



# spotlight

## on community action

A Newsletter of the Southeastern Association of Community Action Agencies

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## The Economic Opportunity Act

In 1964, The Great Society, as envisioned by President Lyndon Johnson, was a sweeping plan to improve the lives of all Americans, regardless of their circumstances. Inspired by President Kennedy and his New Frontier, Johnson pledged to fulfill his promise of equal opportunity for all by enacting several comprehensive changes within the federal government. In August of that same year, the **Economic Opportunity Act** was signed into law by President Johnson creating the nationwide Community Action Network. There are now over 1000 Community Action Agencies throughout the United States and Puerto Rico in this coordinated effort to address the root effects of poverty and to, ultimately, move families and individuals to self-sufficiency.



President Johnson signing the EOA, August 1964

## "Win, Lose or Draw; The War on Poverty 50 Years Later"

Presidents have often used the declaration of "war" to signify their administration's intent to eradicate a social ill. President Reagan brought us the war on drugs, President Nixon brought us the war on crime, and 50 years ago President Johnson brought us the war on poverty. As many of us know the war on poverty gave birth to community action. It stands now as one of the most aggressive platforms against poverty in the history of this country, possibly second only to "The New Deal" of FDR. However, 50 years later, poverty is still with us. This brings forth the question for many, "Was the war on poverty lost?" Fortunately, we can dig deeper and provide an answer to that question.

A report released by the President's Council of Economic Advisers entitled "The War on Poverty 50 Years Later: A

Progress Report" sheds light on the progress we have made in the last 50 years. This report asserts that poverty rates have decreased by 1/3, down to a 50-year low of 16 percent in 2012 despite the Great Recession of the late 2000's. This has been achieved through antipoverty programs that have traditionally garnered rare bipartisan support such as; tax credits for low income families, food and nutrition assistance programs, and unemployment insurance. Additionally, program such as Pell Grants and Head Start have made education more accessible to low-income families than ever before<sup>1</sup>. Community action has been on the front lines of this fight from day one. Nearly, every president since President Johnson has attempted to limit the capacity of community action. Despite this, there are more than 900 commu-

nity action agencies serving low income communities across the country. These agencies overcome local, statewide, and national obstacles to fulfill their purpose with no signs of slowing<sup>2</sup>.

However, all is not well in the "Great Society". 13.4 million children in the United States are currently living in circumstances of poverty. Additionally, class mobility is at an all-time low, less than half of all low income people make it out of the lowest income quintile<sup>1</sup>, despite the wealth of programs that help people living in poverty maintain a respectable quality of life. So while we have come a very long way, we still have far to go before we achieve the "Great Society". ♦

<sup>1</sup>[http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/50th\\_anniversary\\_cea\\_report\\_-\\_final\\_post\\_embargo.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/50th_anniversary_cea_report_-_final_post_embargo.pdf)

<sup>2</sup><http://philanthropy.com/article/Community-Action-Groups/145195/>



# HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR Biloxi, Mississippi Trivia?

How well do you know the town of Biloxi, Mississippi? Here are some trivia facts to see if you know one of the Gulf Coast's oldest cities.

