

THE ALABAMA TRAVELER

August 2006



Alabama Association of Housing
and Redevelopment Authorities

Message From the President



Carolyn Sutley
AAHRA President
2005-2006

Dear AAHRA Members:

This may have been the fastest year on record for me. It may be my age, but I think it is because I have so enjoyed serving as AAHRA President. Thank you for this opportunity and thanks to so many of you that have served on the various committees that made my job easy.

This has not been an easy year for the public housing industry. We have struggled with legislative issues and HUD issues that have truly been detrimental to our organizations and once again we are left to pick up the pieces and make the changes work.

This is where our **ATTITUDE MAKES THE DIFFERENCE!**

I hope this year AAHRA has provided you with some training that made your job easier. I hope our Workshops have given you the opportunity to network with other agencies that are struggling with the same issues and that together you were able to get some ideas of how to deal with your problems. I hope next year we find the problems we had anticipated are not as catastrophic as we had feared.

My goal this year was to encourage each of you to look to the attitude you bring to your agency every day. The way we approach problems makes all the difference in whether we solve the problem or just get an ulcer. I hope you have been encouraged to stand strong and do what you can when you can and not be discouraged about the issues you cannot control.

Many changes have been made to our AAHRA Webpage this year. Be sure you visit it frequently. Tom Wachs, our webmaster, has worked hard to provide you with current information to help you stay up to date on AAHRA activities and provide information you need.

AAHRA is always looking for training that will benefit our members. Please continue to let the Education Committee know if you need specific training. You also need to consider where you can best volunteer to work with AAHRA to keep our organization strong and better able to meet the needs of our membership. The AAHRA leadership is always looking for new people to move into positions of leadership. New ideas will keep us strong and vital as we approach the challenges of the future.

Thanks again for your support throughout this year. Serving as AAHRA President has been a great adventure!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CSutley'.

"There is little difference in people, but that little difference makes a big difference. The little difference is attitude. The big difference is whether it is positive or negative."

W. Clement Stone

THE ALABAMA TRAVELER

Alabama Association of Housing and
Redevelopment Authorities

Housing Professionals Serving the State Since 1940

August 2006 Edition

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The Alabama Traveler is a quarterly publication published by the Alabama Association of Housing and Redevelopment Authorities. It is intended to inform and encourage those associated with the public housing industry and be used for informational purposes only. It is mailed free of charge to member housing authorities as well as vendors and other agencies that support AAHRA through financial contributions to our scholarship program and participate in workshops, conferences and other events hosted by AAHRA.

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\$21,500 Awarded in Scholarships for 2006

AHAEFF, the Alabama Housing Authority Education and Enrichment Fund, in partnership with AAHRA, has announced that \$21,500 in scholarships have been given to ten recipients. Over \$270,000 has been awarded to more than 130 recipients since the inception of the committee in 1984.

EMILY WHITE - DOTHAN

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP - \$2,000

Note: In memory of Doyle Earnest-Guin, Joe Patridge-Brent, J.C. Miller-Montgomery, Pat Isbell-Blountsville, Glenn Stephens-Sylacauga, A.D. McNees-Tuscumbia, Eddie Wilson-Attalla / Scottsboro

"My goals in life are simple: success and happiness. For me, success would be receiving a degree in engineering and happiness would be to give someone else the gift of a place to call their own."

COLLEGE: Troy University Dothan, Fall 2006

MAJOR: Engineering

ACHIEVEMENTS: ACT - 27, GPA - 3.41, works full-time at AmSouth Bank and attends Wallace Community College full-time as well. "I pay for all of my expenses. I have a respectable GPA but I know it would be better if I had more time to study. My parents did not get their degree and I know it would make them very proud for me to achieve my goal of becoming an engineer."



CASSANDRA JERNIGAN - EUFAULA

EXHIBITOR/PROFESSIONAL SCHOLARSHIP - \$2,000

"I know that at times the road is dark and dreary but I am determined. I've headed down this road numerous times and have gotten sidetracked, but I have not given up. I refuse to give up."

COLLEGE: To be determined

MAJOR: Pre-law

ACHIEVEMENTS: Works at Crowne Health Care - on her off days she volunteers to do outdoor activities with residents. Assistant baseball coach for 7 and 8 year olds, member of Abundant Life Choir and serves as school volunteer chaperoning and reading coach.



KIMBERLY RHINE - ANNISTON
EXHIBITOR/PROFESSIONAL SCHOLARSHIP - \$2,000

"I would like to express my gratitude for this scholarship so I can finish my education. I study hard so that someone else will be helped by what I learn. My desire is for others to look at my successes and use me as an example that others can make it just as I have."

