

ADVANCER

January 2025

Phillip (PJ) Haynie III (Business Owner)

Amanda Mathis – NRCS State Conservationist



Arkansas River Rice
Pine Bluff



INSIDE EDITION

- Cover Story Talk of the Land PJ Haynie
- Heir's Property Workshop
- 1890 National Scholars Program
- Arkansas Black Hall of Fame Insights
- NRCS Announces New State Conservationist
- USDA Final \$300 Million to Assistance to Distressed Loan Borrowers
- USDA Investment to Strengthen America Farmers and Business
- USDA Investment of \$124 Million Business Builder
- USDA Announces \$1.13 Billion Local Food Programs
- ALCDC Memorable Moments
- Family-Owned Business Uncle T's
- Membership



Conservation Easement Programs



Conservation Stewardship Programs

5th Generation Farmer

PHILIP J. (PJ) HAYNIE, III
Haynie Farms, LLC Reedville, VA

Whether raising crops or cattle's, Arkansas farmers know the value and reward of a hard day's work. Rice is only grown in six states, where Arkansas is the number one rice producing state in the country.

PHILIP J. (PJ.) HAYNIE, III Haynie Farms, LLC Reedville, VA Philip J. Haynie, III, more commonly known as PJ, graduated from Northumberland High School, Heathsville, Va., in June 1995. While in high school, Haynie served as vice president of his Future Farmers of America chapter and actively worked on his family farm in Reedville, Va.

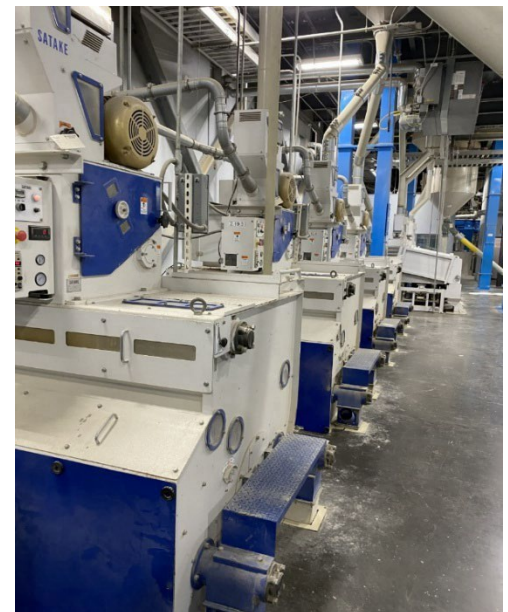


Haynie graduated from Virginia Tech with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural and Applied Economics in May 1999. While attending Virginia Tech, he served as president of the Virginia Tech MANRRS (Minorities in Agriculture Natural Resources and Related Sciences) chapter. During his senior year at Virginia Tech, Haynie was initiated into Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated. After graduating from Virginia Tech, he chose to pursue his childhood dream and continue the family tradition of farming. He acknowledges a dark history his great-great-grandfather worked hard to leave behind. After being freed from slavery, he purchased 60 acres of land on Sept. 14, 1867, in Northumberland County, Va., ground the family still operates on today.

Haynie, a fifth-generation Black row crop farmer, points to statistics showing that in 1920, there were one million Black farmers in the U.S. compared to four million white farmers. Regarding Black land ownership, in 1920, Black people owned 16 million acres of land in the U.S. Currently, Black land ownership is less than two million acres. PJ Haynie and his family, like thousands of other Black farmers, have battled racism and discrimination across generations to maintain both their land and farming businesses.

Currently he owns and operates Haynie Farms, LLC, and a grain farming business producing corn, wheat, soybeans, and canola throughout all four counties of the Northern Neck of Virginia. Haynie and his family also own and operate a transportation company specializing in food-grade liquid and dry bulk transportation, timber harvesting, and landscaping & excavating company.

In 2021 Haynie and his family purchased a state-of-the-art rice mill, called Arkansas River Rice Mill, located in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, becoming the only Black- owned rice mill in the United States today. According to PJ, he was not the first Black owned rice mill in the state of Arkansas. I had to pay homage to Mr. Ephram Lewis, a fellow from around Earle, Arkansas where he was the first African American to have a rice meal in the state of Arkansas but was never able to sell to the food for the food.



