THE DSU DELTA CENTER FOR CULTURE AND LEARNING
Annual Report for July 2002 through June 2003
Submitted by Luther Brown, Director

Introduction to the Delta Center
The Center was founded in 2000, and given the mission "To promote the understanding of the history and culture of the Mississippi Delta and its significance to the rest of the world." Our web site is www.blueshighway.org.

The year reviewed in this document is the third year of existence for the Delta Center.

During the requested time period, the Delta Center employed these persons. VISTA personnel were all funded through the Lighthouse Partnership grant.

Luther Brown, Director
Anna Long, Program Associate for Student and Community Engagement
Leigh Anne Grant, Program Associate for Healthy Families
Henry Outlaw, Program Associate for Heritage Studies
LaTonya Hurstini, Secretary
Nick Dybeck (VISTA)
Debra Wetherspoon (VISTA)
Hannah Mohamed (VISTA)
Kelly Guimain (VISTA)

What we actually do
We promote Delta culture in past, present and future tenses. Our programs are extremely diverse, but all promote Delta culture in some way. It is probably convenient to think of programs that promote past culture, and those that help promote the culture of the future.

Interpreting the Past, involves history
We design and present classes for DSU students and community members. In the fall of 2002, we offered "History and Culture of the Mississippi Delta", GEO 492. In the Spring of 2003, we offered The River, Co-registration in ENGLISH and GEOGRAPHY 492. Both classes enroll traditional and non-traditional students, and are advertised as being open to community members. Most of these community members are retired, and the classes both have very serious outreach consequences for Delta State.

We work regularly with visiting groups. Most of these groups are college classes. Some have service learning projects, and some are simply experiential courses. Most common classes include Civil Rights History, and the Blues. A class from the Harvard Graduate School of Architecture focused on The River as a Shifting Landscape. During the requested time period, we worked with student groups from Yale, Harvard, The University of Michigan, Vanderbilt, Millsaps College, The University of Texas, Florida International, Baldwin Wallace College, Randolph Macon, Brandeis, Franklin Pearce College, George Mason, Duke, and The University of North Carolina. We also provided tours for the University of Mississippi (Living Blues Magazine), the Mississippi Arts
Commission (Whole Schools Institute), and The American Society of Geographers (annual meeting). All of these groups contribute to the DSU Foundation and support the Delta Center.

During this time period, we founded the DSU Blues Band which by design has a flexible membership that often includes older, and sometimes younger, Delta blues performers. A list of performances for this period is attached to this summary. This is a grant funded initiative, with money coming from the Hearin Foundation. It includes scholarships for six DSU music students. It also received a sizable donation of amplifiers (8) and electric guitars (4) from the Peavey Electronics company during this period. The Blues Band does not spend any DSU state funds, and generates income from its performances. This income is spent directly on Band related needs.

We began the Blues Highway Association [BHA] in 2002. This membership group is composed of people who operate museums, Chambers of Commerce, Convention and Visitor's Bureaus, work in tourism, write for magazines, etc. This group provides representation for people and businesses that interpret history to the general public, and links those businesses with the travel industry and tourism authorities. It has a web site at http://www.blueshighway.org/bha.htm and a regularly updated newsletter at http://www.blueshighway.org/bluesnews.htm. A summary of the last meeting during the requested time period is attached as an example of the kinds of minutes the group keeps. BHA met nine times in the requested period.

One step towards realizing the goals of the BHA is the Share Your Heritage Workshop held in Greenwood in August of 2003. The proposals that funded this Workshop were written during the requested period. This workshop was funded by The National Trust for Historic Preservation, The National Endowment for the Arts, USDA, Viking Range, The Mississippi Delta Tourism Association, The Mississippi Tourism Authority, the Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce, the Greenwood CVB, and the DSU Foundation.

Another step towards realizing the goals of the BHA is our effort to have the entire Delta declared The Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area under the National Park Service. This declaration, which has to be made by act of Congress, will have many economic benefits. At the ninth meeting of the BHA, Robert Stanton, Director of the US National Park Service under Bill Clinton, and the only African American to ever Direct NPS, addressed our group. Almost 100 people were in attendance.

