



Rural Advocate

Summer 2006



Arkansas Rural Development Commission

Bruce Leggitt
Chair
Greenbrier

Darla Verkamp
Vice-Chair
Charleston

Sam E. Angel II
Lake Village

Brenda Beltrani
DeQueen

Judy Brown
Brinkley

Steve Cole
Lockesburg

Jeff Gillespie
Danville

Mike Hathorn
Huntsville

Tommy Robinson
Brinkley

Larry Teague
Nashville

Arnell Washington
Dumas

2006 Rural Development Conference a Success!

Thank you to everyone who attended the 2006 Arkansas Rural Development Conference May 24-26 in Eureka Springs at the Best Western Inn of the Ozarks and Convention Center! We had an outstanding turnout of 507 attendees including 64 legislators. Hosted by the Arkansas Department of Rural Services and the Arkansas Rural Development Commission, this three-day event provided participants with the opportunity to gain a working knowledge about a variety of programs and services that are available to assist rural communities and their leaders with development, planning and revitalization efforts.

EAST Initiative discussed the benefits of the EAST Initiative in Arkansas and the mapping of broadband availability across the state.



Bruce Leggitt, Arkansas Rural Development Commission Chairman, presents Kalven L. Trice, Arkansas NRCS State Conservationist, with the 2005-2006 Rural Advocate of the Year award. (Photo by Molly Voeller)

Grantees received a total of \$177,230 to fund community development and fire protection projects.

Kalven Trice, State Conservationist for USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Services, received the Rural Advocate of the Year award at Friday's luncheon. The Rural Advocate of the Year award is one of the most prestigious awards in the state and recognizes Arkansans who provide outstanding leadership and dedicated service to rural areas. Trice graciously accepted the honor on behalf of all Arkansas Natural Resources Conservation Service employees then dedicated the award to the memory of his mother, who was also an advocate for rural Arkansas.

Senator Randy Laverty kicked off the conference with an opening welcome. Ed Darbonne, President/CEO of

Governor Mike Hucakbee presented the keynote address at Friday's luncheon and awarded Fiscal Year 2006, Cycle III grants.

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We are excited about the great interest we have had in the Rural Services Block Grant Program! The RSBG was established in 1999 through a partnership with the Arkansas Department of Economic Development, and the source of funding is federal dollars from Housing and Urban Development. We encourage you to read more about this program on the back page of the *Rural Advocate*. Please note that the deadline for the RSBG has been changed to August 25, 2006! Thank you for your constant dedication to Rural Arkansas, and please do not hesitate to contact our office with any questions.

Bruce Campbell, DRS Director

Bruce Leggitt, ARDC Chair



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Governor Mike Huckabee was awarded the very first "Win Rockefeller Rural Lifetime Achievement Award". The Arkansas Rural Development Commission presented the award to Governor Huckabee in appreciation for his years of dedication to rural Arkansas. Upon receiving the award Governor Huckabee praised Lt. Governor Win Rockefeller for his lifelong service to the people of rural Arkansas.

The conference also offered three days of panel discussions covering topics such as

USDA Business and Community Grant Programs, Recruiting Doctors and Nurses to Rural Arkansas, Rural Crime Scene Investigations, Development in the Delta, and a Grant Writing Workshop. The Political Roundtable and Looking Toward the 86th General Assembly panels were excellent opportunities for attendees to ask questions and comment on issues affecting our state. We very much appreciate the participation of all of our knowledgeable panelists.

Game night was a huge hit! Guests could join in on Bingo

or enter the Texas Hold 'Em or Blackjack tournament. We had a packed event and gave away several door prizes. Karaoke night is the DRS staple event, and it was a blast! We had some very talented singers as well as dancers!

The annual Rural Development Conference is the perfect opportunity to network, learn about resources available for your community, and have fun! If you didn't get to attend this year, we hope to see you next year in Hot Springs. You don't want to miss out!!

2006 ARDC

Game Night and Karaoke Winners!



Texas Hold 'Em

- 1st Place - St. Charles Mayor Robert Patrick (prize - Kodak Digital Camera and trophy)
- 2nd place - Dana Brown, Motor Vehicle Commission (prize - Portable Cold & Warm Mini Fridge and trophy)
- 3rd place - Bruce Campbell (prize - Oasis Tower Fan and trophy)

Blackjack

- 1st place - Representative Lindsley Smith (prize - Kodak Digital Camera and trophy)
- 2nd place - Allison Hinson (prize - RCA DVD Player & trophy)
- 3rd - Linda Chandler (prize - 3 pc. Portable CD/Cassette player and trophy)

Karaoke

Representative Robbie Wills and Mayflower Mayor Randy Holland tied for first place in the karaoke competition. Each winner received \$100 and graciously donated their winnings to the City of Mayflower.

***Thanks to all of those who donated gifts and prizes for Game Night!**

Conference Pics



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"Striving to Enhance the Quality of Life in Rural Arkansas"



Rural Services Grants Available!



Rural Community Grant Program (RCGP) - Funds community development & fire protection projects (walking trails, playgrounds, ball parks / trucks, radios, equipment). Communities must have a population of 3,000 or less and are eligible for up to \$15,000. Grant requires a 50/50 match in the form of cash, in-kind labor, and/or in-kind materials. Funds are distributed in three cycles per fiscal year.

Rural Services Block Grant (RSBG) - Funds the construction/renovation of community centers and fire stations & purchase of fire trucks. Communities/areas must have a population of 3,000 people or less, and the project's service area must be at least 51% Low to Moderate Income (call our office for more information about your community's LMI). Communities are eligible for up to \$30,000, or possibly even \$50,000 if a letter of request is approved. Grant requires a 10% match in the form of cash, in-kind labor, and/or in-kind materials. The RSBG is awarded annually.

County Fair Building Grant- Funds projects to improve county fairs (refurbish bleachers, purchase of picnic tables, building repairs, etc.). Counties must have a population of less than 55,000 and are eligible for up to \$4,000. Grant requires a 50/50 match in the form of cash, in-kind labor, and/or in-kind materials. The County Fair Building Grant is awarded annually.

Deadline for these grants is August 25th, 2006

*Applications are available online at www.arkansas.gov/drs or by calling our office at 1-888-787-2527!