

**TOWN
MEETING
ARKANSAS**

A SUMMARY REPORT
JUNE, 1978



DAVID PRYOR
GOVERNOR

STATE OF ARKANSAS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

March 23, 1978

LITTLE ROCK 72201
(501) 371-2345

Dear Fellow Citizens of Arkansas:

It is a pleasure to recommend to you a program of Town Meetings being offered in our state by the Institute of Cultural Affairs. Your participation in these meetings will be a valuable step towards building a more prosperous future for Arkansas.

The tradition of local initiative and citizen involvement has been one of the great strengths of our Nation. When people work together to solve problems in their towns and communities, it represents the best kind of responsible citizenship. The revival of the American Town Meeting concept, begun during the Bicentennial, offers an opportunity for everyone to have a part in shaping our third century as a free people.

I look forward to hearing of the many benefits which will derive from Town Meeting: Arkansas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Pryor".
David Pryor

DPw

TOWN MEETING: ARKANSAS

PURPOSE OF TOWN MEETING

Every community, from the smallest rural town to the sprawl of an urban neighborhood, has untapped resources waiting to be channeled into the task of improving economic and social conditions. The greatest resource, and the key to all others, is the creativity and energy of the residents, 85% of which is never called upon for the good of the community. This resource, when released, is able to revitalize and rebuild human community far more effectively than any private or public program ever offered. It represents a direct and personal approach to solving the social problems which plague every city and town, and finally contributes to the rediscovery of neighborly cooperation and care.

TOWN MEETING

The Town Meeting format created by the Institute of Cultural Affairs is a community event which allows people to consider the major challenges facing their town, and to discover the possibilities at hand to respond to these challenges. As a community forum, the Town Meeting consists of two workshop sessions. The first one allows citizens to discuss their hopes and dreams for their community first and then to look at their common concerns and finally to state the underlying challenges for their community's future. The proposals workshop allows citizens to create the practical activities to deal with the identified challenges. Community identity is the focus of a separate workshop group which creates the community song, story and symbol. The methods of the Town Meeting encourage the participation of groups and individuals in the community and motivates them to active cooperation in projects for their town.

TOWN MEETING: ARKANSAS

The Town Meeting project was initiated in 1975 as a program designed to bring together the residents of a community for a day of planning. It was adopted by the national Bicentennial program under the name Town Meeting '76. At that time, Forrest City, in St. Francis county, held a Town Meeting. During April and May 1978, the Town Meeting program was demonstrated in each of the remaining 74 counties across the state. The focus was on communities of 1000 or less in population. Mayors, school superintendents, and Council on Aging directors were contacted and invited to help organize a Town Meeting in their community. 76 communities in the state held Town Meetings within a four week period during this time. Over 2500 citizens, both young and old, participated. The events used a workshop format, usually 1½ to 3 hours long, and were held on weekday afternoons and evenings. During each meeting a document was created and distributed to the participants of all the work that had been done during the meeting.

THE NEXT STEP

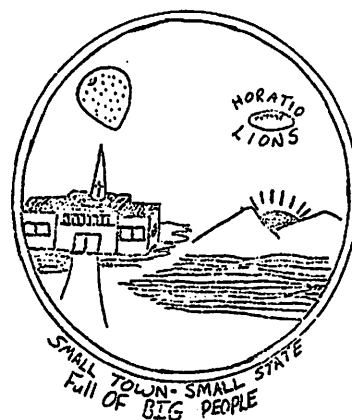
Upon completion of this demonstration phase, allowing many communities to see the benefits of the program, the Town Meeting program is available to any community upon request. In addition, special forums which also use the Town Meeting method are available for youth, women, businessmen and other interested groups.

