farmers Financial Association will be managed by Cornelius Blanding, acting chief executive officer; Shirley Sherrod, acting secretary; and Calvin King, acting treasurer, until a board is formed, and initial hires are made. Each of these individuals brings lifelong expertise and personal experience with farming, farm finance, and helping rural, smallholder farmers maintain farm operations in the face of challenging financial situations.

“The launch of the Southern Farmers Financial Association furthers the Biden-Harris USDA’s vision to keep farmers farming, support rural economies by making it viable for small farms to stay in operation, and make USDA’s programs more accessible and inclusive for everyone who wants to participate in agriculture,” said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. “This new organization will provide a vital bridge to those who may benefit from a different model of outreach, support, and farm lending.”

Farming is a capital-intensive business. It can be difficult to begin or stay in farming without the financial foundation that comes with generational farm operations, and smaller farms are especially vulnerable to the financial blows that come with natural disasters, lost markets, or other sudden impacts. Under a cooperative agreement with USDA, the SFFA will improve land access by creating access to capital and technical assistance for farmers and other producers who have historically faced challenges getting the financing they need so their farms can grow and thrive.

On Thursday in Atlanta, at the National Center for Civil and Human Rights, USDA representatives and SFFA interim leadership gathered with stakeholders and farmers who would potentially receive funding from their new financial institution. Zach Ducheneaux, Administrator of USDA’s Farm Service Agency, who has spearheaded many changes at USDA to improve the farm lending process, applauded the organization’s launch. “As a child of the 1980’s farm crisis, I have seen firsthand the challenges farmers can have accessing capital, and the very difficult impacts that creates for individuals, families, and communities that stand to benefit from strong farming operations. I am excited to see these partners come together and reach farmers in a way that USDA recognizes we may not be able to.” “Every farmer needs affordable financing. Farmers must have reliable and consistent access to capital to be successful,” said USDA Under Secretary for Rural Development Dr. Basil Gooden. “For too long, access to capital has been out of reach for small farmers in the southeast region.”

Support from the USDA will help bring other partners to the table so that SFFA can obtain strategic certifications and raise additional sources of capital. Examples include working with organizations like the Farm Credit system and Co-Bank to obtain Other Financial Institution (OFI) status, or working with the US Department of Treasury, Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) Fund to become a CDFI, and continued engagement with USDA so that the institution can become a guaranteed lender with the Farm Services Agency. "Supporting southern farmers is essential to supporting rural economies in communities across the south," added Shirley Sherrod, acting secretary of the SFFA.

"The SFFA and USDA are building up the toolset southern farmers can use to support their family farms and pass them on to the next generations," said Cornelius Blanding, acting Chief Executive Officer. "This agreement will open up new opportunities for historically underserved southern farmers to sustain and grow their businesses," said Calvin King, SFFA acting treasurer. The SFFA will build on several steps USDA has taken under the Biden-Harris Administration to expand access to capital, keep farmers farming, and make its programs more accessible and equitable. For example:

- USDA established a 41-member Equity Commission through the American Rescue Plan Act which is comprised of individuals who have personal and professional experience with USDA programs and are advising the department on how to address the hard reality of past discrimination and its lingering harm. In February 2024, the Commission delivered its final report to USDA (PDF, 2.0 MB), and many of the recommendations are already being implemented. Every agency at USDA has created an equity action plan, with steps to make its offerings more equitable and accessible, tailored to its unique stakeholder set.
- USDA provided \$67 million in competitive loans through its Heirs' Property Relending Program which, launched in July 2021, allows intermediary lenders to help agricultural producers and landowners resolve heirs' land ownership and succession issues. Heirs' property and other land tenure issues have long been substantial barriers preventing access to USDA programs for many producers and landowners, and this relending program provides access to capital to help producers find a resolution. The program's benefits go far beyond its participants; it will keep farmland in farming, protect family farm legacies, and support economic viability.
- In June 2023, USDA announced an investment of approximately \$300 million to fund 50 innovative projects to improve access to land, capital, and markets for underserved farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners, who often face high barriers to entry in farming, which is capital-intensive. The Increasing Land, Capital, and Market Access Program promotes access to farm ownership; strengthens results for those with heirs' property or fractionated land; increases access to markets and capital that affect the ability to access land; and improves land ownership, land succession, and agricultural business planning.
- The department invested \$262.5 million in institutions of higher education to foster the next generation of diverse agricultural professionals across the nation. The National Institute of Food and Agriculture's (NIFA) grant, "From Learning to Leading: Cultivating the Next Generation of Diverse Food and Agriculture Professionals Program" (NextGen), will enable eligible institutions to cultivate and sustain the next generation of food, agriculture, natural Resources and human sciences workforces. This includes efforts to strengthen USDA's workforce through enhanced educational support, experiential learning, and exposure to early career opportunities. Eligible institutions include 1890 Land-grant Universities, including some Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). As part of the \$262.5 million investment, 33 project partners will provide training and support to more than 20,000 future food and agricultural leaders.
- USDA established the American Rescue Plan Technical Assistance Investment Program, designed to improve awareness of and equitable participation in the full range of USDA programs and services among historically underserved farmers, ranchers, forest landowners and operators through supporting the organizational delivery of technical assistance projects and establishment of technical assistance networks.
 - Through the Cooperator network, support has reached nearly 90,000 participants through face-to-face meetings, webinars, online courses and one-on-one technical assistance sessions.
 - From support of those Cooperators, more than over 3000 participants have already received a USDA benefit that has allowed them to start farming, increase farm size or capacity, increase farm profit, or receive a USDA farm loan.
- USDA has also transformed its farm loan processes, simplifying the application processes to make it easier for farmers and ranchers to get and use farm loans. Applicants now spend half the amount of time filling out an application and, for the first time, can do this online. USDA updated the farm loan rule, based on feedback from farmers, that will help farmers and ranchers make more money and invest in their farms. These changes are designed to make it easier for farmers to manage their finances and invest in their future.

