



## **Alabama Cooperative Extension System Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs at-a-Glance (2005 – 2009)**

### **Vision Statement**

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System envisions a comprehensive statewide Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs Unit encompassing traditional, **nontraditional**, and **new** and emerging programs and delivery approaches in order to meet the needs of Alabama citizens wherever they live and work. The focus, however, is to meet the needs of urban and suburban communities to improve their quality of life.

The mission of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System's Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs Unit is to provide learning opportunities to meet the needs of all urban and nontraditional audiences with a specific focus on limited resource families, under-served audiences, individuals and small enterprises.

### **Mission Statement**

## State Goals

1. Improve the general health of Alabama's urban population by conducting food safety, health, and nutrition programs to empower high-risk families, individuals, and underserved audiences to pursue healthy lifestyles and select, prepare, and consume a safe and healthy diet.
2. Implement an urban youth initiative to promote urban youth development by providing personal development, leadership, and service-learning programs designed to empower youth to reach their fullest potential as positive and contributing members of an economically and socially diverse society.
3. Examine the state of Alabama's new and nontraditional families and provide programs and information that promote the social, economic, and cultural growth and development of families and individuals across the life span.
4. Strengthen family-centered communities through capacity building efforts that target communities and organizations engaged in revitalization, work force and economic development, and community building through diverse populations.
5. Strengthen the capacity of adults, youth, and seniors to establish consumer goals, maintain economic security, and become engaged proactively in public policy decisions related to consumer and personal money management issues.
6. Promote urban and nontraditional horticulture and animal and environmental sciences by helping citizens to make informed decisions, to explore new and alternative production systems and services, and to manage agricultural and environmental issues where urban/rural communities interface.
7. Capitalize on the value-added benefits of technology integration to expand the capability to address diverse educational needs, offer enhanced access to educational resources, and respond to issues related to the digital divide.
8. Design and implement a marketing plan to increase the visibility of Extension's urban programs and Urban Centers as viable outreach efforts that target urban, new, and nontraditional audiences.

## Priority Programs and Program Leadership

The ***Metropolitan Health, Nutrition and Wellness*** program focuses on current health issues such as obesity, diabetes, cancer, hypertension, asthma, arthritis and HIV/AIDS. Educational outreach encourages citizens to become proactive in dealing with health issues and facilitates better understanding of correlations between diet, health and exercise, and physical well-being.

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The ***Successful Aging Initiative***, a partnership between the Alabama Cooperative Extension System and the Alabama Bureau of Geriatric Psychiatry, offers resources and referrals to Alabama citizens relative to current issues affecting the aging population including dementia and associated health issues, finance, and Elder Law. Program delivery is supported by research-based curricula and a certified legal consultant.

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## Priority Programs (con't.)

**"Grand" RAPP** (Grandparents and Relatives as Parents Program) targets grandparents and relatives serving as the primary parent for their grandchildren or other kin. The program provides valuable information and resources including networks and forums where grandparents and relative caregivers can address kinship care issues, build peer support and exchange ideas, experiences, and information.

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**Saving Towns Thru Asset Revitalization (STAR)** offers a nontraditional green space and human dimensions approach to revitalizing distressed communities. Community image recasting is achieved by assessing physical, social, and human resources and using all available assets to initiate planned change.

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The **Cooperatives, Small Business and Entrepreneurship Development** program offers educational outreach to encourage multi-community groups to pool resources using the cooperative model of self help to address common issues. The program also addresses small business and entrepreneurship as economic development options.

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*Extension Community Resource Development Specialist*

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The **Youth Leadership Development** program serves as a catalyst for enhancing the education and development of positive life skills in Alabama's youth population through leadership training, service learning activities, and personal skill building experiences.

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*Extension Youth Development Specialists*

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**Small Ruminant and Nontraditional Animal Production Systems** responds to production needs and consumer demands of alternative animal production systems and nontraditional animal biotechnology research needs. Outreach supports integrated approaches to nontraditional agriculture, addressing the needs of small and nontraditional farmers through educational resources and technological advances in alternative animal production systems.

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**Dogs as Companion Animals** address scientific benefits of evolving human-dog interactions, including recreational, health and clinical advantages. The program provides information on dog sciences (nutrition, health, behavior and breeding), obedience training, dogs and the law, and educates on responsible dog ownership.

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## Priority Programs (con't.)

**Workforce and Economic Development** is a multi-faceted and inclusive community development project. Focus areas include diversity and empowering minority cultures, job readiness, career awareness, partnerships and cooperative development, and community capacity building.

