

# ACTION

## From the Editor

### Farm-City Programs

Many people have the perception that urban and rural communities exist autonomously, when, in fact, these areas are interdependent. Farm-City programs have been created to strengthen the understanding of the real connections between urban and rural areas that make our food, fiber and shelter systems possible.

"Action" is a quarterly publication of the Economic and Community Development Institute, a partnership of Alabama Cooperative Extension System and Auburn University. The mission of ECDI is to improve the quality of life of all Alabama citizens by promoting continuous improvement of economic and community development policy and practice through communication, education, research and community assistance. ECDI seeks to play a leading role in revitalizing Alabama communities, especially in the state's rural areas. ECDI intends to strengthen community capacity to engage local challenges, take advantage of opportunities and build on available assets. "Action" is one tool we use to link Auburn's and ACES' resources to community groups.

Farm-City Program is the focus of this fall 2008 issue of "Action." Programs in Autauga, Cullman and Henry counties are highlighted by the county Extension coordinators Yvonne D. Thomas, Elaine W. Cole and James D. Jones. The Resource Tools segment outlines ADECA's programs and the I-85 Corridor is highlighted in the What's Happening in Alabama section.

The next issue of "Action," winter 2009, will highlight community leadership programs. For more information on these topics or suggestions for additional topics, contact the editor at (334) 844-3517, fax (334) 844-4709 or e-mail chesnjt@auburn.edu.

**J. Thomas Chesnutt, Editor**  
Extension Tourism  
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## Cullman's Farm-City Tour Offers Unique Connection

Cullman's Farm-City Program is one of Alabama's largest. Because Cullman County is the largest agricultural county in the state, this program is a good fit for the people that live and work in the agricultural industry and on farms. The program includes a proclamation breakfast, balloon release by local students with information about Farm-City, a sweet potato cook-off, a Farm-City Day at the new farmer's market and the traditional Farm-City banquet. Most communities celebrate Farm-City Week, but Cullman County celebrates Farm-City Month.

This year, one of the highlights of the Farm-City Program was the Farm-Industrial Tour. The tour featured two outstanding destinations. The tour was free to the public, but the lunch was paid for by participants. The first stop was a visit was to the 2007 Alabama Farm of Distinction: the Billy and Terri Gilley Farm of Holly Pond. The Gilleys shared information about their poultry and cattle farm — how they started their farm and how things have changed over the years. One of the biggest changes was the electronic system in the poultry houses. The system controls the temperature, feed and water, and alerts the Gilleys if the power goes off.

The Gilleys also raise Charlois cattle and sell calves for youth to use in the Junior Beef Expo every year. They had several calves on display for the participants to view. The Gilleys' daughter Angela participated in the Junior Beef Expo as a youth for several years and now serves as a member of the

young farmer's committee of the Farmer's Federation. Raising cattle is big business in Cullman County. Billy talked about how the drought had affected the farmers in the county and how lucky he was to have enough hay for the winter.

The tour traveled across the county to Hired-Hand Inc., in Bremen. Hired-Hand Manufacturing was founded by Grant Crider and began operation in October 1978. From an operation that began building a single product — the patented curtain drop machine, the Curt-O-Matic — Hired-Hand has spent the years since developing a product line that has gained a significant share of the growing markets they serve.

Some of their major product lines now include metal and fiberglass housing fans, furnace heaters, brooders, infrared tube heating systems, automatic curtain machines, electronic controls, evaporative cooling systems, portable evaporative cooling fans, patented roll-up doors, sidewalls and much more.

The electronic controls that are used at the poultry farms on the Gilley Farms are manufactured by Hired-Hand. Employing more than 350 people in plants and locations around the globe, Hired-Hand is poised for growth in the future on a worldwide scale, yet still is family owned and operated by the same family that worked to create the company.

The company is a great economical asset for Cullman County and produces tremendous equipment for the poultry and horticulture industries. The Gilley Farm represents the great agricultural impact that farming has on Cullman County. What a great combination for a Farm Industry Tour.

**Elaine W. Cole**  
Cullman County Extension Coordinator  
Alabama Cooperative Extension System

# Henry County Farm-City Committee

The 10-member Henry County Farm-City Planning Committee consists of representatives from civic organizations such as Kiwanis and Lions Clubs, farmer and cattlemen's boards, Extension homemakers and Extension staff members from the county. The committee plans and conducts the county-wide Farm-City Program for Henry County. The chairperson and subcommittee chairs are elected each year from the active committee. The planning committee chairperson conducts each planning meeting and is the host for the Henry County Farm-City awards banquet.

