

Preston Hamilton to Speak at Simmons Bank Delta Conference

The conference, titled “The Arkansas Delta: Why It Still Matters,” is designed to help Delta leaders network with each other and discuss how communities can be managed in the face of a declining population base.

The conference will begin at 9 a.m. and conclude at 4 p.m. A catered lunch will be served at noon.

There’s no registration fee, but those planning to attend are required to register in advance.

Preston was appointed in January 2015 as the AEDC executive director. Before moving to Arkansas, he served as vice president of government relations for the economic development organization Enterprise Florida. He was part of a team that helped create more than 147,000 jobs in Florida. He worked with the organization’s international team to facilitate trade efforts that resulted in \$3.7 billion in export sales.

Hamilton is a senior research economist, demographer and director of research for UALR’s Institute for Economic Advancement. He has been at the institute since 1996 and has participated in numerous research projects. His areas of expertise include economic impact analysis, regional economic analysis, economic demography and population estimates.

The conference also will feature panels on health care, education, agriculture and economic development that will include state leaders in each of those areas.

Dr. John Kirk, the George W. Donaghey Distinguished Professor of History at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, will be the luncheon speaker. Kirk, the director of UALR’s Institute on Race and Ethnicity, will speak on the complicated history of race relations in the Arkansas Delta. Kirk has published eight books and won numerous awards for his research.

“It’s time for those who craft public policy in our state to come up with a comprehensive plan for dealing with the problems associated with outmigration in the Delta,” said George Makris Jr., the chairman and chief executive officer of Simmons First National Corp. “Simmons Bank has been proud to call Pine Bluff home since 1903. And we’re proud to sponsor this public policy conference in Pine Bluff that hopefully will spur efforts to come up with a coordinated approach to addressing the issues we face.”

About Simmons First National Corporation

Simmons First National Corp. is a financial holding company headquartered in Pine Bluff, Ark., with total assets of almost \$7.6 billion. The company conducts financial operations in Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri and Tennessee. The company’s wholly owned subsidiary, Simmons First National Bank, offers comprehensive financial solutions delivered with client-centric approach. The company’s common stock trades on the NASDAQ Global Select Market under the symbol “SFNC.”

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