Still another step towards our long term goal is the creation of The Mississippi Delta Blues Trail, a series of historic markers telling the stories of the Delta. The first two markers were unveiled by B.B. King and Luther Brown in June of 2003.

We worked with historic preservation initiatives in Drew (the Rosenwald School) and Mound Bayou (the Historic Bank Building). The Drew initiative, in collaboration with The Center for the Study of Southern Culture at University of Mississippi, resulted in a grant of $380,000 in support of building restoration. We also worked closely on several other projects, all of which will preserve important historic structures in the region. One of the most significant of these projects, still unresolved, is work with the family of Joe Rice Dockery to preserve world famous Dockery Farms plantation.
We collected over 60 oral histories, and produced a professionally designed color document called "War Comes to the Delta about the impact of WW II on the Delta (copy attached). Seven thousand copies of this 14page book are being distributed free of charge to Delta area schools. This project was funded by grants from the Mississippi Humanities Council and the American Legion, along with several private donors.

We offer the annual Peavine Awards commemorating excellence in the Delta Blues. The recipients in October, 2002, were Bukka White, Howlin' Wolf, and Ike Turner (program attached)

We also worked with the DSU History Department to present the Cranford Lecture in 2003. We also hosted lectures by Dr. DoVeaanna Fulton, Eugene Dattel, Dr. Bo Morgan, Jay Kirgis, Constance Curry, Dr. John Willis, and presented a preview of the film LaLee's Kin before its release to the public on HBO. Ms Laura Lee Wallace ("LaLee") met with some of our visiting classes during a community rap session (described below).

We developed the Delta Human Rights Leaders Fellowship during the requested time period. This fellowship is funded through an endowment made by Dr. F. Watt Bishop. A brochure is attached.

Influencing the present and ensuring the future involves social activism and service learning.

For three years, we have had a Lighthouse Partnership funded through Learn and Serve America. Primary partners are Cypress Park Elementary and Bolivar County Literacy Program. Anna Long directed this program during the requested period. She worked actively with the DSU Service Learning committee, and all faculty who promoted service learning or community engagement through their classes. One of her primary responsibilities involved Alternative Spring Break experiences, which she describes this way:

Service-learning and volunteer programs within The Delta Center for Culture and Learning provide services to Delta State University classes and students as well as visiting groups. As a member of Break Away, Delta Volunteers hosts Alternative Break Groups from visiting colleges and universities. Services offered include assistance in locating local housing, service sites, local resource people and cultural experiences. Additionally, The Delta Center for Culture and Learning seeks to assist visiting groups frame their experiences with experiential components that give participants a feel for this place. Most groups choose to include tours, Delta foodways experiences, films, the blues, and rap sessions on local cultural issues into their stay here.

Students from New Hampshire's Franklin Pearce College served at Care Station in Clarksdale, Clarksdale Habitat for Humanity, the Bolivar County Literacy Council, and St. Gabriel's Mercy Center in Spring 2002. Students from Miami International University worked with Head Start Children in Bolivar County through the Bolivar County Literacy Council's Reading is Fundamental Program in Spring 2002. Students from Millsaps College in Jackson worked with Habitat for Humanity in Leland as a part of their study-serve alternative break in 2002. Students from Vanderbilt served with St. Gabriel's Mercy Center in Mound
Bayou, Leland Habitat, and the Bolivar County Literacy Council for spring break 2002. Additionally, the University of Texas at Dallas sent a delegation to serve in the Delta in partnership with the Delta Center in 2002.

**Delta Volunteers**, funded by Bolivar County United Way, is a clearinghouse that places volunteers in the community. Delta Volunteers (a United Way Agency) was founded by Alinda Sledge almost ten years ago, and became part of the Office of Student and Community Engagement within the Delta Center for Culture and Learning at Delta State University during the requested time period. Delta Volunteers mission is to support volunteer projects that address poverty-related issues, promote positive social change, and develop cross-cultural understanding. Its web page is located at [www.deltavolunteers.org](http://www.deltavolunteers.org).

