1997-98 Accomplishment Report Summary

Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs

INTRODUCTION

With the nation's urban population at 67 percent and increasing, educational and community outreach agencies are seeking effective ways to help families adapt to changing environments and adjust to changing needs. The United States Census data for 1999 indicates that Alabama has a population of over four million people. About two-thirds of these people live in the metropolitan areas of Anniston, Birmingham, Decatur, Dothan, Florence, Gadsden, Huntsville, Mobile, Montgomery and Tuscaloosa. The Columbus, Georgia metro area also extends into Alabama.

As the trend towards urbanization continues, the state is compelled to respond to community, family, youth, and environmental issues with a significantly different agenda.

The Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs unit functions to provide knowledge, information, innovative technology, and other educational services to address the needs of the state's growing urban population, and to expand the services of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System to more fully serve all of the people of Alabama. During the 1997-98 fiscal year, educational training and services were planned and delivered based on assessed and prioritized needs, and focused on the goals and objectives outlined in the 1998-2001 Four-Year Plan of Work.

Specific goals for the unit over the next four years are to:

1) Strengthen the resiliency of individuals, youth, and families by enhancing coping and survival skills of citizens in Alabama's urban communities.
2) Create a greater appreciation for the value of diversity.
3) Build new supportive institutions, groups, and teams that allow families to exercise their power to shape their own communities.
4) Facilitate changes to improve urban environments and reduce the impact of environmental situations that threaten the safety and health of individuals, youth, and families.
5) Expand understandings of urban agricultural concepts to address real issues of urban/rural interdependence.
6) Create expanded access to public information through independent systems of information referral and retrieval.

EXTENSION TEAM PROJECTS

In keeping with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System's program framework that focused on a team approach to framing outreach programs, nine Extension Team Projects were given priority for the program year for 1997-1998. These projects addressed needs and issues across a number of disciplines and program areas including youth, families, communities, agriculture, and cultural diversity.
ETP 601: Greenspace Mile

The Greenspace Mile project grew out of a need and a desire to provide more sidewalks and designated "green spaces" for walking, exercise, and play. Through support and volunteer labor from Master Gardeners, high school vocational students, botanical gardens, and other horticultural organizations, the project leaders proposed to develop a mile of green space each year. Proposed activities include clearing sites to create trails and play areas, leveling ground, placing benches, and planting trees and shrubs where appropriate.

The project was designed to be piloted in the Madison County area during 1997-98 and then advance into other urban communities in subsequent years. To date, numerous sites for rail-to-trail conversions have been located. Project leaders are working with The Huntsville Land Trust Board to designate sites for improvement and to coordinate project activities with those planned by the board. Project leaders are also working with Alabama A&M University's (AAMU) Urban Planning Department to develop a grant to create a trail from the Railroad Historical museum on Chase Road through the AAMU campus. County Agents in Madison County and several Master Gardeners have committed to assist in the trail development.

The President of the Huntsville Trust Board has provided contacts to identify property ownership of various railroad bed right-of-ways. Expectations are that with proper follow-up, several miles of railroad bed will be prioritized for development by the end of 1998.

ETP 602: Trapped in Poverty, Trapped by Abuse, Trapped by Poor Health

"Trapped!" is a media driven project conducted in collaboration with WJAB (AAMU) and other public radio stations across the state. "Trapped!" focuses on strategies to intervene with problems of domestic violence, poverty and welfare, and associated poor health factors.

In November of 1997 the Trapped!! project team leader initiated a partnership with the University's public radio station and submitted a grant to Sound Partners for Community Health in Maryland. The grant was funded to support a six-part radio series presentation on the interface between domestic violence, poor health and poverty. WJAB has a cumulative audience (CUME) of approximately 38,000 listeners who benefit from running series of public service announcements on family violence prevention. In October 1998 an educational series in recognition of National Family Violence Prevention Month will begin. Project leaders have spearheaded collaborative networks with over 30 statewide partners including Hope Place, the Madison County Spouse Abuse Shelter, Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Alabama ARISE, Central North Alabama Health Services, and Huntsville Police Department's Public Information Office.