TOWN MEETING COMMUNITIES

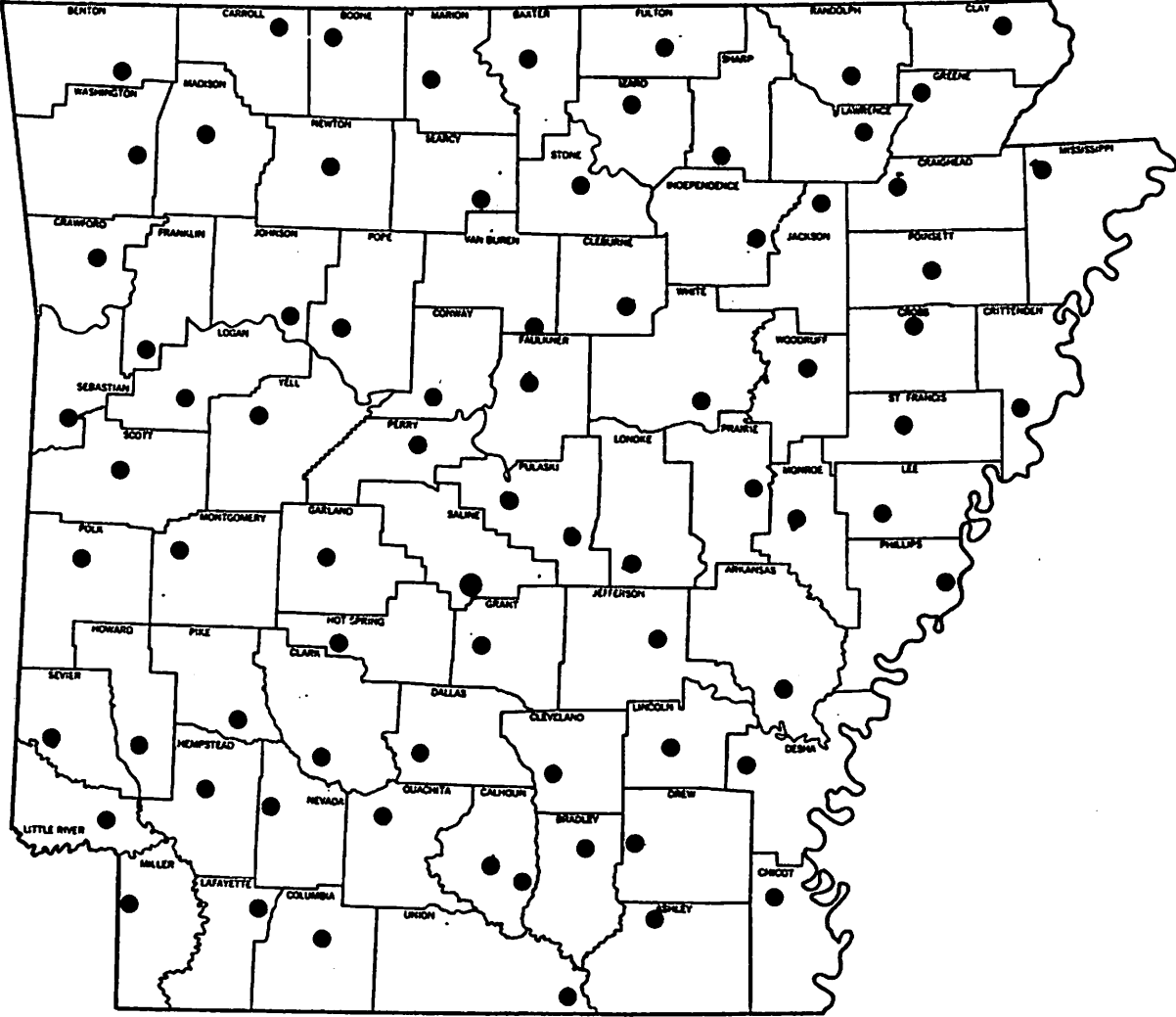
<u>County</u>	<u>Community</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Community</u>
Arkansas	Gillett.	Lee	Aubrey
Ashley	Fountain Hill	Lincoln	Star City
Baxter	Mountain Home	Little River	Ashdown
Benton	Lowell	Logan	Magazine
Boone	Omaha	Lonoke	England
Bradley	Warren	Madison	Huntsville
Calhoun	Hampton	Marion	Pyatt
	Harrell	Miller	Texarkana
Carroll	Oak Grove	Mississippi	Leachville
Chicot	Dermott	Monroe	Clarendon
Clark	Gurdon	Montgomery	Oden
Clay	McDougal	Nevada	Emmet
Cleburne	Heber Springs	Newton	Jasper
Cleveland	Kingsland	Ouachita	Chidester
Columbia	Magnolia	Perry	Perryville
Conway	Morrilton	Phillips	Helena
Craighead	Bono	Pike	Delight
Crawford	Mountainburg	Poinsett	Harrisburg
Crittenden	Edmondson	Polk	Mena
Cross	Cherry Valley	Pope	Dover
Dallas	Sparkman	Prairie	Biscoe
Desha	Mitchellville	Pulaski	College Station
Drew	Wilmar		Maumelle
Faulkner	Greenbrier	Randolph	Pocahontas
Franklin	Branch	Saint Francis	Forrest City
Fulton	Salem	Saline	Traskwood
Garland	Mountain Pine	Scott	Waldron
Grant	Prattsville	Searcy	Leslie
Greene	Delaplaine	Sebastian	Mansfield
Hempstead	Washington	Sevier	Horatio
Hot Spring	Bismarck	Sharp	Cave City
Howard	Mineral Springs	Stone	Fifty-six
Independence	Newark	Union	Huttig
Izard	Oxford	Van Buren	Damascus
Jackson	Swifton	Washington	Elkins
Jefferson	Alzheimer	White	Griffithville
Johnson	Lamar	Woodruff	Patterson
Lafayette	Buckner	Yell	Havana
Lawrence	Walnut Ridge		

"Our future is looking bright. The most important thing we have is us. We can solve all our problems we have mentioned here tonight by working together and being involved."

