



# RURAL HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE ARKANSAS DELTA Update – November 2006

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NEWS FROM THE FIELD REPRESENTATIVE

Greetings from the Delta! Where has the fall season gone? It is hard to believe November is upon us – especially on those 80 degree days! Hope you are all enjoying the fantastic color this time of year (and a winning Razorback football team – GO HOGS!).

The past few months have been a whirlwind of activity – from consultations and assessments to workshops and technical assistance for communities up and down the Arkansas Delta region. So far this year, the Arkansas Delta RHDI has hosted a Visitor Experience assessment, Imaging and Branding consultation, “White Elephant” workshop, Economics of Historic Preservation seminar, Entrepreneurial and Small Business analysis, and an Eco- and Agritourism workshop, as well as numerous individual property consultations. As we enter the final quarter of the Rural Heritage Development Initiative’s (RHDI) first year, we are on track to complete the Year One workplan (see Addendum I) and readying ourselves to move into Year Two at full blast.

Two early successes include the receipt of a \$100,000 Preserve America grant awarded to the RHDI for development and implementation of the Delta Music Heritage Trail, and our selection to participate as one of six organizations in the Association for Enterprise Opportunity’s (AEO) *Regional Flavor* grant program.

The Preserve America grant is matched with \$100,000 locally through in-kind and financial support from Arkansas State University’s Heritage Studies Program and RHDI partner Arkansas Delta Byways, giving us \$200,000 towards the Delta Music Heritage Trail. Grant funding is earmarked for creation, design, and production of consumable materials to support the trail.

AEO’s *Regional Flavor* grant program provides both technical assistance and programming funds for the development of local initiatives aimed at supporting local businesses and entrepreneurs, as well as capitalizing on the products, services, and heritage which make the region unique. The RHDI will focus its *Regional Flavor* award on the creation and promotion of the DeltaMade branding program.



Finally, the Arkansas Delta RHDI has continued to receive great coverage locally, statewide, and national for our preservation-based economic development efforts. RHDI partner Main Street Arkansas and RHDI Advisory Council Chairwoman Mary Gay Shipley were featured in a session at the National Preservation Conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania last week.

REMEMBER - Collaboration is key to the continued success of the Rural Heritage Development Initiative. Please feel free to pass the monthly Updates on to interested parties and organizations, or provide Beth a list of contacts to add to our growing network of supporters.



## PROGRAMMING

### *HERITAGE TOURISM*



In addition to the \$100,000 Preserve America grant awarded to begin implementation of the Delta Music Heritage Trail, the Arkansas Delta RHDI hosted a successful Eco- & Agritourism Workshop in October. Held in Brinkley and open to the public, this six-hour workshop featured Harrison Pittman, Interim Director of the University of Arkansas School of Law's National Agriculture Center and Dr. Rebecca McPeake of the University's

Cooperative Extension Service. Both Pittman and McPeake have emerged as leaders in the rapidly growing Agritourism movement in Arkansas. The workshop was attended by current and potential practitioners, county Extension Service agents, and community leaders from throughout the 15-county Delta region. As a product of the RHDI-sponsored Eco- & Agritourism Workshop, the statewide agritourism movement has a strong presence in the Delta. For more information about agritourism efforts in Arkansas, please contact Joe Foster with the University of Arkansas's Winthrop Rockefeller Center at [fosterj@UAWRC.net](mailto:fosterj@UAWRC.net).

The Heritage Trails taskforce met in August and is moving forward with the collection of information related to the music heritage of the Arkansas Delta. The committee is undertaking an inventory and collection of oral histories for use in a CD/DVD project to showcase the rich music heritage of the region. As a result of the great work of Arkansas State University's Heritage Studies post-graduate students, a comprehensive database of the sites, landscapes, people, and stories of the Delta has been collected and verified for use in the Delta Music Heritage Trail. If you are interested in participating in the Heritage Trails Taskforce of the RHDI, please contact Beth via email, [elizabeth\\_wiedower@nthp.org](mailto:elizabeth_wiedower@nthp.org) or at 870.816.0774.



Pickens First Baptist Church (Dumas) – Potential future site of Arkansas Delta Gospel Institute

## ***LOCAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT***

Todd Barman of the National Main Street Center visited the Arkansas Delta in late September to meet with entrepreneurial and small business service providers within the 15-county region. In addition to representatives from Southern Good Faith Fund, alt.Consulting, Beacons and Bridges, the United States Department of Agriculture's Rural Development offices, and the University of Arkansas's Small Business Development Centers, Barman met with each of the five RHDI Main Street communities' executive directors to assess the current small business environment in the Delta. This visit is the first of several planned to assist local business leaders, entrepreneurs, developers, and economic development professionals in revitalizing the economy of the Arkansas Delta, specifically focusing on small, local businesses.