The project employs a number of nontraditional program delivery modes. Welfare Simulations, a learning tool created by the Reform Organization of Welfare (ROWEL) Education Association of Missouri, are used to train trainers, community leaders, and human service personnel to sensitize them to the realities of life faced by low income people.

A service agreement has been negotiated with Plays for Living, Inc. in New York, a unique service organization that uses professional drama and drama techniques as awareness, education, and training tools on difficult issues like family violence, health care, and poverty. The service agreement allows Trapped! to present educational plays that depict dramatic aspects of family living and mental, emotional and physical health, in collaboration with local high school drama clubs and community-based or civic groups. Morgan County Extension Agents are working with a local high school drama teacher to incorporate Plays for Living into his teaching plan for 1998-99. This will enable "Trapped!" to have a mobile group of high school students available to present Plays for Living to civic, agency and clientele groups in the Morgan/Lawrence County area.

Significant accomplishments made by the project team during the past year include the following:

- Twenty-one youth were involved in an informational workshop on date abuse. The training was conducted at the Boys and Girls Club, Madison County.
- Eighteen agency representatives from Lawrence and Morgan counties participated in project awareness training. An outcome was a more intensive outreach campaign to heighten community awareness of domestic violence. The team is working to develop a pocket-sized
ETP 603: Positive Action on Violence Education

As a state goal, the Urban unit is "to facilitate changes to improve urban environments and reduce the impact of environmental situations that threaten the safety and health of individuals, youth and families." Communities have a responsibility to provide safe, drug and crime free environments for children and families to live and thrive. The Alabama Kids Count Special Edition (1995) cites goals for Alabama children to grow up free from abuse, violence, and the devastation of alcohol and other drugs. In spite of these goals, statistics within the state show over 100,000 children living in distressed neighborhoods with high levels of poverty and increased crime.

The Positive Action on Violence Education (PAVE) program conducted educational programs servicing more than 1,885 citizens. Programs were delivered in the areas of date rape, conflict resolution, women and safety, parenting skills, and violence education seminars.

A date rape program was conducted in Talladega County reaching 15 teenagers and their parents. Approximately 195 Perry County teachers received timely information on conflict resolution to prepare them to teach their students how to cope with hostile behavior and conflicts and to communicate their feelings/disagreements appropriately.

Forty parents in Lawrence County attended a series of programs focusing on discipline, communication and stress management to build family resiliency to environmental and safety issues.

A "Community Response" to domestic violence program involved more than 200 law enforcement officers, counselors, medical and social workers, and educational organizations. Participants received information and gained knowledge to help them understand the cycle of violence and the causes, effects, and procedures for emergency notification. Plans are being made to use the PAVE program model to implement future programs in other target counties.

ETP 604: A Comprehensive Breast Cancer Education Project

A comprehensive breast cancer project that seeks to increase the number of women engaging in early detection strategies, including monthly self examinations, yearly clinical examinations, and annual mammograms (based on physician recommendations). A primary objective is to increase the number of women who know how to correctly administer breast self-examinations. Project activities were launched in March 1998 with an open forum/in-service training that featured Dr. Edwin Johnson, a board certified surgeon, past Director of the Montgomery Urgent Care and Diagnostic Center in Montgomery, Alabama and author of the book, Breast Cancer/Black Woman. Approximately 100 women participated in the open forum.
Project leaders capitalized on existing community expertise and resources from health care agencies, including the Alabama Department of Public Health, the Cancer Information Center, National Cancer Institute, the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center, Huntsville Hospital Women Center and the American Cancer Society. Program delivery modes were designed to target hard-to-reach audiences. Techniques such as train the trainer and peer-training approaches were used to encourage more responsiveness from clientele. Project team members were quite successful in recruiting and training volunteers to educate their peers on how to conduct self-exams.

A success story resulted from a partnership between Extension, the North Alabama (Region III) Office of the American Cancer Society (ACS), and the Madison County Unit of ACS. Through collaborative efforts, over 35 volunteers were organized to give leadership to a breast cancer awareness initiative that targets minority and indigent women in North Alabama. The primary goals of the group were to educate women and men on how to administer breast exams and to make them aware of various support organizations and services.

