

# The Greensboro Echo

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The Official Newsletter of the  
Winston County Self Help Cooperative

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## Recap of WCSHC's 2010 Work-plan

### The Voice of Rural America: Fire in My Belly

I received numerous questions about my "fire in the belly" mantra and what keeps me geared up for the daily task of working and promoting change in rural America. My passion is deeply rooted in a rich family legacy of working the lands and providing opportunities for the next generation of inhabitants to insure a good quality of life. The article below describes my eternal fire in the belly.

#### On the Front Porch by Frank Taylor

On the front porch symbolizes many aspects of living in the Deep South from family's discussions, politics, relaxing, and marriage proposals. I remember spending numerous quiet afternoons with my granddaddy (Maben Austin) on the front porch absorbing life's lessons from a noble gentleman. Sometimes our discussions would extend beyond his normal bedtime of 8:00pm; nevertheless, those moments made an indelible imprint on my life. Although without a formal education, he mastered math, sociology, political science, and life's obstacles to provide comfort for his family in a racial divided Mississippi. Jim Crow's laws paled African

Americans from voting, advocating and securing living wages to ensure a good quality of life for their families. However, those individuals maintained a moral compass of moving forward to overcome adversities and secured our future with bountifully opportunities of change. The front porch represents other significant factors; and, we will end with four generations of Maben Austin Family gathering on (Aunt & Uncle) Omerio and Dee Dotson's front porch. With the sun gravitating westward and temperature approaching 100 degrees, Dee harvested peas, lima & snap beans and pulled watermelons from the family's sandy soil fields. The harvest landed squarely on the front porch where four generations commences to shell as Omerio recounted the Austin's Family History. Omerio received numerous questions from nieces, great-nieces and nephews about growing up without air condition, running water, electricity and most of all television. Omerio responded with a broad smile and said I serve a God of Passion and Humility. Wiping away sweat, Dee told of his adventure on the front porch in asking granddaddy to marry Aunt Omerio. "Dee said before granddaddy granted per-



mission, he received a stirring sermon on "TAKING CARE of THE FAMILY". I referred to my father-in-law as daddy because of his laurel commitment to leave a fruitful legacy for the next generations of

landowners. He said a man should profess, provide and protect his family without regard for life. Those infamous words of wisdom live on today, although Daddy died in 1974. Omerio continued the Austin Family

legacy by moving into the kitchen and prepared a southern style meal. She prepared peas, lima and green beans, corn on the cob, chicken, beef steaks, peach cobbler, fried apple pies and sweet tea. I devour my share of green beans and peach cobbler. The night ended with Omerio and Dee giving more than 30 bags of fresh vegetables, cantaloupes and watermelons. "The nieces gave thanks for life's lesson on the front porch in Louisville, MS as Maben Austin's legacy lives on in 2010".

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#### SAVE THE DATE

February 25 & 26, 2011  
Louisville Coliseum - Louisville, MS

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WINSTON COUNTY SELF HELP COOPERATIVE  
PRESENTS THE 4TH ANNUAL  
**SAVING RURAL AMERICA & YOUTH CONFERENCE**  
**THEME: BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES THROUGH HEALTHY FOOD: GETTING EVERYONE ON BOARD**

For more information please contact WCSHC:  
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# WCSHC's 2011 Upcoming and 2010 Reflections

## WCSHC's 2011

Join Winston County Self Help Cooperative's effort in 2011 to create momentum change where you live and work. If, you need a road map or compass WCSHC will provide you with the needed resources to start a movement of swift change. If you don't know where you are going then any road will lead you there. Your challenge is to build a road map in 2011.

## WCSHC's 2010 Reflections by Frank Taylor

As the curtain draws on Winston County Self Help Cooperative's 2010 work-plan, members can breathe a sigh of relief and start formulating plans for 2011. "We expended an enormous amount of sweat and intestinal fortitude to implement WCSHC's strategies of



Michael Hathorn

helping save rural America according to co-op member Michael Hathorn. We kicked-off 2010's calendar year on December 29, 2009. We established a tradition of starting the next calendar year by meeting on the last Thursday of the year. This promotes an atmosphere of camaraderie and generates self-worth to pro-

pel WCSHC's yearly activities. WCSHC achieved numerous milestones in 2010 which included membership growth, two youth gardens, civic engagements, technical support, business enterprises, and provided leadership in times of uncertainties for other community based organizations".

"WCSHC operates on the principle of being on time with a workmanship like attitude. Our meeting starts promptly at 3:50pm and ends before 4:40pm. This process keeps members and supporters engaged based on this standard of being timely and proficiently. WCSHC leadership contacts each individual member by phone, text messages or e-mails with a crisp reminder of being on time. WCSHC convened a total of 15 business

sessions over an eleven month period with an overlap of numerous outreach meetings, economic tours, canning workshops and field day activities. In 2010, we conducted several Saturday business sessions with the delight of members clamoring for more weekend sessions because of superb breakfast".

"As an individual I am thankful to be a member of this formidable team which promotes, and stimulates change in rural America to protect our natural resources and stay in harmony with Mother Earth. WCSHC blessed my family with five bred goats and one borer. We look forward to expanding our family farm enterprise with cattle, poultry and swine. I am encouraging other young families to get involve and search for an organization similar to

WCSHC for guidance and assistance in connecting with USDA, extension or non-profit organizations to start their farm enterprises. Additionally, my three young children will become members of Winston County Self Help Youth Group at the appropriate ages. WCSH Youth Component provides an intergenerational process of connecting grandparents, parents and children in a holistic atmosphere to instill good work ethics, value judgment and transferring place-based knowledge of families' legacies. I believe with the cooperative and youth group collaborating simultaneously WCSHC's Mantra of "Saving Rural America" will come to fruition and provide guidance into 22rd the century to help save rural America.