Volunteer efforts place students from DSU in hospice care, head start, early childhood centers, schools (through mentoring and tutoring), mental health, area hospitals, the animal shelter, community beautification, blood drives, Habitat for Humanity, and other needs and agencies. Delta Volunteers partners with community agencies and groups to meet needs, and maintains a community agency clearinghouse that is maintained as a resource of volunteer and partnership opportunities.

**VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America)** placed four Service-Learning AmeriCorps VISTA Volunteers (Kelly Guimon, Haneefah Mouhamed, Deborah Weatherspoon, and Nick Dybek) in the Delta Center for Culture and Learning during the 2002-2003 academic year. Each of the VISTA volunteers played integral roles in working to strengthen and build the volunteer and service-learning programs of the Delta Center. One start-up project that subsequently took on its own life involved Nick Dybeck’s work in the Bolivar County Corrections facility. Nick developed a literature program with the Literacy Depot, which subsequently hired Nick full time to expand their work in local prisons.

**Campus Link AmeriCorps**, a federally funded program, primarily supports our Mississippi Reads project, grades 2-4, by placing our Delta State students in local classrooms as tutors and mentors. During the requested period, this program was directed by Anna Long, who described it this way:

Delta State University’s Delta Center for Culture and Learning is a Campus Link AmeriCorps team. Campus Link’s cornerstone projects for the 2002 - 2003 fiscal year were the Mississippi Mentor Corps and Mississippi Reads. Campus Link members worked as a team to strengthen local middle school mentoring programs in partnership with the Cleveland Mentor Program and Big Brothers Big Sisters. Campus Link members mentored, coordinated mentoring activities, recruited other college students to mentor, and facilitated parent involvement activities. Campus Link members coordinated the Mississippi Reads program in conjunction with Elementary Education service-learning classes at local elementary schools (Parks and Cypress Parks). Service-learners in elementary education reading classes created book folders that were used by
Campus Link members and volunteers to tutor 2nd - 4th grade students in reading. Campus Link members assisted in the planning of campus-community Study Circles on critical public issues. Members also planned and implemented service projects.

Volunteers for a Healthy Community and the Healthy Families initiative was first funded by Baxter International, and now by the Federal government through the Delta Health Alliance. This program works with young or very young mothers, and focuses on nutrition and child development. It is a collaboration between DSU child development classes, the Mississippi Cooperative Extension program, local kindergarten classes, and local “healthy baby mentors.” One of its primary programs involves the construction and distribution of learning kits, designed by DSU students in child development, and placed routinely in Delta child care settings. This program now includes hundreds of such kits.

The Parent Place is an outgrowth of the Volunteers for a Healthy Community program. This will be a “parent friendly” house, located on Fourth Avenue, where parents and children can meet with Delta Center and Bolivar School District employees to learn about their child’s growth and development. While it did not open until Fall of 2003, planning was well under way during the requested interval. Its puppet stage is now a big hit with young audiences.

The Entergy Environmental Stewardship Project is funded by Entergy Foundation, and partners with Dahomey Wildlife Refuge, DSU and Cypress Park Elementary school to create environmental learning kits and interpretive kiosks for the school and the wildlife reserve. Its most successful project in the requested interval is described later as The 9-11 Week of Service.

We recently received funds from the WK Kellogg Foundation to create the Youth Innovation Fund, a partnership with Cleveland School District, Cleveland Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce, and Bolivar County Community Action Agency. This project empowers high school students to create their own service learning projects, while building leadership and citizenship skills. It also takes groups of kids to Washington DC and various training centers around the US. This program is now directed by Sarah Leonard, who described its history this way:

In late spring 2003, six high school students came together with Anna Long and Stacy Kirk to write a grant for a civic action project. Their efforts gave birth to the Cleveland Youth Council, a group of twenty young people between the ages of 14 and 18 who are becoming a youth voice for Cleveland. The grant, funded by the Kellogg Foundation in partnership with the Academy for Educational Development, provides funding for two years so that the young people can learn about various action pathways to social change. They also become grant makers, bestowing grants to groups of their peers who have developed action plans for community change. The Cleveland Youth Council works in partnership with the Delta State University Foundation and the Delta Center for Culture and Learning;
the Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce; the Cleveland School District; and the Bolivar County Community Action Agency.