To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.



Outreach Meeting in Cotton Plant, Arkansas

Cotton Plant is a city in southern Woodruff County, Arkansas. Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation held an outreach meeting with USDA partners Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency and Rural Development on September 5, 2024, hosted by the City of Cotton Plant.

As partners ALCDC shares their unique areas of expertise and conservation work to put more awareness to the opportunities with emphasis on reaching the underserved and socially disadvantaged agricultural producers Resources information, training and technical support offered by these agencies.

NRCS representative Kennard Williams, spoke about state programs and initiatives, financial and technical assistance through conservation practices, activities and enhancements to help agricultural producers make and maintain improvements on their land.

FSA Cheryl Massey and Kevin Sheffer spoke on the direct Micro Loan Program, Conservation Reserve Program, Loan Guarantee, Farm Certification and Alternative Crops and local food supply.



Rural Development Flora Pruitt and Latasha Cauley spoke on the Housing Grant and loan programs, rural small town community grant/loan programs, business grant/loan program and energy program.

We want to thank the City of Cotton Plant Mayor Clara Brown and all those who attended the in- person/hybrid summit in Cotton Plant, AR. We are looking forward to a continued partnership and collaborating with you as a catalyst in Urban and Rural Community Economic Development.



Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$239 Million to Increase Access to Clean, Affordable Domestic Biofuels as Part of Investing in America Agenda

WASHINGTON— U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Deputy Secretary Xochitl Torres Small today announced that USDA is awarding \$39 million in grants to U.S. business owners to increase the availability of domestic biofuels in 18 states and give Americans cleaner, more affordable fuel options. Deputy Secretary Torres Small also announced the Department will make \$200 million available through the new Biobased Market Access and Development Grants made possible by Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) funds.

The awards and funding announced today are made possible through the Higher Blends Infrastructure Incentive Program (HBIIP) and the Biobased Market Access and Development Program as part of President Biden’s *Investing in America* agenda with funding from CCC and President Biden’s Inflation Reduction Act.

More Access to Higher-Blends Fuels at the Pump

USDA provides HBIIP grants to fueling station and distribution facility owners, including marine, rail, and home heating oil facilities, to help expand access to domestic biofuels, a clean and affordable source of energy.

Through the investments announced today, the Department is expanding the availability of homegrown biofuels that will strengthen energy independence, create new revenue for American businesses and bring good-paying jobs to rural communities.

The projects will help business owners install and upgrade infrastructure such as fuel pumps, dispensers and storage tanks.

The grants announced today are funding projects in Arkansas, California, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

Since the start of the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA has invested more than \$253 million nationwide through more than 300 awards to increase access to biofuels across the nation. Almost \$192 million of that funding invested in 267 projects comes from President Biden’s Inflation Reduction Act.

For more information, visit the HBIIP webpage.

Biobased Market Development and Access Grant Program

USDA will use previously transferred CCC funds to create the Biobased Product Market Development and Access Grant Program to support innovative biobased technologies and bridge the gap between pilot-scale

demonstrations and commercial viability. The funding will be available to applicants who have been accepted into the Biorefinery, Renewable Chemical and Biobased Product Manufacturing Assistance Program (Section 9003), which is administered by Rural Development. The \$200 million program is being funded through the reallocation of unobligated CCC funds from 2020.

HBIIP

In June 2023, USDA made \$450 million available in Inflation Reduction Act funding through HBIIP to expand the use and availability of higher-blend biofuels. That same month, USDA also announced the first round of Inflation Reduction Act-funded HBIIP awardees.

The Biden-Harris Administration championed the Inflation Reduction Act, the nation’s largest-ever investment in combatting the climate crisis, a key pillar of the *Investing in America* agenda. Through the Inflation Reduction Act, the Administration is delivering on its promise to fight climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions across America.

The Act provides funding to USDA Rural Development to help eligible organizations invest in renewable energy infrastructure and zero-emission systems and make energy-efficiency improvements that will significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. For more information on the Inflation Reduction Act, visit: www.rd.usda.gov/inflation-reduction-act.

ALFDC 44th Annual Conference and Membership Meeting Highlights hosted by: Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation

This year's conference was a complete success! Big thanks to our speakers, sponsors and all participants for making this event so memorable!

The annual conference took place on the 25th of October, with the theme "*The Legacy of Inheritance of Prosperity with Disparity*", which describes Arkansas Land and Farm Development Corporation 44 years of dedicated work for rural communities. Within the contents the amount of equity that has been built over the years, and the level of disparity that exists, shows the gap relating to the minority communities, particularly the African American community. For decades farmers have lost or sold their land with larger and larger operations buying or renting it to add new family members. That doesn't make these farmers failures. In fact, some of the featured guests, Dr. Abraham Carpenter Jr., and Harvey Williams Jr., have a journey that goes along with their beginning.

