2014 ACDS Awards

First, a HUGE thank you to all who made nominations. Without your time we wouldn’t be able to recognize these very worthwhile endeavors!
Our Committee

And thank you, also, to our committee members who gave of their time to review, ponder and select the nominations to be honored today:

Pam Alexander
Whitney Horton
Monieca West
Innovative Community Development Program/Project Award

• **Purpose:** to recognize innovative and successful community development programs and projects taking place in Arkansas communities. A community may be a city, county, neighborhood, region, or may encompass the entire state. Nominations will be grouped according to population and evaluated with similarly sized communities.
Innovative Community Development Program/Project

It’s amazing what “small” towns can accomplish! Today we will be recognizing three communities who put their best community development efforts forward and, yes, they’re all considered small towns (populations under 20,000) but each very very deserving.
College of the Ouachitas: “Men on a Mission”

Men On a Mission is a community based project initiated by the College of the Ouachitas in Malvern. College data showed that completion rates of males, particularly African American males, was unacceptable. Billy Francis, director of the Career Pathways Initiative, believed that if these men were engaged in an on-campus activity, they were more likely to stay enrolled and get a degree.

The project is about more than just helping these men stay in school. It’s about connecting them to their children, connecting them to community resources when needed, and teaching them life skills while in college that are taught and modeled for the next generation. It is about teaching responsibility but in a supportive way. Billy received a phone call from police lock up late one night from one of the men. Billy went to the jail, not to get him out of the bind but to see that the young man learned from his mistake and to encourage him to come back to school and to the group when he got out.
Mountain Home Education Foundation

When industry in Mountain Home pointed out that they were running out of workforce and needed help, the leadership of Arkansas State University at Mountain Home spearheaded a community initiative that led to the opening of a technical center where technical programs would be taught that addressed the specific workforce needs of the region. These programs are in the areas of automotive, heat and air, mechatronics and welding.

With the opening of the technical center, the Mountain Home Education Foundation recognized that incentives were needed to encourage students to pursue these trades and enroll in postsecondary education. They recognized that there were many students who were not interested in conventional educational methods, that there were lots of hands-on learners that would greatly benefit from a college credential coupled with an industry certification.

The unique aspect of this project is not the fact that scholarships are awarded by an educational foundation. What is innovative is that these scholarships are not grade point driven and are restricted to students pursuing the technical and skilled trades that local industry has a need for. One local banker noted that the program is “reaching students that we’ve been trying to reach for years.”
City of El Dorado

The City of El Dorado has a rich history as an oil “boom-town” of the 1920s. As prosperity came to the rural community, the downtown retail area manifested itself in a rich urban fabric. Most of the buildings constructed during the boom remain today. Today, the downtown core represents not only the physical heart of the City, but its historical heart as well.

The City of El Dorado undertook a large sidewalk project. This project consisted of installing new street lights, street signs, power and water sources to be used at festivals and events held downtown, new tree wells and trees. This project was administered by the City of El Dorado and State Highway from Federal Transportation.
New Professionals Award

- **Purpose:** To recognize and encourage community developers who are new to the field. In contrast to the Community Development Achievement Award which recognizes a larger body of work, this award seeks to identify those who have been involved for a shorter period of time (five years or fewer) but whose work has had impact.
2014 New Professional

Whitney works as a business consultant for the Arkansas Small Business and Technology Development Center at UALR. As such, she provides not just individualized consulting, but also training and market research to potential and current small business owners. She assists both new and seasoned business owners in many areas, such as starting a business, business planning, traditional and online marketing, and loan packaging, helping them become more well-rounded, knowledgeable and successful.

Whitney has been a leader and a doer from early years in high school from Mayor’s Youth Council to captain of the dance team and graduate of the North Little Rock Chamber of Commerce Leadership Renaissance program. This continued in college where she represented the LSU baseball team in community outreach and provided leadership to sorority fundraisers and community activities.
Friend of ACDS Award

- **Purpose**: This award is given in recognition of extraordinary service or support for ACDS or for the practice of community development.
Arkansas Heritage Sites

The word “Delta” evokes multiple impressions from Arkansans: cotton and rice fields, Elvis and Johnny Cash, mosquitos and catfish, wealth and poverty, civil rights as well as civil wrongs but we all recognize the area as a place with history as rich as its soil.

Life there can be challenging and people look to Arkansas State University in Jonesboro to make a difference in improving income and educational levels in the Arkansas Delta. This nomination describes how ASU is meeting this challenge while protecting and promoting its history and culture.

Community development on this scale can only be accomplished through the efforts of an enormous number of people and organizations but, to be successful, there has to be leadership. In this case, ASU has provided the leadership and vision that has resulted in numerous awards for heritage preservation, tourism, education, historical and cultural achievements. This nomination is to add community development to that list.