

**A REPORT**  
**June 1978**



STATE OF ALABAMA

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

MONTGOMERY

GEORGE C. WALLACE  
GOVERNOR

April 20, 1978

Dear fellow citizens of Alabama:

The great American tradition of local democracy is an important foundation stone of our nation. When the people let their voices be heard, and help direct the affairs of our State, then our future is in good hands.

Since our recent American Bicentennial, Town Meetings have been held in every state under the sponsorship of the Institute of Cultural Affairs. During the month of May, towns across Alabama will be invited to hold a Town Meeting to decide the challenges facing the town, and to create proposals for practical civic activities to build a better community.

I am pleased to commend this program highly to my fellow citizens and to encourage your full participation. The benefits to us all from citizens interest and initiative will be many. I look forward to hearing about your Town Meetings.

Sincerely,

  
George C. Wallace  
Governor

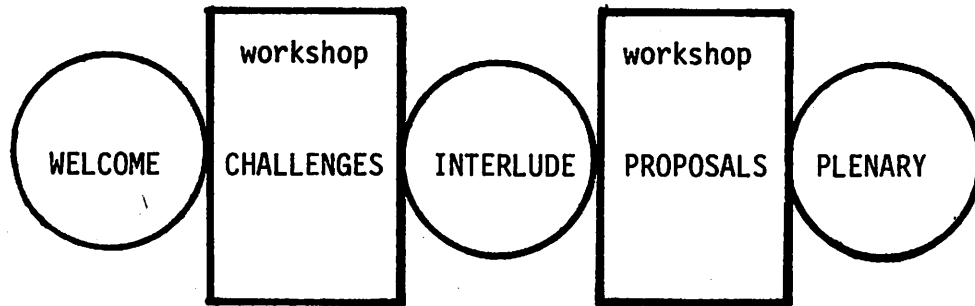
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# PURPOSE

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 a community has is its own people - their creativity and energy. This resource too often lays dormant, but when released is able to revitalize and rebuild human community more effectively than any private or public program ever attempted. 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.

The TOWN MEETING 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. It motivates participants to begin active cooperation in various projects, such as clean-up days, building renovation, and community services for youth and elders. Its effects are felt as a renewed community spirit pervades the whole community. Mayors often mark the TOWN MEETING as a turning point in the community. The TOWN MEETING encourages all citizens to put the care they have for their community into action.

# FORMAT



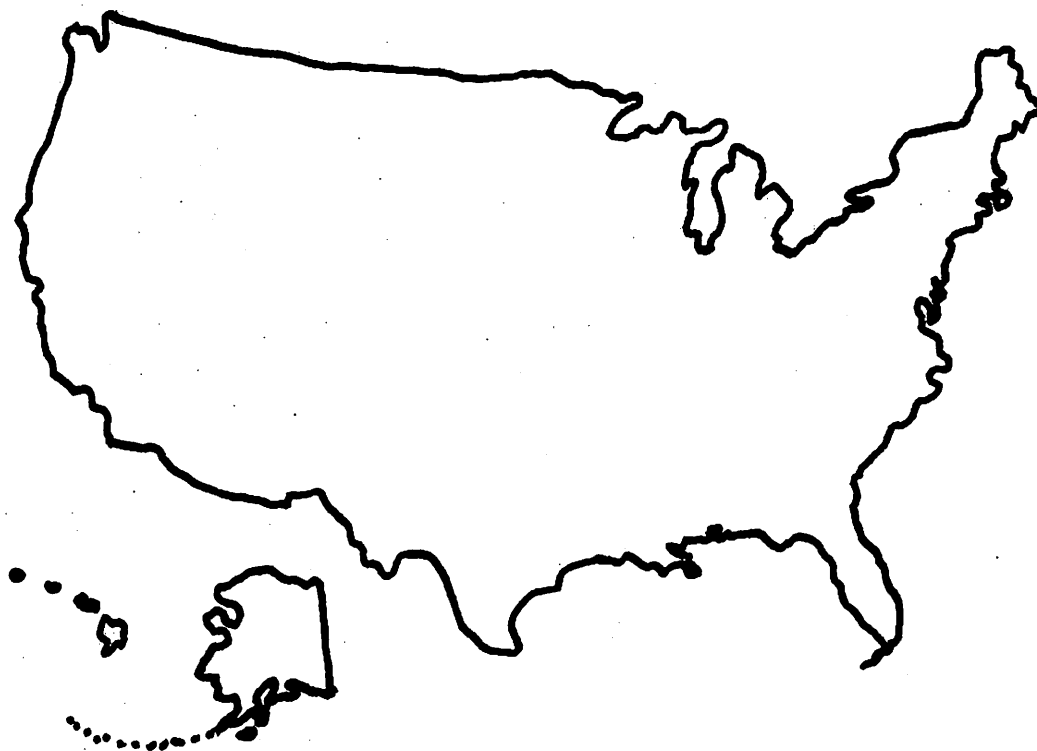
The TOWN MEETING consists of two workshop sessions, each introduced by a brief presentation. The citizens discuss their hopes and dreams for the community, identify for themselves the economic, political, and cultural issues, and then state the underlying challenges for their community's future.