Their stories are endless, and endlessly extraordinary. Every family has endured tremendous hardship at different periods of their lives while farming, while also experiencing wonderful success at other times. It is just a story of every journey that has a step. These gentlemen shared with the audience where they are knowledgeable in the struggles and about the accomplishment and what it took to achieve them. The struggles and the process of how people have persevered in their work and their accomplishments. The historical aspect of that is for us to understand that we stand on the shoulders of others like our poor parents as well and persistent with the theme "*The Legacy of the Inheritance of Prosperity with Disparity*", that go along with these families and the things that they have done associated with ALFDC have shown innovation.

Dr. Abraham Carpenter Jr. simply states that he has been a part of ALFDC for many years, where they have done so much to help sustain farmers and not just minority farmers. He is the CEO of Carpenter Produce and Carpenter Farm Medical Group, a third-year generation farmer. The family owns over 1500-acres of produce in Grady, AR and own and operate 80,000 square feet medical cannabis facility where there is over 35 family members involved in the business and employ over 65 employees. They sell their products to the Walmart distribution centers not only in Arkansas but in Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Texas, AIG and Kroger and other distribution centers throughout the United States. They have been in business for over 55 years.

The legacy all started when Abraham's mother got the family started in the produce business by selling vegetables out of a one-acre garden she planted in 1969. She was so successful that her spouse Abraham Sr., who was working at a lumber mill, quickly decided he was in the wrong line of work, quit his job and went into business with her and bought more land. Abraham Jr. was twelve years of age managing the family farm, during that time, whereby the time Abraham Jr. graduated they had reached over 1500-acres. He stated to the audience that thirty years ago, USDA was giving him a challenging time and things were at an all-time low. There was a lot of growing pain and a lot of adverse actions where we filed a discrimination suit against USDA. The Carpenters have built an empire which has yielded prosperity which certainly did not come without disparity, Abraham says. Though there have been tough times and struggles, the Lord has sustained their family and has made rough places smooth and crooked places straight.

In addition to the farm, the Carpenters own a cannabis facility in Grady, Arkansas called Carpenter Farms Medical Group. They applied for a license which was to be in the top five applicants within the state of Arkansas. On selection night their application was tossed out for many mistakes in which Abraham filed a lawsuit that had to go all the way to Supreme Court costing over a million dollars in attorney fees. Through the beginning of our journey, every journey has a step. When you try to go to the next level you face obstacles along with a ton of unexpected things that you never anticipated you would encounter, says Abraham Jr. In June of 2020 Carpenter Farm received its cultivation license and broke ground in August of 2021.

The opportunity to use their legacy for good came through Harvey Williams Jr., a third-year generation farmer as he tells of all the struggles that his grandfather and dad went through. They didn't have access or an opportunity to build equal wealth and equity within the context of the farming operation. His great grandfather Papa Joe was a sharecropper back in the 1800s who had a dream to buy the land he worked on, but it never happened. His granddad, who he knew as dad Williams, farmed that same land and was able to buy it in 1949 where he picked cotton to sell to the gin and earned side money selling moonshine. In 1980 his dad started farming the 86-acres where he had to transition the farm from traditional row crops to mostly vegetable farm operation. Harvey Jr. grew up picking okra, peas, butter beans, and squash. Harvey Jr. stated that It wasn't a lot of acres, but if my dad was going to continue to farm, he needed to figure out how to get big enough to sustain himself in row cropping or diversify himself on a small farm to sustain his family.

Like most family children, after high school they go to college and move away. After being away for twenty-five years Harvey Jr. decided to come back and be closer to his family. He wanted to do something with the farm where he just didn't necessarily want to do traditional farming. He wanted to take the farm business and the land to another level and do something different. He wanted to build a brand around the farm where the thought of distillery came to mind from his youngest brother Kennard Williams, who stayed around and helped his dad on the farm. His dad and brother would go to vegetable conferences to find new markets and new ways of doing business. One particular year Kennard attended a conference in North Carolina where they were doing amazing things with sweet potatoes. Although this didn't excite Harvey Jr., who worked for Sara Lee in the past for twenty years, his thought was to take sweet potatoes and turn them into alcohol. So, he started exploring and researching and going to different distilleries figuring out whether he could build a business around sweet potato. Harvey and his wife started the Delta Dirt Distillery in December of 2020, in downtown Helena. They are using crops that they grow on the farm to build a business and create products that now have become worldwide. The legacy all started from the land that his granddad bought where his dad transitioned from row crops to a farm. This allowed Harvey Jr. to move to the next generation with his two sons. They have created the first batch of bourbon that was released this past April and astonishingly sold in less than two days. Harvey says that he is excited about the future, where he states that they haven't achieved success. They poured another batch in August that lasted five days and will pour another this November where it's already pre-sold. Delta Dirt vodka has been buoyed by multiple awards, including the Prestigious Platinum Award at the 2024 San Francisco World Spirits Competition for the brand's sweet, distinctly earthy distillate. Their product is being sold throughout the United States.

Participants had a chance to hear from USDA NRCS Regional Conservationist James Tillman Sr., who's service areas include North Carolina, Virginia, Mississippi, Arkansas, Kentucky, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, South Carolina, Louisiana, and the Caribbean. During his 38-year career with NRCS, Tillman has held positions as a soil conservationist, district conservationist, resource conservationist, and USDA 1890 liaison officer.