The DSU Scholar’s House is not directly related to the Delta Center, although the Center spent considerable effort in its creation. This house is used to support visiting scholars and small student groups, and it has played a very important role in our Break Away and visiting scholars programs (described in next year’s report).

Two examples of how all this diversity makes a comprehensive package:

The 9-11 Week of Service as an example of what we do:
This elaborate project involved 350 DSU freshmen, 400 Cypress Park elementary students, 30 DSU employees, and 50+ additional partners from Junior Auxiliary, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, Habitat for Humanity, Cleveland Garden Club, and Cleveland Vo Tech Education Center. The group built an outdoor education center, planted trees, flowers and shrubs, built bird houses, and painted and planted hundreds of flower pots, all during the week of 9-11. These efforts quite literally transformed Cypress Park School, and affected the lives of hundreds of Cleveland students.

Break Away to the Delta as an example of linking past, present and future in pursuit of our mission:
Break Away has already been described as a way to bring Alternative Spring Break classes to the region for combination heritage study and service tours. They build Habitat houses, help with after school tutorials, work with early childhood or senior citizen programs, or participate in other service activities. We often link Break Away type experiences with Community Rap Sessions. These involve students with interested community members, many of whom are elders, and almost always involve discussion of issues of race, economic development, political history, and other often sensitive topics.

The communities that we work with
The Delta Center thinks in terms of communities within communities, or circles within circles. Everyone is part of many such circles- family, church, service groups, libraries, hunt clubs, etc. We try to engage with as many of these circles as possible. The communities include:

Our university community, including Departments of History, Social Sciences, Languages and Literature, Art, Music, and Biology
Other universities, described above
Our local school systems in Bolivar County
Other Delta school districts, especially Shaw
Service clubs like the Garden Club, Habitat, etc.
Young peoples groups like Boys and Girls Clubs, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, individual high school kids, etc.
Blues museums, performers, historians, tourism officials, Chambers of Commerce and Convention and Visitors Bureaus
Veterans groups like The American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars
Church organizations
Health care providers

The Delta Center maintains an extensive scrap book which is available on request. We issue press releases and invite the Press whenever possible.

The Director's assessment
The Delta has a record of successful engagement with many surrounding communities. This success is due to several things. First, we take community engagement seriously. We actively seek partners, and actually enjoy working with partners, and I emphasize "partner" as a true collaborator, not just a supporter. Second, we are blessed to be surrounded by willing and capable partners who are interested in engaging with us. Third, by my own good fortune, the Delta Center happens to have been able to hire some extremely creative and energetic people who are very good at thinking up new ways to make learning fun and help the communities that surround us at the same time. Finally, none of this success would have been possible without strong and consistent support from DSU faculty and especially DSU senior administration.

Grants received during the requested time period:
2003- Promotion of the Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area. City of Cleveland. $10,000.


2003- Support for blues performance. Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce. $600.

2003- Share Your Heritage Workshop. National Endowment for Historic Preservation. This award did not have a specific monetary value, but our in-kind match was a value of $8,500 and our cash match was $15,000.

2003  Step Up to Community Good Parenting. Funded by Step Up to Community Good Parenting. $2,800.

2003 Renovation and construction at The Parent Place, a user friendly house used in support of the Healthy Families Program. Funded through Delta State University. $25,000.


2002 Creation of the Program for Community and Civic Engagement. Funded through Learn and Serve America.

Chevron Community Pride Governor’s Award. Funded by Chevron Oil. 2002: $4000

Community Service Work Study Program, representing 7% of all Delta State Federally funded work study who must engage in community service. US Work Study Program. 2002: $33,000. 2003: $33,000

SALLY (Science and Art Links for Youth). Written by The Delta Center and housed at Cypress Park Elementary School, Cleveland Public School District. Funded by Learn and Serve America. 2002: $40,000. 2003: $40,000.

