ARKANSAS LAND AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (ALCDC)

NOVEMBER 2026

ADVANCER

NEWSLETTER

TALK OF THE LAND *SPOTLIGHT*

Meet **ROGER SMITH** – who shares agricultural knowledge, experience, and encouragement to help cultivate the next generation of farmers.



The greatest harvest is not always measured in bushels or acres.

Sometimes, it is measured by the knowledge we share, the opportunities we create, and the lives we help change.

Through mentorship, Roger Smith helps plant the seeds of opportunity that can grow into a stronger and more sustainable agricultural future for Arkansas.



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CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Dear Members, Partners, Conference Participants, and Friends:

Message from the Board Chairman

"Thank you for supporting our 46th Annual Youth Day, Annual Conference, and Membership Meeting."

Dr. Brian Cornelious, Board Chairman



On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation (ALCDC), I extend my appreciation to everyone who attended and participated in our **46th Annual Conference and Membership Meeting, held October 29–30, 2026, at the Brinkley Convention Center in Brinkley, Arkansas.**

Your presence, participation, and continued support contributed to the success of this year's gathering. We are deeply grateful that you took time from your busy schedules to join us for two days of learning, fellowship, meaningful discussions, and opportunities to strengthen the communities we serve. This year's conference theme, **"Sowing Seeds of Rural and Urban Community Heritage: Rooted in Resource Opportunities for Prosperity,"** reminded us that the seeds we plant today through education, leadership, partnerships, and service will help shape the future of our communities for generations to come.

Our **Annual Youth Day**, which took place Thursday, October 29th, was especially meaningful as we witnessed the enthusiasm, talent, and potential of our young people. Their participation reminded us that investing in youth is one of the greatest investments we can make in the future of our communities. We sincerely thank the students, educators, parents, presenters, and volunteers who helped make this day an enriching and memorable experience. Likewise, our Farming, Housing, and Economic Development Day (Day II) provided valuable opportunities to exchange ideas, share resources, celebrate accomplishments, and strengthen partnerships. Through discussions that focused on farming, housing, conservation, and economic development, we reaffirmed our shared commitment to creating opportunities that improve lives and promote sustainable growth throughout Arkansas.

We extend special appreciation to our distinguished speakers, workshop presenters, community partners, sponsors, award recipients, members, and dedicated volunteers. Your knowledge, generosity, leadership, and willingness to serve helped make this year's conference both informative and inspiring.

Although our conference has concluded, **the work of strengthening our communities continues.** We encourage you to carry forward the knowledge gained, the relationships established, and the inspiration shared during our time together. Let us continue working collaboratively to turn opportunities into meaningful and lasting progress.

Once again, thank you for your participation, your partnership, and your continued commitment to the mission of the Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation.

Together, we are not simply celebrating our heritage; we are planting seeds of opportunity, cultivating hope, and building a legacy of prosperity for future generations.

With profound thanks,

Dr. Brian Cornelious

Board Chairman, ALFDC & ALCDC

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Conference Participant:

Message from the President and CEO

"Thank you for your participation, continued support, and valued partnership with ALFDC and ALCDC."

Dr. Calvin R. King, President/CEO



On behalf of the Arkansas Land and Farm Development Corporation (ALFDC) and the Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation (ALCDC), I extend my sincere appreciation to everyone who participated in our **46th Annual Conference and Membership Meeting, scheduled October 29-30, 2026**. Your presence, engagement, and continued support contributed greatly to the success of this important gathering and reaffirmed our shared commitment to strengthening farms, families, and communities throughout Arkansas.

Our conference theme, **"Sowing Seeds of Rural and Urban Community Heritage: Rooted in Resource Opportunities for Prosperity,"** served as a meaningful reminder that lasting progress is built upon the foundation of our heritage, strengthened through partnerships, and sustained by opportunities for growth and prosperity. Through the exchange of ideas, shared experiences, and meaningful discussions, we reinforced the importance of working together to create stronger, more resilient communities.

I extend special appreciation to our members, farmers, youth participants, distinguished speakers, workshop presenters, community partners, and supporters who generously shared their time, knowledge, and expertise. I am equally grateful to our dedicated staff and volunteers, whose hard work and commitment were instrumental in making this year's conference a success. Your collective contributions reflect the spirit of service, collaboration, and dedication that continues to advance our mission.