## WCSHC Expands Leadership

by Frank Taylor

Winston County Self Help Cooperative's expanded its leadership capacity by organizing (LMS) Leake, Madison and Scott Counties Farmers' Connecting in May 2010. "Jeanette Greenwood founder members said kudos to WCSHC Membership for providing LMS with leadership in formulating our organization. Our members come from a three counties area with various farm enterprises and diverse experiences. We learned the processes of navigating USDA's programs by participating in FSA's County Work Group Meetings and developed awareness of the County Committee's responsibilities, partnered with Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine to deliver animals' health service and Alcorn State University Extension Program for estate planning. We will continue to partner and collaborate with WCSHC to help strengthens LMS's mission of helping small famers and landowners ascertain valuable information to make prudent business decisions. Kenneth Walker Team Leader of LMS emphasized the important of working with WCSHC and learning the administrative processes. "We learned to respect time, prepare a precise agenda and stay on a quest to finish before time. WCSHC Leadership highlighted



numerous pitfalls to avoid and bridged gaps in the delivery of state's programs to help members increase income. We look forward to 2011 and helping WCSHC "Save rural America".

WCSHC Leadership Development Team moved into Kilmichael, MS to help Brown Hunting Organization reorganized and structure activities to engage area farmers, landowners and youths. WCSHC's Leadership Team identified areas of needs through the co-op's assessment template. The leadership team started meeting with Brown Hunting Organization in August which included landowners and farmers from Montgomery, Calhoun, Tallahatchie, and Carrol Counties. Participants voiced concerns of not receiving timely and equitable services through United State Department of Agriculture. WCSHC's Leadership Team elaborated and explained how to overcome barriers and personalities by learning the ins and outs of USDA's Programs. Farmers requested assistance with Natural Resources Conservation Service's Environmental Quality Incentive Program and qualifying for various practices described under EQIP's guideline. Several participants needed assistance with wildlife programs and developing long-term leases to implement cost-share practices. Four participants echoed concerns with Farm Service Agency in obtaining loans (FO) Farm Ownership and (OL) Operating Loans in a timely manner to develop successful farm entities. As of today, three participants qualified for EQIP with two applications



pending. Brown Hunting Organization and WCSHC sponsored a youth session October 18, 2010 to establish dialogue with adults, local elected officials and youths to identify issues affecting daily life in rural Kilmichael, MS. WCSHC's Leadership Development Team will continue to assist and develop Brown Hunting Organization's goals of achieving sustainability through local leadership and build regional partnerships to extend community capacity. Henry Campbell participant said "WCSHC Leadership Development Team generated inspiration and encouragement to overcome adversities and dream of a brighter future for the next generation of landowners".

## WCSHC First 120 days of 2010

The Winston County Self Help Cooperative's continued its valiant efforts of working to help save rural America. The co-op is leading and implementing sustainable practices through partnerships with USDA, universities, extension programs, corporations and non-profit organi-

zations. WCSHC's work-plan is wrapped in strategic points of providing technical support for farmers and landowners to generate income from their natural resources. WCSHC's mission morphed into a vigorous engagement of crossing generations and providing opportu-

nities for families to enjoy Mother Earth's natural resources. The first 120 days of 2010 generated hope and developed resilience among members to carry forth their farm plans. WCSHC conducted its first Saturday business sessions with overwhelming response.





# WCSHC's 2010 Outreach

Winston County Self Help Cooperative's vast outreach effort crisscrossed Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama and delivered an array of services for impoverished communities to develop plans of action and implement strategies to change lives. WCSHC conducted a total of 10 special outreach meetings beyond the perimeter of Winston County which focused on bringing absentee landowners into a cycle of proliferating relationships with USDA

and retaining services to become good stewards of Mother Earth's natural resources. WCSHC partnered with the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) and created awareness of long leaf pine restoration in southeastern Mississippi. Amadou Diop of the (NWF) provided resources and guidance for five forest landowner workshops. This process stimulated interest from 16 landowners who requested forest and stewardship plans with consideration of plant-

ing long leaf pine after current harvest plans. Diop's work-plan engulfs the southeast with a focal point of using unique methods to help achieve sustainability and generating good stewardship practices. "Winston County Self Help Cooperative's invigorating outreach strategy parallels with our vision of informing landowners through attentive actions and developing life's long partnerships to promote a better understanding of the ecosystem



according to Diop". We look forward to working with WCSHC in 2011 to help save rural America. Winston County Self Help

Cooperative served 1331 individuals and farmers in 2010. A map graphic connecting ms, la and ala with pinpoints.

## WCSHC Conducted Fifteen Business Sessions

WCSHC conducted fifteen business sessions which included two Saturday morning breakfasts. Average attendant of 35 boosted attitudes of being on time and ready for informative business sessions. Each business session started promptly 3:50 pm and ended 4:40 pm. This timely formula promoted better than average participation and members left meetings with positive energies to make necessary changes. According to founding member



Mary Hannah, "I can only recall one meeting started late in the past twenty years". We receive minutes from previous meetings and agendas 15 days in advance of the next meeting. This time-frame allows opportunities to inquire or make suggestions before next meeting day. We are required to maintain all related materials in our personal co-op folder and read over previous agendas bi-weekly to

stay focus. Additionally, this process provides an avenue for absent or working members to be vigilant of co-op's activities. If you are planning to participate in WCSHC's business sessions please be on time for a life altering event. Meetings are convened at Winston County Extension Office 460 Vance Street in Louisville, MS on the first Monday 3:50 pm promptly.

## WCSHC's Philanthropy

WCSHC donated 1350 Rhode Island Red baby Chicks to groups in Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana. Winston County Self Help Cooperative is fulfilling its mission of helping save rural America according to Felecia Bell. "We received 30 chicks for needy farm families in distress and youths to generate income through egg production. We have been affiliated with WCSHC over six years and collaborated on various projects to help create sustainability in rural communities. We



are thankful for this donation and we will pass on the gift to other farm families. Additionally, WCSHC

donated apple and peach trees to help members start fruit enterprises".