- Biloxi's population has been decreasing since Hurricane Katrina displaced many of its residents.
- Before Hurricane Katrina, Biloxi was Mississippi's third-largest city.
- After Hurricane Katrina, Hattiesburg is now Mississippi's third largest city.
- Biloxi lies on the Mississippi Sound.
- One nickname for Biloxi is Buck City.
- Biloxi's history spans more than 300 years.
- Biloxi was originally part of Old French Louisiana.
- In 1817, Mississippi was admitted to the US.
- One of the best-known features is the Biloxi Lighthouse that was built in Baltimore, Maryland and shipped in May 1848.
- During the early Civil War, Ship Island was captured by Union Forces who then captured Biloxi.
- Biloxi suffered no direct damage from the Union capture.
- After the Civil War, Biloxi became a vacation spot again.
- In 1881, the first cannery was established.
- The cannery business and seafood factories brought in many different groups from around the world, and diversified Biloxi's population.
- In World War II, the US built Keelser Air Force Base as a basic training site and a site for aircraft to be stored.
- In the 1940s, the casino industry began but it was still illegal at the time.
- The first gambling casino was Broadwater Beach Resort.
- Biloxi became known as the Poor Man's Riviera.
- In the 1960s, Biloxi became a prime destination of Northern travelers who sought an alternative to Florida.
- Biloxi brought in chefs from France and Switzerland to cater to its new Northern vacationers.
- In 1990, Mississippi made gambling legal, and Biloxi was transformed again.
- Biloxi became an important center for gambling casinos, and became a leading gambling center in the US.
- By 2000, the economy was based around gambling, gaming, seafood and tourism.
- Hurricane Katrina hit Biloxi on August 29, 2005 at 6:56 am.
- All the coastal churches in Biloxi were damaged by Hurricane Katrina.
- Katrina was worse than Hurricane Camille in 1969.
- Casinos were ripped off supports and thrown inland.
- Some casinos and barges landed on top of many antebellum and historic homes and completely crushed them. There was nothing to save of these homes and they were demolished. Old photographs were all that remained of these once majestic homes.
- Around 40 casinos have re-opened.
- There is a memorial to Katrina victims in Biloxi placed there by *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*.
- Biloxi is home to the Mississippi Surge, a minor league hockey team.
- Actress Jessica Alba is a native of Biloxi.
- Former President of the Confederacy Jefferson Davis lived and died in Biloxi. His home sustained much damage during Katrina. It has now been restored and a museum is being planned.
- Singer Jimmy Buffet is a native of Biloxi.
- Many John Grisham novels are set in Biloxi, including *Runaway Jury*, *The Summons*, *The Firm*, *The Partner*, and *The Last Juror*.
- Biloxi was referred to by F. Scott Fitzgerald in *The Great Gatsby*. ♦

Published by Val Hegwood

Val has published numerous articles in politics, the arts and travel across the Internet with a special emphasis in the Southern United States. View profile

<http://voices.yahoo.com/how-well-know-biloxi-mississippi-trivia-6870590.html>

# The Charm of Biloxi

Although its coast was devastated by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Mississippi remains an underrated beauty with much to offer. Founded in 1699 as the first settlement, in what was then French Louisiana, Biloxi, Mississippi is one of the oldest and most historic communities in the country. Enjoy the rich cultural blend and southern charm found in Biloxi that is associated with much of the Gulf Coast region of the United States.

## THINGS TO DO IN BILOXI

*Check out these Biloxi Attractions!*

**Biloxi Lighthouse** (at left) One of the first cast-iron lighthouses built in the South, the Biloxi Lighthouse is one of the city's most revered landmarks. If you want to tour the general area, you'll have to get there early; the city operates only three tours daily Monday through Saturday from 9 to 9:30 a.m. Admission starts at \$5 for adults but group tours are available by appointment only.

*More info:* Email Biloxi's museums office at [museums@biloxi.ms.us](mailto:museums@biloxi.ms.us) or call (228) 374-3105.

*Time to tour:* 1 - 2 hours

**Ship Island** About 12 miles off the coast of Biloxi, Ship Island is a popular daytrip for families. Once there, you can relax on the beach with its glistening white sands, or you can take a tour of the tactically located Fort Massachusetts, built to defend the coast following the War of 1812. You can catch a ferry at Gulfport's dock on Beach Boulevard for about \$24 round trip

*More info:* <http://www.msshipisland.com>

*Time to tour:* half day to full day

**Beauvoir** Beauvoir was the retirement home of Confederate President Jefferson Davis, and it's a must-see for Civil War enthusiasts. The main residence – a Louisiana-raised, cottage-style plantation with a smaller, single-room east cottage – has been lovingly cared for by the Mississippi Division of the Sons of the Confederate Veterans. The Beauvoir grounds are located right off of the city's beach on Biloxi Boulevard. The grounds are open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tours start at \$9,

