



## **Delta Bridge Project announces \$90,000 grant to place summer interns with local organizations**

*Shepherd Delta Alliance partnership designed to build capacity of local community based organizations (CBOs) to engage in community development activities*

HELENA-WEST HELENA.—The Delta Bridge Project, a comprehensive community development initiative in Phillips County, has awarded a \$90,000, three-year grant for the Shepherd Delta Alliance partnership to place five summer interns with local non-profits and community based organizations, Circuit Judge Kathleen Bell, Chairwoman of the Delta Bridge Project Leadership Goal Team, announced today.

The Shepherd Delta Alliance, an initiative of Southern Financial Partners and The Shepherd Poverty Alliance, is designed to build the capacity of community based organizations (CBOs) in Phillips County to engage in meaningful community development activities while implementing pre-identified summer projects that utilize the extra manpower made possible by the interns.

The grant will support a three-year program in Phillips County with the goal of creating an endowment to make this intern initiative self sustaining in Phillips County. Participating organizations in this year's program are the Delta Area Health Education Center (AHEC); Boys, Girls, and Adults Community Development Center (BGACDC); Tri County Rural Health Network; Boys and Girls Club of Phillips County; and Mid-Delta Community Services.

“Improving the capacity of local community organizations to launch and sustain development initiatives is important to the success of the overall revitalization strategy of the region,” said Judge Bell, whose judicial district includes Cross, Lee, Monroe, Phillips, St. Francis, and Woodruff counties. “In the future, interns from Phillips County Community College of the University of Arkansas will be included in the project, providing excellent leadership development opportunities for local youth.”

Local CBOs interested in securing the services of summer interns in future years should develop a proposal that states how the interns will be used and specifies the types of projects with which interns would be involved. Interested organizations should contact Michael Boone with Southern Financial Partners and the Delta Bridge Project at (870) 816-1121.

The Shepherd Poverty Alliance is administered by the Shepherd Program for the Interdisciplinary Study of Poverty and Human Capability at Washington and Lee University in St. Louis. The Alliance currently has partnerships with more than 60 agencies in 11 states and the District of Columbia and approximately 60 student interns annually.

The goals of the Delta Bridge Project are outlined in the Phillips County Strategic Community Plan, which was developed by more than 300 Phillips County residents during an 18-month strategic planning process.

The Strategic Community Plan is a blueprint for community development with 46 strategic goals and nearly 200 action steps—workable plans of action that provide organized community engagement in a comprehensive process involving each of the five fundamental pillars of community life: economic development; housing; education; leadership development; and health care.

The Delta Bridge Project has achieved unprecedented success bringing projects to reality and leveraging a total \$59 million in investments to Phillips County since the first edition of the Strategic Community Plan was released in August 2005.

*The Delta Bridge Project is spearheaded by Southern Financial Partners, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit lender and community development organization founded in 1986. Southern Good Faith Fund, Southern Financial Partners, and Southern Community Development Corporation are affiliates of Southern Bancorp, a \$575 million rural development bank holding company with banking operations in Arkansas and Mississippi working to transform rural economies by stimulating investments in people, jobs, businesses, and property.*