

2001 Annual Report Executive Summary

Mississippi County Enterprise Community

The Mississippi County Enterprise Community continued enjoying success during calendar Year 2001. We have maintained and expanded our linkages in the business and civic community and have strong linkages with the grassroot community. Many of our partners are continuing to utilize the Enterprise Community designation for additional and expanded activities. One of our new partners is the Great River Economic Development Committee which has been designated the economic development arm of Mississippi County. The Great River Economic Development Committee consists of all municipalities in Mississippi County, the County Judge's Office, Mississippi County Arkansas EOC, Mississippi County Enterprise Community, Mississippi County Electric Coop and members of private industry.

The Arkansas Development Finance Authority and the Arkansas Enterprise Group continue to use funds set aside through the Intermediary Relending Program as well as our loan fund to enhance business development in the Enterprise Community. A convenience store, café, catering business, Home Health Supply Business, a child care center, Trucking and Repair Company, Dispatch Service, and employment agency have been started with loan funds.

We have continued the benchmark and related activities in the multi-agency Truancy & School Drop Out Prevention Program using the Arkansas Division of Volunteerism funds, as well as cash support from the Blytheville Public School System. We had nine AmeriCorps members placed throughout the Enterprise Community providing drop-out prevention services to students and their families in most of 2001. Drop out rates have been reduced by 5%. The Truancy & Drop Out Prevention Program is currently being operated by the Blytheville Public School System. Tech Prep We are continuing the Tech Prep activities with parent involvement through Mississippi County Community College. This program was also responsible for a Job Shadowing Project that involved more than 140 students and 92 businesses, industries and civic groups. The Mississippi County Tech Prep Consortium provided the following work-based learning activities during 2001: Career Camp for students entering the ninth grade focusing on non-traditional employment opportunities in Mississippi. Chamber of Commerce "Early Bird" breakfast in conjunction with Career and Technical Education for 50 local business and industry leaders. Career Day for 900 ninth grad students in Mississippi County with the topic of "Teenagers Preparing for the Real World" provided by a motivational speaker. Internship Tabloid describing internship assignments and school-based project associated with the internship. National Tech Prep "Employer to Employer" conference for nine business and industry representatives. Preview Day held on the campus of Mississippi County Community College to encourage recent high school graduates to register for classes and continue their education and develop works skills. "7 Habits of Highly Effective People" workshops for faculty, staff, and business and education partners. Career planning and college preparation sessions at each consortium school during the school year. Career Fair held in conjunction with the Blytheville-Gosnell Area Chamber of Commerce Sunbelt Business Expo for 400 twelfth grade students in Mississippi County.

Our Parent Resource Centers are fully operational and the Blytheville Center is currently being expanded to 2,800 sq. ft. The Osceola and Blytheville Centers continue to serve as a vital part of parent involvement in Head Start, Early Head Start, Migrant Head Start as well as host sites for the Community Services Block Grant Program, Home Energy Assistance Program, Healthy Start, Mississippi County Community College, Cotton Boll Technical Institute GED Programs, Each One Reach One and the Mississippi County Fatherhood Initiative.

Our Transportation Program continued to expand during this period. We added two new 15 passenger

vans. The new vans were put on the road to replace the older vans that were being used to transport low income Mississippi County Enterprise residents for employment at Fed Ex in Memphis, Tennessee. Transportation was provided seven days per week. The older vans previously assigned to the Fed Ex runs were reassigned to our local fleet to provide transportation within the County for employment, education, job search, and recreation. We were also able to provide transportation for Kitty Hawk who has a mail sorting contract with the U. S. Postal Service. Transportation was primarily for Kitty Hawk's pilots and crews.

The Mississippi County Youth Consortium is fully functional and continues to expand. Membership in the Boys and Girls Club is increasing as well as the After-School Tutoring Program operated by the Blytheville Community Samaritan Ministry. The Blytheville Community Samaritan Ministry operates a Family Life Center in the central part of the Enterprise Community which serves as a focal point for various youth activities including Basketball, Volley Ball, and Exercise Program. The Charles S. Strong Recreation Center in Luxora continues to serve Enterprise Community youth through its gym and after school program.