The recent assessment of the entrepreneurial environment in the region will complement the Association for Enterprise Opportunity's *Regional Flavor* program now underway. RHDI Advisory Council members and staff will be traveling to Asheville, North Carolina in early 2007 to meet with Becky Anderson and the *Handmade in America* program to exchange ideas and best practices in formulating the DeltaMade branding and promotional campaign for local products and services which are unique to the Arkansas Delta.

## ***IMAGING AND BRANDING***

After an exhausting week of interviews and public input sessions, Randy Wilson and Ben Muldrow of Community Design Solutions (Columbia, South Carolina) worked their magic and presented to a crowd gathered at the West Memphis Civic Center in August a suggested regional brand and image for the Arkansas Delta.



The proposed brand, *Arkansas Delta: Soil and Soul* is the result of comments, site visits, and input from the 15-county Delta region. Adoption by Main Streets Blytheville, Osceola, West Memphis, Helena, and Dumas, as well as the approval of the Helena and West Memphis Advertising and Promotions Commissions and Arkansas Delta Byways, as amended, equals an overwhelmingly positive response to the RHDI's Imaging and Branding consultation.

Work is underway to utilize the new regional brand in both printed publications and an updated Arkansas Delta Byways tourism website. Look for cooperative opportunities for individual organizations and communities to be a part of *Arkansas Delta: Soil and Soul* in early 2007.

## ***PRESERVATION EDUCATION***



The historic Riceland Hotel in downtown Stuttgart  
(Arkansas County)

One of the most successful workshops offered by the Arkansas Delta RHDI thus far has been the “White Elephant” workshop conducted by noted economist Donovan Rypkema of Place Economics in Washington, D.C. Held in Stuttgart in late September, the “White Elephant” workshop featured the Riceland Hotel as an example of imposing historic structures in downtowns throughout the Delta which are perfect candidates for adaptive reuse and rehabilitation. With over 55 in attendance, the workshop offered guidelines and best practices for rehabilitating and reusing old buildings, and included a site visit to the Riceland Hotel. As a result of the RHDI workshop, Stuttgart’s city council voted against demolition of the historic Riceland Hotel.

In addition to the successful “White Elephant” workshop held in Stuttgart, the RHDI hosted an “Economics of Historic Preservation” seminar in West Memphis during Rypkema’s visit to the Arkansas Delta. Aimed at planners, architects, developers, and municipal officials, the seminar made the argument for historic preservation and adaptive reuse of structures in lieu of new development. This is especially important in the 15-county Delta region as we work to preserve our unique natural and cultural heritage and revitalize Delta communities. The “Economics of Historic Preservation” seminar offered continuing education credits for the Arkansas Chapters of the American Planning Association and the American Institute of Architects.

For more information about Donovan Rypkema, check out [www.placeeconomics.com](http://www.placeeconomics.com) and Heritage Strategies International [www.hs-intl.com](http://www.hs-intl.com).

The Arkansas Delta RHDI was pleased to help support its partner, the Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas, in the annual Arkansas Preservation Conference, held in Hot Springs in October. With a variety of educational and field opportunities, the Alliance’s conference was well attended and offered an opportunity to showcase the work of the Rural Heritage Development Initiative. Thank you to the Alliance for their continued support of the RHDI and their continuous advocacy statewide on behalf of historic preservation. For more information, or to join the Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas, log on to [www.preservearkansas.org](http://www.preservearkansas.org) ***Stay tuned for more information about the upcoming statewide rehabilitation tax credit efforts spearheaded by the Alliance in the 2007 Arkansas General Assembly.***

## LANDMARK PRESERVATION



The Arkansas Delta Rural Heritage Development Initiative has been very active with consultations and assistance directed towards historic landmarks across the region. While continuing to work with the Greyhound Bus Station in Blytheville and Centennial Missionary Baptist Church National Historic Landmark in Helena, the RHDI's Landmark Preservation focus has expanded in Year One to include several significant historic structures within the region. The Dyess Colony Building and Johnny Cash boyhood home in Dyess (Mississippi County), Helena High School (Phillips County), Riceland Hotel (Arkansas County), and Blytheville Kress building (Mississippi County) have been added to the workplan and have all received some form of technical assistance through the RHDI. Please let Beth know if you have a landmark in need of assistance.