COLLEGE: Gadsden State Community College
MAJOR: Elementary Education

ACHIEVEMENTS: Serves on AHA Executive Council Board, substitute teacher, volunteers at homeless shelter, middle school and numerous church activities



BEVERLY BARBER - DOTHAN
AHAEF SCHOLARSHIP - \$2,000

"I have realized you can never stop learning. My main objective in pursuing higher education is to strengthen my knowledge base and provide support to face certain obstacles. With the Lord's guidance, I will achieve this education and be able to show my children the rewards."

COLLEGE: Troy University Dothan
MAJOR: Finance

ACHIEVEMENTS: Employed by the Dothan Housing Authority, certified Public Housing Manager and in housing quality standards, family self-sufficiency, co-leader of Girl Scouts troop, women's missionary society, parent advisory counsel for Carroll High basketball



ANGELA JACKSON - MOBILE
SERC SCHOLARSHIP - \$2,500

"I believe it is necessary to pursue education beyond high school in order to become a contributor to the development of society. I would like to become a doctor one day but for now I am majoring in Psychology and possibly minoring in Nutrition because I feel these two are two important issues in society today."

COLLEGE: New York University
MAJOR: Psychology with minor in Nutrition

ACHIEVEMENTS: GPA - 2.90, ACT - 26, SAT - 1240, employed by New York University School of Law Admissions, Theta Phi Beta, Lafayette Hall government, Bide-A-Wee animal shelter, breast cancer walk team, Children's Hope Foundation, numerous high school activities including varsity soccer, National Honor Society, Scholar's Bowl, and Army Junior Reserve Drill Team



JOANN LYNN KAMMAN - ANNISTON
AAHRA SCHOLARSHIP - \$2,000

"I am a mother of two beautiful children and am enrolled full time at Gadsden State Community College. As a volunteer, I read books to children, tutor, and help them with their daily work. I hope to make a difference in children's lives."

COLLEGE: Gadsden State University, will attend Jacksonville State University in August 2006

MAJOR: Health, Physical Education and Recreation

ACHIEVEMENTS: GPA - 3.17, currently a federal work study employee at Gadsden State, attends church at Harvest Church of God and member of Phi Theta Kappa honor society, on the Dean's List for fall semesters of 2004 and 2005, volunteers as tutor at Martin Luther King Child Development Center and at Gadsden State Community College



ASPEN OWENS - BESSEMER
AAHRA SCHOLARSHIP - \$3,000

"I am deeply honored to once again receive this scholarship. I decided that I wanted to make the best contribution to this valued organization that I could. My family, friends and coworkers are very supportive of me, and that makes me even more excited to find what my future may hold."

COLLEGE: Athens State University

MAJOR: Accounting

ACHIEVEMENTS: GPA - 3.75, ACT - 24, currently employed by the Bessemer Housing Authority, Dean's list, President's list, outstanding student for accounting dept, graduated with honors from Bessemer State Technical College, National Honor Society, volunteers at Beverly Health Services, Children's Hospital, Ronald McDonald House, Birmingham Humane Society, and the co-founder of Valley Creek Bluegrass (promoting benefit concerts to raise money for needy families)



TONDRA VENSON - DOTHAN
AAHRA SCHOLARSHIP - \$2,000

"A brighter future for me means achieving my goals by doing whatever is necessary for my family and me. My parents always told me to Never Give Up and Be The Best You Can Be. I want to pass that same message on to my children."

COLLEGE: Wallace Community College

MAJOR: Child Development

ACHIEVEMENTS: GPA - 3.50, employed at the Family Guidance Center in Dothan, participates in activities for child abuse/blue ribbon month, active with son's sports leagues and involved in early headstart program.



**JACKIE WALKER - EUFAULA
AAHRA SCHOLARSHIP - \$2,000**

"I want to show everyone that it's never too late to get a degree and fulfill your goals."

COLLEGE: Wallace Community College - Eufaula

MAJOR: Accounting

ACHIEVEMENTS: GPA - 3.00, employed by Dr. O'Neil Culver's office, volunteers in nursing related programs, sits with and runs errands for elderly neighbors, appointed President of Alabama Federation of LPN's Division II in February 2004, enjoys sewing, crocheting and reading.



**SHARON WILLIAMS - EUFAULA
AAHRA SCHOLARSHIP - \$2,000**

"My goal in life is to be a radiology technician or a nurse. I enjoy helping people and I want to be a role model for other single parents. I would like to encourage everyone to get a college degree."