Each workshop provided essential information, guidance and practical tools to support beginning farmers, rural and urban farmers, veterans, limited Resources farmers and socially disadvantaged groups to access USDA services and programs. Workshop sessions provided equity building for prosperity to participants and rural and urban farms, beginning farmers, ranchers and foresters with conservation and production agriculture financing and program resources information that offer individuals access to financial opportunities to address prosperity disparity with the underserved minority segments of rural communities and rural and urban farming population. Rural Development provided information that increases awareness, access and participation in financial and technical assistance programs, services and grants that support business development and community facilities.

The outstanding achievements of Dr. Calvin R. King Sr., founder and executive director of Arkansas Land and farm Development Corporation continue to address the expectations, wants, and needs of the underserved and underprivileged rural and urban communities.

Special thanks to our honoree James Tillman Sr., guest speakers Dr. Abraham Carpenter Jr., Harvey Williams Jr. and Dr. O'Dell Carr (Youth Conference).



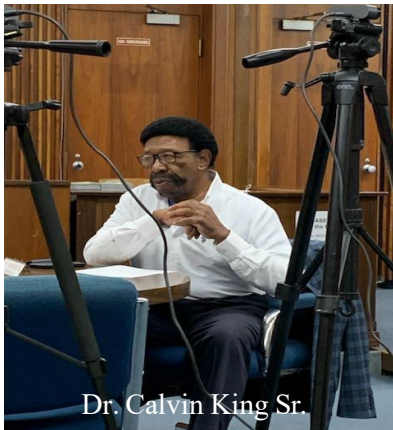
1. Dr. Abraham Carpenter and Judge Berlin Jones
2. The Tillman Family
3. Corey Cornelious
4. Jamie Washington and Doris Washington
5. Michael Jackson
6. Brian Cornelious
7. Mayor Larry Bryant of Forrest City
8. James Tillman Sr.
9. Dr. O'Dell Carr and Harvey Williams Jr.
10. Harvey Williams Family
11. Amanda Mathis
12. Mykaitlyn Smith and Diamond Smith



Southwest Rural and Community Economic Development Outreach Meeting in Camden, Arkansas

Camden is a city in and the county seat of Ouachita County in the south-central part of Arkansas.

Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation and the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development, Farm Service Agency (FSA), and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) held a community stakeholder meeting on September 26, 2024, in Camden, AR.



Dr. Calvin King Sr.

Dr. Calvin King Sr., President/CEO addressed the roundtable discussion summit/workshop participants outlining the core steps and process of accessing financial Resources opportunities for rural and urban-micro farming, beginning farming, limited Resources farmers, heir's property, housing, small business, and cooperatives.

Farm Service Agency (FSA)

The Farm Service Agency implements agricultural policy, administers credit and loan programs, and manages conservation, commodity, disaster, and farm marketing programs through a national network of offices. Farm loan programs for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Loans, Emergency Farm Loans, Farm Loan, Farm Operating Loans, Farm Ownership Loans, Funding, Guaranteed Farm Loans, Microloans, Minority and Women Farmers and Ranchers, Native American Loans, Program Data and Youth Loans

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

NRCS supplies leadership in a partnership effort to landowners and managers conserve, improve and protect our natural Resources and the environment.

Rural Development (RD)

RD helps rural areas to develop and grow by offering Federal aid that improves the quality of life. RD targets communities in need and then empowers them with financial and technical Resources.

ALCDC acknowledges and thanks the City of Camden for hosting the One USDA Summit for Ouachita County and surrounding communities.



Far left to right: Reba Easley, Tommie James, Michele Montgomery, Dr. King



NRCS Garrett Akins



Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation Highlights the Youth Conference held on October 24, 2024

***The Youth Conference took place at the Brinkley Convention Center on October 24, 2024.
More than 140 participants supported the event and made it a success!***

The Youth Conference has been hosted by ALCDC for forty-four years. The conference itself allows youth to establish professional careers in agriculture and related fields including economics, bio-systems, agricultural engineering, communications, dietetics, family sciences, human nutrition, rural community development, and entrepreneurship.

ALCDC was thrilled to welcome youth, young adults, colleges, universities, and professionals from different cities and towns. We were inspired to see attendees of all ages and backgrounds work together to collaborate in our EXCEL/YECAE program in which all students can thrive. The event highlighted an overview of the conference as it kicked off with ALCDC Youth Director Janie Williams and Youth Coordinator Mykaitlyn Smith speaking on the program agenda.

With a warm welcoming by Dr. Calvin King Sr., stating the theme “*The Legacy of Inheritance of Prosperity with Disparity*” where prosperity and being prosperous relates to the youth as they move forward in preparation for their future career and occupation.

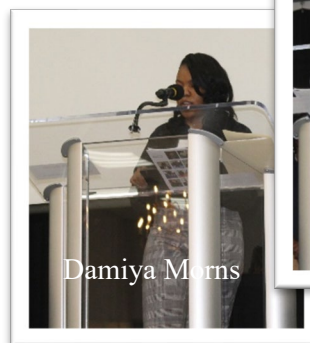
Challenging work rewards itself. Some things come easy in life and others come with a commitment to achieve and succeed despite difficulties that may arise along the way. Prosperity itself, as Dr. King stated, is the ability of one to have both ownership of those things that may be materialistic and the ability to deal with capital earnings in future in career preparation. He also spoke to the audience about the opportunity for young participants to express their well-thought knowledge and perspective in an atmosphere of competitive public speaking demonstrating their talents on being future leaders as well as an opportunity for students to meet with the different universities and colleges in assisting students in pursuing their educational aspirations.

