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Tobacco initiative creating healthier communities through collaboration

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The SU Ag Center Communities of Color (CoC) Network continues to impact lives, statewide - in the arena of tobacco prevention and control. Regional coordinators continue their assault on 'Big Tobacco' by fighting back against decades of lies. This effort is carried out through collaborative partnerships that educate and empower citizens of Louisiana to live healthier, tobacco-free lives. During the month of October, several educational activities were held with African American youth, young adults and adults focusing exclusively on the dangers of tobacco usage and secondhand smoke exposure.

Shirley Simon organized an annual 'Injustice' event on the campus of Southern University at New Orleans on October 17th. Simon, along with her presenter, Mrs. Elizabeth Fletcher, discussed human trafficking and the tobacco industry. The most notable information from this event

was the knowledge about tobacco giant, Phillip Morris, admitting to utilizing child workers in tobacco farms. Due to this type of work, young children were exposed to a rare life-threatening yet painful condition called Green Tobacco Sickness.

Frankie Poland joined with Beacon Light Baptist Church during their 'Pink at the Rink' Skating Party in observance of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. In conversations with the group, one of the gentlemen shared his experiences with secondhand smoke at his workplace with Poland. He discussed his difficulty in breathing and attempts to convince fellow co-workers to reduce their smoking because of the harmful consequences it presents to others. Poland provided him with secondhand smoke literature that conveys his message in greater detail and encouraged him to further educate his colleagues concerning the negative consequences of

secondhand smoke.



Pink at the Rink

Shawntell Lewis-Harrell continues to make a difference in Central Louisiana through policy adaptation and implementation as part of the CoC Network 100% Tobacco-Free Church Initiative. Effective Sunday, October 14th, the use of any and all tobacco products during church functions at the Berea Missionary Baptist Church in Alexandria was prohibited.



Berea Policy

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Harrell educated members of the congregation and community on the dangers of tobacco usage, secondhand smoke and provided cessation information to those interested in kicking their nicotine addiction. As a result of the information received, Rev. Leroy H. Johnson, Jr. and his congregation are now tobacco-free.

LaTonya Owens was asked to attend and participate in the 'Fall Harvest Health Fair' at "The Arbor and The Terrace" in Ruston. Several participants shared their stories surrounding the issue of tobacco with Owens. Many participants were smokers and family members and/or friends of current smokers, who shared concerns about the dangerous impact of tobacco upon their lives.

Owens discussed possible life-saving information with attendees, one-on-one. Following her conversations, Owens distributed literature on strategies that could assist in cessation efforts for smokers and their loved ones. Throughout the event, Owens and CoC Network were praised for tirelessly educating and impacting constituents concerning tobacco prevention and control.

SU Ag Center participates in Bossier City health fair

On October 13, Katherine Ervin, parent educator, Bossier Parish, participated in the Harvest Temple Church of God in Christ, Bossier City's first Health Fair themed "Spiritual and Physical Health Awareness for the Community." Support came from many health organizations, with services provided by a team of doctors and nurses from LSU Medical Center, Willis Knighton Medical Center, Martin Luther King Health Unit and a host of others including Southern University Ag Center.



Participants visit SU Ag Center booth at health fair



Visitors at SU Ag Center booth carry backpacks with information and goodies

More than 75 Youth and adults from the community visited the Southern Ag Center booth, where they received information from Ervin on healthy eating, and physical activity. They were motivated and encouraged to develop healthy eating habits early in life. The youth received Southern Ag Center backpacks with relevant information for healthy living.

SU Ag Center, 100 Black Men hold “Above the Influence” summit

More than twenty Capital High Academy students participated in the “Above The Influence” (ATI) Summit. The three-day summit was the result of a partnership between Southern University Ag Center and 100 Black Men of Metro Baton Rouge, Ltd.