COLLEGE: Chattahoochee Valley Community College - Phenix City

MAJOR: Radiology or Nursing

ACHIEVEMENTS: GPA - 3.70, employed by Cooper Lighting, was on the Honor Roll all four years of high school, volleyball captain and MVP 2002-2003, EHA softball team for three years, Zion Hill Gospel Choir and WCC Youth Leadership



**SHAWANA WRIGHT - PHADA SCHOLARSHIP
WINNER, ELBA HOUSING AUTHORITY**

Shawana Wright, a participant in the Elba Housing Authority's Section 8 Program, was recently awarded a \$4,000.00 scholarship through the Public Housing Authority Directors Association.

Shawana, a senior at Elba High School, applied for the 2006 Bollinger Scholarship that is sponsored by PHADA annually. This year, due to the generosity of Home Depot, PHADA was able to award two extra scholarships in addition to the Bollinger, one of which Shawana was the proud recipient.

Mark Emery from Home Depot and Bernadine Spears, Chairperson of the Scholarship Committee, were in Elba in late June. They met Miss Wright and hosted a dinner in her honor, and officially made the scholarship presentation. We congratulate Shawana for a job well done, and wish her the very best.

Talladega Resident Shares Love of Woodburning

by Chris Norwood, The Daily Home

Juanita Swain and her twin sister Anita first learned to do "wood burning" when they were students at E.H. Gentry, "and we were just so fascinated we've been doing it ever since, even after we got out of school," Juanita said.

Swain's work has been presented, over the years, not only to friends and family but to Dale Earnhardt Sr. and Jr., and to the president of a Karate association. "So I got a couple of my little birdies hanging up in Japan," she said proudly.

Swain demonstrated her art to about a dozen of her fellow Curry Court residents, even allowing them to try their hands at it. Participants in the class were given an opportunity to select one of a number of different designs (lady bugs, roses, butterflies, an elephant, an angel and several others) and two sizes of stenciled letters. The patterns were put on top of a piece of carbon paper, which were in turn taped to the top of a piece of beveled, sanded wood, and traced the designs in pencil.

Once the design had been transferred on to the wood, it was retraced using an electric wood burning pencil. "The tip of it heats up to about 900 degrees," she explained, "and it just burns the lines right into the wood. You have all different kind of tips you can use to get different kinds of lines. I've done all kinds of different things, roosters, cars, Alabama and Auburn stuff, whatever you want to do. You can be creative." The finished design can then be colored and varnished.

Swain has taught several classes in Talladega's public housing community. The first two were in the Westgate and Knoxville Homes communities. The wood blocks were supplied by the Talladega Housing Authority, using scrap lumber from one of their modernization programs.

According to Housing Authority Activities Coordinator Cynthia Capers, these classes are part of a new HUD requirement of public housing residents who do not work outside the home to perform at least eight hours of community service per month. These classes will more than fulfill Swain's requirement.

"She's really the first person we've had that's approached the requirement this way," Capers said. "It's a great opportunity to share this with her neighbors."



Juanita Swain gave about a dozen of her fellow Curry Court residents a class on wood burning, the method of etching designs onto a piece of wood using a special pen with a heated tip.

If you don't use it, you'll lose it!
- Anonymous

Good Grades Mean Good Food, Shows and Savings Too

by William Thornton, Birmingham News

Good grades mean food food in Leeds for some students.

Children of the Leeds Housing Authority who made the A-B honor roll were treated to pizza, along with savings bonds, gift certificates, and an afternoon show by an animal trainer. The program, started this year, is already getting results, according to Executive Director Angela Cole.

"When we started out, we had eight students who made the honor roll," she said. "By the end of the year, we had 16. So

Animal trainer Rick Rakestraw takes questions from an audience at the Leeds Housing Authority about "Precious," the abused monkey he is rehabilitating.



in a very short time we've doubled our number.

Students who made all A's received a \$200 savings bond, while A-B students got a \$100 bond. Each received a \$20 gift certificate, along with several slices of pizza.

Entertainment at the lunchtime show was provided by Attalla animal trainer Rick Rakestraw, who owns a business called Critters Around the World.

For the past 20 years, Rakestraw has taken in abused, neglected and unwanted animals, specializing in exotics such as monkeys, tigers, bears, lemurs, cougars, bobcats, snakes and lizards. He also has a few domestic dogs. He presents a show of his ani-



Jamaine Clark, 11, reacts to a brown lemur during an animal show at the Leeds Housing Authority

mals to schools, churches and civic groups.