D.S.U. Blues Band Events, June 2002-July 2003

October 15, 2002
7:30pm-9:00pm
5th Annual Peavine Awards
Performed with Billy Branch as opening act for Ike Turner
Delta State University Bologna Performing Arts Center
Cleveland, MS
- Billy Branch - harmonica, vocals
- Butch Dixon - keyboards
- Barry Bays - bass, musical director
- Haley Bennett - drums
- Danny Lancaster - guitar, background vocals
- Eden Brent - keyboards, background vocals
- Joey Cummings - harmonica

October 15, 2002
10:00pm-2:00am
Peavine Awards After-show party
Airport Grocery
Cleveland, MS
- Billy Branch - harmonica, vocals
- Barry Bays - bass, musical director
- Haley Bennett - drums
- Danny Lancaster - guitar, vocals
- Eden Brent - keyboards, vocals
- Joey Cummings - harmonica
- Various members of Ike Turner’s band

October 16, 2002
7:30pm-9:00pm
Private event
Home of Luther & Bonnie Brown
Boyle, MS
- "Cadillac John" Nolden - harmonica, vocals
- Bill Abel - guitar, vocals
- Barry Bays - bass
- Joey Cummings - harmonica, congas
- Levan Lortkipanidze - keyboards, harmonica

February 24, 2003
7:30pm-11:00pm
Blues Bash for University of Michigan
Po’ Monkey’s Lounge
Mergold, MS
- "Cadillac John" Nolden - harmonica, vocals
- Bill Abel - guitar, vocals
- Barry Bays - bass, musical director
- Joey Cummings - harmonica, drums
- Levan Lortkipanidze - keyboards, harmonica, flute
March 8, 2003
7:00pm-10:00pm
American Association Of Geographers event
Dockery Plantation
Cleveland, MS
- "Cadillac John" Nolden - harmonica, vocals
- Bill Abel - guitar, vocals
- Barry Bays - bass

April 12, 2003
5:00pm-1:30am
DSU Blues Benefit
Airport Grocery
Cleveland, MS
- "Cadillac John" Nolden - harmonica, vocals
- Monroe Jones - guitar, vocals
- Bill Abel - guitar, vocals
- Barry Bays - bass, musical director
- Levan Lorkipanidze - keyboards, harmonica, flute
- Joey Cummings - harmonica, vocals
- Terry "Big T" Williams - guitar, vocals
- Lee Anthony "Pocketknife" Williams - drums
- Josh "Razor Blade" Stewart - vocals
- Danny Lancaster - guitar, vocals, keyboards
- Shane Fortenberry - drums
- Budley Bays - guitar
- Caleb Boyles - guitar
- Jacqueline Gooch - guitar
- Walter Shegog - drums
- Jay Kirgis - guitar, vocals, harmonica
- Cody Ruth - bass
- Brandi Ward - keyboards, vocals
- Eric Fowler - drums
- Leonard "Mac" McIntosh - saxophone
- Alphonso Sanders - saxophone
- Arron Smith - saxophone
- Jarrod Leland - harmonica

April 23, 2003
10:45am-11:00am
Groundbreaking Ceremony
Coahoma County Higher Education Center
Clarksdale, MS
- Barry Bays - bass
- Joey Cummings - harmonica
June 20, 2003
6:00pm-10:30pm
Private event (Rosay Reilly - Sarah Dill dinner)
Anthony's Market
West Point, MS
- "Cadillac John" Nolden – harmonica, vocals
- Bill Abel – guitar, vocals
- Barry Bays – bass
- Joey Cummings – drums, harmonica

June 22, 2003
2:30pm-3:30pm
Greenwood Balloon Festival
Opening act for Tab Benoit & Mavis Staples
Greenwood, MS
- David "Little Dave" Thompson – guitar, vocals
- "Little Bud" Fordham – drums
- "Cadillac John" Nolden – harmonica, vocals
- Bill Abel – guitar, vocals
- Barry Bays – bass, Musical Director
- Joey Cummings – harmonica, congas
- Levan Lortkipanidze – keyboards, harmonica, flute
Summary of the Ninth Meeting, May 29, 2003
Blues Highway Association
Delta State University, Cleveland, Mississippi

Thanks to the staff of the Charles Capps Archive and Museum at DSU for letting us use their seminar room.

