

# Deer Creek Pilot

*Guiding the South Delta for 129 Years*

*Dedicated to the principle that the truth is the strongest argument.*

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50 Cents



## Y'all Come

The eighth annual Deep Delta Festival kicks off at 8 a.m. this Saturday. The festival is free and the main stage will be rockin' with all types of music throughout the day. Bring your lawn chair and spend the day in Downtown Rolling Fork.



## Local

*More folks working now.*

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*Man dies during storm.*

## Dutch foundation makes huge investment here

*Effort to focus on early childhood development*

ANGUILLA—Partnering with the local bank and a series of non-profit corporations, the Netherlands-based Bernard van Leer Foundation announced the establishment of the Mississippi Delta Children's Partnership, aimed at fostering nurturing families and community environments that support the early growth and development of children.

Tuesday's ribbon-cutting event formally announcing the new initiative was held at a thoroughly renovated plantation-style home—known locally as the "McKinney House," which was donated to the effort by the Bank of Anguilla and which will house one of five early childhood development sites in the Delta.

The Bernard van Leer Foundation has made an initial investment of \$800,000 for the first year and a commitment to consider similar funding for the next four years. Entergy Mississippi has also provided additional local support for the Partnership.

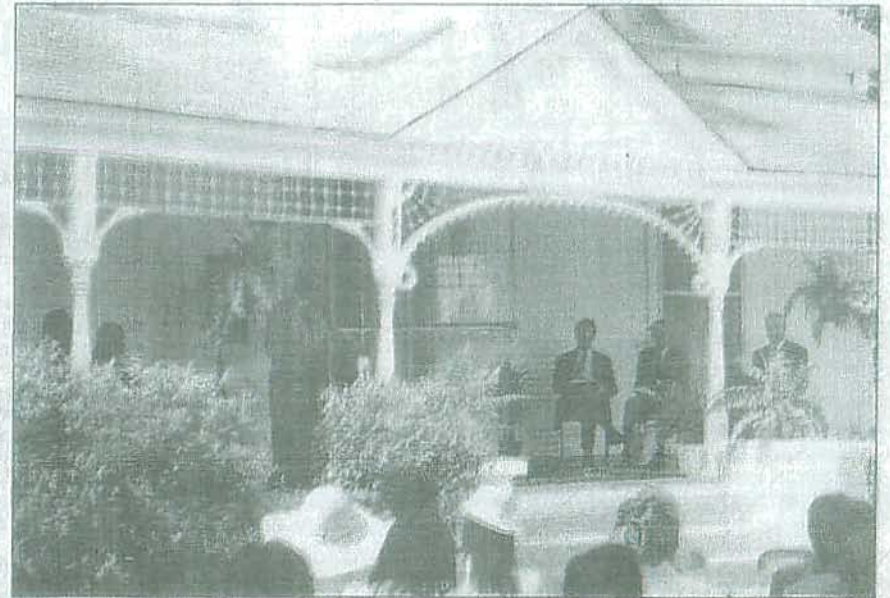
In addition to the Anguilla location, the other so-called "Children's Villages" will be located in Cary, Mayersville, the

Quitman Co. town of Marks and the Tallahatchie County town of Webb. In Anguilla, the foundation is partnering with the Sharkey/Issaquena Improvement Association, in Cary with Cary Christian Center and in Mayersville with the Mayersville Youth Development Committee.

The respective local program directors are Emma C. Harris in Anguilla, Dorsey Johnson in Cary and Fannie White in Mayersville. Johnson said Tuesday the Cary program is "up and running" and wildly popular among its children.

Each of the five sites has what the Partnership terms, "an independently designed child-focused program that emphasizes language development, academic performance, social and cognitive development and self and ethnic group efficacy." This, it is seeking to accomplish through respective after school and summer enrichment programs at each site.

The van Leer Foundation's executive director, Peter Laugharn, and one of its trustees, Peter Bell, toured the five Delta communities Tuesday and Wednesday and in remarks at Tuesday's announcement ceremony here, Bell



## "Children's Village"

Anguilla Mayor Merlin Richardson welcomed the large crowd which gathered at the former "McKinney House" Tuesday for the formal announcement of the establishment of the Mississippi Delta Children's Partnership.

said, "Children have a right to education and good health care."

Established in 1949 in the Netherlands, the Bernard van Leer Foundation is a private trust, mandated to improve opportuni-

ties for children up to the age of 8, who live in circumstances of social and economic disadvantage.

According to the 2000 Census, Sharkey County had the

highest percentage of children under 18 living beneath the federal poverty level in Mississippi at 50 percent. Adults living beneath the poverty level amounted to 35 percent.