Highlights included the attendance of the University of UA Little Rock, East Arkansas Community College, Shorter College and Phillips Community College all showcasing their schools and encouraging high school students to take advantage of the opportunity to apply to their campus. These colleges and universities are committed to helping every student succeed.



Another highlight included a leadership oratorical speaking contest where six contestants spoke for two-to-three minutes on topics prepared by ALCDC Youth Division as they came together to build skills, collaborate, and explore important topics. Trenton Maggit Jr., a first year EXCEL/YECAE student and vice president introduces the oratorical judges starting with Angele Word (Natural Resources Conservation Service), Nitosha Berry (Farm Service Agency), LaShundra Tucker (Urban Ag.) and Seth Harrison (Rural Development).

Contestant Antoine Long and Timothy Cannon students of KIPP Delta Public School and Damiya Morns of Marianna School District talked about bullying in school. Melvin Roddy of Augusta High School spoke about how gun violence has impacted the education system. Aziyah Franklin, a student also of KIPP Delta Public Schools addressed the challenges of pressure from peers, parents, and society, to conform to conflicting expectations, such as, academics grades. Emerson Mason, a student at Clarendon



High School addressed the challenges of dealing with stress, gangs, drugs, alcohol, depression, anxiety, mental and physical health.

The winner of the Oratorical Contest was Antonine Long, followed by Aziyah Franklin in second place, Timothy Cannon in third place and Damiya Morns in fourth place.

A luncheon followed with an engaging keynote speaker Dr. O'Dell Carr, an Author, Pastor, and Social Theorist.

He is a man who is honorable, inspirational and committed to the call of teaching the young and the old captivating his audience with his high- energy keynotes, ability to connect with audience members, and to inspire people into having meaningful insights and interactions in his presentations. He graduated from Forrest City Arkansas and went on to graduate from Philander Smith College in Little Rock, Arkansas with a degree in Special Education. He studied at the Andersonville Baptist Seminary in Andersonville, Georgia and holds a Master of Theology and Doctor of Philosophy from the Texarkana Baptist Seminary in Texarkana, Texas and is presently in his 20th year as Pastor at The New St. Mary Baptist Church of Camden, Arkansas.



Dr. Carr enlightened the audience talking about “Preparing 21st Century Leaders in an Age of Enlightenment” with an emphasis on the psychological DNA of the African personality in a multi-ethnic community focused on his own experience. The topic brought awareness by letting the audience know that students are faced with mental and emotional challenges. He had the audience think about who they were and whence they came from. To think about the road ahead because the truth is if you don’t know where you’re going any road will take you where you’re going. Noting a few things, he learned in the process of writing his first book where he found out that there were so many things that African American and Caucasian people in this world at large didn’t know what history actual entails. When he was a youngster in high school, he was enamored with the remarkable story of how Columbus arrived in what is now known as the Americas. Little did he know that that

was not the case at all, yet we were indoctrinated to believe a part of the story and how his life now is on the trajectory to tell the whole story.

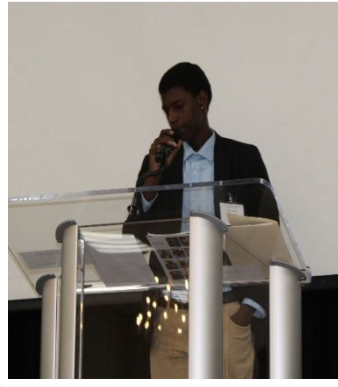
Dr. Carr delivered a very impressive and impactful speech, leaving his audience feeling part of a larger community, full of possibilities.

As the Annual Conference concluded, Larry Lofton Vice President of Arkansas Land and Farm Development and Ag. Farm Division Director, and LaShica Miller Vice President, CFO, of Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation encourage attendees to continue engaging with others and implement the knowledge gained from keynote speaker. They expressed sincere gratitude to our EXCEL/YECAE students, teachers, judges, and staff. We hope that every attendee leaves the conference feeling informed and optimistic for the future ahead.

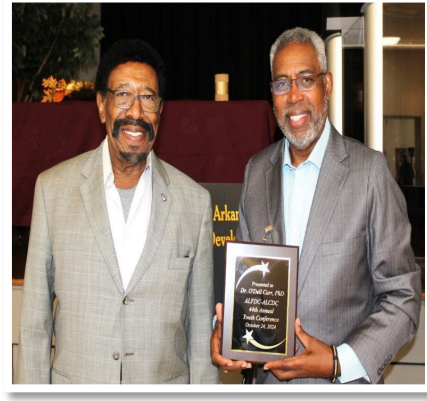
ALCDC would like to thank our sponsors and exhibitors as this event could not be a momentous success without them. We hope to see you all at next year’s event!

To see a video recording of the event, visit www.arlcdc.org

Photo Gallery of Youth Conference



John Turner, Larry Lofton, JD & Rosia



Dr. Calvin King Sr
Dr. O'Dell Carr



Staff: LaShica & Mykaitlyn



Oratorical Contestants



Clarendon School District

USDA Extends Enforcement Deadline for Hemp to be Tested by DEA-Registered Laboratories

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is delaying enforcement of the requirement for hemp produced under the USDA Domestic Hemp Production Program to be tested by laboratories registered with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Due to inadequate DEA-registered laboratory testing capacity, testing can be conducted by labs that are not DEA registered until Dec. 31, 2025.