An interlude follows with refreshments and community singing.

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 symbol, story and song.

The results of the workshop are reported at the closing plenary session where everyone receives a printed document of the meeting's results.

# USA: 4300 Town Meetings - held in every county



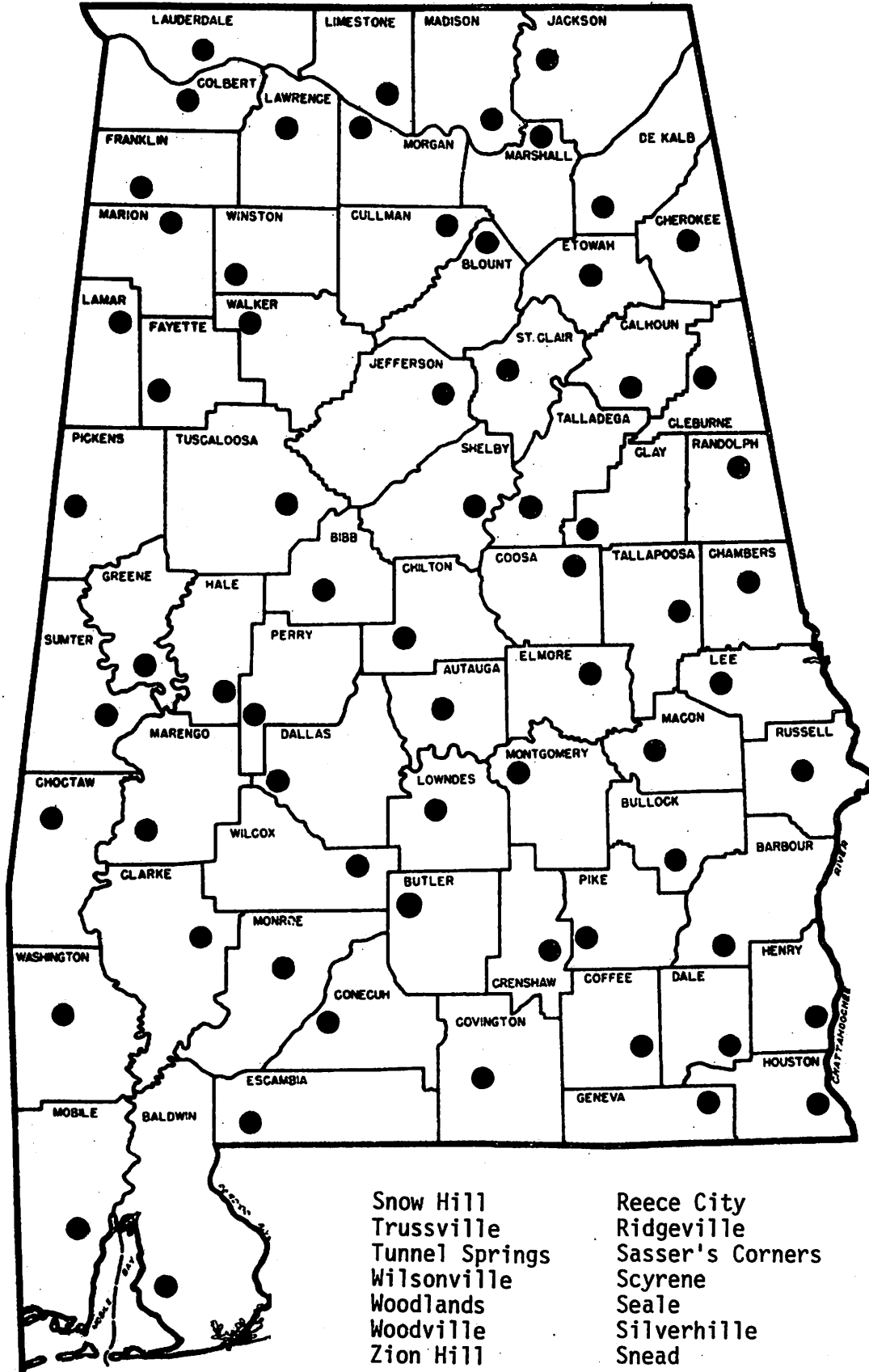
TOWN MEETING began in the Spring of 1974 as a program that brought together citizens of a community for a planning day. It was endorsed by the American Revolution Bi-Centennial Administration, under the name TOWN MEETING '76. 700 TOWN MEETINGS were held that year in urban centers in all fifty states. Then in 1977, in order to share this program with more communities, volunteers in each state made plans to do TOWN MEETINGS in each of the 3100 counties of the United States.