Cole said the authority hopes future programs will continue to inspire student achievement in the classroom.

"We want to let the children know somebody cares about them," she said. "We want to encourage them to stay in school and make good grades."

Busy Times in Anniston

by Geraldine Allen, Director of Operations

Busy as a bee hive best describes Anniston's Resident Initiative Program over the last year. Carolyn Swain, Coordinator, has applied for and received two grants totaling over \$50,000; grants from the Alabama Civil Justice Foundation and the Alabama Community Education Foundation.

The funds received from the Civil Justice Grant were used to purchase computers, printers and software for two Boys and Girls Clubs along with the computer lab onsite at Glen Addie Homes. The Boys and Girls Clubs receive funding from our housing authority.

Monies from the Education Foundation were used to establish "The Sister Program," initiated to help promote and improve self-esteem in young girls from

9-18 years old.

A great amount of time and devotion to help improve the accessibility of life changing skills to our youth has been offered by Ms. Swain, her assistant and volunteers. Because of Ms. Swain's determination, we continue to offer three very successful educational/technology labs within our agency along with other resident programs. Children from different housing communities have been taken on field trips that include Dr. King's Center out of Atlanta, the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Rosa Parks Museum in Montgomery, and the Civil Rights Institute located in Birmingham.

To finish off the summer, our youth visited Alabama

Adventure, an amusement park in Bessemer. Ms. Swain continues to provide educational as well as other avenues for residents that participate in the resident initiative program.



AAHRA Mourns Death of Midland City Director

Mr. Benny Paul Tice, a resident of Midland City, died early Saturday morning, July 8, 2006, in a Dothan hospital. He was 66.

Funeral services were held on Wednesday, July



Benny Tice (L) shakes hands with the late Glenn Stephens at a previous AAHRA Conference

12th, in the Mount Gilead Baptist Church, with the Revs. Tom Anderson and John Anderson officiating.

Mr. Tice, son of the late Pat and Mittie Lee Paramore Tice, was a native and lifelong resident of Midland City. He was a 1958

graduate of Midland City High School and was a graduate of Troy State University where he received a bachelor's degree in business administration. After graduation from college, he served on active duty in the U.S. Army and later served several years in the U.S. Army Reserve.

Mr. Tice previously owned and operated Tice's IGA in Midland City for 20 years, which was owned in earlier years by his father. He formerly served on the Midland City Town Council several terms and was currently the Executive Director of the Midland City Housing Authority since 1990. Mr. Tice was a former member and deacon of the Midland City Baptist Church and was presently an active member of the Mount Gilead Baptist Church.

Surviving relatives include his wife, Chris, and two daughters, Amy Payne and husband Jimmy Payne of Dothan and Alicia Holland of Midland City. Also three grandchildren, two sisters, several aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews also survive.

The AAHRA family's deepest sympathy goes out to Mr. Tice's wife Chris and family.

Crocker Retires

On December 31, 2005, Franco Crocker, Executive Director at the Housing Authority of the City of Marion, Alabama retired after 33 years and 9 months of service.

Franco started out as the full-time Maintenance Chief in 1972. Col.

Lewis M. Stewart was the Executive Director at this time. In 1983, Col. Stewart retired and Franco took over the position as part-time Executive Director and part-time maintenance man. In June of 2000, Franco became the part-time Executive Director. By this time he had a full-time secretary and a part-time maintenance man. He then decided in 2005 that it was time to fish, hunt, work in his gardens, work in his orchard and do whatever "honey-do jobs" his wife Vera could get him to do.



Franco is missed very much by the tenants, most of whom has been in the Housing Authority 15+ years of his 33 years service. Franco was replaced by Diane Banks of the Greensboro Housing Authority as part-time Executive Director.

Congratulations to Mr. Crocker on a job well done! Enjoy your retirement.

14th Annual Public Housing Basketball Tournament "Shooting for Success"

The Dothan Housing Authority and City of Dothan hosted the 14th Annual Public Housing State Championship back in March. More than 200 participated in the four day tournament.

Highlights of the tournament included a fabulous Opening Ceremony Banquet with good food and a wonderful speaker. Judge Rose Gordon was the guest speaker and did a fantastic job of encouraging the youth in attendance.

Judge Gordon was everything a speaker should be. She was personable, down to earth, funny, serious and definitely kept everyone's attention. She shared her personal story of growing up and ultimately becoming a judge and also



encouraged the kids in attendance to get their education. Through humor she made her point. She said, "You laugh at me

now, but you won't be laughing if you are standing in front of me when I have my robe on in the courtroom."