## WCSHC's Third Saving Rural America Conference

WCSHC held its Third Saving Rural America Conference on March 12 & 13, 2010 at the Louisville Coliseum with more than 270 participants. WCSHC rescheduled conference due to unbearable weather conditions in January. The conference offered multiple workshops included goat husbandry, sheep and cattle manage-



ment, forest management, and USDA's program updates. Seven states represented Virginia, Louisiana, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Arkansas and Tennessee. Leonard Jordan served luncheon speaker. Participants enjoyed other fun activities which included gospel singing and modeling. As usual Winston

County Self Help Cooperative served a variety of foods. On Friday participants enjoyed a southern fish fry with side dressings. Saturday morning participants consumed a home style breakfast. WCSHC's conference concluded with a down home luncheon which featured locally grown vegetables and meats.

## Legislative Update

WCSHC sponsored a legislative forum for local state representative and Mayor of Louisville.

The local representative updated members on actions and upcoming legislative issues affecting landowners and farmers. Louisville Mayor highlighted economic growth, homebuyer assistance and potential dip in tax collection. Co-op member will travel to the state capitol in early January 2011 to express concerns about agriculture and forestry issues.

WCSHC proposes a long-term regional strategic plan with emphasis of placing value on the natural resources and using innovation to churn out economic opportunities.



Mayor Hill



Rep. Nowell

**Computer Classes held**  
Some organizations talk about change and others procrastinate about their mission. However, the Winston County Self Help Cooperative is on a purposeful mission of helping save rural communities through computer literacy classes.

WCSHC embarked on a partnership with the Louisville Library to deliver computer trainings for members and others. Carnette Hudson class instructor said 30 participants completed WCSHC's computer curriculum over four years. We teach basic computer

skills because most of our students do not own computers or access to DSL. We spend one-on-one time teaching skill set and creating familiarize with processes. Tentatively, we will offer a class in spring of 2011. For more information call Winston county self help

cooperative office 662-779-2400.

### WCSHC's Economic Tours

Winston County Self Help Cooperative members traveled across Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana investigated farm enterprises to accrue economic opportu-

nities for residents of Winston County. Members visited you pick operations, cattle farms, vegetable markets using (CSA) community support agriculture practices, agro-tourism, and extension's field station experiment sites. The cooperative plans tours for spring 2011.



# WCSHC and MSU's College of Veterinary Medicine event

Winston County Self Help Cooperative & Mississippi State University's College of Veterinary Medicine partnered on three separate events to palpate, vaccinate and tag 110 heifers and horses. We have partnered with MSU's College of Veterinary Medicine for more than six years according to pasture manager Hubert Nicholson. "This relationship provides

opportunities for hands-on trainings for as cattle body scores, demeanor disposition, and overall management practices. Dr. Brett and four 3rd year vet students displayed professionalism and engaged members to watch as animals were palpated, tagged, and vaccinated". The palpating process generated most interest among members. As each animal entered the

squeeze chute members discussed whether the heifers were bred (pregnant). Bred rate was 75 percent on this day. We appreciate MSU's College of Veterinary Medicine for working and partnering with WCSHC to deliver needy services in a timely manner. WCSHC incorporated service through MSU's College of Veterinary Medicine for



Leake, Madison and Scott Counties Farmers Connecting in September 2010.



## WCSHC Honored Mothers

By Frank Taylor

I am honoring my mother in memories on this Mother's Day. My mother died in November 1998 and this event changed my life for eternity. My mother was my champion and guidance counselor. Although she is gone, Artie's legacy lives on through three generations and

I am thankful to have had a loving and kind mother. Those kinds of memories propelled WCSHC's men to honor female members with a Mother's Day extravagant on April 27, 2010. We are grateful for this royal treatment from WCSHC gentlemen according to Jean Harper. "We are elated to receive flowers and partake in

a sumptuous meal under candle lights". Thomas Coleman showered ladies with warm words of encouragement and thoughtful thoughts. One gentleman stated my life started with a woman and more than likely my life will end with a woman. Love your mother each day because Mother's Day is every day she lives.

## WCSHC's Fire Safety Workshops

Mississippi continued to lead the nation in home fire fatalities during 2010.

In neighboring Oktibbeha County 9 family members perished in apartment fire in December 2009, therefore, we are committed to disseminate pertinent information to help save lives through WCSHC Fire Safety Workshops according to cooperative member Carol Williams.

We have conducted 10 fire safety workshops over the past 3 years and donated



300 smoke detectors. The Louisville Fire Department and other Winston county departments help with this important program.



## Delinquent Property Tax Relief Program

Winston County Self Help Cooperative is a community-based organization enriched in a commitment to help save rural America through collective effort of preserving rural values and culture practices. According to national reports, we are losing more than 1000 acres of land per day through delinquent taxes, eminent domain, and unsettled family's disputes and commercialization. WCSHC helped 60 families save their homestead and 700 acres of forestland in 2009 and 2010

through WCSHC's Delinquent Tax Relief Program. According to cop members Linda Stephen, "we are in the business of helping families maintain ownership of their farms and engender good stewardship practices. Landowners have until February 1, to pay taxes without penalty. We will continue to remind absentee landowners and others to pay their property taxes before the penalty period. Landowners are required to pay property taxes yearly based on an overall county's appraisal. I



am encouraging families to visit your local county taxes assessor and collector office for more information on homestead exemption, and learn how proceeds are disturbing between the county and school district".

## Women Focus Group Meeting

WCSHC sponsored a Women Focus Group Meeting for women in Agriculture at the Winston County Extension Office in Louisville, MS. DR. Tamara L. Walkingstick Associate Professor/Extension Specialist-Forestry from University of Arkansas facilitated this meeting. Sandra Jones board member of National Network of

Forest Practitioners recorded notes. Objective of this focus group was to increase understanding a broad range of issues faced by women who work/manage working lands. This increased understanding will be useful in identifying strategies to better serve women and working lands. Walkingstick asked an array of questions including how you

see the roles of women changing with regard to owning/managing working lands. According to national statistics women out lives their partners by seven years and this is pertinent information according to co-op member Gloria Moore. "We are thankful for more than 30 women attending this informative focus group meeting".