On Dec. 19, 2023, USDA announced it was delaying enforcement of the requirement and allowed hemp growers to use labs not registered with DEA through Dec. 31, 2024.

USDA is delaying enforcement of this requirement based on input received from state and tribal governments and third-party cannabis testing facilities that have experienced delays in completing the DEA laboratory registration process. Because of these setbacks in the completion of the DEA process, USDA is concerned there will be inadequate approved hemp laboratory testing capacity for the 2025 growing season. Laboratories testing hemp must comply with all other regulatory requirements.

Furthermore, potential market entrants and related industries are relying on USDA to provide guidance in their preparations for the 2025 growing season, and the Administrator finds there is good cause to exercise enforcement discretion without prior opportunity for notice and comment and to make it effective immediately. For the same reasons, the Administrator finds that even if this exercise of enforcement discretion was subject to the public participation provisions of the Administrative Procedures Act, there is good cause to proceed without notice and comment.

More information regarding testing requirements is available on the AMS Hemp Analytical Testing Laboratories webpage.

For questions concerning this notice, contact the U.S. Domestic Hemp Production Program, at farbill.hemp@usda.gov or 1-888-721-HEMP.

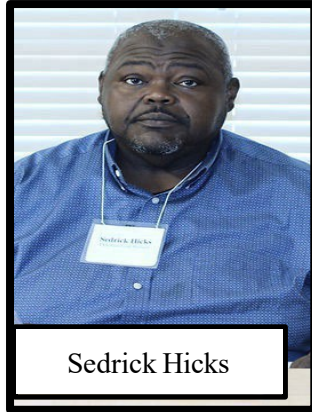
USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.



One USDA NRCS/FSA/Rural Development Tri-State Rural and Community Economic Development Summit in Marianna, Arkansas



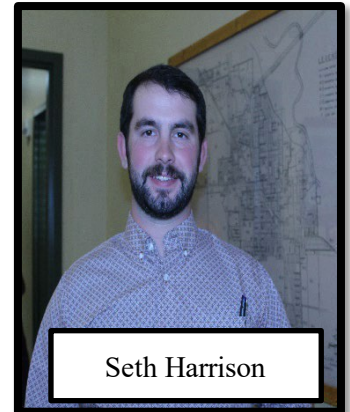
Angele Word



Sedrick Hicks



Kevin Sheffer



Seth Harrison

Marianna is a town in the county seat of Lee County. ALCDC Hybrid One USDA Urban and Rural Community Economic Development Summit was hosted by the City of Marianna on October 10, 2024. The event engaged participants in round table discussions that included Natural Resources Conservationist Angelee Word, Farm Service Agency Sedrick Hicks and Kevin Sheffer, and Rural Development Seth Harrison.

Discussions focused on challenges, shared best practices, and innovative solutions for Equity and Equality Program Resources Opportunities. The topics for discussion were as follows:

- Micro- Urban Farming and Conservation Program Opportunities with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) NRCS Resources Opportunities for New Beginning Farmers & Ranchers and Underserved Farmers and Landowners
- Heir's Property – Equity Holding
- Farm Financing and USDA – Direct Farm Operating Plans, Micro Loan Program, and Loan Guarantees for purchasing land.
- USDA Rural Development and Program Resources Opportunities in Housing, Business, Community Facilities, Water- Sewer Systems, internet access and other grant opportunities.

Agriculture production plays a key role in our rural and urban economies. As we build back better, we must create new and better markets for all producers' communities and consumers.



Mayor Ora Stevens & Dr. King

As always, ALCDC program service delivery is supporting historically underserved and underrepresented farmers who are seeking participation in this essential part of our economy. We want to thank the City of Marianna Mayor Ora Stevens and all those who attended the in-person/hybrid summit. We are looking forward to a continued partnership and collaborating with you as a catalyst in Urban and Rural Community Economic Development.

Single Family Housing Guaranteed Loan Program

What does this program do?

The Section 502 Guaranteed Loan Program assists approved lenders in providing low- and moderate-income households the opportunity to own adequate, modest, decent, safe and sanitary dwellings as their primary residence in eligible rural areas. Eligible applicants may purchase, build, rehabilitate, improve or relocate a dwelling in an eligible rural area with 100% financing. The program provides a 90% loan note guarantee to approved lenders in order to reduce the risk of extending 100% loans to eligible rural homebuyers – so no money down for those who qualify!

Who may apply for this program?

Applicants must:

- Meet [income-eligibility](#) (cannot exceed 115% of median household income)
- Agree to personally occupy the dwelling as their primary residence
- Be a U.S. Citizen, U.S. non-citizen national or Qualified Alien

What is an eligible rural area?

Utilizing this [USDA's Eligibility Site](#) you can enter a specific address for determination or just search the map to review general eligible areas.

Why does Rural Development do this?

This program helps lenders work with low- and moderate-income households living in rural areas to make homeownership a reality. Providing affordable homeownership opportunities promotes prosperity, which in turn creates thriving communities and improves the quality of life in rural areas.