Henry County Farm-City activities begin in October with students in elementary school age divisions creating Farm-City posters and submitting them for judging. Also, Farm-City and peanut essay topics are assigned and students in elementary through high school ages can compete for cash awards. Results of the poster and essay competitions are announced during the Henry County Farm-City awards banquet in November on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. About 250 posters and 150 essays are submitted and awards are presented each year.



Each year the Farm-City committee provides speakers for programs conducted within the civic and farm organizations. These speakers stress the importance of the farm and city components working together as a team in our rural county. The Henry County Farm-City Planning Committee was honored in 2007 by the State Farm-City Committee with a statewide award for having the best civic organization program in the small county program category.

The Farm-City committee also sponsors a county-wide petting zoo for 500 kindergarten age children from across our county. Kindergartners are transported to a central location in the county where volunteers bring in animals, tractors and hay bales. 4-H'ers read stories to the children regarding where food comes from and life on a farm. Some 20 adult volunteers and 30 youth volunteers from 4-H and FFA clubs assist the committee chairs in conducting this event.

Farm-City festivities conclude in our county each year with the Henry County Farm-City awards banquet. About 250 people attend this program each year to honor farmers and those who make it possible for them to farm. Youth and adult volunteer leaders also are honored. The most coveted award presented is the Farm Family of the Year. This award is presented to the best farm family from Henry County and is selected from nominations from each of our civic and farmer member groups.

**James D. Jones Jr.**  
Henry County Extension Coordinator  
Alabama Cooperative  
Extension System

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## Looking Back and Pressing Forward:

### Autauga County Farm-City Week Celebrates Its 25th Anniversary

Prattville and Autauga County began celebrating Farm-City Week in 1982, when the Gaines family and the Young Farmers Group started organizing Farm-City activities locally. Twenty-five years later, the tradition continues in Autauga County. Farm-City Week always takes place the week preceding Thanksgiving and includes activities for the entire family.

On Farm Day, more than 200 area third-graders from public, private, home-school and the faith community gathered at the R. H. Kirkpatrick Agricultural Center in Autaugaville to see live animal exhibits and witness farm related activities such as cow milking and cotton ginning. The youth brought nonperishable canned goods to be donated to the Autauga Interfaith Caring Center, a project sponsored by the Autauga Young Farmers and the Youth Leadership Autauga County.



Some of the youth had never seen or touched a farm animal. Diane Gaines, volunteer coordinator, made sure the kids knew that we get ham, bacon and pork chops from pigs and that footballs are made from pigskin. They also learned about soybeans and corn and how corn is being used to produce ethanol. Moreover, they learned that by-products from cows are used in products such as toothpaste, gelatin and marshmallows. As the youth prepared to depart from the Farm Day activities, each child was given additional educational materials to reinforce what they learned and experienced on the farm.

Other activities during the week included a landowner tour and the Farm-City banquet, which brought the community together. More than 80 landowners visited Tommy Rainwater's property to learn about different management strategies, how to improve wildlife habitat and how to increase timber revenue on their land. Adorned with candles, greenery, hay, a collection of pictures honoring the 25th anniversary, news articles to reflect the past, a scrolling PowerPoint presentation to reference the future and the presence of the honorable Daniel Pratt, the Farm-City Week banquet was the perfect ending to an eventful week.

Approximately 250 citizens gathered to celebrate the accomplishments of local farmers and honor this year's award recipients. Awards were presented to the Farmer of the Year, Business of Year, Business Person of the Year, Farm-City Week Essay and Poster Contest winners and many others.

**Yvonne D. Thomas**  
Autauga County Extension Coordinator  
Alabama Cooperative  
Extension System

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# Resource Tools

## ADECA's Programs

In an effort to consolidate a range of economic planning and federal grant programs under one agency, the Legislature created the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) in February 1983. ADECA was established as a department within the Office of the Governor and operates directly under his supervision and control. The purpose of this consolidation was to encourage comprehensive and coordinated planning and programming of economic and comprehensive and coordinated planning and programming of economic and community affairs. To that end, ADECA provides a single location where local governments and nonprofit agencies can come for assistance with community and economic development issues. Working together, the divisions and programs of ADECA focus available resources to address the many challenges that confront Alabama communities. Through the years, ADECA has been assigned responsibility for a diverse range of programs that support economic development, infrastructure construction, law enforcement operations, workforce development, enhancement of community life, energy efficiency, conservation and reuse of resources and much more.

The Community Enhancement Division distributes community development block grants that enable Alabama counties, cities

and towns to upgrade or install new sewer lines, expand water systems, build community centers and work on other community enhancement projects.

- All projects must meet one of the national objectives of the program – projects must benefit 51 percent low- and moderate-income people, aid in the prevention or clearance of slum and blight, or meet an urgent need.