## Financial Literacy Class

WCSHC delivered financial literacy training to Winston County Head Start Parents, members and youths. The co-op partnered with local banks and credit unions to raise awareness about financial instruments including budgeting, credit cards, credit scores, saving & checking accounts.

Additionally the cooperative partnered with Michelle Hudson of JTS Mortgage Company to highlighted Federal Housing Tax Credit Program and the City of Louisville's Housing Initiative which could help a first time home-buyer obtain 15,000 dollars if they meet requirements. Frank Taylor used Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation's Money Smart Curriculum to teach budgeting.



## WCSHC Forestry Field Days

Winston County Self Help Cooperative sponsored two forestry field day events at Charles Hampton's Tree Farm located 445 Hampton Road in Louisville, MS.

The cooperative partnered with the Mississippi Forestry Commission, Natural Resource Conservation Service and Extension to deliver hands-on experiences through service providers. Participants learned the

different between management and stewardship plans and how to obtain services through Mississippi Forestry Commission.

WCSHC Youth Members participated in a leaf and tree identification tour which drew numerous questions from aspiring foresters.

"This type of event created positive relationships with professionals, who can help inspire our youth



members according Youth



Director Dorothy Harper. County Extension Office and plant memorial trees on Arbor Day".

## WCSHC's Home-buyer Seminar

WCSHC sponsored a homebuyer seminar in conjunction with several lenders and state agencies to provide information for first time home-buyers.

Julia Brooks of Mississippi Home Corporation highlighted their state wide initiative to help low and moderate income families qualify for assistance through their down payment assistance program. Will Hill Mayor of Louisville

elaborated on the city first time home-buyer assistance program. Hill said "Families can qualify up to 15,000 through the criterion process. This program is scheduled to end in September 2011".

JTS & Co. Mortgage Brokers Sales Manager Andy Shurden and Louisville Branch Manager Michelle spoke about current mortgage interest rates and assisting clients with obtaining mort-

gage financing. Shurden spoke about the mortgage process in today's market and about changes that have taken place in the mortgage industry.

"Owning a home is a big part of the American Dream" Shurden explained.

"With interest rates at all time lows, the time is right for everyone that can qualify to own a home." Hudson added. "Educating the public about the mort-

gage process and the steps that you must take to reach the goal of becoming a homeowner is one of the highlights of our job. In the economic times that we are in today, if you don't have the right credit score or debt to income level (DTI) then lenders are quick to turn you down. At JTS & Co. Mortgage Brokers we will take you through our credit simulator and help guide you to achieving the credit



score and DTI that the lenders are looking for today. WCSHC and local extension office are soliciting participants for an upcoming 8 hours homebuyer class tentatively scheduled for January 2011 for more information contact WCSHC 662-779-2400.

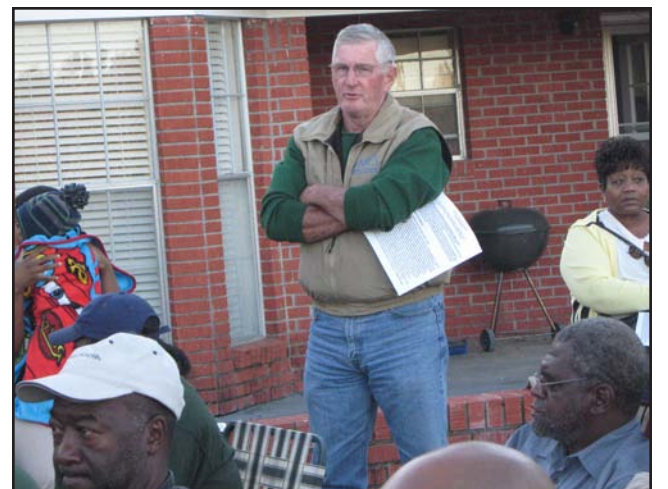
## WCSHC Cattle Field Days

Winston County Self Help Cooperative sponsored two cattle field days to provide members with competent and current information to help build health herds of animals and receive hands-on training from service providers. WCSHC Fall Cattle Field Day occurred on Monday October 4, 2010 at Alonzo & Peggy Miller's Farm located in the prolific New Zion Community. Members and supporters slowly

drifted onto this immaculate farm surrounded by lush green meadow, oak trees and softwood timber in a far distance. This setting presented a grand opportunity for service providers to share relevant market information, health tips and transitioning grazing lands for fall forages. Jerry Orr Local District Conservationist highlighted Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)'s cost share programs availability and sign-up

dates. Dr. Mark Crenshaw of Mississippi State University's Swine Department provided market analysis on swine futures. Laura Anderson of the state office Natural Resource Conservation Service Public Affairs Division photographed activities and shared greetings. Bobby Lane, a local insurance agent disseminated information on how to scrutinize and select the best policy to serve your family needs.

WCSHC Youth Members and Greensboro Youth Group engaged in fun activities and also visited the cows, chicken and dogs. WCSHC's annual cattle field day concluded with Peggy Miller and co-op members serving a delicious meal. The Millers joined WCSHC in 2007 to help fortify dream of owning a working farm. WCSHC awarded the Miller Family with five bred heifers in the spring and each heifer



has delivered a calf. Incentive Program (EQIP) with fencing, ponds, pest control and fertilization. 92 individuals participated in the field day event.

## WCSHC/ASU's Town Hall Forums

Winston County Self Help Cooperative and Alcorn State University Extension Program conducted three town hall forums. "we use this medium to assess community's needs in areas of health, educational, economic, employment and environmental justice according to Dr. Wandra Arrington of ASU. "Forum opened with introduction of university's staff and overview of forum's objectives. Participants divided into two sub-groups and identified issues affecting daily life in Winston County. After 55 minutes of

discussion the two groups merged and selected top five issues: school dropout, employment, lack of civil and community participation, teen pregnancy and mentorship programs for adults and youths. Each issue received a working group consisting of five members to find possible solutions before the meeting. The university will provide personnel with educational resources and make necessary referrals to assist with this project.

