

## Thriving In Challenging Times

As we enter increasingly challenging times, here are some resources from Extension Communications Editor Donna Reynolds that just might help get you 'over the hump':

If your income is not covering expenses, you and your family face tough choices. Remember to involve family and friends in your decision-making. Reaching out for help during times of financial stress may make the difference in whether your family emerges from the crisis with its emotional and physical health intact.

Supportive people in one or more of the following agencies and organizations may help you work through the problems that accompany a temporary crisis or a long-term life change. You pay for many of these services through tax dollars and community support. Tap into these resources to help you thrive in challenging times:

Looking for a job? Locate, call or visit a Career Service Center near Bibb County by logging on to <http://www.servicelocator.org/> or calling 1-877-US2-JOBS to set up a skills assessment and career development plan, access the internet and resume-writing programs, and search for local, state and national job openings, all at no charge.

Need credit counseling? Contact the Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Alabama at 1-800-662-6119 or visit the web at <https://budgethelp.com/main/main.html> Get assistance with budgeting, debt, bankruptcy, foreclosure and home buying.

What if you need assistance with food or housing? To find resources in our area, dial 211 from any phone. 211 is a national program that connects people with important community services, including housing assistance, food assistance, utility assistance and much more. For assistance in our region, contact The United Way of Central Alabama by visiting [http://www.uwca.org/get\\_help1.html](http://www.uwca.org/get_help1.html) or calling 205-251-5131.

Other sources for temporary assistance could include churches, ministerial alliances and food pantries which might provide food, clothing and household items. To find out about services or assistance available, contact a church or ministerial association in your community.

Are you a small business owner seeking counseling, or might you be considering starting a small business? If so, contact your local Small Business Development Consortium, located on university campuses throughout the state. Visit the Consortium's website at <http://www.asbdc.org/> or call them at 205-348-1582 for more information.

If you are like the many folks who have been coming to our Extension office to get soil sample boxes in preparing to have a vegetable or fruit garden, you might want to check into the Alabama Sustainable Agricultural Network (ASAN) as a source for help.

ASAN holds educational programs throughout the state, including a Sustainable Agriculture Field Days and an annual Food Systems Forum. The ASAN Food Systems Initiative includes a mentoring program for beginning and expanding farmers. For more information, visit ASAN at <http://www.asanonline.org/resources.html> or call them at 256-751-3825.

Finally, don't forget about your Bibb County Extension Office! Contact us at 205-926-3117 or visit us on the web at <http://www.aces.edu/counties> Together, we can all 'Thrive In Challenging Times'!