

**AN ARKANSAS
COMMUNITY OF
EXCELLENCE
(ACE)**

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*Osceola-South
Mississippi County
Chamber of Commerce Newsletter*



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Washington DC - In a ceremony on Capitol Hill, Mrs. Laura Bush, First Lady of the United States and Honorary Chair of Preserve America, announced the first 43 Preserve America Grants for 2007 totaling nearly \$2.6 million and acknowledged 20 new Preserve America Communities that have brought the national total to 501 in all 50 states and one U.S. territory. Mrs. Bush commended the efforts of two important preservation initiatives by announcing the "Preserve American and Save America's Treasures Act."

"President Bush and I appreciate the broad, bipartisan support Congress has shown for both of these initiatives. This proposed act-the 'Preserve America and Save America's Treasures Act'-will improve our government's ability to protect America's historic places, objects, and collections for many years to come," Mrs. Bush said. "President Bush and I thank you for your interest in this important work."

Projects in a total of 25 states across the U.S. received Preserve America Grant funds. The grants provide funds on a matching basis to assist Preserve America Communities with marketing, planning, and educational efforts associated with protection and appropriate use of community heritage assets. A second round of 2007 grants totaling \$2.4 million is expected to be announced in early autumn.



Chamber President, Sally Wilson, accepts a grant from Mrs. Laura Bush, First Lady of the United States and Honorary Chair of Preserve America.

President's Message

by Sally Wilson

When visiting other communities, have you ever noticed cast iron historical markers on poles in yards or on old buildings in a downtown area? These markers tell an interesting story about that site to everyone who passes by. It's a permanent reminder of the heritage of that site. Similar signs will be placed throughout the Osceola and around downtown thanks to a \$100,000 matching grant awarded by Preserve America to the City of Osceola, a Preserve America Community. The purpose of this program is to promote and preserve our community's cotton heritage, by conveying the history of our community through these permanent markers.

The local Chamber of Commerce and the Partners in Pro-

gress took the lead to write this grant application. Sally Wilson, with the assistance of Brian Holthouse, prepared the application. But the partnership with the City, Osceola Main Street and the Osceola Historic Commission pulled all the pieces together.

Heritage 61—The Cotton This project will place 50 historical site markers at locations on the Osceola Historic Commission's new driving and walking tour. This project will also create: a way finding brochure with details of the sites on the tour, an audio-cassette and CD of the tour, a web-site detailing the tour, three exhibit kiosks that introduce the tour, educational books, and a coloring book picturing the sites on the tour. All this will be prepared by local volunteers. The grant moneys

will pay for the cast iron markers, which cost about \$2,000 each.

Heritage 61—The Cotton Highway will explain the influence that cotton has had in forming every aspect of our heritage. Good or bad, cotton shaped our landscape, from cypress swampland to levee and cleared fields. Cotton stimulated our transportation development, from impassable woodland to mainline railway, from dirt paths to interstate highway, from flooded Mississippi River bottom to levee-protected rich farmland, from unchartered river landings (such as Mark Twain's Plum Point) to valuable slack water river port.

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Winter Festival News

Our plans proceed on the Winter Festival. The date this year is, as in past years is the Thursday after Thanksgiving, November 29. A Tree Lighting Ceremony will be held just prior to the Christmas Parade which begins at 7:00 PM. Float entries are asked to line-up at 5:30 PM and all other parade participants at 6:00 PM. Parade positions will be assigned by the Chamber office and mailed with directions to participants. All entries will be judged and first, second, and third place prizes awarded. Judging times for the Home Decorating Contest will be announced at a later date in the Osceola Times.

Main Street will again host Santa Pictures following school dismissal and up to the time of the parade.

The Kiwanis Club will host its annual Radio Day and a chili supper from 5:00 PM until parade time in the Ohlendorf Civic Center.

This year we are resuming a favorite event of past years, Holiday Tables. The date is Sunday, November 25, in the Ohlendorf Civic Center. There is no fee for participants, but an admission fee of \$5.00 per person will be charged, children 12 and under are free. Tickets will be available in advance from the Chamber office and at the door. Anyone interested in participating with a Holiday Table or needing tickets may contact the Chamber office at 563-2281 or by e-mail at chambersecretary@sbcglobal.net.

Since the Ohlendorf Civic Center will be decorated for these events, we are reminding our Chamber members that the center is available for annual Christmas parties sponsored by their businesses. Just contact the Chamber office regarding available dates and fees.

New School-To-Parent Communication Program for Osceola Schools

In a district wide effort to better communication between parents and schools, the Osceola School District is initiating a new School-to-Parent Communication Program this year. This program is designed to keep parents apprised of the many activities, programs, and events that happen at our schools.