*More info:* <http://www.beauvoir.org>

*Time to tour:* 1 - 2 hours



**Beau Rivage Resort and Casino** The Beau Rivage Resort and Casino is one of the ultimate stay-and-play resorts in Biloxi. It covers all of its bases, boasting of restaurants, bars, entertainment acts, a spa and salon, golfing and shopping on top of its 24-hour casino and hotel. If you plan on spending most of your time in the casino, sign up for the player program to get the best bang for your gambling buck.

*More info:* <http://www.beaurivage.com>

*Time to tour:* half day to full day



**Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art** If you're a fan of abstract art, you'll love the Ohr-O'Keefe Museum's modern ceramics and sculptures. There's a special focus on local artists, who create tradition-defying pieces like Richard Barthé's *Untitled (Tumbling Acrobat)* and Helene Fielder's collection of complexly textured stoneware. Open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children, between the ages of six and 17.

*More info:* <http://georgeohr.org>

*Time to tour:* 1 - 2 hours

[http://travel.usnews.com/Biloxi\\_MS/Things\\_To\\_Do/](http://travel.usnews.com/Biloxi_MS/Things_To_Do/).



# Encouraging “Dad-ness” In Tennessee

*Douglas-Cherokee Economic Authority, Inc.*

MORRISTOWN, TN - Dads matter! That’s the message of a program that helps fathers in East Tennessee. TEAM DAD assists low-income fathers to become self-sufficient and improve their parenting skills.

Program Director Richard Beaty says the goal is to give men tools to use so they can become what they all want to be – a great dad.

“Each dad is the most important man in the whole world to his children and has enormous influence on their lives,” says Beaty.

There is a need for dads to be more involved. One in three children is growing up without their biological father. Those children are more likely to be poor, drop out of school, and engage in risky behavior. On the other hand, when engaged, loving fathers are in the home, children are more likely to be successful according to Beaty.

TEAM DAD is part of Douglas-Cherokee Economic Authority, Inc., a community action agency located in Morristown, Tennessee, with over a dozen programs that help families living in poverty improve their lives by offering assistance and services they are not able to provide for themselves. Douglas-Cherokee serves six rural Appalachian counties in East Tennessee-Cocke, Grainger, Hamblen, Jefferson, Monroe and Sevier.

TEAM DAD helps men through job coaching, parenting classes from a guy’s perspective, and connecting men to community resources that address personal issues. The program co-hosts family events such as a Daddy-Daughter Hoe-Down and recognizes “Random Acts of Dad-ness” by rewarding men engaged in positive fatherhood in the community. Donated bicycles are given to participants without reliable transportation. Its free services are also offered to inmates in county jails. ♦



More information can be found at [www.teamdad.org](http://www.teamdad.org) or [www.facebook.com/TeamDAD.TN](https://www.facebook.com/TeamDAD.TN).

TEAM DAD is a Responsible Fatherhood project funded by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. Participation is voluntary and the services are available to all eligible persons, regardless of race, gender, disability, or religion.

## A Man, A Boy, And A Home

*Western Carolina Community Action Association, NC*

Ryan was “couch surfing” when his son, Ackee, came to live with him from another county, leaving an unstable situation with Ackee’s mother. Ryan worked part time at Pizza Hut. His earnings weren’t enough for him to provide a home and the basic essentials for his son. He knew he needed to take the responsibility of caring for his son as a single father. PLAN, a United Way funded program, and an enhancement of WCCA’s Self-Sufficiency program, empowered Ryan to help himself and his family. Basically, PLAN jump-starts families on the path to self-reliance by tackling dependency on all fronts and replacing powerlessness with the opportunity for a better future. Ryan’s story is a great example of how PLAN works.