Interest Rate Decrease for SFH Direct Programs

Programs	October 2024 Interest Rate	Interest Rate Effective November 1, 2024
Rural Housing (RH) 502 Very Low or Low	4.625%	4.375%
Single Family Housing (SFH) Non-Program	5.125%	4.875%
Rural Housing Site (RH-524), Non-Self-Help	4.625%	4.375%

ALCDC Reflections of Outreach Meetings



Cotton Plant, AR



Cotton Plant, AR



Morrilton, AR



Fargo, AR



Tollett, AR



Forrest City, AR



Greenville, MS



Fargo, AR

USDA Under Secretary Moffitt Highlights Investments in Organic Agriculture

Portland, Ore., -- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs Jenny Lester Moffitt yesterday attended the National Organic Standards Board fall meeting to highlight USDA's investment in and support of the nation's organic agricultural industry. USDA's programs are opening new market opportunities for farmers, expanding consumer access to organic foods, and helping producers take home a greater share of the food dollar.

"USDA recognizes how important it is to meet the growing consumer demand for organic goods and the unique position organic producers have in the marketplace," said Under Secretary Moffitt. "Our investments through programs such as the Organic Market Development Grant program are ensuring more Americans have access to affordable organic foods and helping small and mid-sized producers gain access to new, profitable markets. I was excited to share these accomplishments with industry leaders at the National Organic Standards Board meeting."

During her remarks, Under Secretary Moffitt highlighted the Organic Market Development Grant (OMDG) program which has, with the final awards announced in August, provided \$85 million for 107 projects around the country. OMDG is supporting the development of new and existing organic markets to increase the consumption of domestic organic agricultural products. The projects funded through this program are expected to benefit over 102,000 producers and increase 119 million people's knowledge s of organic products. Among the awarded projects is funding to Grange Cooperative in White City, Ore., to expand its processing and marketing capacity of organic grain for livestock feed. It is anticipated that through this project, the cooperative will be able to process an additional 2,000 tons of organic grain feed, increase domestic organic grain feed sales, and create more and better markets for organic producers.

OMDG is part of USDA's Organic Transition Initiative (OTI), a \$300 million investment that delivers wrap-around technical assistance to producers interested in transitioning to organic. The initiative includes mentoring and advice, direct farmer assistance through conservation financial assistance, and targeted organic market development grants.

Among OTI's comprehensive suite of programs is the Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP). TOPP is supporting farmers transitioning to organic by connecting them with mentors, providing community building, technical assistance, workforce development, and helping producers overcome challenges during and following certification.

Additionally, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) supports conservation practices required for organic certification and leverages partnerships to expand relationships within the organic community. NRCS and its partners offer field days, workshops, and one-on-one technical assistance to producers working to meet organic standards. OTI is a part of the USDA food system transformation initiative to support local and regional food systems, expand access to markets for more producers, and increase the affordable food supply for more Americans while promoting climate-smart agriculture and ensuring equity for all producers.

AMS administers programs that create domestic and international marketing opportunities for U.S. producers of food, fiber, and specialty crops. AMS also provides the agriculture industry with valuable services to ensure the quality and availability of wholesome food for consumers across the country and globally. AMS services and its significant grant investments create opportunities by supporting American farmers, ranchers and businesses across the supply chain, and drive economic development in small towns and rural communities.

ALCDC Outreach Meeting in McGehee, AR November 21, 2024



Larry Lofton

McGehee (Desha County) is a small town located in southeast Arkansas. **Agriculture** remains a strong factor in the economic development of McGehee whereas cotton continues to be the main crop besides rice and soybeans.



Mayor Jeff Owyong



ALCDC, and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), Farm Service Agency (FSA), Rural Development (RD) partnered to provide individuals, landowners, rural and urban farmers, ranchers, small businesses, agriculture enterprises, housing and community residents, resourceful information tools, and an opportunity to engage with interactive discussions to achieve Urban and Rural Agricultural Economic Development.

The event engaged participants in round table discussions that included Larry Lofton, Ag. Farm Division Director of ALCDC and staff, Mayor Jeff Owyong, NRCS Staff Kalycya Hawkins and Chandler Knowles, FSA representative Christa Kimbrel and Danny Hoots, Rural Development Marisa Harris, Arlene Campbell, along with community partners and stakeholders. Discussions focused on challenges, shared best practices, and innovative solutions for Equity and Equality Program Resource Opportunities.



Kalycya Hawkins



Chandler Knowles



Christa Kimbrel



Danny Hoots, Arlene Campbell, Marisa Harris

As always, ALCDC program service delivery is supporting historically underserved and underrepresented farmers who are seeking participation in this essential part of our economy. We want to thank the City of McGehee and all those who attended the in-person/hybrid summit. We are looking forward to a continued partnership and collaborating with you as a catalyst for Urban and Rural Community Economic Development.



ALFDC/ALCDC Partnership Membership Renewal

From October 1, 2024 - September 30, 2025

_____ Individual Membership \$25 _____ Partnership Membership \$40

_____ Organizational Membership \$200

Member Benefits

Advocacy and Public Relations -ALCDC/ALFDC participates in federal and state hearing sessions that focus on policy development for its members, farmers, youth, and rural residents.

Member Opportunities -ALCDC/ALFDC offers leadership opportunities within the organization for our youth, farmers, and rural residents. As a member you will have the opportunity to serve on advisory committees in support of the organizations program service delivery work.

Marketing Opportunities -ALCDC/ALFDC offers cooperative marketing opportunities for rural and urban farmers, and businesses. We also offer the opportunity to present and set up an exhibition during our Regional Meetings and Annual Conference, along with faculty rental discounts.