They also have a satellite operation in Phillips County, Arkansas where they have been farming for over six years. He's using the generations of agricultural knowledge to continue his family legacy of feeding others, both at home and abroad.

Haynie was featured in the documentary *Gaining Ground*, produced by Al Roker. The documentary discusses Black land loss resulting from heirs' property laws. They also hope owning the rice mill will encourage other Black farmers and young people to pursue farming careers. But for now, their focus is on ensuring they can do their part to help alleviate hunger around the world.

PJ said he feels fortunate his ancestors paved the way for him to become a farmer and wants to do the same for future generations. "My family has given me the ability and the confidence to go out a thousand miles away, to put our stake in the ground and grow, and now we're very blessed to be able to grow crops in two states and be part of a processing facility where we can process rice and help feed the needs of the world and feed those that are hungry."

They recognize that closing the wealth gap for Black farmers is crucial for boosting economics for the Black agricultural community. And they're doing their part by providing high-quality rice to customers across the country, Arkansas River Rice can process 22 metric tons of rice in an hour, which is the equivalent of an 18-wheel tractor trailer filled with rice. A year after opening, the company secured two contracts from the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service to export rice internationally for humanitarian aid, he said.



"Rice is one of the smallest commodity groups out there, [as] rice is only grown in six states -- Arkansas being the number one rice producing state in the country -- and there are only about 50 rice mills in the whole U.S. that can help feed all the population here in the U.S. as well as around the world. There's a lot of rice imported as well, but we have a lot of people here that American rice farmers feed every day, and a lot of the products that are derived from American grown rice really help contribute to our global food security. It's good to learn and be a part of a great industry, an industry that has a lot of history," Haynie said.

While Black farmers are very few and far between, Black rice producers are one of the rarest commodity grower groups of all because, one, rice is only grown in six states, two, you really need improvements on your farm to grow rice, like land leveling and irrigation, and not that many Black farmers have those improvements to be able to grow rice," Haynie said. We are helping the underserved rice growers by bringing these opportunities to their farms so they can change their production practices, and they are incentivized to do that in case they have any yield loss on what they typically have been doing and to do is look at opportunities to help protect and preserve the remaining Black farmers that exist, and hope that we can increase that number in the years to come.

In addition, to farming, Haynie takes pride in serving as Chairman of the NBGC. A non-profit organization whose mission is to Improve the Efficiency, Productivity, and Sustainability of Black row crop farmers. P.J. and his wife, Dr. Lisa Haynie, reside in Reedville, Va., with their three children, Colette, Philip, IV, and Trevor. He states that "Farming is a joy, and it's a privilege. My family legacy is rooted in it, and it's been my mission to raise my children with the same work ethic that my family instilled in me".



Spectrum of Public Engagement on “Heir’s Property”



Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation (ALCDC) held an in-person and hybrid summit meeting on December 9, 2024, in Forrest City to discuss Heirs Property. For those that are members and those that are new to ALCDC, the organization has been around for forty-four plus years and Heirs property in one of those areas that we have learned a lot about because of our experience in working with families and with individuals dealing with heir’s property issues. ALCDC also had a key role with the law change in Arkansas whereas at one time if an outside individual purchased undivided interest that person could petition the courts and as a result the land would be ordered sold to the highest bidder.

As part of the outreach meeting ALCDC wants for public purpose for individuals and families to understand how heirs’ property challenges and its barriers for accessing certain resources that are available to know you’re not dealing with the highest value point of the assets itself unless there is some clear framework as to how heirs’ property is being held and it has some structural basis to the estate.

Real property passed to subsequent generations via intestate succession (i.e., without a will) is termed a tenancy-in-common, or more colloquially, “heirs’ property.” Property may also be classed as heirs’ property via an intentional simple will that divides real estate assets equally among descendants. With this kind of property ownership, co-heirs hold fractional interests in property that is not physically divided. As such, heirs’ property represents a form of collective ownership. Owners are private property holders but are limited in their ability to use such properties to build wealth because creditors typically do not accept these properties as bona fide collateral.