The Mississippi County EOC Youth Golf Program has continued to expand its after-school Golf Program now reaches approximately 300 youths. An in school program has been developed in schools in the Enterprise Community including Blytheville, Osceola and South Mississippi County Public School Systems. This program had originally been planned as a 10-Week Instructional Program throughout the Enterprise Community, but was expanded to include two 10 week Instruction Programs at each school which gave us an opportunity to reach in excess of 1,400 youths. This program enjoys broad base support locally and nationally and has received more than 5,000 donated golf clubs, a putt putt course, shoes, a ball wash, etc. The Youth Golf Program has been notified of our selection as a site to receive golf clubs from the Golf Foundation Kid of Boca Raton, Florida. Golf Fore Kids collect clubs from country clubs in Florida and New York. The Youth Golf Program is currently being operated on a 17-acre golf course that was obtained from the City of Blytheville for \$1 per yr. We received funding from the U S Golf Association Program title AFor the Good of the Game. Funding will amount to \$60,000. Work on a new sports complex by the City of Blytheville is expected to be completed in April 2002 at which time our Jr. Golf Program will move to the Arkansas Aeroplex Golf Course which is approximately 60 Acres and will be located adjacent to the new sports complex which includes two softball fields, a golf course and other recreation areas. We have developed an application for the First Tee Chapter and have been told it will be funded the first quarter of 2002.

We have begun work on a Continuum of Care Program for the homeless. We have completed 10 units of Self-Help Housing and six units are under construction which will end our first contract with Rural Development. The contract is scheduled to run through April, at which time a new contract is being considered. Our application for new construction with Arkansas Development Finance Authority has been approved. We worked the Group WorkCamps Foundation of Colorado to rehab 70 plus units in the Southern part of the Enterprise Community. We have also provided housing counseling to 30 families.

Community Improvement Projects: 1. Delta Sigma Theta Sorority worked on an ACT Preparation Project. They conducted a series of ACT Workshops to help 20 high school students on test taking strategies. The intent of the workshops was to help the students score 19 or above on the ACT test, and to involve the parents in the workshops. The workshops will also include tours of local colleges. 2. Promiseland Church of God in Christ provided Breast Awareness educational Information to approximately 180 participants. 3. The Shalom Community developed community gardens on donated lots throughout the Osceola area. The purpose of the gardens was to provide nutritious food for impoverished, unemployed and physically impaired families. The gardens were planted, maintained and harvested by volunteers. Items produced in the gardens included greens, cabbages, peppers, cucumbers, etc. 4. St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church developed a parent and grandparent computer literacy project

with the aid of a grant from the Enterprise Community and computers obtained from the U. S. Customs Department. The project is on-going. We have also been successful in getting 50 plus computers for the Osceola School System.

The Alternative School is continuing operation with an enrollment of 38 students. The Alternative School is a collaboration between Cotton Boll Technical Institute, South Mississippi County Public School System, Osceola Public School System and parents and students. We worked with the Save the Bus Station Committee to obtain funds to purchase and restore a 1930s building located in the Enterprise Community that was formerly used as a Greyhound Bus Station. The building was on the market to be sold and a possible buyer had been identified that was going to move the station out of the area. This building is historically significant because of its unique architectural design. If this building had been moved, it would have been a great loss to the community. The Save the Bus Station Committee was able to raise \$55,000 locally, and in working with its partner, Main Street Blytheville, Inc., it has been able to receive a National Historic Registry designation. Main Street Blytheville, Inc. has received a \$284,182 grant from the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department to purchase and restore the building. The building will be used as a Tourist Information Center, and when operational will generate employment and economic opportunities for the area. Other projects being planned will include carriage rides, tour of homes, and to the archaeological site located on the nearby former Eaker Air Force Base. The community is trying to get a Smithsonian designation for the archeological site.