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## OPPORTUNITIES & INFORMATION

### *Arkansas Historic Preservation Program FY2008 Grant Cycle*

[www.mainstreetarkansas.org](http://www.mainstreetarkansas.org)

AHPP is happy to announce the opening of the FY2008 grant cycle! The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program will begin accepting a Letter of Intent for the following grant programs: **County Courthouse Restoration grants** and **Historic Preservation Restoration grants (HPRG)**. HPRG Grants up to \$10,000 are available for properties listed on the Arkansas Register of Historic Places; and/or 2) identified as a non-contributing structure in a National Register Historic District. This grant category funds projects that would make the property eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, provided that the owner completes a National Register nomination on the property once the project is completed. HPRG Grants of \$10,000 or more are available to the owners of properties that are LISTED on the National Register of Historic Places, and are owned by 1) a 501[c]3 not-for-profit organization or 2) a local government entity (city, county, school district, improvement district, etc). This grant category funds AHPP-approved restoration projects. Recipients must donate a conservation easement for the property receiving grant funds. Applicants are strongly urged to submit a Letter of Intent early. This will

allow for ample time for project consultation with technical staff. This process will allow you to develop a beneficial project!

***AHPP Documentary Media Grant application period: November 6 – January 8, 2007***

[www.arkansaspreservation.org](http://www.arkansaspreservation.org)

Documentary Media Grants are available to individuals and public, private and non-profit organizations for film, broadcast or web-based documentary projects that:

- Explore and interpret unique aspects of Arkansas's cultural and architectural history
- Bring Arkansas's cultural and architectural histories to both traditional and new audiences using a combination of film, broadcast and web media.

Documentary Media Grants require a 1:2 match; for every \$2 awarded by the AHPP, the applicant must provide at least \$1 in cash or in-kind contributions. We have 50k budgeted for this program for the fiscal year.

### ***Take Your Main Street Foods National***

With heritage tourism a growing trend in so many of our Main Street communities, the National Trust has developed a relationship with a food company to promote local restaurants and food products. This opportunity recognizes a growing popularity of locally-based foods and dining. If you think there is a great food product and story in your community, please send your ideas to Miriam Lenett at the National Trust by email [miriam.lenett@nthp.org](mailto:miriam.lenett@nthp.org)

### ***Preservation Technology Grants***

The National Park Service's National Center for Preservation Technology and Training will issue a Call for Proposals for PTTGrants the first week of October. Proposed projects must support research, training, meetings, conferences, and publications that advance the use of science and technology in historic preservation. Information is be online at <http://www.ncptt.nps.gov/>

NCPTT advances the application of science and technology to historic preservation. Working in the fields of archeology, architecture, landscape architecture and materials conservation, the Center accomplishes its mission through training, education, research, technology transfer and partnerships.

### ***Hamburger Helper Announces Grant Program for Local Communities Across America***

<http://fconline.foundationcenter.org/pnd/10004569/myHometownHelper>

Hamburger Helper/General Mills is looking to lend a "helping hand" to neighborhoods across the United States with its "My Hometown Helper" grant program to help improve their community project.

### ***Public Relations Grants Available for Nonprofit Organizations***

[www.cyberalert.com/](http://www.cyberalert.com/)

CyberAlert, Inc. an online media monitoring company will award a minimum of ten public relations grants to not-for-profit organizations for one full year of news monitoring/press clipping services, ranging in value from \$2,700 to \$3,900.

### ***Interpreting America's Historic Places Grants***

[www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/historicplaces.html](http://www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/historicplaces.html)

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) offers Consultation Grants and Planning Grants to support public humanities programs that use one or more historic sites to interpret important topics in American history.

### ***Diversifying Public Markets and Farmers Markets***

The Project for Public Spaces, Inc. is pleased to release its second Request for Proposals (RFP) to support individual farmers markets. This round, we will be awarding approximately \$400,000 in funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Grants resulting from this RFP will be awarded in early 2007 and will be for one year.

### ***Conservation Assessment Program***

[www.heritagepreservation.org/cap/](http://www.heritagepreservation.org/cap/)

Museums with small to mid-sized collections are eligible to receive professional assessments of the museum's collection and environmental conditions. Museums with buildings more than 50 years old may receive the services of an architectural assessor. The services are available to eligible museums on a first come, first served basis. Applications will be available on October 6. To request an application call 202-233-0800 or e-mail [cap@heritagepreservation.org](mailto:cap@heritagepreservation.org). The application will also be available for download at [www.heritagepreservation.org/cap/](http://www.heritagepreservation.org/cap/) Deadline: **December 1, 2006:**

### ***Community Development Block Grant*** (non-entitlement cities)

[www.1800arkansas.com](http://www.1800arkansas.com)

Dear Community and Economic Development Partners:

The Arkansas Department of Economic Development is accepting proposals for grant funding under the General Assistance and Innovative Projects line item of the Arkansas Community and Economic Development Program.