At the time of our meeting, we had 135 people on the email list. This represents about 20 more than last month, and we have an additional half dozen who have been added since the meeting. Twenty people attended the meeting. Thanks to this “hardcore” of regulars for driving over, and thanks also to all of you who could not attend, but who participate via email or phone. We are a grass roots effort that really does facilitate communication among diverse interest groups focused on the Blues, heritage, and tourism in the Delta.

We skipped around on the agenda a bit because some folks were late, but I’ll present the issues in the same order as the agenda for simplicity sake.

Merrill McKewen reported that the Chicago tourism party hosted by Isaac Byrd and MS Tourism was a great success, and has led to subsequent meetings between Mr. Byrd and the Mayor of Chicago. The mayor’s office is still looking for artifacts for their Delta display, and anyone interested in sending brochures, artifacts, posters, or other materials should contact the Mayor’s office through Barry Dolins at bdolins@cityofchicago.org.

Billy Johnson reported on the status of the Highway 61 Blues Festival which will be held THIS SATURDAY, June 14, from 10am till 10pm in Leland. Their lineup looks really great, so let’s all support this fourth year of the festival. Billy also said that he feels that visitation at the Highway 61 Blues Museum is increasing, and that more visitors are coming from farther away than in the past.

Marisa dalla Valle reported on the status of the Highway 1 Gospel and Blues Celebration which is AUGUST 7, 8, 9, and 10, corresponding to the Sunflower River Blues and Gospel Festival in Clarksdale. She also pointed out that the dates published on the promotional flier that we distributed are wrong for that festival, so please point this out to anyone you give posters to. The Highway 1 events will feature blues, gospel, and spiritual performances, folk art and African masks, a West Indies exhibit, and prayer dancing. Events will be held in several small towns along the Riverside, including Friars Point, Gunnison, Beulah, Rosedale, Benoit, and Simons-Malvina. Posters are available from Marisa at info@bkbfoundation.com.

I reported on the Share Your Heritage Workshop that is being organized by The National Endowment for Historic Preservation, and funded with money from Viking Range and MS Tourism. The actual workshop will be held at The Alluvian Hotel in Greenwood on August 6, 7 and 8. We are only allowed to include 30 participants, and the focus of the workshop will be on Delta Heritage.

Delta Center for Culture and Learning, Box 3152, Delta State University
662-846-4311  www.blueshighway.org
In preparation for the Workshop, we are constructing a comprehensive inventory of all heritage sites and issues in the heart of the Delta, being all those seven counties that are at least partly contained by a triangle between Clarksdale, Greenville, and Greenwood. This inventory will be made available to anyone on disk, in Excel format. It will ultimately be used to construct various products, including a "Virtual Delta." This product was not mentioned at the meeting, and I’ll put it off until our next meeting, but an example of the approach can be seen by going to www.ocgi.okstate.edu/shpo and selecting the line that reads “Interactive Map of Oklahoma National Register Properties.” You have to go through the home page to load the GIS map page. Use the cursor to draw the areas on the State map that you want to see in expanded detail, and click on the “Picture” button to see photos and text about each historic site. Our site will include the ability to select all of the categories of heritage that we’re including in the inventory.

Betsie Brown (betsie@blues.org) is the point person for construction of the inventory of all heritage sites. The effort is funded partially by Viking Range, and we are actively seeking additional funds. We need an estimated $15,000 to complete this inventory, including gps coordinates for significant sites.

Jef Judin, and Betsie Brown reported on the Journey to Clarksdale project which will be filmed in Clarksdale October 17-26, and ultimately produce CDs, DVDs, video, a multipart TV special, and a feature length documentary that will be presented at Sundance next year. The project will bring dozens of top music stars to the Delta for performances, and also so that they can tour the area and learn about Delta history and culture. Jef asked all of us to be as involved in this as possible. Jef (jef@jam.rr.com) is producing the event, with Morgan Freeman and Bill Luckett as executive producers. Betsie (betsie@blues.org) is in charge of publicity. The Delta Center will work with them to coordinate the educational aspects of the event.