As we reflect on the accomplishments of this year's conference, let us also look toward the opportunities ahead. I encourage each of you to remain engaged, build upon the relationships established, explore the valuable resources shared, and carry the knowledge gained back to your farms, families, neighborhoods, and organizations. Together, we can continue cultivating meaningful partnerships, preserving our rich heritage, expanding access to resources, and creating pathways to prosperity for present and future generations.

Although our 46th Annual Conference has concluded, **our commitment to strengthening communities, expanding opportunities, and improving the quality of life for those we serve continues.** The relationships we have strengthened and the opportunities we have identified provide a foundation for the important work that lies ahead.

Once again, thank you for your participation, continued support, and valued partnership with the Arkansas Land and Farm Development Corporation and the Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation. It is both an honor and a privilege to serve alongside individuals and organizations who share our vision for stronger, thriving communities throughout Arkansas.

With sincere appreciation,

Dr. Calvin R. King, Sr.

President/CEO, ALFDC & ALCDC

Talk of the Land

Roger Smith: A Legacy of Farming, Mentorship, and Conservation



A Farming Legacy Rooted in Family and Community

Roger Smith — "I was three years old, sitting on the fender of a tractor with my uncle," Roger Smith recalls, describing the moment that sparked his interest in farming.

For Arkansas farmer Roger Smith, agriculture is more than a career. It is a cherished family legacy rooted in generations of hard work, perseverance, and dedication to the land.

Smith proudly refers to his family's historic farmland as "homebase." The property was originally purchased by his great-great-grandmother, Idella Cantrell. The farm family initially consisted of 80 acres. Over time, the family sold half of the property to preserve the remainder. The remaining 40 acres have stayed in the family and were farmed by previous generations, including Smith's grandfather, Nelson Terry and his uncle, Larry Terry.

Smith took over management of the land in 2011, carrying on a cherished family legacy that spans generations.

After years of leasing acreage, Smith hit a major milestone four years ago by purchasing his first piece of farmland—an achievement that has filled him with immense gratitude.

Today, Smith operates approximately 2000 acres across Lee, Monroe, and Phillips counties, producing corn, soybeans, rice, and wheat. The journey represents a deep commitment to agricultural sustainability.

Planting the Seeds of Opportunity Through Agricultural Education

Smith's journey began at an early age and continued through his involvement in Future Farmers of America (FFA) and the Arkansas Land and Farm Development Corporation's (ALFDC) Youth Program. Through these experiences, he gained hands-on training, leadership skills, and exposure to opportunities with the farming industry. After graduating from High School, Smith attended East Arkansas Community College (EACC) and later worked alongside an experienced local farmer, gaining practical knowledge of agricultural operation and farm management. These early experiences helped reinforced his belief in the importance of farming and mentorship.



Giving Back Through Mentorship

When asked about mentoring others, Smith said he is always willing to help anyone interested in agriculture. He believes opportunities to learn from experienced producers and connect with agricultural experts are especially important for beginning farmers who may be uncertain about whether farming is a sustainable career path.

His advice to young producers looking to enter the farming industry is simple: build relationships, be patient, and take advantage of every opportunity to learn.

Talk of the Land Continued

Building Stronger Farms Through Conservation Partnerships

Smith emphasizes that the benefits of USDA-NRCS conservation programs extend far beyond financial assistance. Through initiatives such as the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), farmers gain access to technical expertise, research-based recommendations, and opportunities to exchange knowledge with conservation professionals and fellow agricultural producers.

Working closely with NRCS conservationists and local county extension offices, Smith has received valuable technical guidance to implement conservation measures that support his farming operation.

Strengthening the Future of Arkansas Agriculture

As Arkansas looks toward the future of agriculture, mentorship remains an important way to strengthen farming communities and encourage the next generation.

> ***"The greatest harvest is not always measured in bushels or acres. Sometimes, it is measured by the knowledge we share, the opportunities we create, and the lives we help change."***

Through mentorship, experienced farmers, like Roger, help plant the seeds of opportunity that can grow into a stronger and more sustainable agricultural future for Arkansas.







