



CRDC FOCUS

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Crowley's Ridge Development Council, Inc.

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Community Action Month activities bringing agency's efforts to forefront

As a part of the 1,000-member Community Action Agency network, the board, management, staff, and volunteers at Crowley's Ridge Development Council (CRDC) are striving daily to attain the lofty ideals of the agency best illustrated by its motto, "Helping People ... Changing Lives!"

Established in 1969, CRDC is very proud of its track record, Robert Wilford, executive director, points out, and will celebrate Community Action Month in May with an increased number of special events. Most of these activities will involve participation in local community observances throughout Northeast Arkansas.

"It may or may not be a coincidence that we observe Community Action Month in May," Wilford states. "However, we are happy to join those hosting community celebrations in Northeast Arkansas. It gives us wonderful opportunities to spread the message about CRDC to thousands of our friends and neighbors, and open the door to opportunities for those who

may need our services."

"We're extremely proud of the work we've done helping a large number of low-income residents in Northeast Arkansas become more self-sufficient," Wilford continues, "and each day there is a success story taking place that underscores how hard our program participants, staff and volunteers work."

He stresses, however, that much more needs to be done.

"We want to showcase our success stories, but we also want to provide a vehicle where the entire area can learn more about poverty and unite to fight against its causes," he adds.

"Poverty is fast emerging as a unifying social issue. What once was an issue largely frowned on and ignored, has exploded onto the newspapers and talk shows," said Wilford. "We have an unprecedented opportunity to use National Community Action Month to discuss the issue of poverty and encourage local residents to unite against it."

Looking at some of the many services offered by CRDC to its customers in the

Northeast Arkansas service area, Wilford points out that it is sometimes difficult to explain "the breadth and scope of all that CRDC does or can do."

"We've come a long way since 1969," says the executive director. "That's the year CRDC was incorporated with a budget of only \$35,000 serving four counties. Today, we employ a budget of over \$14-million and some 400 employees to provide much needed services and relief to low-income residents in eight or more Northeast Arkansas counties, depending on the program."

Wilford explains that, in 1998, the agency assumed duties in Cross, Woodruff, St. Francis and Crittenden Counties, in addition to the original four geographic entities it was assigned.

"Our programs are geared toward improving the quality of life for real people - people who might be your friends, neighbors, etc.," Wilford continues. "We're trying to offer a hand up to folks with specific needs. It's something we enjoy, and I am happy to say, it's something the staff at CRDC does extremely well."

Wilford invited anyone wanting more information about CRDC and the programs it offers to come by any CRDC facility, including the temporary central office at 4920 E. Nettleton Ave. in Jonesboro.

"We're more than happy to tell the story of CRDC and community action agencies around the country, especially during National Community Action Month in May," Wilford concluded.