On Monday, October 15, ATI participants from Capital High took part in a closed door “Influence discussion” where the teens engaged in an intimate conversation about their thoughts and perspectives on the topic of influence. On Tuesday, the ATI participants took part in “Tag it” at Cortana Mall in Baton Rouge, La. “Tag it” is an official ATI activity designed to increase teens’ awareness of influence in their environment, and how influence may prompt teenagers to make decisions.

On the final day of ATI week, an open panel discussion was held on the influences that affect teenagers and how they play a role in their daily lives. The teenagers gave everyone in attendance a glimpse of their personal lives and how they handle positive and negative influences.

“It’s okay to be above the influence,” said Lorenzo Harris. “It’s okay to talk to your peers because they’re going through the same thing.” The majority of the teenagers in attendance echoed that same sentiment. “What I learned from ATI is that I’m not the only one going through problems,” said

Antonio Davis. Shaquille Dillon, President of the Collegiate 100 Black Men, Southern University Chapter, expressed that there is pressure in college as well. “There’s peer pressure in college too, you have to look at it from a broad standpoint,” he said.



Dr. Adell Brown, President of 100 Black Men addresses teens at summit



Teens discuss issues at summit

Because of ATI, the participants said they feel more empowered and better equipped to be young leaders in their communities. “After today I’ll be a great leader because of ATI,” said Keandra Thomas. “The experience has changed me and now I can be better.” ATI has given Capital High

Academy students an opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns, about important issues that are often overlooked by adults according to the teenagers.

Parents and adults in the audience expressed their concerns as well. “Maybe your parents have that same mentality and want the best for you because they know your full potential,” said Jana Snowden, in response to panelist John Brumfield’s comment about how he is protective of his younger sister and tries to steer her away from the negative influences in high school.

ATI gave the participants an arena to express themselves openly and freely, without judgment or punishment, something that many of them have never experienced before.

“Sometimes we need someone to talk to or someone to just listen,” said Sundae Brumfield. “Look at it from our point of view.”

The National Above the Influence campaign aims to provide new ways to engage youth in dialogue about both positive and negative influences in their lives and to empower them to make healthy decisions.

Charisma Deberry, Research Associate-Program Development and Kelli Palmer, graduate research associate coordinated the ATI activities.

CRSBD staff attend microenterprise development institute

Center for Rural and Small Business Development staff members, LaKeeshia Giddens, E-Learning Center Program Director and Eual Hall, Business Outreach Specialist, attended an Operation JumpStart (OJS) Institute in Ridgeland, Mississippi, September 27-28.



Participants at OJS Institute

Operation JumpStart is an award-winning, hands-on, microenterprise development program that partners with organizations seeking to assist aspiring entrepreneurs.

The training included an overview of the materials available to Operation JumpStart affiliates to assist agencies in delivering in-depth training to current and potential small business owners. The training also discussed the procedures of facilitating business development trainings that can be used to hone the skills of entrepreneurs.

Hall and Giddens will provide Operation JumpStart Project Coordi-

nator Jessica Clayton with an implementation plan within 60 days of the training to receive OJS certification. The CRSBD staff will teach one full program and provide copies of the program evaluation to Mrs. Clayton within a year of the training to receive full certification as an affiliate of the institute.

The CRSBD staff will continue to participate in professional development training programs that will assist them in delivering the latest training techniques to current and potential small business owners in rural communities.

CRSBD Technology Specialist holds one-on-one training with small business owner

Center for Rural and Small Business Development Bisnet Technology Specialist Wilbert Harris traveled to Wilson, Louisiana, on Thursday, October 4 to conduct a site visit and one-on-one training session with John Sanders, pastor of Second Baptist Church of Wilson and owner of a trucking company. Mr. Harris trained Pastor Sanders on Excel, QuickBooks and operating the church's electric message board using the pastor's computer.

Mr. Harris also assisted Pastor Sanders in ordering a square card reader to enable him to accept credit card payments from his mobile phone. Having the square card reader will assist Pastor Sanders' business in processing payments quicker, allowing him to purchase another truck and hire additional staff.