The North Alabama group is composed of cancer survivors, professionals, health care providers, representatives from various sororities, organizations, and concerned citizens who have already worked successfully to make more women aware of breast cancer, how to detect it, and ways to live a quality life if the disease is present. This group was instrumental in increasing the awareness of 837 clients. Since the project was initiated, county Extension agents, educators, and specialists have participated in more than 12 health fairs in malls, department stores, schools, and churches. Valuable educational pamphlets and brochures were distributed to support the project’s objectives. Workshops, seminars, and awareness programs for professional and lay groups have been conducted. Many church, seniors, and teenage groups were eager to receive training on health issues that impact their lives. Exhibits were displayed at professional meetings and conferences. Approximately 2,083 citizens have benefited from training and services provided under this ETP.

A great deal of energy and time were devoted this year to solidifying relationships and identifying clear strategies for accomplishing objectives. One of the true impacts was effective coalition building with other health agencies. Another impact was the increased access to readily available resources. This project has educated hundreds of people from many ethnic backgrounds, educational levels, and set in motion vehicles for greater outreach throughout the state.

**ETP 605: Valuing Differences and Managing Diversity**

As Alabama’s population changes and becomes increasingly diverse, its response to issues of diversity must also change. The truth is differences alone do not cause racial problems, but how people respond to differences can. Extension’s Urban unit realizes the need for Alabama citizens to strive to enhance their appreciation for differences and to move forward to eradicate prejudice through education.

Resources such as videos, audiotapes, and guidebooks have been acquired to support the delivery of cultural diversity programs and topics across the state using a variety of delivery modes. Training has been done with groups that range from 4-H youth to frontline managers through seminars and conferences with private firms and government agencies. An estimated 2,869 clientele were served through project activities.

Members of the project team provided assistance to the Philippine American Association in celebration of the Philippine Centennial recognizing the Declaration of Independence in the Philippines. An estimated 230 participants were involved in this event. The team also provided diversity training and cultural-specific activities and displays in support of the Eleventh Annual International Food and Cultural Fair held annually at AAMU. The event promotes cultural awareness and involves over 1,000 participants representing students, faculty, organizations, groups, and communities.

Through the state’s 4-H program, LABO students and chaperones participated in the Japanese
exchange summer programs. Families and communities were involved in hosting the delegates. Long before their arrival, many activities took place in the counties where more than 85 prospective families were recruited, 40 ultimately oriented and 11 finally chosen as host families for the delegates.

In Houston County, a forum on race relations brought students, teachers, and parents together in the Dothan City Schools. The forum was the beginning of a process to involve citizens in talking about current issues that lead to seeking common ground in addressing community issues.

In May 1998, Extension and the International Program at Alabama A&M University co-sponsored a visit of 10 Hungarian foresters. Tours, meetings, and briefings were provided of Extension programs and the School of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences.

---

**ETP 606: Workforce Preparation: Finding and Securing Employment**

According to 1990 Census data, the state of Alabama has an unemployment rate of nearly seven percent. One-third of adults in the state do not have a high school education, and there are fewer adults with post-secondary degrees than the national average. Agencies that provide support in preparing this population for the "Workforce 2000" are undoubtedly challenged.

The Workforce Preparation Project was designed to assist newly skilled and non-skilled workers to find their place in the workforce by increasing the employability of a cadre of workers. Project leaders worked to establish rapport with a number of small businesses that are targeted for future partnerships.

Partnerships were also established with the Department of Human Resources, the Unemployment Office/Industrial Relations, the Alabama Development Office, and the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs' Workforce Division. In Lauderdale County, a partnership has developed with the Shoals Family Economic Summit & Industry to assist limited resource families in becoming successful in the Shoals area workplace.

A resourceful partnership was established with the Madison County Chamber of Commerce Committee on Workforce Preparation. This partnership involves working with the committee to develop and deliver a new employee skill testing technique for local industries. The test will give participating businesses/industries a more accurate assessment of prospective employees.

During Fiscal Year (FY) 1997-98, county Extension offices endeavored to provide information and resources to many of the state's unemployed citizens as well as those who are seeking job advancement.

In Escambia County, county agents worked with nontraditional audiences to provide independent living classes and training to inmates in the county jail. The objective was to prepare them in their pursuit of a better quality of life once they were dismissed. Twelve (12) inmates participated in this training.

