

**RURAL HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE
ARKANSAS DELTA
Update – May 30, 2006**

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NEWS FROM THE FIELD REPRESENTATIVE

There is quite a bit to report on, as the RHDI is now in full swing. April and May have been a whirlwind of travel and planning for a number of workshops and opportunities this summer. We are working hard in each of the five key focus areas of the RHDI Year One workplan: heritage tourism, local business development, landmark preservation, imaging and branding, and preservation education. See the Programming section for details.

Thank you to all who participated during the recent visit by the RHDI independent evaluation team of Melissa Riba and Amy Spray from Public Sector Consultants. We crammed as much in as we could over a short three days, but Melissa and Amy really enjoyed their visits and came away with valuable information for the evaluation element of the three-year Kellogg-funded pilot program.

The RHDI Advisory Council gathered in Harrisburg on April 26 for its quarterly meeting. Chairwoman Mary Gay Shipley of Blytheville convened the meeting which included presentations by staff and Public Sector Consultants.

During the meeting taskforces were established to begin work on Year One projects. A Musical Heritage Trail taskforce, Evaluation taskforce, and Product Design taskforce were created and Advisory Council members volunteered to participate. Representation is needed from all communities and factions within the Arkansas Delta region. Please contact me, at elizabeth_wiedower@nthp.org or 870.816.0774, if you are interested in serving on one of these or future taskforces.

A huge thank you to Cary Tyson, Main Street Arkansas, and the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program - RHDI and the state preservation office have applied for \$100,000 in grant monies from the Preserve America program on behalf of five Preserve America communities in the Delta: Blytheville, Osceola, West Memphis, Helena, and Dumas. Preserve America is a White House initiative aimed at creating economic impact by preserving and promoting America's history and heritage in towns across the country. RHDI and the state preservation office applied for funding to begin implementing the Musical Heritage Trail in the Preserve America communities. If you are interested in becoming a Preserve America community, check out www.preserveamerica.org. The next round of applications for designation are due June 1, 2006. September 1, 2006 is the next deadline for communities who miss the June 1 deadline.



Melissa Riba & Amy Spray, PSC, Inc. with Beth Wiedower, RHDI, near Dumas on Hwy, 165.

IMAGING & BRANDING

The RHDI has purchased www.arkansasdelta.org. This website is not intended to compete with any existing tourism, heritage, or economic development organization’s web presence, but instead will serve as an umbrella site for all things Arkansas Delta. It will not only link to specific resources and sites, but will also be a central location for RHDI information and updates.

Please email Beth if you have worked with and/or have recommendations of website designers in the Delta region. Contact has been initiated with several colleges and institutions in the region in search of local talent, but any recommendations are welcome.

LANDMARK PRESERVATION

RHDI is working with both the E.C. Morris Foundation in Helena (Centennial Baptist Church) and Main Street Blytheville (Greyhound Bus Station) on the preservation and restoration of these two significant landmarks. Assistance such as grant writing, identification of funding sources, and restoration recommendations are available through RHDI for these selected projects.



Centennial Baptist Church, Helena



Greyhound Bus Station, Blytheville

PRESERVATION EDUCATION

Both the Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas’s 2006 Ramble and the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Regional Advisor’s Meeting traveled to the Arkansas Delta this spring. The trips highlighted Arkansas Post, Dumas, Rohwer, Lakeport, Arkansas City, Lake Village, and Stuttgart among others. Combined, these two daytrips introduced close to 100 new faces to the Arkansas Delta. RHDI is pleased to have sponsored the trips, and we look forward to initiating more in the future.

The five RHDI Main Street communities recently participated in a Better Boards training focusing on strengthening Boards of Directors and Executive Directors’ leading downtown revitalization in the Delta. The two-day training featured Maureen Robinson, formerly with the Center for Non-Profits, now boardsource.org with input from the National Trust and Main Street Arkansas. Kudos to Main Street Blytheville, Osceola, West Memphis, Helena, and Dumas for taking advantage of this learning opportunity.

Plans are underway to bring in the dynamic Donovan Rypkema, internationally-known economist and advocate for historic preservation and the economic viability of preservation and revitalization. This workshop is geared toward municipal planners, developers, and anyone interested in the economics of building rehabilitation. Watch for dates in late August!

OPPORTUNITIES & INFORMATION

AT&T Access All Excelerator Competitive Grants Program

http://www.sbc.com/Common/files/doc/2006_Excelerator_Application.doc

The AT&T Excelerator grant program aims to empower community-based organizations through technology.

AT&T Excelerator helps nonprofits meet their missions by improving technology resources, including hardware, software and networking tools. AT&T Excelerator grants also help nonprofit organizations put technology tools into the hands of the communities they serve, providing resources such as Internet access, computer training, math and reading programs, and job skills development.

AT&T Excelerator addresses a wide variety of community needs in four main program areas — Education, Community Development, Health & Human Services, and Arts & Culture.

AT&T Excelerator grants typically range from \$2,500 to \$25,000 and are one year in length. Two or more organizations can collaborate on a project and apply for a grant up to \$50,000.

Since its inception in 2002, the AT&T Foundation has awarded \$33 million in AT&T Excelerator grants to more than 2,000 nonprofit organizations.