John Fewkes presented his concept for Association t-shirts and a proposed logo, which I’ve attached as two files, one for the front and one for the back. John has changed some of the map (back side) since our meeting.

Allan Hammons faxed a statement concerning The BB King Museum in Indianola, and the Blues historical marker project. The museum will open in 2005, and has a 10-12 million dollar price tag. It will include interactive exhibits, and is being supported by BB King and his management company.

I announced the marker dedication that actually happened on June 5, and everyone was invited to attend. Two markers were unveiled, one commemorating the corner on which BB King first decided to become a Blues musician, and the other describing Club Ebony. These markers have been discussed by our group before, but they now ACTUALLY EXIST. We now have the start of a Blues Trail, and we need to move forward with more markers. Our organization will assist with the wording, and verify the accuracy of text as new markers are proposed. All municipalities and individuals who want to be part of The Blues Trail should begin by getting in touch with Allan Hammons (allan@hammons.com).
Preston Lauterbach described the Spring issue of *Living Blues Magazine* which will be completely dedicated to the Blues in Mississippi. This issue is partially funded by MS Tourism, and will be an extremely important contributor to blues tourism because it will include actual tour routes and stops. Interested parties should contact Preston, who is the editor of this issue (wplauterbach@aol.com).

I reviewed where we stand on the National Heritage Area designation. Discussion ensued, and several members expressed concern that both of our Senators and our Delta Congressman should be sponsors of the movement. Since our meeting, two things have happened. First, Senator Lott has sponsored a bill creating a Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area. Second, I’ve met with Brad Prewitt who is a lobbyist and consultant for Viking Range. Brad will act as our contact with Washington, thanks again to Viking Range.

Senator Cochran’s office sent a faxed message to us via Suzy Gordon. It includes much interesting material, and anyone who wants to see it in full should contact me. Most relevant is a long discourse by Paul Hoffman, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Department of the Interior, to the US Senate on March 13, 2003. Here is the most relevant quote:

> “Our experience over the past two decades has led us to make the following observations about the process for the study, designation and management of national heritage areas. To be successful, all heritage area initiatives must be developed and shaped by local people and by local initiative. Some of these heritage proposals also seek the support and assistance of the National Park Service through designation as a national heritage area or corridor. To warrant our involvement, these areas should tell nationally important stories through a regionally distinctive combination of natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources and provide outstanding opportunities for resource conservation. When appropriate they should also strengthen, complement, and support existing units of the National Park System.”

Thanks again to Steve LaVere for providing excellent notes of the meeting.

**Reminders:**

Jef Judin announced that Bobby Rush will appear at Ground Zero Blues Club June 27 and 28.

Betsie Brown is continuing to organize a spreadsheet with everyone’s addresses, affiliations, and phone numbers. She WILL NOT include anyone who does not specifically request inclusion, no matter who you are! If you want to be included, please contact Betsie at betsie@blues.org.
We have been given very nice copies of the Governor’s Proclamation of The Year of The Blues. This should be on display at every museum and CVB. Please pick up a copy and get it framed for display.

Thanks to the Mississippi Delta Tourism Association and Ground Zero Blues Club for providing the money needed to produce Lori Hoskin’s poster. Copies were given out as party favors at the Chicago gig, and we have plenty more, so pick up several. Note that at least one set of dates is incorrect.

The Greenville/Washington County CVB has done an impressive job on their new African American Heritage Guide. Check it out—copies are available for everyone. This is a job very well done, and we should all refer interested parties to this guide.

“The creation of a heritage area usually begins with a grass-roots effort by residents, businesses, community and political leaders to protect, preserve, and promote the special qualities of their environment, history, or culture. To pursue federal designation, potential areas must undergo an evaluation of significance, feasibility, and suitability.”


Luther Brown
4/17/03
Photos from the 9-11 Week of Service project, which linked all of the DSU students enrolled in GST classes with the students of Cypress Park Elementary School, the Cleveland Vocational Technology School, Cleveland Garden Club, Entergy employees, and the Cleveland Habitat for Humanity organization. VoTech made the bird houses, elementary students painted them, and Delta State students helped assemble the structures and worked with the younger students to learn about basic ecology.