

Marengo County Staff

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Marengo County Economic Development Authority Established with Help from ACES

In the rapidly changing world of economic development, county wide cooperation is imperative. Until a county establishes one voice for economic development, it cannot join in the regional efforts that are so necessary for success today. In January 2007, two Marengo County commissioners, the mayors of the eight municipalities in the county, representatives of two local industrial development boards, and County Extension Coordinator Kathryn Friday were invited to a meeting to discuss the possibility of forming a county wide economic development authority. At that meeting, a steering committee composed of thirty citizens of the county was appointed. Commissioner Ken Tucker and CEC Kathryn Friday were asked to serve as co-chairmen of the group.

In March the group received a grant from the Alabama Cooperative Extension System and Auburn University Rural Initiative grant program. This allowed money for training the steering committee. Dr. Joe Summers of the Economic and Community Development Institute of ACES and Auburn University provided some of this training as did economic developers from other sections of Alabama such as Larry Lee of Opelika and Grady Batchelor of Winston County. The Marengo County office of ACES served as the point of contact for all committee members and handled all communications for the group.

The steering committee established an organizational structure for a Board of Directors, wrote a mission statement for the authority, and wrote bylaws. Once the bylaws were approved by the county attorney, Commissioner Tucker and CEC Friday visited each city council in the county and asked them to approve the bylaws, appoint members to the Board of Directors, and commit funding to the MCEDA (Marengo County Economic Development Authority.) They were also able to address any concerns the councils had about the bylaws or structure of the Board. By the end of December, all of this had been accomplished. Every city or town in the county committed funding as did the County Commission. With funding in place, a Board was appointed and met in January to formally organize and to hire an economic developer. This is just another example of how ACES working with local groups can help our rural areas develop.

Antique Rose Seminar

**Jason Powell from Petals
from the Past in Jemison,
Alabama will conduct a
seminar on antique roses at
the Rural Heritage Center in
Thomaston on Tuesday,
February 26, from
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.**

**Cost is \$15.00 which
includes lunch. Jason will
have antique roses for sale
after the seminar.**

**The Rural Heritage Center
is located on Hwy. 25 in
Thomaston. For more
information, call
334-627-3388**

Become a 4-H Volunteer

I have found that most people know very little about the services the Alabama Cooperative Extension System offers to the people of Alabama. I often refer to us as a “well kept secret.” The one thing most people do know about and remember is 4-H. It is a great youth program. It always has been. But as with many other things, 4-H is changing. Even though school clubs will continue to meet and teach our young people, the move today is toward volunteer led clubs that meet outside the school setting. These clubs can be organized as traditional 4-H clubs or as special interest clubs. They can have as few as five members. The students involved in these volunteer led clubs are there because they want to be.



More Than You Ever
Imagined!



That is where you come in. Would you consider being a leader for a 4-H club in your community or church? We have a Regional Extension Agent, Susan Thompson, who will work with your group to provide training for volunteers. She will guide you as your club gets started. And of course the Marengo County office will be here to help you in any way that we can.



When we surveyed the students in our school clubs this year, we found some areas of interest. Look over these. See if you might like to work with some of our youth in these areas. The main areas of interest were shooting sports, dogs, cats, horses and ponies, rabbits, computer technology, bicycles, performing and visual arts, child care and baby-sitting, photography and video, arts and crafts, and leadership skill development. You might have some area of interest that you want to share. In neighboring Choctaw County there is a sewing club. The students in this club make and model clothing each year. There is also a cooking club. Shelby County has a very active shooting sports club.

There are ATV clubs. The opportunities are endless. Maybe you are a fisherman (or woman). You could have a fishing club and teach students how to fish or how to make their own flies for fly fishing. If you are a preacher, you might teach public speaking skills. Often people complain that children spend too much time in front of computers and televisions. You can change that. Organize a 4-H club and give them something else to do--something that they enjoy doing. If you think that you might be interested, call Kathryn Friday at the Marengo County office (334) 295-5959 or Susan Thompson at (205) 459-2133. We would love to work with you to get a club established.