By June 1978 a TOWN MEETING had been held in every county of the United States - bringing the total to over 4300. Three-fourths of these events were held in small, rural towns.

Citizens in these towns were awakened to the social contradictions in their communities and saw how to move through them by careful planning and group action. Towns were strengthened in their own identity as they grasped their heritage, their uniqueness and their enjoyment in being neighbors.

# ALABAMA: 67 Town Meetings

## - held in every county



- Atmore
- Auburn
- Baileyton
- Beaverton
- Belk
- Belle Mina
- Bermuda
- Blue Springs
- Bon Air
- Brent
- Brookwood
- Camp Hill
- Carolina
- Cedar Bluff
- Central Autauga Co
- Central Mill
- Chatom
- Courtland
- Cox Heath
- Crossville
- Decatur
- Eclectic
- Enterprise
- Five Points
- Florence
- Forkland
- Goodwater
- Gordon
- Goshen
- Hackleburg
- Haleburg
- Heflin
- Hobson City
- Hodges
- Hollins
- Honeycut
- Kansas
- Lisman
- Lynn
- Malvern
- Maplesville
- Mobile
- Montgomery
- Mosses
- Muscle Shoals
- Napier Field
- Newbern
- Odenville
- Ownes Crossroads
- Perote
- Pickensville
- Princeton
- Rabbit Yard
- Snow Hill
- Trussville
- Tunnel Springs
- Wilsonville
- Woodlands
- Woodville
- Zion Hill
- Reece City
- Ridgeville
- Sasser's Corners
- Scyrene
- Seale
- Silverhill
- Snead

# CHALLENGES - a summary

## LIMITED ESSENTIAL SERVICES

- medical services distant from many
- small communities cannot support clinics
- water wells run dry in summer
- no garbage pick-up service

## LOCAL CITIZENS UNORGANIZED

- citizens unable to get behind local projects
- people wait on county to provide services
- few citizens attend council meetings
- many are not registered to vote

## UNENCOURAGED COMMERCIAL GROWTH

- land unavailable for new businesses
- roads are in poor condition
- few local jobs available
- no civic organization to promote town

## UNPLANNED LEISURE ACTIVITY

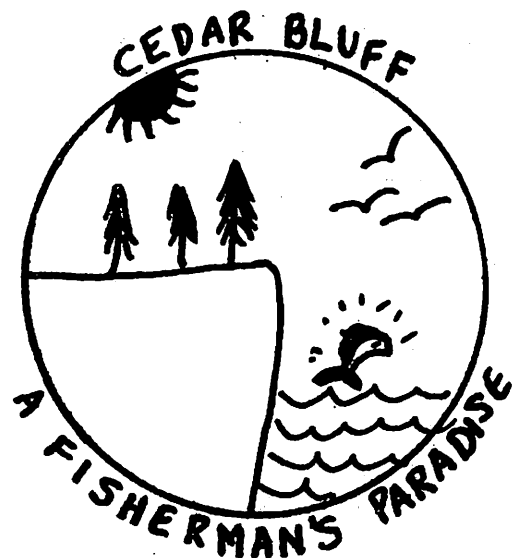
- no leadership for recreation programs
- municipalities own no recreation land
- no funds designated for recreation needs
- people drive long distance for recreation

## UNSATISFACTORY CITIZEN HOUSING

- senior citizen home repair loans not used
- low income housing needs upgrading
- absentee property owners neglect their property
- no new housing available

## RESTRICTED MUNICIPAL REVENUE

- unable to expand water and sewer lines
- sidewalks in poor repair
- towns are not incorporated
- no follow-up money after initial grant



*"This was the first time that so many of these people opened their mouths and talked"*

# PROPOSALS - a summary

## EXPANDING RECREATION PROGRAMS

- hold an old time fair with dancing and fiddlers
- promote community softball games
- youth hold recreation center fund drive
- build community park

## INCREASING COMMUNITY UNITY

- community-wide meetings
- organize community with street captains
- community civic association
- meet with elected officials and candidates

## EXTENDING COMMUNITY SERVICES

- set up a volunteer rescue squad
- fund drive for volunteer fire department
- visit a successful community clinic
- community water system