In addition to playing basketball, the young people visited the Wiregrass Museum of Art and had a walking tour the famous downtown murals of Dothan. Murals included George Washington



Carver and the Salute to the Peanut Industry, DeSoto's First Encounter with Wiregrass Natives, the Dothan Riot, Chief Eufaula, Johnny Mack Brown and several others. They learned about the murals, how they were painted, and the history behind them as well.

The goal of the youth sports program is to bring young people to a new place and let them see with their own eyes another side of life. In addition, the values of good sportsmanship, education, work ethic and a drug free lifestyle are taught.

Participating teams were: Dothan, Montgomery, Birmingham, Huntsville, Mobile, Anniston, Alex City, Troy and Eufaula.

Special thanks to Glenn Franklin, Barbara Mitchell and the housing authority and City of Dothan for their hospitality. Also a big thanks goes out to the Alabama Sports Festival's Marc Riker, Chris Taft and the crew for another outstanding job.





Boys 18 and under Champions
Birmingham



Boys 15 and under Champions
Anniston



Boys 12 and under Champions
Huntsville



Girls 15 and under Champions
Birmingham

Here are the finals
results for the 14th
Annual Public Housing
State Championship

Boys 15 and under

- 1st - Anniston
- 2nd - Birmingham
- 3rd - Huntsville

Girls 15 and under

- 1st - Birmingham
- 2nd - Montgomery
- 3rd - Mobile

Boys 18 and under

- 1st - Birmingham
- 2nd - Alex City
- 3rd - Huntsville

Boys 12 and under

- 1st - Huntsville
- 2nd - Montgomery
- 3rd - Mobile

The Public Housing Youth Sports Program was created in 1992 as a joint venture of both AAHRA and HUD. In 1995, a partnership with the Alabama Sports Festival was initiated to further develop the goals and objectives of the Public Housing Youth Sports Program.

The Alabama Sports Festival provides oversight and works closely with the Youth Sports Committee. They organize and manage our events. ASF has been around since 1982 and hosts an Alabama Olympic Style Festival each year. For more information, visit their website at www.alagames.com.



AAHRA AND ASF...A GREAT
PARTNERSHIP



Phenix City Goes From Old...To New

Executive Director Judy Hare may not be the most excited person in Phenix City. Hard to believe but there might be a few residents more elated than Judy and her staff.

"We are excited about the final results of our complete reconfiguration and renovation of 42 units at our Riverview Court Apartments," Hare said. "We had an open house a few months ago after a few of the apartments had been rented. The residents were eager to show off their units to the local news media. We received very positive press."



The renovated units have central heating and air, cable and phone hook-ups in the living and bedrooms, a washer/dryer closet, a dining area and walk-in closet in the master bedroom. The apartments were occupied within a month after completion.



(Top L) beginning of construction, (R) inside demolition
Bottom (L) completed kitchen
(Below) finished product



Student Earns GED, Speaks at Ceremony

MOBILE, Ala. - In May, Averna Harshaw became the first student of the Neighborhood Technology Access Center of the Mobile Housing Board to earn a high school equivalency diploma. The Center was opened in September 2005 to provide public housing residents greater access to computer technology. The agency received a \$250,000 grant from the HUD to provide computer training and supportive services needed to help public housing residents become economically self-sufficient.

The supportive services include helping residents prepare to take the GED test. Mrs. Harshaw, 24, went to the Center for that very reason. She dropped out of high school at the beginning of her ninth grade year.

For years, her mother encouraged her to get her diploma. Ten years later, and within three months of her mother's death, Mrs. Harshaw took the GED Test and passed all five sections in one sitting.

At her graduation ceremony in May, Mrs. Harshaw told the audience, "I wish my mother could have been here. For years she pushed me to get a diploma, but I had other things on my mind. She pushed me because she knew it would bring a better life for me and my kids," she said.

Mrs. Harshaw, who has three children, was one of two students who were given the honor of speaking at the ceremony. Five of the 75 graduates were awarded \$1,000 scholarships to Bishop State Community College. Mrs. Harshaw was one of the recip-



agement.

ients.

During her speech, she thanked family and friends and Sharnee Hobbs, her GED instructor at the Neighborhood Technology Access Center, for their encour-

"I really knew I needed the GED because it was getting harder for me to get a job," Mrs. Harshaw said. She hesitated to take the test for years, however, fearing she could not pass it.

In fact, Mrs. Harshaw "didn't believe it when I told her how well she did on the assessment in January," Mrs. Hobbs said. "I suggested that she take the test immediately, based on her assessment scores alone."