Pastor Sanders and Mr. Harris also discussed launching a Facebook page and website for his

business to create a web presence and assist in the promotion of the business. The Center for Rural and Small Business Development will continue to provide training sessions for small business owners in rural communities.

CRSBD introduces E-Learning Center to the Town of White Castle

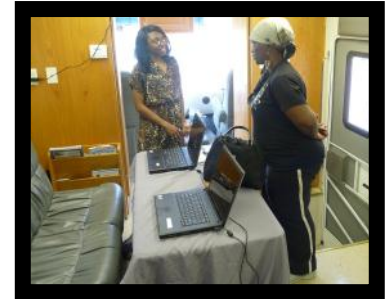
The E-Learning Center in the Center for Rural and Small Business Development was reintroduced to the Town of White Castle on Friday, October 5 during the community's annual White Castle High School Alumni Homecoming Week Activities.

E-Learning Center Program Director LaKeeshia Giddens and Business Outreach Specialist Eual Hall provided tours of the mobile E-Learning Center to interested potential and current small busi-

ness owners. Individuals also received one-on-one counseling, the CRSBD brochure, the registration forms and applications to legally register a business or non-profit organization, information on how to market a business, profit and loss statements, cash flow statements, and the USDA's 502 Home Buying and 504 Home Loan and Grant Programs.

The E-Learning Center will continue to work with the town's mayor and community leaders to

schedule business development workshops and training sessions within the city in the coming months.



Giddens, left, counsels a client on the E-Learning Center

CRSBD holds Intro to QuickBooks training for New Roads business

B&A Quick Mart, Inc. is a local staple for the New Roads community. The store has been a long time client of the Center to Rural and Small Business Development. In an effort to ensure the business continues to operate efficiently, one of the store's owners, Mr. Claiborne Ashford and his two sons, attended an Introduction to QuickBooks training session at the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center on Monday, October 8.



The Ashfords inside the store

The training, conducted by CRSBD Bisnet Technology Specialist Wilbert Harris, will enable the Ashfords to effectively track the store's expenses, income and tax information.

The CRSBD will continue to assist B & A Quick Mart, Inc. and other small businesses in Pointe Coupee Parish.

SU Ag Center hosts Partners for a Prosperous Louisiana Coalition

The Partners for a Prosperous Louisiana Coalition held their annual meeting at the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center on Wednesday, October 10.

The Center for Rural and Small Business Development, a partner of the coalition arranged for the meeting to be held at the Ag Center. The meeting updated the partners on the hiring of a coordinator to run the coalition and the progress it has made, future plans for the organization, the coalition's policy agenda, Louisiana Asset Scans, the development of a web-

site for the coalition and the upcoming Southern Regional Asset-Building Coalition Conference in Choctaw, MS, October 30 – November 2, 2012.



Attendees at coalition meeting

The coalition was formed by the Federation of Southern Cooperatives through a grant from the Ford Foundation to develop policy that impacts communities of color as it relates to asset building. The CRSBD will continue serving as a partner of the coalition and provide business development training and assistance in an effort to support rural citizens of color in gaining assets for themselves and their families.

CRSBD holds additional Home Ownership Assistance Seminar in Roseland

Eual Hall, Outreach Business Specialist in the Center for Rural and Small Business Development conducted a Home Ownership Assistance Follow-Up Seminar at the Town Hall in Roseland, Louisiana on Thursday, October 18.

During the seminar, Hall discussed the USDA's 502 Home Buying and 504 Home Loan and Grant Programs and eligibility requirements. He also assisted several of the seminar attendees with completing the application process.



Hall, left, speaks at seminar

This workshop has been repeated several times because of the dire need for housing assistance within the area. The Center for Rural and Small Business Development will continue to work to assist rural citizens in gaining assets for themselves and their families.

CRSBD participates in Agri-Business workshop

Center for Rural and Small Business Development Director Gloria London and Business Outreach Specialist Eual Hall participated in an Agri-Business Workshop hosted by the Magnolia Business Alliance and the Louisiana Association of Cooperatives.

