



## PRESS RELEASE

September 2, 2016

Contact: Nathan Willingham  
256-389-0515

### For Immediate Release

(*Any town, AL*) - Name/Organization completed the annual *Your Town, Alabama, Designing Our Future Workshop* held at Camp McDowell near Nauvoo, Alabama August 31 - September 2, 2016. This event was the 18-year anniversary of the Your Town Alabama workshops. Name attended two and one-half days of interactive presentations and worked with a team to plan a hypothetical town. After attending this intensive workshop, many participants have returned to their communities to emphasize the importance of planning to long-term economic viability.

With presentations by Keynote Speaker Sally Mackin of the Woodlawn Foundation, Lea Ann Macknally, President of Macknally Land Design on *Alabama: Our Changing Landscape*, Dr. John Kvach, UAH on *Cultural and Historic Resources*; Kellie Johnston, Cawaco RC&D on *Natural Resources*; Mary Helmer/Mike Putman on the *Alabama Main Street Program*; Jim Byard, Director, ADECA on *Economic Development*, Jay Lamar/Connor Lowry on *Alabama Bicentennial*, Mary Shell, Alabama Historical Commission on *Connectivity*, Nathan Willingham, NACOLG/Nigel Roberts, Birmingham Community Development on *Finding Resources* and Matt Leavell, The University of Alabama Center for Economic Development to introduce the *Design Challenge* and a host of others. Name and 53 other civic and community leaders found plenty of technical advice, inspiration, and hands-on training.

Your Town Alabama is a direct response to the uncertain future of Alabama's small towns—a future increasingly threatened by large scale changes in our economy, population shifts, the impact of telecommunications and mass merchandising, and changes in land policy. In the face of these forces, communities have found themselves struggling to maintain their vitality and even their sense of identity. Whether the threat is sudden growth or stagnation, planning and design decisions can often make the difference between survival and decay, between healthy prosperity and decline.

The Your Town Alabama workshop format is an intensive engagement of citizen leaders and professionals and focuses on these critical planning and design decisions. The workshop is highly participatory, with lectures and interactive group problem solving, including working on realistic issues in a hypothetical small town.

The Your Town Alabama workshop offers real hope to real communities. People like Name who care about their community's appearance can begin learning more about how to protect it through these workshops. For more information about Your Town Alabama, please visit the Your Town Alabama website: [www.yourtownalabama.org](http://www.yourtownalabama.org).