- Typical activities include water and sewer extensions and rehabilitation, housing rehabilitation, neighborhood and downtown revitalization, and street and drainage improvements.

Recreational Programs Department administers grants to Alabama communities for recreational trails and parks and the Law Enforcement Division distributes funding to help reduce crime, encourage safe driving and provide safe haven in domestic cases.

- The U.S. Department of Interior, Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) provides funding to Alabama cities and counties for the development or establishment of outdoor recreational areas. Projects include parks, playgrounds, forest and wildlife refuges, recreational lakes and ponds, outdoor playing fields, and picnic and camping areas.

- The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation and provides funding assistance to federal agencies, states and local governments for development and improvement of recreational areas such as walking, jogging, cycling, skating, backpacking and horseback riding trails.

The Energy, Weatherization and Technology (EWT) Division has played an active role in making high-technology a priority in Alabama, particularly long-distance learning programs in schools. EWT also encourages energy conservation and the pursuit of alternative energy sources other than petroleum. EWT programs are the following:

- Energy Efficiency and Waste Utilization Programs
  - o Agriculture Energy Efficiency Program
  - o Alternative Fuel Vehicles
  - o Energy Star Program Local

- o Government Energy Loan Program
- o Recycling Program
- o Ride Sharing/Transportation/Fuel Economy
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program
  - o Assisting low-income families with home heating and cooling bills and emergency assistance particularly for families with members at risk due to health problems.
  - o Target homes include those with older family members, young children and family members with disabilities or health problems.
- Weatherization Assistance Program
  - o Assist low-income residents in reducing energy loss; priority is given to homes with young children, older family members and family members with disabilities or health problems.
  - o This program will assist with installing insulation, repairing or replacing windows and doors, and sealing air infiltration.
  - o Provide education on energy efficiency.

The Workforce Development Division provides educational and employment opportunities for many Alabamians, particularly those who have lost their jobs, due to closures and layoffs. Also, ADECA's Surplus Property Division provides local governments the opportunity to buy used equipment at significantly reduced prices. Remaining equipment is sold to the public at auctions and the funding returned to the state general fund.

Finally, it should be noted that ADECA plays a major role in the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Delta Regional Authority. The agency also provides major support for the governor's initiatives including the Black Belt Action Commission and Alabama Rural Action Commission. Each year, ADECA programs touch and improve the lives of millions of Alabamians. If you would like more information on ADECA, please contact Jessica Dent at (334) 353-5682 or via e-mail at [Jessica.Dent@adeca.alabama.gov](mailto:Jessica.Dent@adeca.alabama.gov).

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## ACTION

Alabama  
Communities  
in Transition

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*Action* is published once each quarter by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. We would like you to share success stories in your community for inclusion in future issues of *Action*. Send to: J. Thomas Chesnutt, 218 Extension Hall, Auburn University, Alabama 36849.

# What's Happening in Alabama?

## I-85 Corridor Alliance

“Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results”

In 2005, the I-85 Corridor Alliance was formally established to promote a productive cooperative partnership among various stakeholders in the region of central and eastern Alabama defined by counties linked by interstate 85 from Montgomery to the Georgia line. This nonprofit organization was seen as an opportunity for government, civic, business and education stakeholders to come together and have a shared impact on their region and to work as a unified team to accomplish things they could not accomplish individually. The alliance has created an environment for brainstorming and educating one another on ways to foster the region's competitiveness in the constantly changing economic climate.

2008 has been a year of change for the alliance. In March, Allyson Martin of ECDI was

brought on board to help manage the group and their efforts for the region. Having just completed a visioning and strategic planning session, the I-85 Corridor Alliance is ready to expand and strengthen their efforts in the region. One of the members of the organization described the group as a train and that we can keep adding cars to the train; in other words, keep partnering with one another and continually grow the connection and alliance with one another.

This next year will find the group focusing on the following top priorities: Funding, establishing themselves as an information sharing or clearinghouse for the region, establishing an Ambassador's Program and researching the implementation of an adult workforce skill-building awareness campaign or program. Currently, the organization is formulating a newsletter that they will begin publishing at the end of the year. This will serve as an instrument to highlight the many innovative economic and community development projects that are going on throughout the region. “We have a very busy year ahead of us, but I am excited to have the opportunity to work with this dynamic and passionate group of people from the region,” says Allyson Martin.

**Allyson Hahn Martin**  
Economic Development Specialist  
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### Important Upcoming Events

- Alabama Community Leadership Network Conference – Auburn, October 8 to 9.
- Mississippi - Alabama Rural Tourism Conference – Columbus, MS, October 27 to 29.

Visit the Community Resource Development home page at [www.aces.edu/departments/crd/](http://www.aces.edu/departments/crd/)

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