Blues Music Foundation Grant

<http://www.emplive.org/BMF/BMF-GrantApplication.doc>

The Blues Music Foundation is currently accepting applications to underwrite projects that promote blues education, assist organizations with special blues-related needs, and support other worthy blues causes.

Applications and funding criteria are available online at www.EMPLive.org/BMF or by writing to: The Blues Music Foundation c/o Experience Music Project, 330 Sixth Avenue North, Suite 200, Seattle, WA 98109. Applications must be postmarked no later than July 31, 2006. Grant winners will be announced in the fall.

The Blues Music Foundation, a 501 (c) 3 charitable entity, was created in 2003 at the behest of filmmaker Martin Scorsese, and Experience Music Project, the non-profit, educationally-driven Seattle music museum, founded by Paul Allen. The Blues Music Foundation's primary initial objectives were the following: to account for and collect net proceeds from the "Salute to the Blues" benefit concert produced by Experience Music Project at Radio City Music Hall in New York during The Year of the Blues celebration in February, 2003, and to account for and collect net proceeds from the concert film that resulted from "Salute to the Blues." The film, produced by Mr. Scorsese, and titled "Lightning in a Bottle," had both a theatrical and DVD/CD release in 2004. B.B. King, Bonnie Raitt, Natalie Cole, Robert Cray, Ruth Brown, Mavis Staples, and many other blues luminaries gave their time and talent to make the concert and film a success.

Following the instructions set forth in its charter, The Blues Music Foundation now seeks to distribute those funds to the general blues culture. The Blues Music Foundation is currently accepting applications so that it can present monies to organizations in the blues world in order that they might further the celebration and preservation of the blues, promote blues education, assist individuals and/or organizations with special needs, and/or underwrite other worthy blues causes. The Blues Music Foundation will only fund suitable

projects presented by legitimate organizations and institutions that further the cause of blues education and preservation and will not be funding individuals directly.

National Endowment for the Humanities Interpreting America's Historic Places Grants

<http://www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/historicplanning.html>

Planning grants are being offered as part of the Interpreting America's Historic Places program. Its goals are to:

- enhance lifelong learning in American history by connecting nationally significant events, people, ideas, stories and traditions with specific places;
- foster the development of interpretive programs for the public that address central events, themes and issues in American history; and
- encourage consultation with humanities scholars and history organizations in the development of heritage tourism destinations.

Interpreting America's Historic Places projects should:

- interpret a place that played a significant role in American history;
- interpret the place in light of central themes and issues in American history;
- enrich the visitor experience at one or more historic places by linking the story of those places with broader themes in American history;
- make use of the specific features of one or more historic places--the site, its location, buildings, or other natural or built features--as integral parts of the proposed interpretation;
- be based on sound humanities scholarship;
- involve humanities scholars in all phases of development and implementation;
- approach the subject thematically, analytically, and interpretively through an appropriate variety of perspectives;
- interest broad audiences;
- employ appealing and accessible program formats that will actively engage the public in learning; and
- expand the numbers of people reached, either by
 - incorporating multiple venues;
 - featuring creative collaborations;
 - promoting outreach to new or underserved audiences; or
 - serving as models that can be emulated.

Project formats might include visitor orientation exhibits, interpretive displays and labeling, revised scripts and content-based education training materials for docents, publications such as brochures or guidebooks, interpretive driving or walking trails or tours, annotated itineraries, trail signage, video or audio displays, on-site interactive media, and digital products such as CD-ROMs or websites. Ancillary public programming, such as lecture series, hands-on workshops, and radio or television programs, is also encouraged.

Applicants are encouraged to develop projects that include partners inside and outside of the traditional history community, such as heritage tourism or economic development agencies, community and other non-profit organizations, and agencies of local, state, or tribal governments. While innovative partnerships are encouraged, at least one partner should have experience in developing and implementing humanities programs.

REMINDERS

As part of its mission, **Tourism Cares for Tomorrow** distributes charitable grants to worthy tourism-related nonprofit organizations worldwide for conservation or preservation of exceptional cultural, historic, or natural sites. Historically, typical grants have ranged between \$10,000 and \$20,000 and have been considered for either capital improvements or appropriate educational programs. Grant recipients must be classified as non-profit and tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code or, in the case of non-U.S. organizations, must function as the equivalent. Further information can be found on [Goals and Preferences](#), [Application Deadline and Procedure for the Letter of Inquiry](#), and [Application Form](#).

FREE PAINT FOR NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS. Each year, millions of gallons of paint remain unused or unsold by our nation's retailers. The National Council on Paint Disposition, Inc. a nonprofit environmental organization, is compiling a list of nonprofit organizations that are interested in receiving the free paint that might otherwise end up in a landfill. There is no charge to participate in this program and no requirement to take in quantities more than your organization can use. More information is available at www.paintrecycling.org/register.htm <<http://www.paintrecycling.org/register.htm>> or e-mail marvgoodman@paintrecycling.org

The heat is here and it promises to be a HOT summer in the Arkansas Delta! I hope to see you soon and please let me know how I can be of assistance.

Beth

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