Houston County has initiated a quarterly job fair schedule. Two county job fairs reached over 400 citizens. A total of 35 employees supported the fairs and were onsite to interact with participants at the Dothan Family Center. Entry-level jobs were offered to employees impacted by industry closings.

Sumpter County also used job fairs as an information delivery approach. A Sumpter County job fair attracted approximately 300 participants, including welfare clients trying to make the transition from welfare to work.

Work has begun on a five-lesson curriculum that will be used to train displaced workers, new hires, and low-skill workers on finding, securing, and retaining a job. A series of district trainings with project core team members to critique and fully develop the curriculum began in September 1998.
ETP 607: Youth Entrepreneurship

According to recent surveys, Alabama has a population of approximately 880,000 young people between the ages of 5-19. There is a critical need to ensure that today's youth are well prepared in careers that will be relevant and secure in the twenty-first century workplace. Entrepreneurship is a viable career option and in an effort to address the need for entrepreneurship education, several programs were implemented that focused on emotional, mental, and social development, development of leadership skills, promotion of work ethics, and preparation for economic success.

A 4-H sewing day camp was conducted in the Morgan County area involving youth in the projects designed to enhance product design and marketing skills. This was the camp's third year in operation. Local agency participation included the Family and Community Education Association and community volunteers.

A group of young entrepreneurs was organized in Washington County to provide concessions at local community sporting events using the "learn and earn" concept. Several local businesses served as mentors for this project. Support from these agencies also served as monetary start-up for operation. Approximately 1200 clients were serviced by this youth business. This group is expected to expand their current business operations to include the sale of t-shirts in the local school system. An exemplary youth entrepreneurship project such as this, raises self esteem, provides legitimate financial options, fosters a sense of hope, provides a link between education and one's goals in life, and creates unlimited opportunities for personal and community success.

ETP 608: Health Education Initiatives Impacting the Underserved Population

The project focuses on high-risk diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, arthritis and heart disease. Programs were designed for all ages to teach nutrition education, healthy eating habits, behavior modification, and physical activities with specific emphasis on reducing risk factors. An estimated 1200 citizens have been reached through health fairs, churches, senior citizen clubs, and youth groups.

ETP 609: A Youth Mentoring Program Initiative

The youth mentoring project was designed to raise the awareness of parents and community leaders about the needs of the urban youth and family culture, and to promote and encourage mentoring groups or organizations to provide more positive role models in urban communities and to support positive youth development. During FY 1998, several programs were implemented in furtherance of the goals and objectives outlined in this team project. More specifically, youth programs were implemented that addressed welfare to work issues, summer recreation, personal development, and how to handle societal pressures in an urban environment.

A Shoals Family Economic Summit was conducted as an outreach program to those affected by welfare to work requirements. Agencies and organizations, elected officials, and educational leaders were brought together with industry representatives to assist limited resource families in becoming successful in the Shoals workplace. Major committees formed to address various aspects of securing and retaining employment. Participants were taught how to interview for jobs, work ethics, problem-solving skills, budgeting, communication skills, and stress/time management.

Youth forums were conducted in the Marengo County area with panels addressing topics such as "School Drop Outs – How to Cope," "Adolescent Pregnancies," "Handling Rejections," "Gang Mentality," "Teenage Suicide," "Understanding and Preventing Aids," and "Peer Pressure." Similar forums have been planned as ongoing activities. Additionally, drug awareness mentoring programs were established in various churches as an intervention/prevention strategy to address drug issues with youth of all ages. The programs have been instrumental in reducing the number of youth who fall prey to the drug industry, teen pregnancy, gang violence, and other societal ills due to lack of educational resources and self awareness programs. Mentoring programs can resolve many problems that plague communities today. Approximately 600 participants benefited from these mentoring programs.