-Emmet



TOWN MEETING COMMUNITIES



"We told our past and present and planned our future." -Fifty Six

TOWN MEETING: ARKANSAS COMMITTEE

Annie Mae Bankhead
President
Progressive League of College Station

Anne Bartley
Director
Arkansas Department of Natural and
Cultural Heritage

Evangeline Brown
President
Dermott Concerned Citizens
Enterprises, Inc.

Richard C. Butler, Jr.
Trust Officer
Commercial National Bank
Little Rock

The Rev. Richard N. Clark
Vicar
St. James Episcopal Church
Eureka Springs

B. Stan Cook
President
Texarkana National Bank

Jerry Cronin
Project Manager
Independent Community Consultants, Inc.
Hampton

Dr. Horace Hartsell
President
East Arkansas Community College
Forrest City

Bishop Kenneth W. Hicks
Arkansas Area
United Methodist Church

George S. Ivory, Jr.
Director
Division of Community Services
Arkansas Department of Local Services

Bob J. Nash
Vice President
Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation

Jess P. Odom
President and Chairman of the Board
Odom Enterprises, Inc.

In addition to members of the state committee, citizens across the state have extended generous assistance and advice. Below is a representative listing of this group.

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Cabe, Little Rock
Mr. Horace Cabe, Gurdon
H. C. Carvill, Executive Director, Arkansas Bankers Association
Earl "Buddy" Chaddick, Pine Bluff
Arch Ford, Director, State Board of Education
Rev. Richard Hardie, Westover Hills Presbyterian Church, Little Rock
Right Rev. Bishop Christoph Keller, Jr., Episcopal Diocese of Arkansas
O. J. Magee, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Little Rock
Deloris Martin, Deputy Director, Arkansas Council on Aging
Most Rev. Bishop Andrew J. McDonald, Catholic Diocese of Little Rock
Rev. William S. McLean, Associate General, Union Presbytery of Arkansas
Carl Miller, Jr., Little Rock
David B. Roosevelt, Executive Director, Arkansas Community Foundation
Rev. Allen Smith, Second Presbyterian Church, Little Rock
Mr. and Mrs. Daniel West, President, Arkansas College, Batesville
Parker Westbrook, Office of the Governor, Little Rock

A SUMMARY OF CHALLENGES FROM 77 ARKANSAS COMMUNITIES

Inadequate social services

- need for street repair
- no adequate recreation facilities
- need for more activities for elders and youth
- not enough funds for services
- limited practical community education opportunities
- inadequate law enforcement

Limited citizen participation

- "let someone else do it" attitude
- low attendance at meetings
- no focused community involvement
- too few citizens exercising a vote in government
- complacency and hopelessness

Limited community cooperation

- lack of cooperation between young and old
- dissension between newcomers and oldtimers
- lack of town pride
- lack of support of public officials
- jealousy between groups

Ineffective community promotion

- lack of knowledge for handling red tape and regulations
- inadequate training for obtaining funds
- lack of cooperation with leaders
- unorganized to decide needs and priorities
- no communication between county and community leaders

Lack of consensus on economic growth

- too few employment opportunities
- unavailability of property for sale
- no incentives to sell land
- fear of encouraging growth
- conflict of industry interest and environmental concerns

Unrecognized community needs

- lack of awareness of housing, health, and road needs
- lack of community interest in senior citizens
- need to create desire to improve services
- need to support law enforcement
- no comprehensive plan for obtaining community needs

A CHALLENGE is an underlying issue that blocks the hopes and dreams of the people.