Only non-entitlement cities and counties are eligible to apply. All projects must address a national objective for the Community Development Block Grant program (CDBG): benefit to persons of low to

moderate income, elimination of conditions of slum and blight, or assistance in addressing an urgent community need.

Grants will be for an amount between \$50,000 and \$200,000. Priority will be given to innovative projects, to communities with lower average incomes, and to projects that address priorities cited in the state's Consolidated Plan. See the enclosed description for a more detailed description of the requirements.

Proposals must be submitted no later than 4:30 p.m. on March 31, 2007. Grant awards will be made before July 1, 2007.

To obtain an application and a copy of the application guidelines, contact the Grants Management Unit at the Arkansas Department of Economic Development at (501) 682-1211, or 1800ARKANSAS.

Applications and guidelines can also be viewed online at the website of the Arkansas Department of Economic Development: <http://www.1800arkansas.com>

### ***National Endowment for the Humanities Announces Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants Program***

[www.neh.gov](http://www.neh.gov)

Deadline: November 15, 2006 and April 3, 2007

Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants is the first new program under the National Endowment for the Humanities' new Digital Humanities Initiative.

NEH's Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants are designed to encourage scholars with bright new ideas and provide the funds to get their projects off the ground. All projects will incorporate new ways of studying the humanities.

Start-Up Grants are offered for the planning or initial stages of digital humanities initiatives in all areas of NEH concern:

Research, publication, preservation, access, teacher training, and dissemination in informal or formal educational settings.

Applications should describe the concept or problem that is being addressed, the plan of work, the experience of the project team as it relates to the plan, and the intended outcomes of both the grant and the larger project that the grant will initiate.

Eligible applicants are U.S. nonprofit organizations or institutions; state and local governmental agencies and Native American tribal organizations; and U.S. citizens or foreign nationals who have been living in the United States or its jurisdictions for at least the three years immediately prior to the application deadline. Applicants affiliated with an eligible institution must apply through an institution (ordinarily their own). Adjunct faculty may apply as individuals. Project directors cannot be degree candidates.

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REMINDERS

*Become a Preserve America Community*

<http://www.preserveamerica.gov/communities-form.pdf>

Communities may apply for special designation as a *Preserve America* Community, which recognizes communities that:

- protect and celebrate their heritage;
- use their historic assets for economic development and community revitalization; and
- encourage people to experience and appreciate local historic resources through education and heritage tourism programs.

Benefits of designation include:

- White House recognition;
- a certificate of recognition;
- a *Preserve America* Community road sign;
- authorization to use the *Preserve America* logo on signs, flags, banners, and promotional materials;
- listing in a Web-based *Preserve America* Community directory;
- inclusion in national and regional press releases;
- official notification of designation to State tourism offices and visitor bureaus; and
- enhanced community visibility and pride.

Four application and designation cycles occur each year. The remaining 2006 application deadline is December 1.

The Rural Heritage Development Initiative (RHDI) is a three-year pilot program of preservation-based economic development in the 15-county Arkansas Delta region. Focusing on heritage tourism, local business development, preservation education, landmark preservation, and imaging & branding, the RHDI is funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Partners in the RHDI are Main Street Arkansas, Arkansas Delta Byways and the Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas, as well as the Main Street programs of Blytheville, Dumas, Helena, Osceola and West Memphis.

For more information, or to receive future RHDI Arkansas Delta Updates, please contact:

**Beth Wiedower, RHDI Arkansas Delta Field Representative,**

**141 Cherry Street, Helena, Arkansas 72342**

**870.816.0774 [elizabeth\\_wiedower@nthp.org](mailto:elizabeth_wiedower@nthp.org)**

# Rural Heritage Development Initiative

## ARKANSAS DELTA

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### Heritage Tourism

#### Year One

- **ONGOING – DESIGN PHASE** Create tear-off maps for Arkansas Delta region, focusing on scenic byways with guided itineraries
- **ONGOING – MUSIC HERITAGE TRAIL TASKFORCE, \$100K PRESERVE AMERICA GRANT AWARD** Develop itineraries and infrastructure for Music Heritage Trail
- **ONGOING – ASU HERITAGE STUDIES GRADUATE STUDENTS** Research and documentation of African-American and agricultural historic sites and cultural heritage
- **ONGOING – ASU HERITAGE STUDIES GRADUATE STUDENTS** Sponsor a tourism infrastructure assessment
- **COMPLETED – JULY 2006** Sponsor a visitor experience and interpretation assessment
- **COMPLETED – OCTOBER 26, 2006** Sponsor an Eco- & Agritourism workshop focusing on value-added businesses to supplement rural agrarian local economies