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**Family Financial Security and Consumer Education** provides educational information to prepare adults and youth to better manage financial resources. Program activities promote financial security in emergency and crisis situations and in later life. The program also addresses savings, investments, credit, and retirement options across the lifespan including LifeSmarts consumer education for youth.

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**Tapping at Postsecondary Schools** targets secondary and postsecondary schools, community clubs and organizations, and the faith based community to tap into under-used volunteer resources. The objectives of the program are to promote community service, improve life skills and work ethics, and enhance personal development of participating youth and adults.

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*Urban Extension Volunteer Program Coordinator*  
*Extension Children, Youth and Family Specialist*

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**Urban and Nontraditional Horticulture Programs** promote urban, new and nontraditional horticulture and community gardening concepts and offer training in nontraditional horticultural enterprises. The objectives are to improve income, food sources, food security, and enhance community relationships.

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The **Service-Learning Program at Alabama A&M University** combines service to the community with students' academic pursuits. Students learn and develop through organized service in conjunction with elementary or secondary schools, colleges, universities or community programs.

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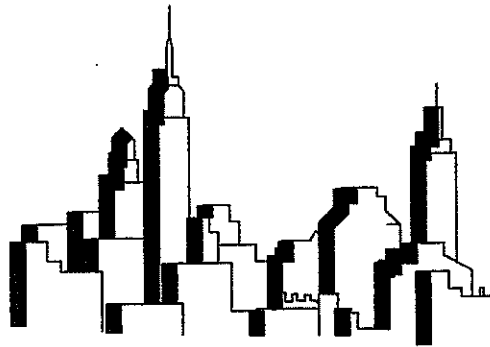
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## Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs

# 2004 Highlights

Alabama Cooperative Extension System

Alabama A&M University



- ❖ **Resources** such as the on-line Metro News ([www.aces.edu/urban/metronews](http://www.aces.edu/urban/metronews)), the WECAN4U job assistance website ([www.WECAN4-U](http://www.WECAN4-U)), A Look at Alabama Families ([www.aces.edu/urban/FamilyWebsite](http://www.aces.edu/urban/FamilyWebsite)) and the Programacion en Espanol Spanish only website ([www.aces.edu/urban](http://www.aces.edu/urban)) provided electronic links to Extension's research based information.
- ❖ The **Fostering Achievement Through Mentoring Education (FAME)** project supported volunteer training for the newly developed "Lend an Ear" program of the Family Drug Court of Madison County. The program seeks to reunify families where parental rights have been suspended by building life skills, and providing resources and adult mentors.
- ❖ Developed around the theme "Prescriptions for Healthy Lifestyles", the **Annual Family Conference** featured **Dr. David Satcher, former U.S. Surgeon General**, as keynote speaker.
- ❖ Special needs and special education students organized their own sale of plants grown through a **horticulture therapy program in Tuscaloosa County**. Profits of **\$1200** will be used to continue the program.
- ❖ The **community based Family Life Center**, coordinated in partnership with the Huntsville Housing Authority, continued to function as a resource hub for more than **1600 families who reside in Huntsville's public housing facilities**.
- ❖ The **Houston County Groundwater Education Day** provided interactive water quality educational experiences for over 1200 fourth graders from the Dothan City and Houston County Schools.

- ✱ **Extension Specialists coordinated the Students Promoting Action Through Community Education (SPACE) program in collaboration with Alabama A&M University's Student Learning Network (SLN). The SLN/SPACE trained 400 student volunteers and partnered with over 100 agencies to generate 17,546 community service hours reaching a total of 38,690 citizens in Madison County. Additionally SPACE volunteerism programs were ongoing in Talladega, Lauderdale, Mobile and Jefferson Counties.**
- ✱ **Regional agents in Lauderdale and Morgan Counties involved Extension clients in research pilots with the Southern Agbiotech Consortium for Underserved Communities (SACUC). To promote understanding of the benefits of agbiotech, small producers compared agbiotech varieties of corn that had naturally occurring insect destroying bacteria with conventional varieties. The results showed measurable reductions in production costs for the agbiotech variety.**
- ✱ **Extension Agents in Tuscaloosa County worked with the Alabama Fire Ant Management Program to introduce phorid flies throughout Alabama as a pilot program to control fire ants.**
- ✱ **Through the Metropolitan Health and Wellness Initiative for Underserved Audiences, agents in Lauderdale, Jefferson, Madison, Calhoun, and Houston metropolitan areas provided a series of diabetes cooking schools, awareness classes, seminars, conferences and health fairs.**
- ✱ **Extension agents in Mobile conducted a simulation program "Oh Drama" involving University of South Alabama students and SPACE student volunteers. The open dialogue, facilitated by professional counselors, enhanced participants' knowledge on how to develop healthy relationships. The program concluded with a drive to collect cell phones that were refurbished and distributed to a local women's shelter.**
- ✱ **Adjoining counties participated in the Better Kids Care satellite training from Penn State hosted by the Morgan County Urban Center. The training addressed correlations between having dependable, qualified childcare providers and the longevity of employment for working parents. Eighty four (84) childcare providers earned 168 training hours.**
- ✱ **Over 10,000 contacts were made by the North Alabama Breast and Cervical Cancer Project funded by the Alabama Department of Public Health. Approximately 500 received referrals for professional services (clinical examinations, mammograms and treatment). The goal of the project was to create awareness, teach self care strategies and increase the number of women getting exams.**
- ✱ **The annual "Living with Grief/Alzheimer's Disease" teleconference hosted by the Mobile County Urban Center helped to strengthen the resiliency and increase the knowledge of professionals, caregivers and the general public.**

