

## **Cleaning Up Bibb County!**

My hat is off to the many vibrant organizations in Bibb County that are working hard to improve the quality of life and attract tourism into our county. These organizations include, but are not limited to, the Better Hometown Group, the Centreville Historic Preservation Commission, the Chamber of Commerce, the West Blocton Improvement Committee, Cahaba River Authority, the Cahaba Rive Society and the Friends of the Cahaba National Wildlife Refuge. I will highlight the good work of these and many other organizations in the future, but today I'd like to acknowledge the good work by Cindy Ragland of the United States Forest Service (USFS) and her colleagues in the Oakmulgee District of the Talladega National Forest. On the heels of numerous cleanup efforts this past summer in West Blocton, Centreville and other parts, the USFS, Bibb County Commission and several corporate partners sponsored a cleanup of the National Forest as part of National Public Lands Day on September 29. 43 tons of trash were collected from dumps on the National Forest alone. And this figure does not include the steady stream of county residents that took advantage of the "Free Day At the Dump" at the Bibb County Landfill to rid the landscape of many an eyesore. As someone so aptly put it afterward, this massive cleanup is but a small dent in the county's litter problem. The cleanups need to take place more regularly, not just on an annual basis. Most importantly, youth leadership programs, 4-H programs, outdoor classrooms, and other Extension based programs, along with the Alabama Clean Campus Program, Adopt-A-Mile and others are needed to impress upon our youth the aesthetic, environmental and economic development benefits of not littering. I look forward to working with our Extension staff, County Commissioners and others to develop these programs in the future.

Speaking of leadership...are you interested in learning more about Bibb County, meeting new and interesting people, and having a huge say in Bibb County's economic development? The Bibb County Chamber of Commerce and the Industrial Development Authority are working hard to implement a leadership program for adults and youth alike in Bibb County, courtesy of a grant from Extension's Rural Alabama Initiative (RAI) program administered by Auburn University's Economic and Community Development Institute. Perhaps you have seen the articles in this paper seeking participants. To register, call Jennifer Butler-Ford at the Bibb County Industrial Authority at 205-926-9557. Don't miss out on this opportunity to make a difference for the better in Bibb County!

Finally, someone asked recently asked me to come up with a list of shade trees that would be good to plant in Bibb County. For answers and guidance I immediately sought the advice of Home Grounds and Gardens Regional Extension Agent Nelson Wynn, who works out of Shelby County but serves Bibb. We came up with following list of trees that are deciduous, medium-sized, grow relatively fast, flower, and provide attractive fall foliage---Aristocrat Pear, Black Locust, Bradford Pear, Cockspur

Hawthorn, Dogwood, Japanese Tree Lilac, Redbud, Red Maple, Sweet Gum and Tulip Tree. There may be others that would fit our criteria, and this list certainly does not include all shade trees. But if you're looking for stunning natural beauty in spring and fall, as well as relief from the summer sun, we think these are some good choices to consider. Contact us at 205-926-3117 if we can help you in any way.

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