#### Intermediate & Long-term

- Sponsor Music Tour in fall 2007, culminating at the Arkansas Delta Blues and Heritage Festival
- Develop itineraries and infrastructure for Agriculture and African-American Heritage Trails
- Create a “Delta Stories” program similar to Arkansas Stories and link to the website
- Develop electronic versions of scenic byway maps
- Develop linked packages and itineraries with ecotourism attractions in Brinkley, Clarendon, Stuttgart, etc.

### Local Business Development/Regional Marketing

#### Year One

- **ONGOING – LOGO DESIGNED, INVENTORY IN PROGRESS** Create and implement a DeltaMade branding program
- **COMPLETED – SEPTEMBER 2006, PARTICIPANT IN AEO’S REGIONAL FLAVOR LEARNING CLUSTER** Conduct an entrepreneurial business assessment and workshop – AEO and Kansas Sampler program
- **ONGOING – NEW REGIONAL IMAGE & BRAND DEVELOPED** Develop a comprehensive branding and marketing campaign
- **ONGOING** Increase the Main Street presence and effectiveness in the Delta
  - Better Boards workshop sponsored by Main Street Arkansas **COMPLETED – MARCH 2006**
  - Retail promotion workshop **RESCHEDULED - 2007**

- Arkansas Downtown Development Network presentations to small towns: Marianna, Forrest City, Marion, Wynne, Brinkley, Piggott, Clarendon, Dewitt, Rector, Dermott **ONGOING – MARIANNA, RECTOR, DERMOTT TO DATE**

### **Intermediate and Long-term**

- Develop and implement a Delta Kitchens project
- Develop and implement a Delta Diamond hospitality training program
- Develop and implement an entrepreneurship training program that focuses on targeted business clusters: tourism-related businesses, local products, etc. – “Regional Flavor”

### **Landmark Preservation**

#### **Year One**

- **ONGOING – GREYHOUND STATION UNDER CONSTRUCTION** Provide targeted consultation and assistance on the restoration of Centennial Missionary Baptist Church in Helena and the Greyhound Bus Station in Blytheville
- **COMPLETED – FEBRUARY 2006** Complete an 11 Most Endangered nomination for Centennial Missionary Baptist Church
- **COMPLETED RICELAND HOTEL MEETING – JULY 2006, COMPLETED HELENA HIGH SCHOOL MEETING – SEPTEMBER 2006, COMPLETED ARKANSAS HUMANITIES COUNCIL GRANT APPLICATION ON BEHALF OF DYESS COLONY – SEPTEMBER 2006, SCHEDULED BLYTHEVILLE KRESS CONSULTATION – OCTOBER 2006** Begin targeted property assessment consultations: Stuttgart Riceland Hotel, Helena High School; Dyess Colony Administration Building; Blytheville Kress Building

### **Intermediate & Long-term**

- Targeted consultation and assistance on the restoration of significant structures within the region

### **Preservation Education**

#### **Year One**

- **COMPLETED – AUGUST 2006** Host an Economics of Preservation seminar for local officials and civic leaders
- **COMPLETED – AUGUST 2006** Host a “White Elephant” workshop for community leaders and interested public
- **ONGOING – RHDI PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS TO DELTA COMMUNITIES** Prepare talking points, press releases, and other presentation materials that “make the case” for historic preservation
- **COMPLETED – APRIL 2006** Host an informational tour at Spring 2006 SWO-MPO Advisors/Partners Meeting
- **COMPLETED – MARCH 2006** Host the 2006 Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas Ramble in the Delta

### **Intermediate & Long-term**

- Identify model small town ordinances
- Support the creation of citywide preservation plans for Main Street communities and Certified Local Governments in the Delta

## ***Imaging and Branding***

### **Year One**

- **ONGOING – DOMAIN PURCHASED, POTENTIAL MERGE WITH ARKANSAS DELTA BYWAYS?**  
Design and maintain umbrella website for all things Arkansas Delta: [www.arkansasdelta.org](http://www.arkansasdelta.org)
- **COMPLETED – AUGUST 2006** Image assessment and development of Arkansas Delta logo and brand
- **ONGOING** Coordinate and collaborate with existing organizations and associations working in the region

### **Intermediate & Long-term**

- Develop a comprehensive marketing campaign to potential visitors, residents, and businesses