### WCSHC's Heifer Project

WCSHC passed on 25 bred heifers to five families in 2010 through the coopera-

tive's Heifer Program. WCSHC received 74,500 in 2002 from Heifer International and this gift has helped 35 families start cattle operations. Members sold 100 heads of cattle in 2010. For more information on this program please visit our website [www.wcshc.com](http://www.wcshc.com) and read August Special Edition 2010 page 2.

### WCSHC's Newsletters and Videos

Winston County Self Help Cooperative continued to provide news to rural America through the Greensboro Echo

Newsletters. In 2010 the co-op published two newspapers which included thoughtful and informative stories on individuals from rural America, organizations, youth, crops, USDA programs, extension and other extraordinary events. WCSHC has published more than 100 newsletters in the past seven years. You can read previous newsletters at the website [www.wcshc.com](http://www.wcshc.com). Additionally, the United States Department of Agriculture featured WCSHC a video titled "Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food". You can view this video at the follow link. <http://kyf.blogs.usda.gov/2010/11/05/saving-rural-america-starting-in-winston-county/>. Stay tune for more information for from rural

America in 2011. If you have story ideas please forward to Frank Taylor [fltaylor@bellsouth.net](mailto:fltaylor@bellsouth.net)

### Members Receive AI Training

Willie Matthews, Lee Otis Mays and Tim walker participated Artificial Insemination training at Mississippi State University's Boost Center on November 4-6, 2010. This training will help members determine calving capabilities and identify animals with impending problems. These individuals will assist cooperative members; strengthen herds in size through selection of quality bulls and structuring breeding seasons.



# WCSHC Visit Piney Woods School

By Linda Stephen

Winston County Self Help Cooperative traveled to Florence, MS and other locations. The first stop was at Piney Woods School (PWS) located in Florence, Mississippi. PWS is the largest of only four historically African-American Boarding Schools left in the nation. It was founded in 1909 by Dr. Lawrence Clifton Jones. He was born in St. Joseph, Missouri 1882. Dr. Jones arrived in Mississippi with his college diploma, a bible in his hands, and \$1.65 in his pocket. Dr. Jones had a vision of a school where a HEAD, HEART, and HANDS education would be available to rural blacks. He taught his first students under a cedar tree until a former slave named Uncle Ed Taylor donated a log cabin. Uncle Ed Taylor was an ex-slave known as the meanest man in Rankin County that donated a log cabin and the 40 acres of land because he was impressed with the work of Dr. Jones. The

log cabin is now covered by another structure to protect it. This log cabin was once a slave cabin turned into a sheep shed. It served as the residence of Dr. Jones and another teacher, as well as the first classroom prior to their marriage of the Joneses and moving into the Museum. Upon arrival on campus, we toured the Founder's Cemetery that contains the graves of Dr. Lawrence and Grace Jones, their son Turner, Lawrence's sister Nellie Bass, Uncle Ed Taylor, and several teachers. This log cabin is next to the gravesite. Each building on campus tells a story of the struggle of 100 years. Dr. Lawrence Jones was married to Grace Morris and they had 3 children. They lived in the building now named the Lawrence Jones Museum. This building was built by students in 1922 and houses a collection of artifacts relevant to the school's history and crafts made by Grace Jones. She taught the art of basketry. Mrs. Jones died

at an early age of complications from pneumonia. Dr. Jones never remarried and lived in the museum until his death. In 1939 in memory of Grace, using money raised by women of the school and neighborhood along with members of the Mother's Club and local chapter of the Mississippi Federation of Colored Women's Club, the Grace Jones Memorial Log Cabin was built. The machines presently located on the porch of this building are brick-making machines that were used to build all of the earlier buildings on campus. Mrs. Jones also started the Cotton Blossom Singers Choir that used her crafts to help fund the choir. Dr. Jones appeared on a television show called This Is Your Life in 1954 to honor his life's work. Ralph Edwards, the host, requested \$1 from each member of the viewing audience and over a million dollars were raised. This was the beginning of the school's permanent endowment and this building is called the

Ralph Edwards Administration Building. The farm covers 500 acres and allows students to build character while understanding the economy. The once fully operated farm houses wild horses and burros presently with ponds, lakes, wildlife, and catfish farms. Crops of peas, watermelons, and greens are grown by the students. PWS is known as the first School for the Blind in the state of Mississippi. The 5 Blind Boys of Mississippi and the International Sweethearts of Jazz were educated at PWS. PWS has its own radio station (104.3 FM). The last building toured was the Caldwell Dining Hall built in 1961 in honor of Sadie Caldwell that donated the funds for construction. There are two meal shifts where the students are provided non-caffeine, nutritional meals without deserts reasonably priced for visitors. PWS started out on 40 acres and now encompasses 2,000



acres including a 500 acre farm with five lakes, managed timberland, and Mississippi's only rock garden amphitheatre. What once started out as a place where children of former slaves once learned to read is now a modeled learning environment that is training leaders for the new millennium with a mission to educate youth? PWS operates on a 4 and 1 weekly program meaning that the students attend school for 4 days and work 1 day. The requirements for entrance are a letter of interest to tell why you want to attend, a 2.5 grade point average, and no history of trouble with the law. PWS is the first and only private school that adjusts tuition to the family's income. PWS environment teaches only 9-12th grades and 33% of the faculty/staff lives on campus. The girls lives on opposites sides of the campus from the boys and the faculty lives on the north end of the campus. No child is allowed on the faculty quarters without permission. A doctor is on hand 5 days a week and a nurse is on 24 hour call. Open enrollment is in the fall and spring with two weeks at summer time vacation. A summer camp for 10-15 year olds is provided. A large percentage of students come from abroad and over 90% of graduates attend college. The remainder of the field trip did not measure up to the environment at PWS. Thank you PWS!