In addition, ALCDC has worked for over twenty years with Olly Neal, who is an attorney and former judge in attempt to get legislation passed where Arkansas is one of the few States particularly in the southern region that has been successful with that law being changed.

With the new law in place “The Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act” (UPHPA) is a law in Arkansas that allows heirs to divide property and protects their rights:

- Protects tenants-in-common. (Tenants-in-common can buy out a co-owner without selling the entire property)
- Provides notice and appraisal (Tenants are given notice and have the right of first refusal.)
- Ensures reasonable value (If other tenants don't exercise their right of first refusal, the property is sold for fair market value under court supervision)
- Preserves wealth (The law aims to preserve and maximize the wealth of heirs' property owners)
- Balances rights (The law balances the rights of family members who want to sell the property with those who want to keep it)

The UPHPA became law in Arkansas on January 1, 2016. It applies to all actions filed after that date. To learn more about heirs’ property contact Larry Lofton at (870) 594-8028.

USDA Now Accepting Applications for the 1890 National Scholars Program

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is accepting applications for the USDA 1890 National Scholars Program, which aims to encourage students in 1890 land-grant universities to pursue career paths in food, agriculture, natural resource sciences, or related academic disciplines. The application deadline is March 1, 2025.

Young people around the country are invited to complete and submit their applications online through an e-application. Administered through USDA’s Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement (OPPE), the USDA 1890 National Scholars Program is available to eligible high school seniors entering their freshman year of college as well as rising college sophomores and juniors.

“The USDA 1890 National Scholars Program enhances career opportunities for students in 1890 land-grant universities,” said USDA Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement Director Lisa Ramirez. “The program has also been an effective tool to help USDA recruit and retain highly qualified students into careers in food, agricultural science, natural resources and related fields.”

The USDA 1890 National Scholars Program is a partnership between USDA and the 19 land-grant universities that were established in the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1890. USDA partners with these 1890 universities to provide scholarship recipients with full tuition, fees, books and room and board. Scholarship recipients attend one of the 1890 land-grant universities and pursue degrees in agriculture, food, natural resource sciences, or related academic disciplines. The scholarship also provides work experience at USDA through summer internships. Scholars accepted into the program are eligible for noncompetitive conversion to a permanent appointment with USDA upon successful completion of their degree requirements and program requirements by the end of the agreement period. The program awarded 94 scholarships in the 2024 cohort of 1890 Scholars.

Learn more and apply online at USDA 1890 National Scholars Program. For more information, contact partnerships@usda.gov.

USDA has a long history of developing the next generation of agricultural leaders at, and providing support to, public land-grant universities, such as those established under the Second Morrill Act of 1890. These institutions emphasize building and sustaining tomorrow’s food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences workforce.

The 19 members of the 1890 universities system are: Alabama A&M, Alcorn State University, Central State University, Delaware State University, Florida A&M University, Fort Valley State University, Kentucky State University, Langston University, Lincoln University, North Carolina A&T State University, Prairie View A&M University, South Carolina State University, Southern University and A&M College, Tennessee State University, Tuskegee University, University of Arkansas Pine Bluff, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Virginia State University and West Virginia State University.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America’s food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy, and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.



Other Stories in the News “Arkansas Black Hall of Fame Insights on two Historic Women”

Information Obtained from the Arkansas Times

During a ceremony at Robinson Center on Saturday, October 26, 2024, the Arkansas Black Hall of Fame inducted two of the most honoree women’s who have made tremendous contributions to African American culture, the state of Arkansas, and the nation.



Cora Duffy McHenry was born in Augusta, Arkansas. Her parents emphasized that education and faith were crucial to their children’s successful development, and McHenry used this inspiration to earn a Bachelor of Science degree from Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Additionally, she did postbaccalaureate studies at Hamilton College Language Institute. She received Honorary Doctorate degrees from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, Arkansas, and Shorter College in North Little Rock, Arkansas, where she served as president for several years. Her first professional teaching job was with the Camden Public Schools, where she taught French and English for ten years before being selected to serve as the Director of the Arkansas Education Association from among a field that included 22 people, 21 of whom were white males. Her tenure there lasted for more than two decades. During McHenry’s career she has been recognized for her outstanding service and achievements as a philanthropic community activist and active member of several prestigious executive boards and has received numerous service awards including the

Arkansas Tech Education Scholarship which is named in her honor. These accolades are a testament to her unwavering commitment to social justice, equality, empowerment, and excellence in education.