All School-to-Parent Communication will be printed on salmon colored paper and any information printed on this paper should be given immediate attention by the parents. EVERY student within the district will have a Tuesday Communication Folder. This folder will keep parents informed of school and community related information. The communication folder will be sent home every Tuesday and will include information on school events, programs, and activities, Salmon colored communication papers, and community/school related information. The folder WILL NOT include personal information such as graded papers or discipline information. Also under this new program, the school district is initiating Teacher-to-Parent Email Communication. Forms are being sent home for parents to submit their email address to create an address book for parents in each classroom. This is great tool to use and will allow parents to receive reminders and updates from their child's teacher on test dates, parent-teacher conferences, class activities, programs, etc. It also ensures frequent contact between the parent and teacher and will help eliminate the possible loss of information when sending notes home.

The Osceola School District is looking forward to this new program. It is yet another step in developing better communication with our parents and increasing parental involvement in our schools.

STEM School Initiative Proposed for Mississippi County Schools

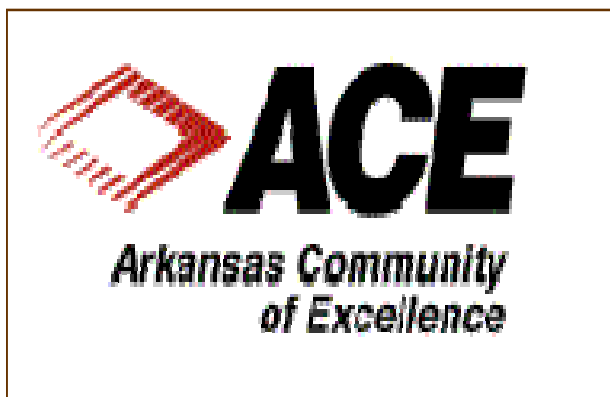
After a year of discussion and review by administration at Arkansas Northeastern College and superintendents of each of the 6 Mississippi County school districts, a Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) School Initiative is being proposed for the 2008-2009 school year.

The proposed conversion charter will include the six public school districts in Mississippi County: Armored, Blytheville, Gosnell, Manila, Osceola, and South Mississippi County and serve high school students in grades 10-12. The proposed school will be housed at the ANC Burdette Campus and will enhance the current vocational programs as well as high school course offerings by providing an early college STEM program. This school will offer students, regardless of their course of study, the opportunity to participate in rigorous, real-world learning experiences in science and mathematics.

The proposed conversion charter is currently in the early planning stages. A planning committee has been formed with representatives from ANC and all 6 of the school districts moving forward with the charter application process.

A planning committee has been formed with representatives from ANC and all 6 school districts moving forward with the charter application process. Through grant funding received by the state, committee representatives are currently researching and visiting model schools throughout the country as it determines the focus and vision for the proposed school.

Osceola is an....



RV PARK IS ONE STEP CLOSER TO REALITY

by David Pierce, *Osceola Times Staff*

A proposed RV park just south of town took a step closer to reality Thursday at a special-called meeting of the Osceola City Council.

The city council approved the Planning Commission's recommendation to move forward with the project although aldermen and Mayor Dickie Kennemore did express some concern.

The development was presented as being a temporary-approximately five years-housing site for Zachary Construction workers.

It was the "temporary" moniker and the \$6,000 asked from the city to run the water line to the property, which caused the mayor and the council some apprehension about the project.

The construction company has guaranteed Barbara and Gene Cox, property owners, to return the land to its original condition once the Plum Point Power Plant

construction is complete.

"I just want to take some precautions," said Kennemore, who also noted the developers were no longer asking the city to fund the water line. "Before it's all said and done I would like a commitment to getting it returned to the way it is.

"I just don't want it to fall back on the city," he added.

Currently the property sits in the county, though it is in the early stages of being annexed within the city limits which explained the mayor's uneasiness about the pending project.

Jesse Dawson, of Dawson and Lewis Development Group, LLC, handling the development of the property for Zachary Construction, assured the owners and the council the construction company would make good on just that.

"It's been outlined in a letter agreement with the landowners," said Dawson.

The park is being designed to hold 70 RVs and might include triplexes in the near future. A six-foot high fence will surround the seven acres and park residents would enter through a remote-control access gate.

"We're not just throwing something together," explained Dawson. "We have a well-laid plan which will meet standards."

According to Dawson, nearly one-third of the Zachary Construction employees own RVs which would make the park an ideal project to benefit the construction company as well as keep tax revenue within the city.

"We're really excited about it," said Dawson, who expects to have the property developed by November 11.

The measure was approved by an unanimous vote with five city council members voting. Harry Whitted was absent.

Commemorative Engraved Brick Program

Commemorative engraved bricks are being placed in the center of the Chamber plaza which is also the walkway entrance to the building.

**Purchase a brick in memory of a loved one or to honor someone special
Bricks may be ordered through the Chamber Office**

Osceola Communication, Arts and Business School

To: Local Business Leaders,

With the new growth in our local commerce due to the PPPP construction, you may be facing the need for additional employees.