Mrs. Harshaw soon agreed to take the test right away, realizing it would be difficult to find someone to keep her toddler while she attended classes.

Passing the test restored Mrs. Harshaw's confidence. "It felt so good to pass the test. I'm proud of myself," she said in a recent interview. "I thought I would pass four parts and fail the math part. But I passed it all."

Mrs. Harshaw plans to enroll at Bishop State Community College in Mobile in the fall to study nursing.

FROM THE BIRMINGHAM HUB OFFICE OF PUBLIC HOUSING



Disaster Management Plan for the State of Alabama's Housing Authorities

The Birmingham Office of Public Housing in conjunction with a small task force composed of a self-selected group of the state's housing authority personnel completed a Disaster Management Plan for Alabama's public housing authorities.

Within the next few weeks, the Plan and an accompanying sample Policy Statement for housing authorities to consider adopting will be introduced to all of the state's housing authorities. In the interim, if you have questions as to the proper course of action to take during impending severe weather conditions, you may contact the Birmingham Field Office of Public Housing.

Worldwide, the impact of natural disasters on humans, including the loss of life, injuries or made homeless, has affected over 200 million people. The United States is one of the most severe weather-prone countries on Earth. Each year, Americans cope with an average of 10,000 thunderstorms, 2,500 floods and 1,000 tornados.

More specifically, Alabama ranks in the top ten in the number of presidentially declared natural disasters. It is a part of Gulf Coast Region that is not only more likely to experience a natural disaster but also more vulnerable to the subsequent adverse effects on human life and property damage.

By definition, a disaster is "a naturally occurring event with or without warning, causing or threatening death, injury or

disease, damage to property, infrastructure or the environment, which exceeds the ability of the affected geographic area to cope using only its own resources."

The potential for loss of life and significant damage to property has forced the issue of disaster reduction and risk management to the forefront of the United States in general and more particularly to Alabama.

For housing authorities within the State of Alabama, Disaster Management takes on particular importance. Our mission is to provide "safe and sanitary housing for Alabama's low-income, fragile and vulnerable families." Inherent within our mission statement, housing authority administrators serve residents that can be categorized as members in the "Special Needs" population.

The term "Special Needs" is widely used when developing and implementing a disaster and emergency management plan. As it pertains to the administration of a housing authority, a "Special Needs" population includes: people who live in poverty or on public assistance; people without private transportation or who rely on public transportation; and people who rely on caregivers for assistance in their daily lives and would need similar assistance in the event of a natural disaster.

Of particular note are the segments of the population that are disabled, they fair poorly in the event of natural disasters. This segment includes people with a variety of visual, hearing, mobility, cognitive, emotional, and mental disabilities and activity limitations, as well as older people, people who use life-support systems, people who use service animals, and people who are medically or chemically dependent.

While natural disasters and emergencies affect everyone, their impact on people in the "Special Needs" population is often compounded by factors such as their limited accessibility to emergency warnings; information, and communication; lack of ready access to transportation to designated shelters; electrical power for mobility devices and other aids and access to life-sustaining medication. This population is extremely vulnerable in emergency situations.

Within the state's public housing communities, a significant number of the resident population can be designated "Special Needs." Explicit and implicit within our mission statement, public housing administrators must take proactive and protective measures to protect the lives of residents and minimize damage to the property of its public housing communities in the event of severe and dangerous weather conditions.

With that in mind the State of Alabama's Public Housing Disaster Management Plan has the following Strategic Objectives:

- Ensure the safety of the residents of public housing authorities; and,
- Minimize damage to public housing property; and,
- Minimize suffering and disruption in housing authorities' resident lives and housing authorities' operations; and
- Create disaster-resistant housing authority residential communities.

Please contact Henry Nelson of the Birmingham Office of Public Housing for more information.

Gadsden Honors Students, Seniors

The Greater Gadsden Housing Authority's "ESTEEM" Honor Roll Students were given an Awards Banquet on Monday June 5th, 2006. The Banquet was held at the Senior Activity Center where the students and their families



enjoyed a nice dinner catered by Ms. Jean's. The guest speaker was Dr. Nathan Carter, Riverview Regional Medical Center Pharmacist.

To celebrate their achievements, each of the students received a trophy, a certificate and a tote bag. The 'ESTEEM' program had one final outing in late June to Lake Winnepesaukah, ending the 2005-2006 school year.

Congratulations "ESTEEM" students!!! We are very proud of you all and are looking forward to another great year in 2007.