# WCSHC's 2010 15th Business Session and Christmas Gala

Winston County Self Help Cooperative 2010's Work-plan culminated with the co-op's annual Christmas Gala and fifteen business sessions on December 3, at Taylor's Union Hall in Louisville, MS. Members dressed in red and black to symbolize and inspire the season of given. The 15th business session started with prayer from Myra Bryant of the Mississippi Association of Cooperatives. Members accepted minutes as printed and moved swiftly to reiterate plans for 2011. Nancy Woodruff dissected details for

Winston County Self Help Cooperative's 4th Saving Rural America and Youth Conference (SRAC) February 25 & 26, 2011 at the Louisville Coliseum. This year's conference Theme: BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES THROUGH HEALTHY FOOD: GETTING EVERYONE ON BOARD. SRAC's planning committee will convene a conference call to confer other details in upcoming weeks. WCSHC's 15th business session concluded with words of inspiration from community advocates Cleveland Hudson and Carl Mickens. Cleveland



Hudson (retired high school coach and teacher from Starkville, MS presentation focused on faith with emphasis of staying in the middle to support your family and leaving a fruitful legacy. Carl Mickens Circuit Clerk of

Noxubee County Macon, MS. Carl engaged participants with thoughts of creating individuality to propel success and not settling for mediocre. Robin Matthews initiated the Christmas Program with words



welcome encouragements. Winston County Self Help Youth Group offered devotion and songs of joy. Greensboro Youth Group performed two skits entwined with thoughts of the less fortunate. Co-op member Dean Miller's soprano

voice amazed delivered the song "Go tell it on the Mountain" which encouraged participants to join in on the course. WCSHC's annual Christmas Gala concluded with a soulful dinner prepared by the Coleman Sisters.

# WCSHC's Canning Workshop

By Orlando Trainer

Winston County Self-Help Cooperative conducted four canning workshops in 2010. Participants learned methods of preserving fresh vegetables and recipes for homemade jellies. Highlights from Sand Creek Chapel Canning Workshop hosted by Orlando Trainer. The church is located at 1890 Rockhill Road Starkville, Ms. in the

Rockhill Community. Winston County Self-Help Cooperative members served as presenters for this informative canning session. The program began at 7:00pm with Orlando Trainer calling the group to order. An invocation was given by him and he welcomed the participants to the community and church. Refreshments were available throughout the evening. Orlando Trainer

introduced Frank Taylor who gave remarks and an icebreaker after which he introduced Mary Coleman. Mary talked about various canning techniques that she had developed down thru the years. She allowed participants to ask questions and share their canning knowledge based on their experiences. Thomas Coleman talked with the group about the importance of continuing

and starting garden projects whether large or small. He encouraged the group to raise as much food as possible because it is much healthier and cheaper during these tough economic times. The night was not complete until Frank Taylor gave some inspiring



remarks and challenges the group to strive to continue on its journey on the quest to help save rural America.



# The Miller's Move to Rural America

By Peggy Miller

"Who would have ever thought it?" Born and raised in the metropolitan area of one of the largest cities in Texas, I spent the last thirty years of my adult life in a major suburb area of Dallas, called "Grand Prairie". Straight up "City Living!" Surrounded by large 2 and 3 level malls, major grocery store chains, restaurants serving up gourmet cuisines, 18 screen movie theaters, symphony and concert halls, musicals, plays, Cowboy Stadium, Ranger Stadium, American Airline Center, Six Flags Over Texas, Wet and Wild, and DFW International Airport all just minutes away. Oh, I dare not forget about the multi-levels and 10 lane highways. But, I said "Good Bye" to it all, including my family and my friends. No, I didn't get on a Midnight Train to Georgia. But I left it all behind for a life in Louisville, Mississippi, sometimes referred to as "The Sipp".

By way of a Cadillac, a Pick-up truck, and 2 loads in an 18-Wheeler, I am now residing on "Green Acres" in Winston County, Mississippi. What in the world would cause me to make such a drastic change at such a young age (50 plus) in my life? Well, I'm glad you asked....In year 2002, I met Alonzo Miller who had moved to Texas about one year earlier. He was actually a new member at my church, but for some reason it took a year before I noticed him, which seems strange because we were in the same Sunday school class. Of course he said that he had observed me for 2 years prior to our first date. Alonzo later became one of the teachers for our class. To make a long story shorter, we started a friendship in 2003 and I became Mrs. Peggy Miller in 2004.

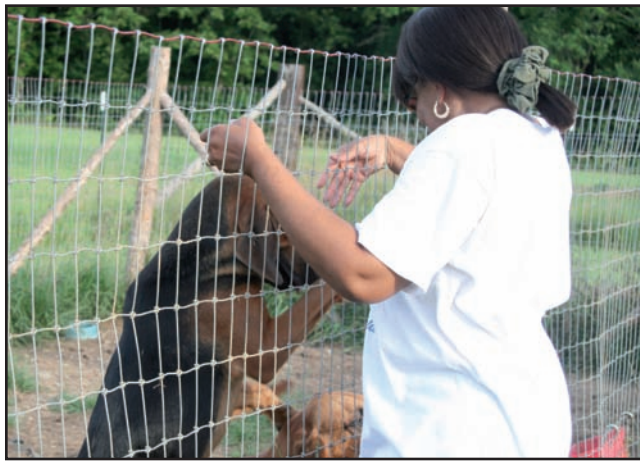
Life for the three of us (Alonzo, me and God) seemed to be on a fast pace. Shortly after getting married, we started a Trucking company which was a whole new experience for me. So I guess that was the first of big changes in my life. I went on the road with Alonzo for 9 months which gave me an opportunity to learn the business first hand. Because of my experience as Project Manager in Corporate America, I recognized ways for us to improve our customer base, customer service and our profits, so I came off the road and set up a Home-based office that I managed. We quickly realized that the 3 of us (Alonzo, me and God) worked very well together. A few months later, Alonzo accepted his calling into

the Ministry and I then became the wife of a Minister. I told you things moved fast for us.