In an effort to curtail negative activity during the summer break, community mentors with the Cooper Green Housing Development in Birmingham, Alabama were trained to implement the YES I Can program. The YES I Can curriculum includes lessons on values clarification, study skills, self-esteem, recreation, and work force preparation. The summer program will be modified to provide tutorial and mentor guidance as an ongoing education program during the school year.
A similar program was delivered to address local housing and economic development problems in communities surrounding the campus of Alabama A&M University. A comprehensive youth mentoring program was established for young men involved in a job skills assignment with a Housing and Urban Development-funded Community Development Corporation (CDC) in a Huntsville urban community. The program was designed to promote good self-esteem, clarify personal and family values, encourage high academic standards, promote work ethics and equip youth with training and education necessary for seeking and retaining employment.

ETP 227: Enhancing Small Ruminant Animal Health Care Delivery Systems

Program activities for 1998 were focused on project development, program delivery, and marketing strategies including the following:

• Establishing a demographic database identifying local veterinary resources within the State of Alabama interested in supporting and sustaining the goat and sheep industry. Collected data is being mapped and plotted for rapid identification and delivery of health care services needed by this nontraditional, agricultural based target group. Currently, a listing of over 100 veterinarians interested in small practice aspects has been compiled. By recruiting and training veterinarians interested in better serving these producers, Extension will ensure the economic viability and sustainability of this often neglected food animal industry and concurrently improve animal well being.

• Designing and facilitating educational materials and training. Ongoing program planning has led to the development, production, and dissemination of related fact sheets (via the ACES website) and will continue to provide more publications, educational videos and other material resources that represent user-oriented packages of selected technologies and management practice standards for the duration of the project.

• Assisting with clientele/producer meetings and on-farm demonstrations related to animal care. To date, one goat producer meeting held earlier this year in Lawrence County addressed concerns on effective de-worming strategies in small ruminants.

• One goat PAC committee meeting was recently held in Franklin County. The focus on this committee is to provide opportunities for community (county) dialogue of issues and concerns with county Extension agents (CEAs). CEA participants will plan another PAC meeting before the end of 1998. In this county, a field trial evaluating the utilization and recycling of poultry litter has been established. The overall aim of the study is to determine to what level poultry litter can be added to goat rations and still be palatable and ingested by goats. To date the poultry litter has been used in 25-40 percent of a mixed ration fed to goats with a good degree of palatability. Evaluation is desirable to the level of 65 percent of the ration.

• Efforts toward identifying nine goatherds and nine ewe flocks in Alabama to participate and to serve as model sustainable livestock production systems have been initiated. Since the initiation of this ETP we have implemented the survey and screening of potential producer participants using a Small Ruminant Producer Questionnaire developed to make initial assessments of producers for project inclusion.

The aim of project leaders for 1998 was also directed toward magnifying publicity and marketing efforts through information delivery about the program (mass media, i.e. radio and newspaper, Alabama Cooperative Extension signage, and other System novelty items, posters, etc) that will ultimately provide more visibility to the program. Startup kits for producers to maintain resource materials and record keeping have been acquired. An ultrasound scanning system was requested for pregnancy testing activities and buck test station activities forthcoming in 1999. Criteria were established for each of these activities pertaining to producer and animal eligibility requirements.
ETP 244: Intensive Rotational Grazing Systems

Because of the growing demand for information on grazing systems, the key goals for this project are to: 1) train Alabama cattle and sheep producers to manage pasture grazing for high production per acre, to manage animals properly to minimize forage wastage, and to achieve good gains by growing animals; 2) make producers aware of developing methods (mixed grazing cattle and sheep) to increase efficiency of forage use; and 3) provide producers with strategies to reduce operating costs and increase environmental benefits.

Many of the objectives of this project were addressed through the development of a publication and other printed materials developed through the project. The publication is in its advance stages and will be printed in February 1999.

Students Promoting Action/Community Education Program (SPACE)

In accomplishing the program objectives for this student volunteerism project, 39 Alabama A&M University students volunteered 956 hours in the areas of mentoring, tutoring, nurturing, and serving to directly impact the lives of 1,741 clients in (Madison County) social service and public agencies. The SPACE program has provided support in the areas of:

a. Literacy and employment at the Seldon Adult Learning Center
b. Strengthening families at J. O. Johnson’s Creative Parenting Laboratory
c. Troubled youth programs with the Coalition of At-Risk Minority Males (COARMM), Meadow Hills Initiative After School Program, Seminole Service Center, Upward Bound and Colonial Hill Elementary School (Madison County)
d. Health care (American Red Cross through Community Disaster Education Programs and the Donor Program; Huntsville Hospital Support Programs and North Alabama Sickle Cell Anemia Program)
e. Student services in support of SPACE’s headquarters and project focused community service activities including the annual Christmas “SPACE Walk for Angels” and the Thanksgiving food share.