Phyllis Dickerson has served as an authority on government administration for nearly two decades, lending her expertise to mayors, U.S. presidents, and those they represent.

As the CEO of the African American Mayors Association (AAMA), the only organization exclusively representing African American mayors in the United States, Dickerson works to empower local leaders for the benefit of their citizens. Under her leadership, AAMA advocates for public policies that improve the vitality of cities, while offering mayors the leadership and management tools required to turn those policies into action. The organization also functions as a forum for member mayors to share best practices related to municipal management and operational excellence. Dickerson provides crucial leadership to AAMA staff, acts as its most prominent spokesperson, and oversees a multi-million budget and fundraising strategy—all in service of meeting the diverse needs of the association’s members.

Before leading AAMA, Dickerson worked as the lead advance staffer for the Clinton and Obama administration, as well as the Regional Mayoral Director for Mike Bloomberg’s 2020 Presidential Campaign. In 2015, she became the first woman to ever be appointed as chief of staff to the mayor of Little Rock, Arkansas. In this role, she coordinated daily operations within Mayor Mark Stodola’s office, conducted research and analyses on constituent issues, and provided support for the implementation of special programs and initiatives. Additionally, she served as the Special Events & Program Coordinator for the City of Little Rock. In that capacity, she was responsible for planning the historic Central High Integration 50th Anniversary.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Announce Arkansas State Conservationist



Amanda Mathis began volunteering with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in 2004 and quickly learned the agency was a perfect fit for her agriculture and conservation passion. In 2005, she joined the agency full time and served as a soil conservationist and district conservationist in counties throughout Arkansas.

In 2015, Mathis was selected as the first Arkansas assistant state conservationist for partnerships. In this role, she worked with a broad conservation network to enhance collaborative efforts to achieve NRCS's conservation mission. She also led the state's Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) and the Mississippi River Basin Initiative. Additionally, Mathis oversaw a \$93 million portfolio of conservation partner-

focused grants and agreements.

She worked closely with Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation on innumerable projects in support of conservation education and outreach, heirs' property resolution, and minority youth experiences in agriculture.

Mathis served as acting state conservationist in Louisiana and Oklahoma and provided expertise for several national teams, most recently aiding the NRCS effort to streamline and simplify RCPP. This effort was designed to ease the workload burden on employees and partners and help maximize flexibility for partners looking to take part in the program.

During her career, Mathis has led producers and conservation partners through developing and implementing site-specific conservation plans, managed Farm Bill programs, and developed and conducted outreach for conservation services and programs.

She grew up on a cattle operation in northwest Arkansas and holds a deep love for agriculture and a belief in the power of great partnerships and voluntary, locally led conservation efforts.

Mathis holds a Bachelor of Science in Conservation and Wildlife Management from the College of the Ozarks in Point Lookout, Missouri, and a Master of Science in Crop, Soil, and Environmental Sciences from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville.

She and her husband Kevin live in their cow-calf operation and enjoy the company of their four rescue dogs.



Natural Resources
Conservation Service

USDA Announces Final \$300 Million in Automatic Assistance for Distressed Farm Loan Borrowers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the final approximately \$300 million in assistance to distressed direct and guaranteed farm loan borrowers under Section 22006 of the Inflation Reduction Act. Over the past two years, USDA acted swiftly to assist distressed borrowers in retaining their land and continuing their agricultural operations. Since President Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act into law in August 2022, USDA has provided approximately \$2.5 billion in assistance to more than 47,800 distressed borrowers. The assistance announced today is expected to provide \$300 million in assistance to over 12,800 distressed direct and guaranteed Farm Loan Programs (FLP) borrowers. This round of automatic assistance includes approximately:

