

Black Belt Action Commission to Host Bed and Breakfast Ownership Seminar

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA, August 8, 2007. The Small Business Development Committee and the Marketing and Tourism Committee of the Black Belt Action Commission, in conjunction with the Perry County Chamber of Commerce and the Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel, have announced that they will sponsor an informative seminar on bed and breakfast ownership Thursday, September 20, 2007, from 9 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., at the depot in Marion (1200 Washington St.). The Commission, a task force spearheaded by Gov. Bob Riley, seeks to improve conditions in Alabama's Black Belt counties.

“The Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel has put a great deal of effort into promoting what the Black Belt has to offer,” says Sam Givhan, chair of the Small Business Development Committee. “But if we want people to visit the Black Belt, we need to be able to offer them a place to stay, so that's the idea behind the seminar. We hope to encourage people to consider opening a bed and breakfast in these counties, but we also want to give them a realistic idea of what that involves.” To that end, Givhan says, speakers at the seminar will include an attorney who will address liability issues, an accountant who will share information about potential tax breaks and how to make bed and breakfast ownership profitable, and a chef who will speak about food safety issues and health regulations. Realtors will present a slide show about available properties in the Black Belt that potentially could be turned into bed and breakfast establishments. Bed and breakfast owners will also be on hand to answer specific questions. The cost of the seminar is \$25 per person and includes lunch.

“We are very excited about this upcoming seminar and hope to attract people from all over the country who might be drawn to the beautiful homes and landscape of Alabama,” says Phyllis Kennedy, a member of the Small Business Development Committee. “It's my understanding that bed and breakfast ownership can make a very nice home an affordable investment, and we want to help people learn how to do that in the Black Belt.”

Those interested in attending the seminar should call 1-800-ALABAMA to register. The last day to register is September 14, 2007.

The Black Belt Action Commission was formed in 2004 to help improve the lives of citizens in the following counties: Bullock, Choctaw, Dallas, Greene, Hale, Lowndes, Macon, Marengo, Perry, Pickens, Sumter, and Wilcox. State Sen. Hank Sanders of Selma, Mayor Sheldon Day of Thomasville, and Margaret Bentley, Area Manager with Alabama Power Company, serve as co-chairs of the Black Belt Action Commission.