In September of 2013, Ryan was referred to us through HELP, which is the homeless education linkages program in Hendersonville, NC. Ryan needed a place of his own in order for his son to flourish in school. He found a home in Etowah, which was perfect because

his son did not have to switch schools. Thanks to United Way funding of our PLAN (Preparing, Learning, Applying Now), WCCA assisted Ryan with the initial deposit, several months of rent, and electricity.

Ryan’s vehicle was very important in his efforts to become self-sustaining since he didn’t live near the public transit system. It was a long and trying struggle, with his car breaking down often. Through the PLAN program, WCCA provided gas cards and some car repairs. When Ryan received his tax refund, he bought a dependable car. Having reliable transportation was a huge financial relief for Ryan. To save on the cost of gas, Ryan decided to move closer to his job and other resources. Once again, WCCA assisted with the initial costs of the relocation. However, Ryan’s progress allows him to pay his own rent and utilities. Working with his caseworker at WCCA, Ryan searched tirelessly for a better paying, full-time job. He held

down two part-time jobs until he was given the opportunity to work full-time.

Through the careful guidance of his caseworker, Ryan learned how to manage his finances and maintain a budget. He leveraged his resources to increase his financial stability and self-reliance. Thanks to the support Ryan received through PLAN, a United Way funded program, Ryan is now working full-time and has a sustainable, stable home for his son. ♦

### SEACAA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

#### September 2014

##### 9 SEACAA Board of Directors

Beau Rivage Hotel  
875 Beach Boulevard  
Biloxi, MS 39530

##### 11 2014 SEACAA Awards Banquet Program

Beau Rivage Hotel  
Biloxi, MS

#### January 2015

##### 8 CAP Management & Leadership Training Conference

Marriott Harbor Beach  
Ft. Lauderdale FL

# Partnerships to Opportunity

For over 20 years, Hope Enterprise Corporation / Hope Credit Union (HOPE) have been working with partners to build pathways to economic security. In recent years, some of the more fruitful partnerships have included work with Community Action Agencies (CAA). The CAA mission of self-sufficiency and self-empowerment resonates deeply with HOPE's mission to provide access to high quality financial products and services in economically distressed areas.

For example, this year, the Hinds County Human Resource Agency (HCHRA) formed a relationship with HOPE to provide financial counseling to HCHRA clients. Through the partnership, HOPE team members visited job center sites twice a month to speak with job seekers about their financial needs. Once HCHRA clients were introduced to the HOPE team, many continued to work with the HOPE staff to establish and rebuild their credit. Others joined the credit union and took advantage of HOPE's Borrow and Save product that helps individuals improve their credit and save money for an emergency or future purchase.

Over the last four years, HOPE has also regularly attended orientation meetings held at the Gulf Coast Community Action Agency (GCCAA) in Mississippi. During the

*continued on page 6*



## War on Poverty Wall on Display at 2014 SEACAA Conference

"The war on poverty must be won in the field, in every private home, in every public office from the courthouse to the White House" President Lyndon Johnson, State of the Union, 1964

The War on Poverty Wall of Honor is a twenty-one feet long and ten feet high exhibit that personifies the greatness of the people who have served and who continue to serve in the War on Poverty.

This exhibit is shown at local, state, regional and national conferences around the country. You can receive a listing on the Wall of Honor and a medal of honor to be issued at the SEACAA Exhibit table. Register names of staff, board members, volunteers and elected officials with 10 years or more of service in the War on Poverty. The wall is a great way to commemorate our dedication to the war on poverty over the past 50 years. Please be sure to stop by The Wall during the conference as we commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of community action.

Website: [www.dawsoninstitute.com](http://www.dawsoninstitute.com)



*"When we give what we can and we give it with joy, we don't just renew the American tradition of giving we also renew ourselves."*

— Bill Clinton

## Second Annual Jimmie Samuel Day of Service: Book Drive for Gulf Coast Community Action Head Start Programs

GULFPORT, MS - As members of community action associations we have all dedicated our careers to the betterment of our communities. This year we will continue our tribute to SECAA visionary and purposeful leader, Jimmie Samuel to support future generations and fellow community action agencies. Jimmie Samuel was the former SECAA Vice-President and had served as Executive Director of Macon-Bibb county EOC, Inc. since 1986. His legacy will forever be that of a pillar of his community who touched thousands of lives and lived to provide opportunities for others.