- \$168.5 million for payments in the amount of any outstanding delinquencies on qualifying direct loans as of Nov. 30, 2024, for direct borrowers one or more days delinquent as of that date, and in the amount of any outstanding delinquencies, as of Sept. 30, 2024, on qualifying guaranteed loans of guaranteed borrowers one or more days delinquent or flagged for liquidation on a qualifying loan as of that date (including those who received prior IRA 22006 assistance).
- \$5 million for payments in the amount of any outstanding delinquencies on qualifying guaranteed loans as of Sept. 30, 2024, for guaranteed borrowers who were delinquent as of Sept. 30, 2024, on a qualifying loan but by fewer than 30 days and were therefore not eligible for the assistance announced on Oct. 7, 2024.
- \$67.3 million for payment of the next installment due on all FLP direct loans for borrowers that received direct borrower delinquency assistance under IRA 22006 announced on Oct. 7, 2024, not to exceed the remaining balance. \$35 million for payment in the amount of the next installment due on qualifying direct loans for borrowers that restructured or who have accepted an offer to restructure, a qualifying direct loan between March 27, 2023, and today through primary loan servicing available through FSA. This assistance will be equal to the amount of the next installment (first applied toward any delinquency) for all qualifying direct loans held by the borrower, not to exceed the remaining balance. For any borrowers who have accepted an offer to restructure, payment will be equal to the next installment for all qualifying direct loans post-restructure, not to exceed the remaining balance.
- \$9 million for the payment of outstanding direct Emergency Loans as of Nov. 30, 2024.
- \$4.1 million in assistance for borrowers of qualifying direct loans with protective advances outstanding as of Nov. 30, 2024, and borrowers of qualifying guaranteed loans with protective or emergency advances as of Sept. 30, 2024. Protective advances are defined in 7 C.F.R. 761.2 and are those made consistent with 7 C.F.R. 765.203 or 762.149; emergency advances are those made consistent with 7 C.F.R. 762.146(a)(3). For direct loan borrowers, payments will be in the amount of the outstanding protective advance as of Nov. 30, 2024, where possible based on the structure of the account. For guaranteed loan borrowers, payments will be in the amount of the outstanding protective or emergency advance balance as of Sept. 30, 2024, where possible based on the structure of the account.
- \$3.9 million for payment of outstanding interest for direct borrowers whose interest exceeds their principal debt owed as of Nov. 30, 2024.
- \$1.8 million for payment of outstanding Economic Emergency (EE) loans for borrowers who have both EE loans and qualifying Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act loans as of Nov. 30, 2024.
- \$109,000 for the payment of outstanding non-capitalized interest for all direct borrowers as of Nov. 30, 2024.

FLP payment eligibility is determined on a loan-by-loan basis. Distressed borrowers may be able to receive assistance under multiple categories if they have multiple direct or guaranteed loans that qualify, however each qualifying loan may only receive one payment. FLP direct and guaranteed borrowers who have a loan that qualifies under multiple categories of assistance above will receive a payment on that loan based on the option that provides the greatest payment amount, except in cases where the loan is eligible for payment of non-capitalized interest, which can be applied to that loan along with another assistance category.

Any distressed direct and guaranteed borrowers who qualify for these forms of assistance and are currently in bankruptcy will be addressed using the same case-by-case review process announced in October 2022 for complex cases.

While FSA does not at this time anticipate having remaining funds available for additional assistance under IRA Section 22006 after each type of assistance above is issued, if any funds remain at that time, FSA will make a payment on a prorated basis by loan and subject to the availability of funds towards the next installment due on all FLP direct loans, not to exceed the remaining balance, for borrowers who both (i) have direct loans that qualified for assistance under the first bullet above; and (ii) have not received IRA 22006 assistance prior to this announcement. If full next installment payments are made to borrowers who meet (i) and (ii) above, and funds remain available, FSA will provide the same installment assistance on a prorated basis by loan and subject to the availability of funds to borrowers who meet (i) but have received prior IRA 22006 assistance.