- ❖ **The Saving Towns Through Asset Revitalization (STAR) program partnered with community groups such as the Madison African American Alliance Group (MAAG), the Handy Recreation Center in Florence and local leaders in Lisman, AL. on initiatives designed to support “smart growth” responses from resource-limited and at risk neighborhoods and municipalities. Tree City USA status was facilitated, a tree board was established and an arbor celebration was implemented with municipal officials, civic stakeholders and business people in Lisman. Presentations and demonstrations on the human dimensions of green space development, asset revitalization, and image recasting were delivered across the state.**
- ❖ **Food share programs such as “Plant an Extra Row” in Tuscaloosa County and the Autauga community garden distributed hundreds of pounds of fresh produce to needy families through family service programs including faith based organizations and the Salvation Army.**
- ❖ **The Urban Nutrition Education Program (UNEP) expanded its reach to provide services in 9 of Alabama’s 10 primary metropolitan areas. The program targets seniors and families in public housing to provide nutrition education, resource management and food safety information.**
- ❖ **Relatives as Parents Programs (RAPP) provided support services to grandparents and other relatives who have taken on the responsibility of surrogate parenting. Alabama AARP provided leadership for the regional conference on “Grand Parenting”**
- ❖ **Impact results from LifeSmarts assessments show significant increases in consumer education knowledge. State competition winners for 2004 were from Morgan County. The team represented Alabama at the national competition in Chicago.**
- ❖ **Extension partnered with the PHOENIX Juvenile Justice Program in Madison County to introduce the youth intervention program statewide. The goal is to assist first time offenders in their efforts to avoid further delinquency and risky behavior. The program has a 70% success rate for participating youth.**
- ❖ **Agents in Houston County partnered with project RIO, a state funded pilot program through ADECA to help implement a proactive employment assistance service to offenders during incarceration and after their release. The program targets 200 offenders per year.**
- ❖ **Data from the 2004 Youth Career Summit held in Madison County indicated over 70% of the 300 high school participants changed their career interests as a result of increased awareness of nontraditional careers for women.**

- ❖ **The Annual Youth Fishing Rodeo** has a two-fold mission to combine environmental education with opportunities for family development and cultural enrichment. Over 1500 youth and their parents were in attendance at the 2004 event held in the Lawrence County Oakville community. **The rodeo is sponsored in partnership with the Lawrence County Schools' Indian Education Program.**
- ❖ **Over 50 pond managers in Houston County** were educated on how to control fish kills, a venture that could cost thousands of dollars. Participants were better able to adjust the alkalinity of water and soil and control aquatic weeds without the use of chemical herbicides for a healthier environment.
- ❖ **State funded mini-grants in nontraditional agricultural science supported programs and demonstrations in beekeeping and the use of honeybee pollination in Houston County, horticulture therapy in Tuscaloosa County, fragrance gardens in Autauga County, and banana farm projects in Calhoun County.**
- ❖ **Over 300 seniors participated in the "Successful Aging Initiative" expo conducted in Huntsville.** A component of the partnership agreement with the Alabama Bureau of Geriatric Psychiatry, the expo aims to educate and provide resources on issues related to aging, elder law, health and wellness, and financial security.
- ❖ **Over 300 participants attended a "Smart Growth" conference held in Mobile County** where speakers shared information to prepare communities to manage population growth and associated changes in urban environments.
- ❖ **Pets were used to encourage 4-H youth in Cullman County to participate in public speaking events through the "Dogs as Companion Animals" program.** Program results support research findings that a dog can enhance self-esteem and feelings of competence in youth, as well as improve motivation when given the responsibility for its exercise, training and feeding.



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