Yes I Can Program (Youth Education in School/Initiating Change: Action Now)

The Yes I Can youth intervention program has five training units including: 1) Self Esteem, 2) Clarifying Values, 3) Enhancing Study Skills, 4) Job Preparedness Skills and 5) Recreational and Leisure Activities. A total of 4,850 contacts were made with culturally diverse youth/adults, and volunteer leaders through this program. A summary of program participation follows:

• Five hundred and ninety-seven (597) youth in Franklin County attended five educational programs in the area of self-esteem, values clarifications, and job readiness.
• In Lawrence County, the Yes I Can Program was used with 52 4-H Club programs reaching a clientele and making contacts with some 1,300 youth.
• The county Extension coordinator in Bibb County coordinated the Yes I Can Program for the school system (teachers and counselors), reaching a clientele of 57 students.
• In collaboration with the PHOENIX Program (operated through the Madison County Circuit Court Attorneys, the Chief Probation Officer of the Madison County Juvenile Court/Neaves-Davis Center for Children and the Madison County District Six Commissioner), the Yes I Can Program was used as a part of a ten-week training program for juvenile offenders.
• The Yes I Can Program has also been successfully used to build the self-esteem of foster care children, and to promote study skills with youth involved in math, engineering, and science education programs at local universities.
ANNUAL CONFERENCES

The Urban-Rural Interface Conference

The Urban unit has as one of its six state goals to "expand understandings of urban agricultural concepts to address real issues of urban/rural interdependence." As the outreach component of the land-grant universities, it's proper that Extension recognizes the interconnection between urban and rural areas to better serve all people. State Extension educators realize a healthy Extension service needs a strong rural component and a viable urban presence.

The Urban-Rural Interface Conference was developed to focus on the importance of building working relationships with communities, organizations and agencies to serve diverse audiences through more balanced programming efforts. Conference activities are designed to educate participants on how to collaborate, build partnerships, and establish coalitions to enhance programs and services.

Conference objectives are to:
• Convene organizations and individuals addressing urban-rural community needs.
• Identify a common understanding of issues and opportunities.
• Develop an understanding of reciprocal strengths and potential contributions of conference participants.
• Provide training models that will prepare participants to successfully implement partnerships within their community.

The 1998 conference was held on April 16, 1998 in the James I. Dawson Cooperative Extension Building, Alabama A&M University. Mr. Thomas Wood, chief executive officer, Community Action and Community Development Agency of North Alabama, Inc. delivered the keynote address centered around the conference theme "Building Partnerships to Enhance Alabama Communities." More than 150 participants representing various groups, agencies, and organizations were involved in open forums, panel discussions, group sessions and exhibit reviews that focused on successful models for building partnerships. This conference is held each spring in conjunction with the University's Agricultural and Consumer Sciences week.

National Shiitake Mushroom Symposium

In October 1997 the Second National Shiitake Symposium was held in Huntsville, Alabama. This conference was designed to convene researchers and educators, establish linkages across the state and institutional boundaries, promote educational models, identify research areas, and create publicity and establish a clearinghouse for Shiitake mushroom information in the southern region.

Presenters were involved from across the country (Mississippi, Florida, Wisconsin, South Carolina, Oregon, Maine, and Washington, D.C.) and addressed topics such as sawdust and log production, marketing, development of cooperatives and associations, ecological guides to edible mushrooms, television and printed media advertising, genetic engineering, strain selection, timing of soaking and fruiting, funding opportunities and composting spent sawdust logs.

A significant outcome of the conference will be the development of proceedings and videos comprised of all facets of shiitake mushroom production, marketing, nutrition, health, sustainability, producer experiences, genetics and economics.

Representing one of the state's nontraditional, value-added products, shiitake mushroom production was begun in Alabama to explore its viability as an alternative enterprise. There are currently over 15 producers involved in the production of an estimated 20,000 logs, yielding over 7,000 pounds of mushrooms per year.