USDA Makes Investments to Strengthen American Farms and Businesses, Increase Competition and Lower Costs

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18, 2024 – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that USDA is making domestic fertilizer production investments in nine states to increase competition, lower fertilizer costs for American farmers and lower food costs for U.S. consumers.

“When we invest in domestic supply chains, we drive down input costs and increase options for farmers,” Secretary Vilsack said. “Through today's investments to make more fertilizer, USDA is bringing jobs back to the United States, lowering costs for families, and supporting farmer income.”

USDA is awarding more than \$116 million through the Fertilizer Production Expansion Program (FPEP) to help eight facilities expand innovative fertilizer production in California, Colorado, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Oklahoma and Wisconsin.

FPEP is funded by the Commodity Credit Corporation and provides funding to independent business owners to help them modernize equipment, adopt new technologies, build production plants and more.

Through the Fertilizer Production Expansion Program, USDA has invested \$517 million in 76 fertilizer production facilities to expand access to domestic fertilizer options for American farmers in 34 states and Puerto Rico. These investments will increase U.S. fertilizer production by 11.8 million tons annually and create more than 1,300 jobs in rural communities.

Examples of projects being announced today are listed below.

- In California, Biofiltro USA Inc. will use a \$2.3 million grant to construct a new facility in Kingsburg to process manure from dairy cows by using vermifiltering techniques. The project will yield more than 33,000 cubic yards of composted fertilizer alternative annually and benefit farmers within the region.
- In Georgia, Reve Solutions Inc. will use a \$1.3 million grant to expand a biosolid fertilizer composter and will help increase capacity through additional equipment and working capital for two production locations. Through this expansion, Reve Solutions is expected to generate over 30,000 tons of fertilizer nutrient and create five new jobs
- In Kansas, the Farmers’ Cooperative Association will use a \$2.3 million grant to expand an existing dry fertilizer facility with additional storage and processing capacity. The project will improve the efficiency of order processing but also expand services to include dust suppression to reduce run-off. Through this investment, the facility will increase its dry fertilizer production to 24,500 tons per year.

President Biden and USDA created FPEP to combat issues facing American farmers due to rising fertilizer prices, which more than doubled between 2021 and 2022 due to a variety of factors such as war in Ukraine and a lack of competition in the fertilizer industry. The Administration committed up to \$900 million through the Commodity Credit Corporation for FPEP. Funding supports long-term investments that will strengthen supply chains, create new economic opportunities for American businesses and support climate-smart innovation.

Investments in this program also have advanced the President’s Investing in America agenda to grow the nation’s economy from the middle out and bottom up and to promote fair and competitive markets for American farmers and ranchers.

USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities, create jobs and improve the quality of life for millions of Americans in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community facilities such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural, tribal and high-poverty areas. Visit the Rural Data Gateway to learn how and where these investments are impacting rural America.

USDA Highlights Investment of \$124 Million in Business Builder Grants for Small and Mid-Sized Farm and Food Businesses

WASHINGTON, - The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced it has invested a total of \$124 million in Business Builder grants to support small and mid-sized farm and food businesses by funding projects that increase business viability, develop regional market opportunities, and expand value chain capacity.

The Business Builder grants are being offered through USDA's 12 Regional Food Business Centers (RFBC) and is a part of their work to support a more resilient, diverse, and competitive food system by providing localized assistance to access local and regional supply chains, including linking producers to wholesalers and distributors.

"The Business Builder grants are enhancing the efforts of the Regional Food Business Centers to strengthen the middle of the supply chain and help small and mid-sized food businesses launch and expand their businesses," said USDA Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs Jenny Lester Moffitt. "Business Builder grants further USDA's goals to create a food system that fosters opportunities for everyone, from regional food businesses to rural economies."

Recent Business Builder Announcements

Today's announcement includes \$25 million in Business Builder grants announced earlier this week that will be made available through the National Intertribal Food Business Center (NIFBC). The NIFBC's Business Builder grant program supports small and mid-sized farm and food businesses across Indian Country. NIFBC, led by the Intertribal Agriculture Council, works to create new markets and expand current linkages throughout the supply chain, directing resources to food system revitalization efforts among American Indian and Alaska Native communities. The Center's Business Builder program provides strategic investment to enhance economic opportunities in rural and remote areas not functionally reached by the other Regional Food Business Centers.

