

THE PROGRESS REPORT

A Newsletter of Arkansas Black Mayors Association

JUNE 2024



A Message from Our Chairman:

In September 2021, ABMA held its annual meeting in Fort Smith. At this meeting, our members voted to approve a strategic plan to transform ABMA into a full-time organization. We adopted a vision to leverage our collective power – the power of a group of chief executives of municipalities across the state – to address issues that affect rural and often neglected communities.

New mayor training and orientation programs, affordable housing initiatives, and community workforce needs and development are a few of the issues that ABMA is developing for its member communities. Stay tuned for more information on these initiatives.

In 2022, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the National Resource Conservation District (NRCS) awarded roughly \$100 million to address flooding issues in Arkansas by improving the watersheds surrounding 19 communities that applied and were approved. ABMA was tasked with fiscal responsibility and oversight of this monumental project. The project is on schedule and work is ongoing, please take a look at our website for more information.

Again, we are EXCITED about the possibilities of providing resources to marginalized communities across our great state. We remain “United for Progress.”

ABMA Executive Board



Mayor Tomeka Butler
Vice-Chairman



Mayor Leroy Wright
Chaplain



Mayor Zola Hudson
Treasurer



Mayor Harry Brown
Parliamentarian



Mayor Melisa Logan
Secretary



Mayor Daryell Howell
At-Large Member

Leadership Spotlight:

Rural black mayors share experiences and challenges in Arkansas small towns

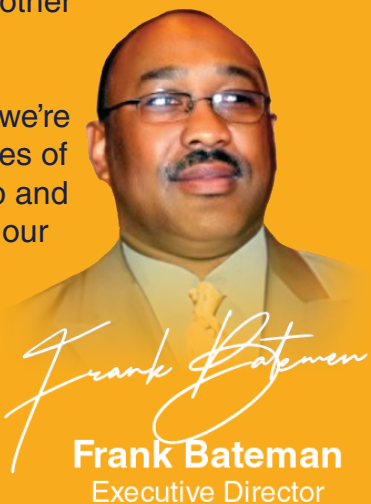


Arkansas boasts a wealth of black elected officials, many of whom have garnered widespread recognition. From well-known figures like Little Rock Mayor Frank Scott Jr. and Pine Bluff Mayor Shirley Washington to the unsung heroes serving in rural communities, their journeys paint a diverse tapestry of leadership in the state.

While urban mayors like Scott and Washington navigate the complexities of city life, rural mayors encounter a different set of challenges, shaped by the distinctive character of their communities. Despite these differences, all share a common commitment to advancing the interests of their constituents and driving positive change across Arkansas.

From the Executive Director's Desk

As we embark on another month of advocacy, collaboration and community building, we're excited to share stories of resilience, leadership and progress from within our network of African American mayors. Thank you for joining us on this journey towards positive change.



Frank Bateman
Executive Director

Equity & Social Justice:



Promoting Resilience:

The Arkansas Black Mayors Association, in partnership with NRCS Watershed Flood Prevention Operations, is taking proactive steps to mitigate the impact of natural disasters in targeted areas throughout Arkansas. Recognizing the disproportionate effects on African American communities due to systemic underfunding, this initiative addresses issues such as floods, droughts, landslides and erosion. Work is underway in 14 project areas across the state. Engineering firms are diligently developing comprehensive plans that promise to uplift generations of Arkansans, improve their quality of life and promote resilience in the face of environmental challenges.



Policy Advocacy Updates:

Our Voices Matter!

Stay informed about the latest policy developments impacting African American communities. From voting rights to infrastructure investments, we're committed to advocating for equitable policies that will uplift our cities and residents. Get involved and make a difference today.



Upcoming Events & Opportunities:

Save the Date: Join us for the ABMA 2024 Gala! We're thrilled to announce that this year's Gala will be held on September 7 at the Venue at Westwind in North Little Rock, AR. This prestigious event promises an evening of celebration, networking and recognition of African American leadership. Stay tuned for more details and mark your calendar for this unforgettable occasion.

Community Impact Stories:

Stories of Change:

Discover how ABMA member Mayor Zora Hudson of Altheimer, AR, has transformed her community with the launch of a mobile food pantry. The city is in Jefferson County, which is a food desert. Mayor Hudson's dedication to improving access to grocery stores and healthier food options has increased awareness in the community.



Thank you for being a part of the ABMA community! Together, we're driving positive change and making a difference in the lives of African American communities across the state. Stay connected, stay inspired, and stay committed to building a brighter future for all.

We look forward to continuing this journey with you.

The Arkansas Black Mayors Association, established in 1972, is a non-profit, charitable, and educational organization.