As we gather this year, it is important that we make a collective effort to improve the Gulfport community. This year the Jimmie Samuel Day Of Service Project will be a book drive to collect pre- k children's books that will be donated to two local Head Start agencies. The Mississippi Head Start Association's (MHSA) mission is to provide the state's children and families with a range of individualized services in the areas of education, early childhood development, medical, dental, mental health, nutrition and parent involvement. MHSA embraces a set of core values which promotes wellness, respects families' cultures and diversity, and supports family empowerment and community development. Our goal is to collect 50 books to commemorate the 50th anniversary of community action. Please bring your books to registration table on the day of service and do your impact the community that is hosting our conference ♦

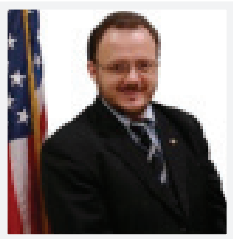




## President's Corner



The 2014 SEACAA Annual Conference is fast approaching. You should have been registered for the Annual Conference to be held Sept 10-13 at the Beau Rivage in Biloxi, MS. The theme is Community Action: Commemorating Community Action's 50th Anniversary. We look forward to seeing everyone in Mississippi!



*Ricky Baker*

SEACAA's mission is to strengthen the Community Action Agencies in Region IV. By providing technical support, training opportunities, and advocacy, SEACAA remains on the leading edge in providing support to the Community Action Agencies of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. If you know a way that SEACAA can help you or your state, please let us know how!

This year's conference will provide valuable training opportunities and several avenues to network with other professionals throughout the south east region.

The pre-conference workshop on the OMB Super Circular will provide access to the latest information regarding the new IRS regulations at a price that can't be matched. The Super Circular provides a new framework for managing federal grants and sub-grants so make plans to attend or send relevant staff.

I ask that if you have not officially joined SEACAA to do so soon. It has never been more important than now to have a unified voice in the Region IV. We must have our message heard and with the strength in numbers to make sure that it is not only heard but heeded as well. In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "There is power in numbers and there is power in unity." So join SEACAA today!

As is our promise, "Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live". See you in Biloxi!!!

**Ricky Baker**  
President, SEACAA

## SEACAA Executive Committee

President, Ricky L. Baker,  
Kentucky

Vice-President, William Holt,  
Florida

Secretary, Brenda L. Fox,  
Kentucky

Treasurer, Arnold Collins,  
South Carolina

Community Action Partnership, Paul Dole, CCAP,  
Kentucky

NCAF, Janice Riley, CCAP,  
Georgia

### Our Mission

*SEACAA exists as a professional organization that provides research and policy development resources, education and training to ensure progress toward the elimination of poverty and causes of poverty in the Southeast.*

*We focus particularly on serving our membership, which represents the interests, issues and concerns impacting the quality of life in communities.*

*We also link local, state, and national organizations in developing strategies, policies, and actions.*

*We believe that investing in improving the quality of life of citizens and communities through carefully planned programs and policies is a crucial investment in the nation's well being.*

## Congratulations! New CAP Officers Sworn in at CAP National Conference



## Partnerships from page 5

meetings, HOPE team members worked with CAA clients in both group and in a one on one setting to provide education and training on budgeting and financial management. Witnessing the success of the relationship first hand with their clients, employees of GCCAA have also become members of HOPE and use its financial products and services.

Since inception fifty years ago, Community Action Agencies have always played a central role in the creation of economic opportunity. As CAA's look ahead to the next 50 years, strategic partnerships like the ones established with HOPE remain essential to ensuring that low-income and low-wealth families have the necessary resources to thrive in today's society. ♦