

**Third Annual Homegrown Small Business Conference  
September 25, 2015**



**The Small Business Development Center at the University of West Alabama is pleased to promote this event in conjunction with the Alabama Black Belt Commission's Small Business Committee**

This event will focus on energizing small businesses and rural communities. The conference will feature strong, hands-on learning opportunities for potential and existing business owners. The conference agenda includes an opening general session and four breakout tracks of development workshops throughout the course of the day. Two of the tracks will have a special emphasis on young ladies and women entrepreneurs. The purpose is to encourage small business development in rural West Alabama to lift local economies and create jobs.

The 2015 Conference will be held at:

**Shelton State Community College  
9500 Old Greensboro Road  
Tuscaloosa, AL**

**Registration begins at 7:45 a.m.**

**Opening Session - 8:45 a.m.**

*Transform your life by Starting and Growing  
Your Own Small Business...*



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BLACK BELT COMMISSION, UWA HOST SMALL BUSINESS SEMINAR  
*Third Annual Event to Focus on "Feeding the Entrepreneurial Spirit"*

TUSCALOOSA, AL—The Alabama Black Belt Commission's Small Business Development Committee and the University of West Alabama's Small Business Development Center will once again hold their Homegrown Small Business Conference on Friday, September 25, 2015.

The conference, to be held at Shelton State Community College, 9500 Old Greensboro Road, will feature keynote speakers Lucy Farmer and Martha Hawkins. Farmer, owner of Lucy's Inspired, reclaims antique architectural hardware to create jewelry. Based in Cullman, Farmer has been featured in *Southern Living* and *Fresh Style* magazines. Farmer will deliver the opening keynote address, and her jewelry designs will be available for sale at a 15% discount for conference participants.

Hawkins is the owner of Martha's Place, a soul food restaurant in Montgomery. Hawkins has gained national media attention, and several celebrities have dined at her establishment. She is also the author of *Finding Martha's Place: My Journey Through Sin, Salvation, and Soul Food*, published in 2010 by Touchstone Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster. Hawkins will deliver the luncheon keynote address and will be available to sign books during the event.

"We are very excited to have these two outstanding ladies as our speakers this year," said Donald Mills, chairman of the Black Belt Commission committee and director of UWA's Small Business Development Center. "This year, our theme is 'Feed Your Entrepreneurial Spirit.' Both our speakers embody that. Farmer found a niche that fed her creative spirit, and Hawkins literally feeds others and feels spirit-led in her business."

The conference will also include breakout sessions for youth and adults on money management, IDA loans, and how to start a small business. Thanks to sponsorship from the Alabama Department of Commerce and ADECA, the conference is free and includes lunch.

For more information, please contact Donald Mills at (205) 652-3665 or email at [dmills@uwa.edu](mailto:dmills@uwa.edu).

The Alabama Black Belt Commission was formed by Governor Robert Bentley in 2010 to improve conditions in the state's Black Belt counties and promote economic growth. The Small Business Development Center at UWA offers one-on-one assistance to entrepreneurs to help them start and grow small businesses in the region.

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