"This was not stuff we didn't understand."
-Fifty-six

A SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS FROM 77 ARKANSAS COMMUNITIES

Improving community services

- create recreation center
- increase school activities
- start service clubs
- set up community bulletin board
- start seviror citizen phone network

Encouraging community cooperation

- organize block clubs
- community appreciation day
- community work projects
- public meetings
- community get-togethers

Inspiring public involvement

- regular town meetings
- voter education
- invite police and leaders to meet with special groups
- monthly community workshops
- inform officials of needs and wants of citizens

Promoting community improvement

- research grant availability
- create town P.R. brochure
- encourage industries
- hold fund-raising events
- erect street signs

Motivating citizen participation

- community work projects
- active church visitation
- door to door survey
- clean up campaign/street competitions
- begin town newspaper

Staging community celebrations

- sing alongs
- town picnics and fish fries
- community festivals
- July 4th celebrations
- music festivals and hoot owls

A PROPOSAL is a plan of action
that meets the challenge.

"We can do this." -Newark

SYMBOL STORY SONG

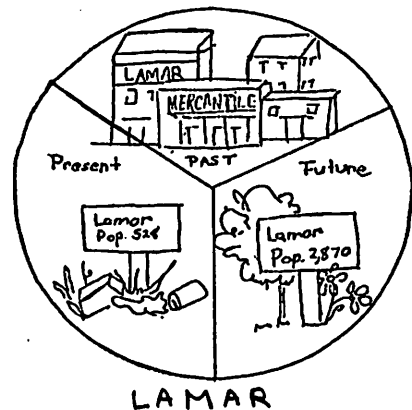
Three ways for local people to express pride in their community.

GRIFFITHVILLE STORY

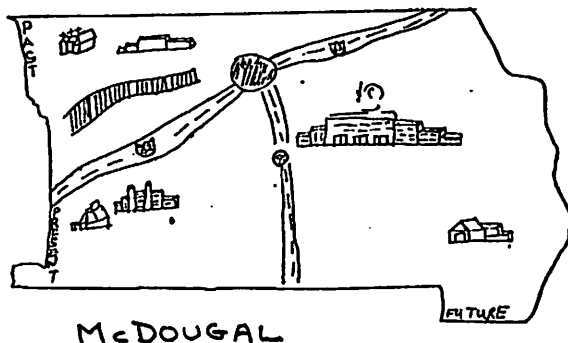
Griffithville was established on Griffith's farm. People have fond memories of the old jail house, the saw mill, the cotton gin, church meetings, singings and box suppers. The theatre, the old hotel and the friendliness seem to stand out in most people's minds.

We now have a new high school building and are proud of our ball teams. We are proud of our good people, our black top roads, our churches, our farming and our businesses. Our greatest accomplishment is our good water system.

The things we want are many and varied. A sewer system is our biggest need. Mosquito control, law enforcement, a fire department, cleanup control are also very important to us. Everyone agrees we need more pride in our town. We all want a better place for our children to grow up and become better adults.



"LET'S ALL WORK TOGETHER FOR A BETTER FUTURE FOR McDOUGAL."



DERMOTT: A FRIENDLY TOWN

Tune: Swing low, Sweet Chariot

Dermott was owned by blacks
Used to be everyone's town
Dermott while looking back
Dust keeps a falling down.

Dermott, we need industry
People's voting gotta be done
Dermott, we need industry
I know change has gotta come.

Dermott, we'll living fine
Prejudice has taken a fall
Dermott, it's a friendly town
We've got a fair share for all.

"I hope the enthusiasm generated tonight will continue for a long time."

-Griffithville

A DAY OF OURS

Tune: This Land is your Land

This town is your town, this town is our town
From the horse arena to the Black River Bottoms
From Calvins Crossing to the Pond Switch Byway
Swifton was made for you and me.

With the Cotton fields growing, the farmers are rolling
And the townspeople showing, and the ball team winning
And all around us are voices sounding
Swifton was made for you and me.



HORATIO'S COLORFUL HISTORY

The Good Days

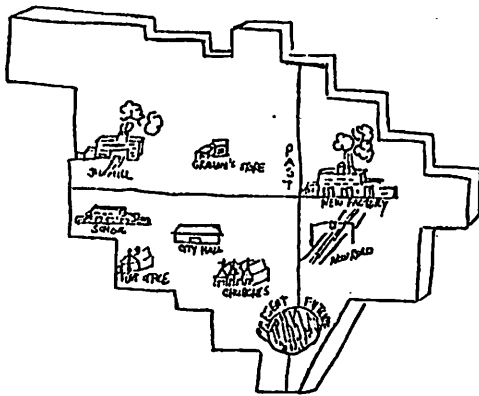
When Horatio was just a thought in someone's head, the idea was a small spark until Horatio came along. It grew along with strawberries and produce, and the KCS railroad, then came industries and a high school.

Growing

Many years later, Horatio was blessed with a good running water system, new businesses and factories, a newer school was built and a bank. The roads were improved. With more people came better law enforcement, and a better city park.