Alonzo had grown up on a farm in Louisville, MS, about a mile from where we currently live. He often talked about his life on the farm, which I thought was fascinating. He told me stories about families pulling together to help each other. Sometimes families who may have raised hogs would come together to kill and process them at the same time. They would share with other families who may have shared crops with the group. But they would all take part in the processing. Everyone may not have raised the same things, but everyone received some of everything. If you think about it, this is the same concept as the first church in the book of Acts. Most people worked from sun up to sundown on the farm. I remember Alonzo telling me about how he and his siblings had to help his parents plant the fields. When they were finished for the day, he would sneak off into the woods and plant his own little garden with seeds that he had stored away in his pockets during the day. So at the age of 6, he was growing and maintaining his own garden in the woods. One of the things that stuck with me the most was the fact that Alonzo recalled that his family did not have a lot of money, but they always had plenty of food to eat. Listening to the many stories my husband told about growing up, I began to realize that he had a real passion for farming.

Alonzo began to speak to me about his desires to be self sufficient and to be in control of the food that we ate. He was concerned about the quality of the food and produce that we bought out of the stores as well as the chemicals and preservatives used on them. He said that if we grew our own vegetables and raised our own meat, we could eat healthier and we would also be assured of what we were eating. It made good sense to me. We began to talk more and more about being in a place where we could do this and the more we talked about it, the more we prayed about it. We put together a plan and began to move on it. We found the land to be more expensive in the areas we preferred in Texas than in his hometown of Louisville, Mississippi, so he asked me if I would be willing to move there. After giving this idea some serious thought, and negotiating a deal with my husband, I agreed to the move.

Our first connection to our future in Mississippi was actually made about



6 month prior to our move. Alonzo's Dad and brother had told us about a wonderful program that they were members of called "Winston County Self Help Cooperative" (WCSHC). The program sounded so great that we had to access the website ([www.wcshc.com](http://www.wcshc.com)) and check it out for ourselves. We were more than impressed, people working together to save Rural America. The benefits and opportunities this program presented were impressive as well. There was a newsletter online that featured an article about a husband and wife team who are members of the WCSHC program. They had recently opened a restaurant in Winston County. There were also other articles related to farming and all sorts of other things that were happening within the program. Alonzo and I immediately contacted Frank Taylor (president of WCSHC) via email and began what we call the Mississippi Connection. Because we were making arrangements to move to the area, we were able to become members just by sending in our annual dues. We began receiving minutes from the meetings as well as newsletters just as if we were already here. I was convinced that we had made the right choice when I heard about the Heifer program WCSHC offered. Where else can you get 5 bred heifers given to you? All that was required was that we give back the first 5 females so that the process can continue and be extended to other members in the program.

So in the fall of 2008, we loaded up the truck and moved to Beverly. No, we moved to L'ville. I traded in my 2 story home on a third of an acre

lot for a ranch house on a 72 acre farm. I traded in my corporate suits, dresses and my high-heels for over-alls, straw hats, work gloves, and knee high rubber boots. My friends from Texas to Oregon compared me to Lisa on the Green Acres TV sitcom. They found it hard to believe that I would even consider giving up the "city life" for a new life in Rural America. So now that I'm here, I would not trade what I've learned for anything in the world.

We eventually gave up the Trucking business and concentrated on building the farm, so Alonzo took a job teaching Alternative school in Carthage, MS. We planted our first garden (about 1/2 acre) in the spring of 2009. We were able to attend seminars and workshops sponsored by WCSHC that helped us tremendously. All that my husband did not know about farming, he was able to learn from the workshops, conferences, and meetings. Everything was new to me. I had to learn about cutting and rowing the garden and the process of preparing the soil before planting the seeds. Some of the senior members told us when to plant certain crops and all of the do's and don'ts associated with each. So, I planned what we were going to plant and made a list to take to the seed store, instead of the grocery store. We harvested okra, squash, corn, tomatoes, peppers, peas, butter beans, green beans, turnips and mustard greens, and water melons. Our winter garden yielded us collards, sweet potatoes, cabbage, and broccoli. It was so fascinating to see the fruits of our labor. When my hus-

band went to work each morning, I headed off to the garden to pick vegetables by myself and put them up. I attended canning classes also sponsored by the WCSHC program in addition to tapping into the wisdom of my mother-in-law and was able to can many of the vegetables from the garden. What I didn't can, I used the internet to learn the process to properly freeze vegetables. My mother-in-law also taught me to make pear preserves from the pear tree we have on the farm. We had more than enough for ourselves, so we shared with our friends and family here in Louisville. I even sent packages back home to Texas so my family and friends could get a taste of what I had learned. It was wonderful having vegetables that tasted fresh all year-round, with no preservatives.

During the winter or 2009, we added chickens to the farm, which we also received through the WCSHC. Had I raised chickens before? I can't recall ever touching a chicken that wasn't fried, baked, roasted, grilled, or cooked in some way. In other words, if I touched them, they didn't have feathers. I have the morning feeding shift and my husband takes the evening shift. The first few weeks, I went out in all kinds of protected armor just in case one of the roosters decided to attack me. But then, the more I talked to them, the more we were comfortable with each other. I gave them all their own names, which they responded to very well. I experienced my first cock fight when my husband was at work. I walked out to the chicken house one morning and saw

blood everywhere. My first thought was that some wild animal had gotten into the coop and attacked one of the chickens. I counted them each morning to ensure they were all there and that particular morning, I was missing one. I pulled up the swing door to the under compartment and saw Roger the rooster in one of the back corners in a balled up position. Just as I began to speak to him, Roody the rooster ran in and attacked Roger. They both ran out pass me and fought on the ground for a while then they both took flight to the air. WOW! I had never seen anything like that before. I was trying to break up the fight and call my husband on the phone at the same time. As soon as he answered, I began telling him what was happening and he began yelling at me through the phone to get out of the pen with the chickens. He then explained to me how roosters fight so one can become the dominate rooster, in other words, it's a male thing. It was apparent that Roger could no longer protect himself due to injuries, but Roody wanted a fight to the bitter end so I let Roger out of the pen. For fear that he would wonder off and some wild animal would get him, I sat on a bucket outside and talked to him until my husband got home about 2 hours later. Needless to say, Roger never had his way with the hens again. They all belonged to Roody and he was not willing to share.