ANNUAL CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Strong Youth Participation: Over 200 Youth Registered for Annual Youth Day



46TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE CELEBRATES YOUTH LEADERSHIP, COMMUNITY HERITAGE, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROSPERITY

The Arkansas Land and Farm Development Corporation's 46th Annual Conference, hosted by the Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation, was held October 29–30, 2026, at the Brinkley Convention Center in Brinkley, Arkansas. Drawing participants from across the state, the conference placed a strong emphasis on youth leadership, community heritage, and expanding opportunities for rural and urban prosperity.

Thursday's Annual Youth Day placed young participants at the forefront, highlighting the importance of developing the next generation of leaders. A featured event was the Youth Leadership Oratorical Competition, which provided young people with an opportunity to demonstrate their public speaking skills, express their perspectives, and build confidence as future leaders. The competition showcased the voices and talents of youth while reinforcing the conference's commitment to preserving community heritage and creating pathways to future success.



Students Eagerly Arrive to Celebrate ALFDC & ALCDC Annual Youth Day



1st Place Oratorical Winner

Malik Thompson
Delta Preparatory–Helena
Topic: Academic Pressure, Learning Gaps & Equity Issues



2nd Place Oratorical Winner

Za'Miya Johnson
Delta Preparatory–Blytheville
Topic: Bullying and Cyberbullying



3rd Place Oratorical Winner

Ky'Len Eggerson
Lee High School (Lee County)
Topic: Mental Health and Wellness

ANNUAL CONFERENCE CONTINUED

The Youth Day program also featured an Education Symposium, providing students with valuable information about college and university degree programs, career pathways, and educational resources. The symposium emphasized the importance of education, career readiness, and preparing young people to take advantage of opportunities that contribute to their personal growth and the long-term prosperity of their communities.



College representatives from EACC, Philander Smith, UALR, UAPB, and Pulaski Technical College

Youth Day Luncheon Speaker Ms. Angelee Word, a representative of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) in Marianna, Arkansas, highlighted the conference theme and its connection to youth leadership, community heritage, and future opportunities. Her presentation reinforced the importance of investing in the next generation and connecting young people to valuable resources.

YOUTH PARTICIPANTS



Annual Youth Day Captured in Photos



Oratorical Judges



Annual Youth Day Luncheon



ANNUAL CONFERENCE CONTINUED

Day Two Turns to Land, Housing, and Economic Resources

Friday's opening session featured Dr. Ronald Broussard, Pastor of Mount Calvary Missionary Baptist Church in Marianna, Arkansas, who served as the morning speaker. His address set the stage for a day of informative workshops focused on farming, housing, business development, and community economic growth.

Throughout the day, workshop sessions provided participants with valuable information on programs, services, and resources designed to address challenges and expand opportunities for individuals, families, farmers, and communities throughout Arkansas.

Presentations addressed important topics such as heirs' property, housing opportunities, USDA conservation programs, and available financial assistance. Additional sessions explored financing opportunities for beginning farmers and micro-urban farmers, along with business financing, marketing strategies, and resources to support entrepreneurship and economic development.

Together, these workshops brought the conference theme, ***"Sowing Seeds of Rural and Urban Community Heritage: Rooted in Resource Opportunities for Prosperity,"*** to life by connecting participants with practical information and resources to help them make informed decisions, ovecrome barriers, and pursue opportunities for growth.



Rev Broussard delivers the Morning Inspirational Message. Below. **Jacqueline Davis-Slay** gives the Annual Luncheon Address.





ANNUAL CONFERENCE CONTINUED

ALFDC & ALCDC Award Ceremony

The Annual Luncheon celebrated the extraordinary contributions of unsung heroes whose lifetime achievements, dedicated service, and valued partnerships have made a lasting impact on rural communities. Recognized as true **"power players" in community service and development**, these distinguished honorees were celebrated for their unwavering commitment to preserving community heritage, expanding opportunities, and strengthening the lives of individuals and families. Their remarkable contributions embody the spirit of our conference theme, **"Sowing Seeds of Rural and Urban Community Heritage: Rooted in Resource Opportunities for Prosperity."**



BEATRICE SHELBY

Recognized for her outstanding leadership, dedicated service, and continued commitment to strengthening families and communities in Arkansas.