Annual Seniors Picnic Big Fun For All

This year's seniors picnic was, without a doubt, the best ever! If you were at least 50 years old and a resident of public housing, Nocalula Falls was the place to be on May 18th. Everyone who came had a great time!

The Vintage Ladies entertained us with first rate performances. A female Elvis impersonator did a fantastic job and she even threw out a couple of scarves after her performance. And then there was a Minnie Pearl impersonator.

Her jokes had everyone laughing. The grand finale was a performance by all of the ladies (including the current Ms. Senior Etowah County) performing "Itsy-Bitsy, Teenie-Weenie, Yellow Polka Dot Bikini." It was hilarious! Starnes Park's own former Ms. Senior Etowah County first runner-up, Ms. Martha Hicks, and Campbell Court's own Ms. Eva Cunningham, both sang beautiful gospel selections.



After the entertainment, we enjoyed delicious grilled hamburgers and hot dogs, prepared by Mr. Stephen Bucannan and the potato salad, baked beans and all kinds of desserts had everyone loosening their belts. The room and tables were festively decorated in a Hawaiian theme by Janice of Council on Aging, Inc. COA also sponsored the bingo games and gave away great prizes. Before ending the outing, several people rode the train through the park. It was fun to see the new improvements at the Falls.



We wish to thank the Council on Aging and the GGHA for all their hard work to make this event possible each year. Special thanks to Pro-Care and Thirteenth Place for helping to serve.

Vernon Residents Display Beauty

In honor of National Neighborworks Week, Community Service Programs of West Alabama, Inc., and the Vernon Housing Authority honored the many Housing Authority residents who have beautified their neighborhoods. On June 8th, judges evaluated the many wonderful flower gardens maintained by Housing Authority residents and prizes were awarded to the top three.



The awards for the three best flower gardens were given to the following ladies: Jean Anderson, Ruby Lawrence and Annie Wallace all of Strickland Court.

The prizes were provided by Rogers Farm Supply of Vernon and Neighborworks America. Refreshments for the celebration event were provided by Vernon Market.

Guin Highlights Special Resident

Our special resident that we would like you to meet is Mrs. Bobbie Wallace. "Mrs. Bobbie" has 4 children and 9 grandchildren. Her children are Randy Downs, Brenda Downs, Aretha Wallace, and Fannie Stewart.



She grew up in Lamar and Marion County and she attended Marion County High School. She has lived in Guin for 42 years.

Mrs. Bobbie has a variety of work experiences. She worked at the Guin Nursing Home for 16 years, she also worked at Health Tex, Tennessee River, Jack's and for the last 2 years she has worked at Dollar

General in Winfield. Mrs. Bobbie is a member of the Guin First Baptist Church.

If you drive past Mrs. Bobbie's house in the late afternoon you often see her sitting in her chair on the porch. She is usually surrounded by children. It is no wonder that her hobbies are cooking and watching her grandchildren. She has great advice for young people. She believes you should go to church and stay in school to get a good education. You should never use drugs and to trust in the Lord always no matter what happens.



Piedmont Honor Roll Students Enjoy Trip to Aquarium

Seven students who reside in the Piedmont Housing Authority were treated to a trip to the Atlanta Aquarium. These students were all year end honor roll or perfect attendance students in Piedmont City Schools and Spring Garden School.



These students received a two pack of cameras for plenty of pictures to return to their families at home. The kids enjoyed the tour of the world's largest aquarium and had lunch in the food court during the visit. On the return trip home, the kids were treated to dinner at Shoney's compliments of the Piedmont Housing Authority.

Keith Word, Executive Director of the local Housing Authority said it was a pleasure to treat the kids because they are the best of the best. Word also thanked each of the parents and grandparents who traveled with the kids for their help as chaperons during the trip. Each student received their own personal aquarium (electric) to take home as a reminder of their trip to Atlanta, Georgia also compliments of the local housing authority.

Piedmont's Hill Receives Honor

Each year the Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce promotes administrative/secretary/profes-

sional day during April. This year's recipient for 2006 is Mrs. Sheila Hill, the Deputy Director of the Piedmont Housing Authority.

Mrs. Hill has been employed with the local Housing Authority for fifteen years. Keith Word, Executive Director, said it was a sincere pleasure to work with Sheila each day since she was truly a professional in every manner.

Hill received a beautiful plaque, a very nice gift basket, and a free weekend at the beach for her selection as Secretary of the Year.



Sheila Hill is pictured fourth from right



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Mistaken Bumper Sticker Identity

Two cars were stopped at a red light, one behind the other. When the light turned green, the first car didn't budge. The man in the second car began honking, which prompted the driver of the first car to turn on her hazard lights. Rather than simply going around the woman, the man chose to scream at her and beat on his dashboard.