There was also the time when I went in to feed the chickens and the wind caught the door of the coop and held it opened just long enough for our dog, Samson to get in.



# Winston County Self Help Cooperative Louisville, MS “Saving Rural America”



Chickens were running around everywhere and wings were flapping like crazy. His mouth clamped down on the back of Ms. Red (one of the hens), and the fight was on. In addition to screaming and crying, I was beating the heck out of the dog trying to get him to turn loose of the chicken. When he finally let go, I dragged him out of the pen and chained him down. I went back to see how bad Ms. Red was hurt and saw a small hole in her back side as she just lay on the ground. I had never picked up a live chicken in my hands and certainly not an injured one. But thank God for my mother-in-law. I called her and she told me that I needed to separate Ms. Red from the other chickens. I left the chicken coop to find a large box and lined it with hay. When I returned to the coop, the other hens were pecking the wound caused by the dog and the hole was larger. When my Mother-in-law arrived on the scene, she picked Ms. Red up and examined her thoroughly. We were relieved to know that there were no broken legs. I tore a white towel into strips and soaked it with some anti-biotic cream that I had gotten from a foot doctor in Texas. I then stuffed the towel into wound on her back. I put small containers of feed and water in the box and changed out her towel each day. I prayed and talked to Ms. Red every day and told her that she was not going to die. A couple of days later, she began to stand up in the box, and then shortly after that, she began to walk around. I saw her make progress each day. She is a Road Island Red so I would tell her how nice she looked in her red dress and that she was the prettiest chicken out there. She began to talk back to me when I talked to her. People would call to check on Ms. Red and I would let them hear her speak through the phone. Eventually I nursed her back to health and it was time for her

to go back into the pen with the other chickens. It wasn't that easy. It never occurred to me that hens could be so mean toward each other. I now understand why women are sometimes referred to as "Hens". Since the other chickens did not receive her well at all, we had to gradually work her back into the fold. The other hens were jealous and pecked her constantly. I encouraged her to fight back, but she would just run away. Finally the day came when things got back to what I deem as normal in the hen house.

As the chickens grew older, some of the hens began to look a little strange to me. So I did some research on the internet and found that male chickens have spurs on the back of their legs, which is a way to identify them from the females. So sure enough, some of the hens were really roosters. They were just not as old as Roody and Roger. So we were in for more cock fights. Roody is still king of the coop and the positive is that I'm collecting eggs every morning when I go out to feed.

In April of this year, we added 5 bred heifers and 1 donkey to our family. It didn't take long before our number came up on the WCSHC list. Thanks to the assistance of Winston County Office of Natural Resource and Conservation Services (NRCS), another great organization we became familiar with through seminars and conferences sponsored by the WCSHC, Alonzo started months in advance sectioning off pasture land and installing barbed wire fences. What a long and tiring process! He worked all day in the classroom, and then came home to work on fences until dark. During the summer months, he worked from daylight to dark. But that was the bitter. Now let me tell you about the sweet. NRCS, a sub-division of USDA has an EQIP (Cost Share Program) that will reimburse

## SAVE THE DATE

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you for your fencing material once you have installed the fence in adherence to their specifications. Their representatives even came out to our farm and made recommendations to help us reach our goals. They were always available to answer questions or to provide whatever assistance we needed as small farmers. No doubt about it, this is a "Win Win" situation.

Since Alonzo had to work alone most of the time, he constructed tools and devices to make the job easier (he says). I see nothing easy about it. We don't have all the equipment that we need yet, so he has to do a lot of improvising. I remember when he instructed me to call Bennett's Rental Center and reserve a gas powered post-hole digger. Little did I know that it took two people to operate the machine? So I became the second person. What an experience! You would have had to operate one in order to appreciate what I did. I offer to help out when I can like with the constructing

of the chicken house, the dog pen, and loading fire wood. Some of our best conversations take place when we're working together. Maybe one day, he'll surprise me and offer to help me with the house cleaning.

Our 5 heifers gave birth to their calves in August and September of this year, two bulls and 3 heifers. We also acquired 2 more donkeys (and yes they have names). Almost every day I learn something new. There is always something to do on the farm. If you're ever bored, it's because you're not doing anything. The work is very physical and most of the time downright dirty. In other words, there is nothing glamorous about farming. As for me, I've experienced many exciting things in my life. I've traveled to many places in the U.S. and even to other countries. When I compare them to my experiences on the farm, they are just fund memories that may someday fade away. But now I have lasting memories that I can pass on to my daughters and their daughters

for generations to come.

Usually something sounds better on paper, but that is certainly not the case with WCSHC. This is one of those programs that I would definitely recommend to a friend. Since we have been members, we have received chickens, heifers, fruit trees, and other vegetable plants. The conferences, seminars, and workshops have provided information galore. Not to mention the organized field trips that provide upfront, up-close, and personal views of what farmers and cattlemen are doing to achieve success. We are also exposed to Government programs that are set up to assist us in reaching our goals. If someone asked me today, what I think is the best thing about Mississippi; I would have to say hands down, that it is the Winston County Self Help Cooperative. It has certainly helped my husband's vision to become a reality that we both share together....Otherwise; it would have only been a dream. "Oh, it ain't over!"