CHRISTINE SMITH

Honored for her exceptional leadership, service, and commitment to improving the quality of life for others.



SAMELLA WHITE

Recognized for her longstanding dedication, community service, and positive impact on individuals and families throughout Arkansas.



BELINDA MONDY & RADIO

Honored for their leadership, communication, and continued efforts to inform, educate and empower communities across the state.



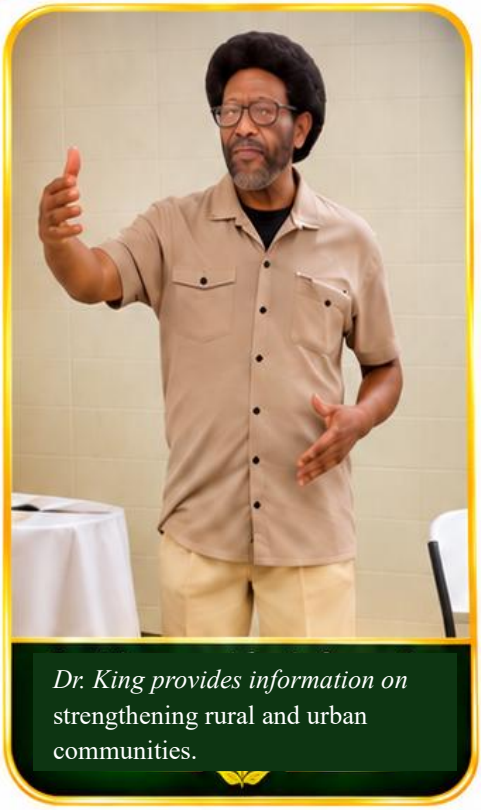
ATTORNEY MICHAEL JACKSON

Recognized for his professional excellence, legal expertise, dedication to protecting rights, and expanding economic community development in underseved communities.



ATTORNEY CLEVON YOUNG

Honored for his legal leadership, advocacy, and ongoing commitment to community growth, economic opportunity, and the well-being of Arkansas.



Dr. King provides information on strengthening rural and urban communities.

Empowering Growers and Producers: Small & Urban Agriculture Initiatives Workshop

Connecting Farmers, Landowners, and Communities to Resources for Economic Growth and Prosperity (October 01, 2026)



By Staff Writer

Lake View Cafeteria, Helena, AR- The Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation (ALCDC) hosted an informative workshop that focused on empowering small and urban farmers, growers, producers, and landowners by connecting them with valuable agricultural resources, technical assistance, and economic development opportunities.

The workshop brought together representatives from the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), USDA Rural Development, and the Arkansas Department of Agriculture to highlight programs supporting farm ownership, agricultural financing, conservation practices, housing, and rural business development.

Participants gained valuable insight into farm loans, financial assistance, conservation incentives, heirs' property challenges, and emerging agricultural technologies. The workshop also emphasized the importance of partnerships in helping historically underserved communities overcome barriers to resources and build sustainable agricultural enterprises.

Through education, collaboration, and access to resources, ALCDC continues its commitment to empowering farmers, preserving family land, strengthening rural and urban communities, and sowing seeds of opportunity for lasting economic prosperity.

CONSERVATION AND THANKSGIVING

A HARVEST OF GRATITUDE: Giving Thanks for the Land and Preserving Our Future



By Staff writer

As families across Arkansas gather around the table this Thanksgiving, we are reminded that the blessings of the harvest begin long before the meal is served. Behind every dish are the dedicated farmers, ranchers, and landowners who spend their lives cultivating the soil and protecting the natural resources that sustain us all. Thanksgiving is more than a celebration of abundance; it is a call to reflect on our responsibility to the earth.

For the **Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation (ALCDC)**, this season carries a profound truth: honoring the land today is the greatest way to secure prosperity for future generations.

Stewardship: Protecting the Soil That Sustains Us

Arkansas is defined by its fertile fields, abundant waters, and vibrant forests—resources that drive our agricultural heritage and economic vitality.

Yet this natural wealth demands active stewardship. By implementing vital conservation practices—such as cover cropping, rotational grazing, and strategic water management—local producers maintain high yields while safeguarding the environment. These efforts do more than support ecological health; they anchor the economic survival of our rural towns.