"The Intertribal Agriculture Council is proud to partner with USDA in bringing these critical resources to Tribal Nations and individual Native producers," said Kari Jo Lawrence, Intertribal Agriculture Council CEO. "This opportunity not only supports economic growth but also strengthens Tribal sovereignty. It reinforces our commitment to preserving Tribal food systems and ensuring their vitality for generations to come."

Additionally, earlier this month, USDA announced \$4 million in Business Builder grants to be made available through the Southwest Regional Food Business Center for businesses in Nevada, Utah, Arizona, and California.

Upcoming Regional Food Business Center Announcements

Over the coming months, USDA will finalize Business Builder programs with six Regional Food Business Centers, adding to the six Business Builder Programs already launched in 2024. To date, \$7.8 million has been made available through the RFBC Business Builder program, with \$116 million in remaining funding to be awarded by December 2027 across the country.

In May 2023, USDA awarded \$360 million to finalists to establish 12 USDA Regional Food Business Centers, including a National Intertribal Food Business Center, to provide essential local and regional food systems coordination, technical assistance, and capacity building. The 12 USDA Regional Food Business Centers provide financial assistance through their unique Business Builder programs to support farm and food businesses producing in, sourcing from, and focused on local and regional markets. Business Builder grants are for small and mid-sized food and farm businesses, including agricultural producers, processors, aggregators, distributors, and other businesses within each center's region.

More information can be found on the Regional Food Business Centers webpage.

USDA Announces Availability of \$1.13 Billion for Local Food Programs

Funding will support states, territories, and Tribes in purchasing and distributing wholesome, locally produced food for food banks, schools, and childcare facilities.

WASHINGTON-- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced a \$1.13 billion investment to support local and regional food systems, building upon the Department's previous investments in the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement (LFPA) and Local Food for Schools (LFS) programs.

This round of funding, announced on October 1, will allow states, territories, and federally recognized Tribes to purchase wholesome, locally produced foods for distribution within their communities to emergency food providers, schools, and child care centers. Those interested in applying for this round of LFS, which now includes funding for child care centers, can visit this website. Those wishing to participate in this round of LFPA can visit this website. Producers wishing to receive information about becoming a vendor for LFPA or for LFS should contact their respective state, territory, or Tribal purchasing authorities.

"These programs expand on the prior achievements of USDA's LFPA and LFS programs and carry them into 2025, assuring local farmers, families, and communities that they will continue to get the help they need," said USDA Under Secretary Jenny Lester Moffitt. "The programs reaffirm our commitment to bolstering local economies, ensuring food security, and fostering resilient agricultural communities nationwide."

"USDA believes that a healthier future for our country starts with our children," said Cindy Long, USDA's Deputy Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services. "We are excited to build on these successful collaborations that connect schools and emergency food organizations with nutritious food from local farmers and producers by expanding the model to childcare facilities for the first time. Families can feel good knowing their kids are eating food that was grown right in their own community."

USDA will allocate up to \$471.5 million for states and territories to purchase local, unprocessed, or minimally processed domestic foods for use by schools participating in the National School Lunch and/or School Breakfast Programs, and up to \$188.6 million for use in child care facilities participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Additionally, USDA will allocate up to \$471.5 million for states, territories, and Tribal governments to use in local feeding programs, including food banks, schools and other organizations that reach underserved communities. Of that, \$100 million will go to Tribal governments.

Conceived in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the LFPA, LFPA Plus, and LFS programs have invested over \$1 billion into local food purchases to date. Through the LFPA programs, USDA has provided \$900 million in funding to 50 states, the District of Columbia, four territories, and 84 Tribal governments, sourcing foods from over 8,000 local producers, with more than 5,000 identified as underserved. This wholesome food has gone to 7,900 food banks, food pantries, and communities across America. Additionally, LFS has awarded up to \$200 million for states and territories to purchase domestic, local foods for use in their National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. These collaborations between the states, school systems, and local producers have established many new supply-chain partnerships, and enabled states to re-envision the school meal and what it can do for both students and local, small, and underserved farmers. Together, the LFPA and LFS programs have strengthened food systems, expanded local and regional markets, and are helping to build a fair, competitive, and resilient food supply chain.