There is a new school program, Osceola Communications, Arts and Business School, (OCABS), being proposed that will target young people who have not completed their high school education but are ready to make the effort to improve their lives. OCABS, will offer these young adults a chance to return to a school, where they can, simultaneously 1)obtain their high school diploma, 2)receive employability skills and 3)work at a job.

OCABS' students will attend classes year-round, beginning in August 2008. The school to be located in part of the former Fruit of the Loom building.

How will this program work? In one scenario, the OCABS will transport the young people to the workplace (either full or part time), during the day. In the evening, the school will transport the young people to the school to attend night classes. Part of their education will include training in NCCER & a construction skills education course. Additionally, the school will support the young people in various ways, such as childcare for their young children, counseling and mentoring.

If you would like more information , please contact one of the school's promoters, including Sally Wilson, Brian Holthouse and Myra Middleton.



Chamber Events

- Oct. 17, 2007 TBA
Adam Gin Tour
- Oct. 18, 2007 10:30 A.M.
Executive Board Meeting
- Oct. 18, 2007 11:00 A.M.
Board Meeting
- Oct. 20, 2007 All Day
Industrial Appreciation
Golf Tournament
- Oct. 23, 2007 5:30 P.M.
Partners For Progress
- Oct. 31, 2007 12:00 Noon
Winter Festival Committee
- Nov. 6, 2007 5:30 P.M.
Partners For Progress
- Nov. 15, 2007 10:30 A.M.
Executive Board Meeting
- Nov. 15, 2007 11:00 A.M.
Board Meeting
- Nov. 20, 2007 5:30 P.M.
Partners For Progress
- Nov. 25, 2007 2-4 P.M.
Holiday Tables
Winter Festival
- Nov. 29, 2007 7:00 P.M.
Winter Festival Parade
- Nov. 29, 2007 5-8 P.M.
Kiwanis Chili Supper
Winter Festival

Ohlendorf Civic Center
Rotary Club
Every Tuesday at noon

Kiwanis Club
Every Thursday at noon

Calling All WWII Vets

The Arts Council of Mississippi County

On Monday, October 15, 2007, at 7:00 PM, The Arts Council of Mississippi County will present *War Bonds: The Songs and Letters of World War II*. The nationally touring program is a musical journey through a war that redefined the world-World War II. The Arts Council would like to use this opportunity to recognize and honor all World War II Vets and their spouses living in the Blytheville area by inviting them to attend the program as special guests.

The program is a multi-media living history cabaret interspersed with personal letters from the Front and headline news of the period. It is a warm reminiscence

and a harrowing reminder of a time that is not unlike the present. The cabaret is created and performed by Serena Ebhardt and David zum Brunnen of EbzB Productions. Jane Lonon of the Ashe County Arts Council in North Carolina says, "War Bonds is a well crafted work by two of the best in the business. It leaves audiences with smiles and tears."

All interested World War II Veterans in the area are asked to contact The Arts Council as soon as possible at 870-762-1744 to arrange to receive their complimentary tickets.

Contact—David Lyttle
Executive Director



Kiwanis Radio Day & Chili Supper
November 29, 2007 * During Winterfest
Chili Supper is from 5:00pm until parade starts
At the
Ohlendorf Civic Center
Tickets available at the door

President's Message cont.

Cotton influenced our government, from lawlessness to well-controlled drainage districts. Cotton impacted our architecture, our literature, our music, our arts, our food, our dress, our religion, our recreation, our superstitions, our military history, our schools, and even our way of speaking.

Through value-added processes, cotton began our transformation from a totally agrarian community to the manufacturing community that we are today.

However, knowledge of our cotton-influenced heritage is disappearing. Our cherished historians are passing away. These original storytellers—the gray-haired, grandparent-types, walk us through town and point out the meaningful landmarks. They tell us what had happened at that site. Our young citizens are less connected to our links to

cotton and how it fashioned our heritage. It is critical that we not only preserve, but highlight, this influence on our past. The Heritage 61—The Cotton Highway's historical markers will serve as the heart of our five step program to raise awareness of our proud heritage.

These attractive markers will stir pride in our residents and attract visitors. Since many of the structures listed on this trail are in a state of disrepair, placing an attractive marker will raise the value of these sites. It is possible that the community will once again value these sites and inspire reinvestment and revitalization.

Calling all volunteers. Now, you can help. The committee is beginning its work and wants your involvement. The committee meets every other Thursday morning at the Chamber office.

Adams Gin Tour

The Industrial & Community Relations Committee has lined up a tour of Adams Gin Company in Leachville on Wednesday, October 17th. If you are interested in taking this tour, please contact the Chamber at 563-2281.

Industrial Appreciation Golf Tournament

The Chamber and the City of Osceola would like to invite your company to participate in our annual Industrial Appreciation Golf Tournament.. To register your teams for the tournament, please call the Chamber for a registration form.

The tournament is set for October 20, 2007. Please register by October 16, 2007.