Through targeted outreach and strategic partnerships, including our collaboration with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), ALCDC bridges the gap between historical disparities and future sustainability.

We ensure that critical conservation tools and resources reach the hands of farmers and landowners who need them most, particularly within historically underserved communities.

Preserving Our Heritage, Securing Our Legacy

For many Arkansans, land is far more than an economic asset. It is a living testament to family sacrifice, a vehicle for generational wealth, and the bedrock of community identity. Protecting family farmland means honoring the legacy of those who walked these fields before us, while clearing a path for those who will follow.

True conservation doesn't just protect acres; it sustains families. So, this Thanksgiving, as we give thanks for the harvest, let us renew our promise to protect our soil, conserve our water, and shield family farms from loss.

From our family to yours, ALCDC wishes you a safe, blessed, and Happy Thanksgiving!

More Annual Youth Day Photos









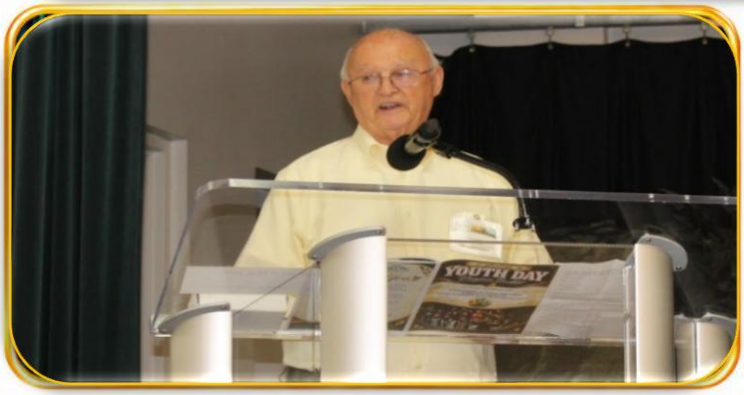






MORE ANNUAL YOUTH DAY PHOTOS













CONFERENCE DAY 2 IN PHOTOS













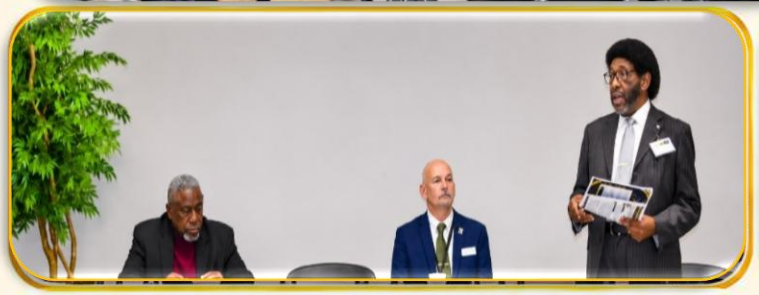




DAY 2 NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES AND WORKSHOPS











THANK YOU FOR CELEBRATING WITH US!

Greatness is not measured by what we have, but by how we give, serve, and empower the lives of others.



ALCDC
ARKANSAS LAND & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
People • Land • Housing • Stronger Communities

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ABOUT THE *ADVANCER*

The Advancer is a publication of the Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation (ALCDC) printed quarterly and circulated as a public service and communication resources for our membership and constituents. The Advancer publication reaches a broad range of organizations and residents throughout the Delta and the United States.

The Advancer reflects the nature of our work-supplying self-help opportunities and support services to our farmers and others of limited Resources in our forty-two (42) county service area. ALCDC is committed to helping people become more productive and self-sufficient. We appreciate your comments and suggestions. Direct all comments and inquiries about this publication by phone to (870) 734-3005 or e-mail us at alcdc1934@yahoo.com.

To update your mailing address, contact Mary Harris at (870) 734-3005.

ALCDC *MISSION*



The mission of ALCDC is to supply advocacy outreach, technical aid, and training to limited Resources small farmers and all rural residents to alleviate poverty, enhance sustainable farming and strengthen communities' economic sustainability and workforce readiness.

ALCDC services and programs are available without regard to age, race, religion, gender, or physical handicap.

For Additional Information
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www.arlcdc.org