During FY 1997-98, approximately 300 contacts were made with 150 clients to provide educational programs and services.
Annual African-American Family Conference

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs co-sponsored the Annual African-American Family Conference, held in October 1997. The conference was conducted in partnership with Maximum Life Enhancement, Inc., Alabama A&M University, and WHNT-TV 19. The conference theme was "African American Families: Strength for Today and Hope for Tomorrow." This two-day conference was a character building, family-oriented, culturally enriching program with an attendance of 120 families.

Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs Exhibition

On December 17, 1997, a program exhibition was held to introduce the community, the University family, and Extension to the newly established Urban Affairs unit. Programs and activities were showcased in many of the ETPs such as Valuing Differences and Managing Diversity, Breast Cancer Awareness, and Health Education Initiatives. It also included exhibits from 4-H Youth Development, Yes I Can, the North Alabama Regional office, and Madison County Extension.

An estimated 175 citizens, Extension personnel, university faculty, and other agencies, organizations, and groups flowed through the Extension building to review the open exhibits and to take advantage of available resources and information.

IN-SERVICE TRAININGS

Guidelines for Establishing Urban Centers and Expanding and Enhancing Urban Programs

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System, like other Extension systems across the nation, has worked as a publicly funded entity to provide quality programs to meet the needs of the people wherever they live. While services have always been available to citizens in rural, urban, and suburban communities, in recent years the state has recognized the need and accepted the challenge to expand and enhance outreach to urban and nontraditional audiences.

During February 1998 a statewide in-service training was conducted to apprise Extension employees of the state "Guidelines for Establishing Urban Centers and Expanding and Enhancing Urban Programs." Sixty-seven Extension staff members attended, including county agents, specialists, district Extension coordinators, and other Extension administrators.

Computer Training

A series of training programs were delivered during the summer of 1998 (May-July) to provide updates to prepare specialists to respond to changing demands in communicating and reporting within Extension, and to support more efficient responses to clientele needs. Group and one-on-one training sessions were conducted.

Funded Programs and Resource Development

Understanding the role played by Extension staff and faculty in building resources to support Extension programming, efforts were made to sharpen grant-writing skills through additional training, and to exercise these skills by pursuing external funding. The unit enthusiastically pursued opportunities and was instrumental in acquiring new strategies through participation in grant-writing sessions, seminars, and workshops.

Extension's contracts and grants specialist conducted a grant-writing workshop for all Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs unit's staff. The primary objective of the workshop was to teach participants how to write concise and integrated proposals. Information on the process for preparing a proposal to a government agency or private foundation was provided and possible funding sources for specific project areas were explored. Approximately 25 specialists, faculty, and graduate students attended the training session.
During FY 1998-99, grants that were funded, extended, or were still pending included:

- A Proposed Model for Training Urban Educators in the Agricultural Sciences and Home Economics (3-year grant, CSREES Capacity Building, 1998-2000)
- Community Development Initiative (3-year Kellogg funded grant in Cooperation with the University of Wisconsin at River Falls)
- OSHA Safety and Health Training and Education for Alabama Small Business (Pending Funding)

A Proposed Model for Training Urban Educators in the Agricultural Sciences and Home Economics

This capacity building grant is a three-year funded project that promotes the development of partnerships between Alabama A&M University, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, and local welfare agencies and community action agencies. Through activities initiated under the capacity building grant, the unit seeks to fulfill its commitment to ultimately expand the resource pool of competent urban educators and to expand the potential of Alabama citizens to more effectively assess and address emerging issues and concerns within urban communities. The project lends support to underserved, hard-to-reach audiences (a targeted group of Extension Service-USDA), by recruiting students directly from this audience and training them in two year, 4-year and graduate studies programs to function as peer teachers and leaders within their own communities.

The expected outcomes of the project are directly in line with the goals of Extension – educating people to help themselves, thus improving their quality of life. Project objectives are to: 1) increase the enrollment of nontraditional students (i.e. adult learners), and 2) enhance curricula and instructional strategies and program delivery modes in targeted areas within the School of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at Alabama A&M University. The project supports actively recruiting nontraditional students directly from the target audiences of limited resource families, single-headed households, and families affected directly by the Welfare Reform Act (1996). The long-range goal of this project is to help individuals move from the level of being the benevolent beneficiaries of the United States Department of Agriculture, to become contributing professionals.