Access to housing, farming, and youth services -ALCDC/ALFDC offers rural and urban residents technical aid and training for access to affordable housing, homeownership education business development, help in accessing farm financing Resources for conservation practices, youth leadership development, education enrichment, and workforce readiness.

Information and Communication -ALCDC/ALFDC members can communicate with an ALCDC representative via phone or website concerning their farming, housing, business and youth service's needs. Members receive ALCDC updates and news through our quarterly newsletters and weekly e-letters and website.

NAME: _____

Address: _____

City*State*Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please return your application and tax-deductible contribution to:
ALCDC/ALFDC Membership
P.O.Box 743•Brinkley,AR72021

ALCDC/ALFDC programs and services are available without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, or familial status. On your compatible Android phone, Smart phone, or tablet-open the built-in camera app. Point the camera at the QR code. Tap the banner that appears on your Android phone, Smart phone, or tablet to join or renew membership.



There's a saying that it is better to give than to receive. Usually, this means that one person has given something tangible to another. In return, they receive something intangible. If you are truly looking for joy this holiday season, give, serve, encourage someone else first.

December 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23 Closed	24 Close	25 Christmas Day Closed	26 Closed	27 Close	28
29	30 Closed	31 Closed				

Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation will be closed for the Holidays from December 23, 2024, thru January 6, 2025

January 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 New Year's Day Closed	2 Closed	3 Closed	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20 MLK Jr. Day	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Happy Holidays



ALFDC/ALCDC Information Survey for Service

We are requesting that you complete the following survey and provide the requested information. This will give us added options for providing you with valuable service during these challenging times.

Name: _____ Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
County: _____

Mobile Phone Number: _____ Home Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Is your phone a landline or a mobile? Landline _____

Mobile _____

Do you have access to the internet? Yes _____ No _____

Please check yes or no to all the following that apply:

Landowner: Yes _____ No: _____ Heir Prosperity Interest Holder: Yes: _____ No: _____

Row Crop Farmer: Yes: _____ No: _____ Gardner: Yes: _____ No: _____ Small Farmer: Yes: _____ No: _____

Vegetable Farmer: Yes: _____ No: _____ Rancher (Livestock Operation): Yes: _____ No: _____

Small Business Owner: Yes: _____ No: _____ Veteran: Yes: _____ No: _____ New/Beginning Farmer: Yes: _____ No: _____

Are you presently receiving any service from USDA? Yes: _____ No: _____

If so, which ones apply? _____ National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

_____ Farm Service Agency (FSA) _____ Rural Development (RD) _____ Forestry _____ Other

Do you have any conservation program service contracts? Yes: _____ No: _____

If you are an heir or a joint interest holder of land (farm, ranch, or woodland), has this property received any USDA program service? Yes: _____ No: _____

Does your property of interest have a Farm # assigned by USDA Farm Service Agency? Yes: _____ No: _____

Would you desire ALCDC to assist you with attaining a farm # from USDA to qualify you for additional USDA assistance? Yes: _____ No: _____

Please mail the information provided in the survey to:

Mary Harris

P O Box 743

Brinkley, Arkansas 72021



P.O. Box 907
Brinkley, AR 72021

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ABOUT THE ADVANCER

The Advancer is a publication of the Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation (ALFDC) printed quarterly and circulated as a public service and communication Resources for our membership and constituents. The Advancer publication reaches a broad range of organizations and residents throughout the Delta and the United States

The Advancer reflects the nature of our work-supplying self-help opportunities and support services to our farmers and others of limited Resources in our forty-two (42) county service area. ALCDC is committed to helping people become more productive and self-sufficient. We appreciate your comments and suggestions. Direct all comments and inquiries about this publication by phone to (870) 734-3005 or e-mail us at alcdc1934@yahoo.com.

If your mailing address is not correct, contact Mary Harris at (870) 734-3005.

ALCDC STAFF

Dr. Calvin R. King Sr. – President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
LaShica Miller – Vice-President and Chief Financial Operation Officer (CFO)
J.D. Davis – Vice-President of Programs and Policy
Larry Lofton – Vice President of ALFDC, Ag. Farm Division Director
Barbara Erby – Director of Public Relations Marketing Administrative Service
Janie Williams – Farm Advisor Specialist, Youth Director
Michael Tucker – Farm Advisor
Ashley Crockett – Housing Director, Farm Advisor
Mary Harris – Office Manager, Farm Admin Asst.
Diamond Smith – Accts Payable, Farm Financial Analyst
Mykaitlyn Smith – Administrative Assistant
Endia Rapiere – Accts Receivable, Site Manager
Nelson Hubbert – Environmental Engineer

Multi-Family Housing (Off-Site)

Ashley Crockett-McNeil Apartments Phase I and II, Crawfordsville, AR., Earle Duplex's, Pinewood Apartment Development, Brinkley, AR
Keisha Caffey (Resident Manager)-Meadowbrook, Marianna, Helena-West Helena
Jennifer Jones (Resident Manager) Forrest City and Wynne

ALCDC MISSION



The mission of ALCDC is to supply advocacy outreach, technical aid, and training to limited Resources small farmers and all rural residents to alleviate poverty, enhance sustainable farming and strengthen communities' economic sustainability and workforce readiness.

ALCDC services and programs are available without regard to age, race, religion, gender, or physical handicap.

for Additional Information
Phone (870) 734-3005
Visit Our Website
www.arlcdc.org

Website for
ALFDC
<http://alfdc.webs.com>