The Small Town Assistance Program worked with the Luxora Police Department and City Hall in obtaining a donated building to house the Police Department in a separate location from City Hall. The separation of these two units of governments created adequate space for each as well as a more customer friendly environment. The Enterprise Community provided funds to the City of Luxora to move and install the tower for the Police Station in order to better communication between the Police Department and its uniformed officers.

We have worked with the Blytheville/Gosnell Chamber of Commerce, the County Judge's office, Blytheville Gosnell Regional Development Authority on the development of the Great River Road Economic Development, Inc., an area wide Economic Development Entity. The City of Burdette has received a \$334,950 Water/Waste Water grant from the Arkansas Department of Economic Development coupled with a \$274,000 Water/Waste Water grant from USDA. These funds will be used to build a new water tower and extend water lines to accommodate new customers including the Mississippi County Department of Correction facility.

We are continuing our workplace basic skills program through the Each-One-Reach-One Program, whereby we work with TEA or former TANF recipients to obtain the necessary basic skills for employment. Advanced skill development activities are conducted at Mississippi County Community College and Cotton Boll Technical Institute. We also participate in the Welding Sectoral Program that is offered through Cotton Boll Technical Institute. The Sectoral Program is a collaborative effort between the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, The Foundation for the Mid South, Cotton Boll Technical Institute, Industrial Relations Committee of the Blytheville Chamber of Commerce and the Mississippi County Workforce Alliance. We assisted 78 families in transition from Welfare to Work. Workforce Development also serves as a one-stop computerized career enhancement center where we have computer hook ups and a person on staff that can assist customers with their job search, resume development, and educational/training references. We have assisted 58 individuals seeking employment. Currently, we have one-stop centers located in Blytheville and Wilson.

We have an average of 80 enrollees in our Each One Reach One Mentoring Program. The Mentoring Program is a collaborative effort of Faith Based and Community-based Groups. Our Each One Reach

One Sponsors are: First Baptist Church, Mt. Moriah Missionary Baptist Church, Mt. Nebo Missionary Baptist Church, Pleasant Grove Missionary Baptist Church, St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church., and Promise land Church of God in Christ. We also operate a Kids Store and a Career Center in a unit provided by the Osceola Housing Authority. Currently, 25 at-risk and underprivileged students who reside in public housing participating in this project. Healthy Start and Teen Pregnancy Prevention We have Healthy Start centers located in Blytheville, Osceola, and Luxora. They are staffed by six para-professional case workers which serve the entire Enterprise Community.

We provided services for 614 mothers and their children, during the year. We have also received funding to employ a Health Educator. The Health Educator will work with public schools, community based, and faith based groups to gain their involvement and create an educational network. The Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program which is funded by the Arkansas Department of Health is engaged in teen pregnancy prevention throughout the Enterprise Community. Our Agency maintains a collaborative agreement with the Mississippi County Women's Clinic which is located in the Mississippi County Health Department. A Respite Elder Care center has been opened in the Enterprise Community. A Fatherhood Initiative has been developed in the Enterprise Community focusing on two Areas: 1) Increased involvement of fathers of pre-school children, and 2) working with incarcerated fathers who are about to be released. The Incarcerated Fatherhood Initiative focuses on three areas: 1) Training and employment for fathers who are about to re-enter society, 2) Increased family communication, and 3) Attitude and behavior improvement. We are continuing our childcare expansion efforts with emphasis on infant and toddler slots for both our regular Early Childhood Education Program and the Seasonal Farm Workers Program. We have been able to increase these slots by 33 children this year. Also, a new childcare center for children with special needs is located in the Enterprise Community. This center serves 82 children which consist of infants, toddlers, and pre-schoolers. The center is housed in a new \$550,000 complex in the Enterprise Community that is accessible to most Enterprise Community families with special needs children. The center provides transportation.

We have organized and Incorporated the Blytheville-Gosnell-Armorel Tobacco Smoke Free Project. The project conducts public education and awareness seminars, as well as conduct in-school educational programs. The program has received funding from a Smoke Free Arkansas.