The workshop, which was held on Oct. 24 at the Southwest Center for Rural Initiatives in Opelousas, La, featured sessions on topics such as organic no-till production, food system assessments: community-based assessments, farmscaping for pest and wildlife management, the importance of small farms and a networking session.

SU Ag Center Staff Attend National Evaluation Conference in Minneapolis

The American Evaluation Association (AEA) held its 26th Annual Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota, October 24-27, 2012. The AEA is the parent association of all evaluation associations in North America. The conference targeted evaluation professional all over the world which include private practitioners, and evaluation personnel from industries, non-profit organizations, governments, educators, advocacy groups, international NGOs, etc. The theme of the 2012 conference was “Evaluation in Complex Ecologies Relationships, Responsibilities, Relevance.” This conference is truly crucial to the United States Department of Agriculture/National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA/NIFA) which has made it mandatory for actual evaluation plans and reports to be included in progress reports effective FY 2011. This way, USDA/NIFA ensures that resources utilized for research, extension, and teaching have value-adding im-

pacts and can consistently be measured. Before the conference, several pre-conference workshops were held for two days and conducted by experienced professionals and practitioners including personnel from the National Science Foundation, Center for Disease Control, published academicians, and mega evaluation corporations such as Westat and Battelle.

According to AEA statistics, more 2,800 registered for the 2012 conference. International registration was also high. It was exciting to meet new colleagues from near and far and to see efforts in international outreach coming to fruition. SU Ag Center’s Oscar Udoh, coordinator for planning and evaluation and Bridget Udoh, communications specialist attended and participated in the conference in Minneapolis. Approximately 1,000 sessions were held relating to evaluation and measuring outcomes/impacts in extension and

research. Several sessions also dealt with issues such as, the value of evaluation input for strategic planning in research and extension, evaluation capacity-building, valuing extension impacts in community well-being, cultural competence in evaluation, measuring student achievement.

Other presenters shared their knowledge on best practices on subjects relating to international evaluation, impact reporting, networking for effective performance measurement, management in the midst of dwindling resources, diversity and building to ensure evaluation cultural competence using AEA guiding principles.

The most fulfilling event at the conference was that the 2012 president of AEA, Rodney Hopson is African American.

FACULTY AND STAFF ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Linda Batiste, director of finance at the SU Ag Center received an award for her service as state treasurer and executive council member for 3 years. Batiste was recognized with Outstanding Officers award during the 30th annual Louisiana Association for Developmental Education (LADE) conference held in Alexandria, LA on Oct 24 - 26, 2012,

LADE is a state organization whose purpose is to promote developmental education throughout the state through college and university partnerships.



Ms. Batiste with awards

LADE affiliates include Baton Rouge Community College; Bossier Parish Community College; Delgado Community College; Grambling State University; Louisiana College; Louisiana Delta

Community College; Louisiana State University at Alexandria; Louisiana State University – Baton Rouge; Louisiana State University – Eunice; Louisiana State University of New Orleans; Louisiana State University – Shreveport; Nicholls State University; Nunez Community College; McNeese State University; Southeastern Louisiana University; Southern University of Baton Rouge; Southern University at New Orleans; Southern University at Shreveport; and University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec 4, 11, 18 : Second Chance training, 1pm – 3pm at the East Baton Rouge Parish Prison. For further details, please contact Tiffany Franklin at (225) 771-2775 or tiffany_franklin@suagcenter.com

December 1 – 5: Session 6 Small Farmer Ag Leadership Institute, PAWC / Tuskegee, AL, Contact Dawn Melion_Patin at 225-771-3532.

January 8, 15, 22, 29: Second Chance training, 1pm – 3pm at the East Baton Rouge Parish Prison. For further details, please contact Tiffany Franklin at (225) 771-2775 or tiffany_franklin@suagcenter.com

February 28-3/1/2013: 70th annual livestock show. For further details, please contact Christie Monroe at 225-771-4350 or via email at christie_monroe@suagcenter.com