*Photos are of 4-H students in
Mrs. Moore's class at US Jones in
Demopolis*

Leigh Akins Joins Marengo County Office

Leigh Taylor Akins has joined the staff at the Marengo County office as a 4-H agent assistant. Leigh is a graduate of the University of Alabama with a degree in human development. She has a Masters in Continuing Education from the University of West Alabama with an emphasis in special education.



"She is a true asset to 4-H in Marengo County," according to Marengo County CEC Kathryn Friday. "She can really motivate the students to participate in 4-H events."

Leigh's primary responsibility is with students in Demopolis City Schools and John Essex School although she often fills in at the other schools in Marengo County. She is also very involved in program planning and development in Marengo County.

Leigh is married to Pat Akins. They have four children - Taylor, Catherine, Philip, and Audrey. The Akins live in Demopolis where their three oldest children are in Demopolis City Schools.



Leigh Akins
4-H Agent Assistant
Marengo County



Healthy Heart Tips



February is heart month. I forget the official title, but the intent is to remind us all of heart disease. Addressing cardiovascular disease risk also involves adopting healthy lifestyle choices. Dr. Robert Keith, an Alabama Cooperative Extension System nutrition and health specialist and Auburn University professor of nutrition and food science recommends the following:

- Don't smoke.
- Get plenty of exercise - walking, incidentally, is excellent
- Maintain an ideal body weight or lose weight if you have excess fat
- Avoid diets high in saturated fat (mostly derived from animal products) and trans fat
- Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables
- Drink wine and beer in moderate amounts - no more than 1 or 2 drinks per day
- Get a good night's sleep
- Go easy on the salt

Keith recommends adopting as many of these lifestyle changes as possible because the more changes you make, the less chance you will have of developing premature cardiovascular disease. Also, remember that caring for the heart encompasses your entire lifestyle and should be practiced over a lifetime.

Kathryn B. Friday

CEC, ACES/Marengo County

Alabama Cooperative Extension System

Offers Programs for Marengo County and Area Citizens

Production Meetings

- Peanut Producers Meeting - January 29
- Cotton Producers Meeting - February 1
- Soybean Producers Meeting - February 22

Contact Regional Extension Agent Rudy Yates at (334) 295-5959 for details



Rudy Yates

- **Growers' Meeting conducted by Regional Extension Agent James Miles and Edgar Vinson, Auburn Horticulture Research Associate - February 28, Rural Heritage Center, Thomaston.**

Meeting will be from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. There is no charge.

Topics will include vegetable varieties trials, vegetable production issues, and some fruit production opportunities. Anyone with an interest in growing fruits and vegetables is welcome.

Contact the Marengo County office for more information. (334) 295-5959

- **April 11 and 18 - Caring To Help Others Caregiver Training.**

Training is geared toward individuals who are caring for a disabled/ill loved one or may have to care for a disabled loved one in the future.

Contact Regional Extension Agent Andrea McCoy at (334) 295-5959 or (334) 750-1170 for details.

- **Friday, August 1 - Estate Planning Seminar. (Details to be announced later)**



Loretta Carr
NEP Agent Assistant
Marengo County

Brunswick Stew

Recipe provided by NEP program, Marengo Co. NEP Agent Assistant Loretta Carr

Serving Size: 1 cup - Makes 8 servings

Ingredients:

1 tablespoon vegetable oil	2 cups cooked diced chicken or turkey
1 medium sliced onion	2 cups canned or cooked tomatoes
2 cups low sodium chicken broth	2 cups canned or cooked lima beans
2 cups canned or cooked whole-kernel corn	

Directions:

Heat oil in a large pan. Add onion and cook in oil until tender.

Add all remaining ingredients. Bring to a simmer for 30 minutes at medium- low.