Hope

We hope that the community will work closer together for the advancement of Horatio. And everyone take interest in the town's problems and goals.



TRASK WOOD

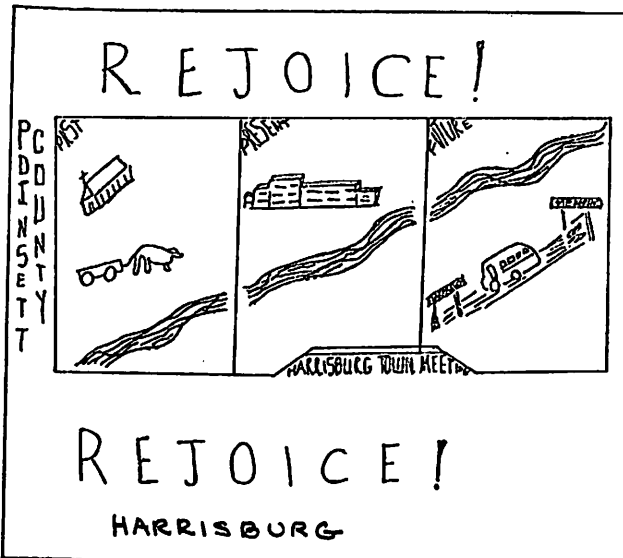
A SONG FOR PYATT

Tune: Row Row Row your Boat

Grow, grow, grow and thrive
Share your beauty
Mountains, streams, & trees and lake
People with a dream.

Railroad brings the lumber down
And milling helps our town.
Trash and garbage in the creek
Let's patch up the leak.

Fishing, boating in our lake
Could bring some dough to town
Fixing up our roads and streets
Could make us look real neat.



"I was surprised I enjoyed this meeting. I expected it to be boring."
-Huntsville

TOWN MEETING: ARKANSAS

CONTRIBUTIONS

Appreciation is extended to the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation and to the Texarkana National Bank for their financial support of the Town Meeting program. Special thanks is also given to the individuals, local businesses and participating communities for their financial donations.

The Town Meeting: Arkansas project acknowledges in addition the generous gifts of goods and services from businessmen and institutions across the state.

FOOD

Bonanza Steak House, Jonesboro, Little Rock
Captain D's Seafood, Little Rock
Coca Cola, Little Rock
Collucci's Italian Kitchen, North Little Rock
International House of Pancakes, Little Rock
Kentucky Fried Chicken, Clarksville
Main Liquor, Little Rock
McDonalds, Jonesboro, Little Rock, Pine Bluff,
Russelville, Texarkana
Minute Man, Batesville
Pizza d'Action, Little Rock
Pizza Planet, Little Rock, North Little Rock
Port City Produce, North Little Rock
Red Lobster, Little Rock
Sonic, Heber Springs, Searcy
The Shack, Little Rock
Shakey's Pizza, Little Rock
Shoney's Big Boy, Little Rock
Wendy's Hamburgers, Fayetteville, Little Rock

SERVICES

Dept. of Local Services, Little Rock
1st Presbyterian Church, Batesville
St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, Little Rock
Second Presbyterian Church, Little Rock
Standard Coffee Service, Little Rock
University Buick, Little Rock
Westover Hills Presbyterian Church, Little Rock

LODGING

Arkansas College, Batesville
Camelot Inn, Little Rock
1st Methodist Church, Mountain Home
Quality Inn, Little Rock
St. John's Catholic Center, Little Rock
Sam Peck Hotel, Little Rock
Sheraton Inn, Little Rock

PRINTING & SUPPLIES

Addressograph-Multigraph, Little Rock
Arkansas Democrat, Little Rock
Arkansas Paper, Little Rock
Elliott Office Machines, Little Rock
Freddie's, Little Rock
Graham's Blueprint, Little Rock
International Graphics, Little Rock
Insta-Print, Little Rock
Jiffy Print, Little Rock
Odom Enterprises, Maumelle New Town
Postal Instant Press, Little Rock
Sears, Jonesboro
The Storehouse, Jonesboro
Thurston's Printing & Stationery,
Little Rock

"The senior citizens
participated more than
I've ever seen before."
-Heber Springs

TOWN MEETING: ARKANSAS was created for local communities by the Institute of Cultural Affairs, a not-for-profit research, demonstration and training group concerned with the human factor in world development. The ICA staff and volunteer consultants in 103 American cities and overseas locations work with local sponsoring groups to coordinate program development and provide resources, training and follow-up services upon request. For further information contact:



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