Cooperative Development Initiative Grant

Expanding leadership development opportunities and getting groups of communities to work together in solving issues of mutual concern to bring about economic prosperity is the objective of the Cooperative Development Initiative (CDI). The Kellogg Foundation funded this project in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin at River Falls.

The CDI project coordinator, staff, and supporters have targeted a number of small businesses and small farmers such as the Alabama Meat Goat Association, the Small Business Incubator Center, Inc., and the Community Development Initiative (Urban Planning at AAMU) to provide technical training assistance. Seminars, workshops, and meetings with project leaders provided educational training on grant writing and resource building, writing and producing newsletters, conducting effective board meetings, principles of parliamentary procedures, leadership development and strategic planning for community and economic development ("Mapping Your Journey").

The Small Business Incubator Center, Inc. (SBICI) provides an example of the success of the project and the true meaning of cooperative development. During this past fiscal year this group became involved in the CDI. The SBICI is composed of thirty community leaders engaged in small business in the town of Russellville, located in the northern part of the state. This group was organized in 1996 with the assistance of Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

The primary purpose of the Center is to assist the members in establishing small businesses, to promote interest in the community, and to encourage more involvement in establishing small businesses.

To date, this group is renovating the old Reedtown School building, one of the last remaining schools in the town that was abandoned as a result of integration. This building, when completely renovated, will be rented out to small entrepreneurs in the community. Support for the renovation is being provided through participation of people in the Reedtown community, the mayor and the city council, Director of the Chamber of Commerce, Tennessee Valley
Authority, RC&D, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, State Senators and State Representatives. Other local residents are also being recruited to join the SBICI.

The CDI project will continue as a viable program to meet the needs of communities and organizations in rural and urban areas in Alabama. Goals are to expand the services to utilize the System's potential to address more urban focused training activities. Work has begun with the CDC at Alabama A&M University. The CDC is a HUD sponsored non-profit organization that addresses the housing and economic development problems of HUD targeted areas in the City of Huntsville (Meadow Hills and Edmonton Heights communities) and Madison County.

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE)

Funds were obtained from SARE to develop a Web site that promotes sustainable production of shiitake mushrooms and will include summaries of shiitake research articles, books, magazine articles and other shiitake materials. This Web site will be keyword, author, and title searchable, and will provide links to other shiitake mushroom sites on the Internet. The primary home of this Web page will be linked to the Alabama Cooperative Extension's home page and the Alabama A&M University home page. This project will begin in 1998 and is due to be completed by September 1999.

Environmental Justice Proposal

An environmental justice project proposal was developed to target urban communities and was designed to provide extensive training to enable urban residents (Alabama) to identify and reduce non-point source pollution in their communities by changing their methods of storage and disposal of chemicals. The proposal was drafted by a writing team composed of Extension agents and specialists and is still pending funding.

OSHA Safety and Health Training and Education for Alabama Small Companies Proposal

Characteristically, supportive communities promote work and living situations that insure the well being of families including the availability of jobs as well as job safety. The OSHA grant proposed to develop and conduct a training program using a "train the trainer" model to provide managers and supervisors with the necessary tools to train their employees in safety, health, and hazard awareness. Pending funding, this grant will help foster working relationships with industry to support goals and objectives outlined under the System's "Work Force Preparation" Extension Team Project (ETP).

SUBMITTED BY

Jannie Carter, State Program Leader
With Input from State Specialists/Educators and County Extension Agents with Urban Responsibilities
Unit Specialists/Educators: Edna Coleman, Donnie Cook, Julio Correa, Marquita Davis, Deny Gapasin, Mary Hurt, Jacqueline Johnson, Marilyn Johnson, Grace Kirkman, Rosalie Lane, Wilma Ruffin, Cathy Sabota, Bernice Wilson

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work in agriculture and home economics, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, and other related acts, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A&M University and Auburn University) offers educational programs, materials, and equal opportunity employment to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status, or disability.