Suddenly a police car pulled up. The officer approached the man in the car and tapped on his window.

"Is there a problem, officer? Is honking suddenly a crime?" sniped the driver.

"I just need to see your license, sir." The driver gave him his license and a few minutes later the officer returned.

"So, are you giving me a ticket or what?" asked the driver.

"I never planned on giving you a ticket," said the officer. "I just thought the car might be stolen so I checked it out."

"Why would you think it was stolen?"

"Well, I saw you sitting there making such a fuss and I noticed your bumper stickers" *Say something nice, Remember the Golden Rule, and Lend a hand, make a friend.* It didn't add up so I thought the car might be stolen because the person who believes all those things wouldn't act like that.

The driver replied, "Today, I'm in a hurry and she's holding me up."

"And today," said the officer, "you've given me my first case of mistaken bumper sticker identity!"

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If you are a vendor, professional, or any interested agency that does or wishes to do business with local housing authorities and would like the opportunity to advertise your services, then placing an ad in the Alabama Traveler is for you!

One quarter (¼) page - \$50.00
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For more information, please contact:

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The Alabama Traveler
(334) 687-2451
twachs@eufaulahousing.com

Housing Authority Officer Makes History - Graduates From Policy Academy

Richard Thornton, Eufaula Housing Authority, graduated from the Montgomery Police Academy on May 16th along with 21 others from across the state. The standing-room-only ceremony saw graduates from police forces, sheriff's offices and law enforcement units such as Alabama State University, the Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles, the Alabama Department of Forensics and the Montgomery Fire Department.

Capt. Huey Thornton, spokesman for the Montgomery Police Department, said it's standard procedure for the academy to train officers for area law enforcement agencies.

"You did a great job in hiring these people," Montgomery Police Chief Art Baylor told the department leaders from the 11 agencies during the graduation ceremonies. Thornton said the Montgomery Police Academy does not charge for the training, but the agencies must provide their recruits with uniforms, weapons and ammunition. Once the officers graduate, "They are all sworn officers. They can all make arrests," Thornton said.

Each member of the class completed 13 weeks of intense training in criminal law and standardized training. The Montgomery Police Academy is ranked as high a 3rd toughest in the nation.

Officer Thornton is believed to be the first housing authority graduate in Alabama police academy history. It is unique for housing authorities to have their own police officers, but the City of Eufaula granted the housing authority a special ordinance in 2005. Housing authority police officers are charged with all the duties and vested with all the powers of police

officers, according to the ordinance.

Executive Director Tom Wachs and Chief Sanford Johnson had nothing but praise for Officer Thornton.

"He made it! Not only is it a physical test, but you have to be mentally tough as well," Johnson said.

Wachs commented, "We're extremely proud of Richard. He's a first class individual and will do a great job."

Officer Thornton is expected to work second shift for the housing authority, providing around the clock protection to housing authority residents.



(L-R) Chief Sanford Johnson, new graduate Richard Thornton and Executive Director Tom Wachs

The Ordinance from the City of Eufaula was granted after a favorable opinion was returned from the Attorney General's Office.

The Attorney General based their decision on a previous opinion given to former Montgomery Director J.C. Miller. The Miller opinion concluded that the City of

Montgomery could provide for police powers for investigators of the HA and that they had to comply with APOST standards.

The opinion given to Eufaula similarly states that the City of Eufaula can vest such powers in housing authority employees it designates as housing authority police. As employees of the authority, housing authority police officers would act under the authority's supervision and control and have the powers of police officers on property owned or leased by the housing authority.

For a complete copy of the Ordinance from the City of Eufaula and the entire Attorney General's Opinion, please visit Eufaula's website at www.eufaulahousing.com and click on *News*.

Calendar of Events

2006 Schedule

September 11-12 PHADA Legislative Forum - Washington, DC
October 15-17 NAHRO National Conference - Atlanta, GA

2007 Schedule

January 21-24 PHADA Commissioners Conference - Phoenix, AZ
March 19-21 NAHRO Legislative Conference - Washington, DC
June 3-6 PHADA Annual Convention & Exhibition - Las Vegas, NV
July 20-22 NAHRO Summer Conference - Chicago, IL
August 20-22 AAHRA Annual Conference - Sandestin Hilton - Destin, FL
October 28-30 NAHRO National Conference - San Diego, CA

**THE ALABAMA
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**Tom Wachs, Editor
Eufaula Housing Authority
PO Box 36
Eufaula, Alabama 36072-0036**