Today's notice of funding will continue this vital work and provide an additional \$1.13 billion to support local agriculture, schools, and feeding programs.

ALCDC Memorable Moments



Photos from top left to bottom

Dr. Brian Cornelious, Judge Berlin Jones, Evelyn Bryant, Bob Nash, Judge Olly Neal, Harvey Williams Jr., James & Rosia Davis, Dr. Abraham Carpenter Jr., James Tillman Sr., Dr. O'Dell Carr, Amanda Mathis, Dr. King & LaShica Miller

African American community and businesses along the historic West Ninth Street in Little Rock “Uncle T’s”



The original Uncle T owners Tillman & Lillie Green opened a mom-and-pop grocery store in the small town of Sunset, Arkansas in 1955. Years later, his twin nephews Dr. William Henry Woods and Willie L. Woods, who grew up in Marion, Arkansas would bring the business to Little Rock where they and William’s wife Margaret bought Braswell’s Mini Mart found on West 16th and High Street in Little Rock in the late 60’s.

Dr. William Woods graduated from Philander Smith College with a B.S. in 1954, a M.S. Degree from Atlanta University in 1957, and Ph.D. in Zoology from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville in 1973. He was the first Black graduate student to be admitted to the

graduate program in Anatomy at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) and the first to receive a Ph. D in Zoology at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. He was also the first Black professor in the School of Arts and Sciences of the University.

With early exposure to the food retail business, Dr. Woods family would continue the legacy where in the mid 70’s the family bought property on the corner of 14th and High Street and decided to build a new store and call it Uncle Ts in honor and memory of their great uncle who started it all Uncle Tillman Green, which opened in early 81. The store is now found at 1509 W Daisy L Gatson Bates Dr. and MLK. The grocery store features a large space that has a deli counter which generates a considerable amount of business income with their sandwiches and meat trays.

Today Uncle T’s is run by Dr. Woods’ three children, William, Ronald and Dr. Jerrye Woods who continue the legacy for over 40 years.



William Woods Jr. graduated from Morehouse College in Atlanta (HBCU) and majored in Math is general store manager of Uncle T’s following in his great uncle’s dad’s, and mom’s footsteps of working in the store, cleaning, stocking shelves, and staying true their customers,



Dr. Jerrye Woods graduated from the University of Arkansas of Medical Sciences College of Medicine in 1991 as a specialist in Pediatrics and continues to work using her skills working for the Department of Finance Disability Determination for Social Security Administration.

Ronald Woods owns the Wood Group Architects, Inc in Little Rock, Arkansas. He founded his own architectural practice in 1992 after serving as Project Architect for ten years with part of Arkansas' largest architectural firms, including one firm where he spent 5 years as a Project Manager taking control of all projects from start to finish and from programming to construction administration. Ronald has more than 35 years of specialized project experience in planning, design and production of various building types. Uncle T’s is a place that you will enjoy! It’s not what the sandwich is made of, it’s about who it’s feeding which is the mission of serving others that truly makes Uncle T’s a true community neighbor to the surrounding and to others to call a great place to go. Order today by calling (501) 372-9025.



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 exhibit 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 Code:

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please return your application and tax-deductible contribution to:
ALCDC/ALFDC Membership P.O. Box 743
Brinkley, AR 72021

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.



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, AR72021



ABOUT THE ADVANCER

The Advancer is a publication of the Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation (ALCDC) 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-six (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 (CFOO)
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 Rapier – Accts Receivable, Site Manager
Nelson Hubbert – Environmental Engineer

Multi-Family Housing (Off-Site)

Ashley Crockett-McNeil Apartments Phase II, Crawfordsville, AR, Earle Duplex's,
Pinewood Apartment Development, Brinkley, AR
Keisha Caffey (Resident Manager)-Meadowbrook, Marianna, Helena-West Helena
Jenifer 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