## PROMOTING ECONOMIC GROWTH

- local industrial board
- encourage shopping locally
- incorporate the community
- community planning board

## DEVELOPING COMMUNITY PRIDE

- July 4 clean-up day
- erect community welcome signs
- community volunteer board
- voter registration program

## IMPROVING EDUCATION PROGRAMS

- expand vocational skills courses in high school
- community employment fair
- night classes for adults
- survey for volunteer teachers



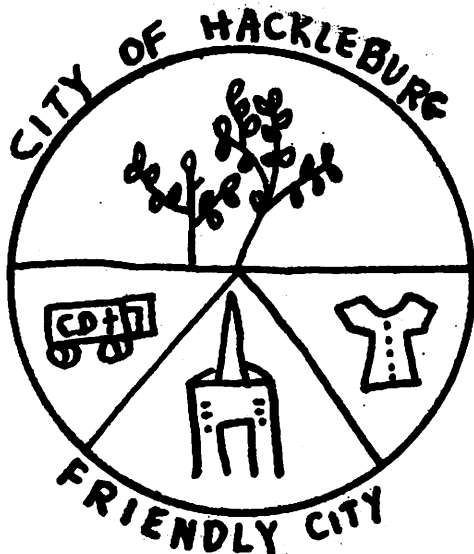
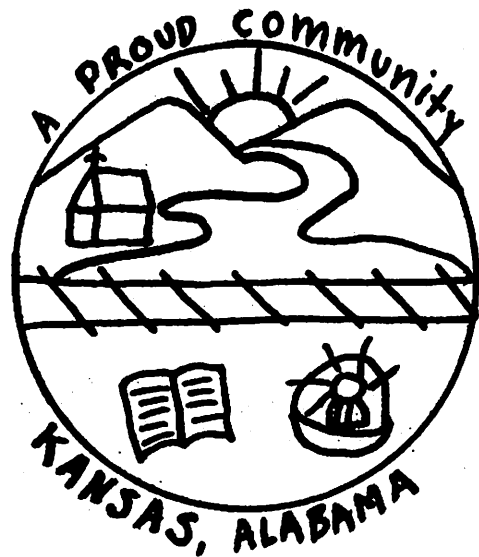
*"We need to get off our own cans  
and do something about our town"*

# SYMBOL, STORY, SONG

tune: When the Saints Go Marching In

Snow Hill people came a long way  
To build a new community  
Many years back lived an old man  
His name was given to this town  
The founder of education was  
Mr William J Edwards  
That's how the new was given  
to the Snow Hill community

Now Snow Hill people come together  
To build the new spelled facilities  
There will be a new day tomorrow  
When people start working together



tune: Down in the Valley

Down in the valley, valley so low  
Indians once roamed here a long time ago  
The settlers came in with wagons and hoe  
And built their homes in this valley so low

Down in the valley, valley so low  
Once it was Reeceville  
Now Reece City you know  
In Little Willis Valley, valley so low,  
There is a city you should watch grow

Beautiful Montgomery we used to think of you as a small country town and remember the cotton wagons drawn by horses who rested and drank at the artisan well in the square. We always looked with pride up the hill to the Alabama Capitol and down Commerce to the River. What fun it was to ride the open trolleys out to Pickett Springs and Camp Sheridan of the First World War. You got off the ground and into the skies and named the launching pad Maxwell Field. You were and are the home of many churches and colleges, the guiding light of our education.

D. Martin Luther King, Jr. began his non-violent movement here with you. He started some of the concern for the rights of all individuals. From this stemmed participation in our government, our schools, and civil rights for all citizens. Through this participation you have helped create communications between us all.

Today as always your skirts are adorned with the God-given beauty of flora and fauna, your golds and browns in fall and the glorious hues of azaleas and camellias in spring.

Your family has increased and your figure has spread but life is still good and we're looking ahead.



# CONTRIBUTORS

## MEALS

### Montgomery:

Church's Chicken  
Western Sizzlin  
Bar-B-Q Land  
Captain D's  
Wendy's  
Morrison's  
McDonald's  
Waffle House  
Sambo's  
Pizza Hut  
Dino's Pizza  
Shakey's  
Bonanza Sirloin  
Red Lobster  
Shoney's  
Krystal  
Basch Distribution Company  
Montgomery Beverage Company  
ARA Food Service Company  
Big Apple Discount  
Food World Stores  
Allstate Beverage Company  
Coca-Cola Bottling Company

### Gadsen:

McDonald's  
Omlette House  
Wendy's

### Birmingham:

Hungry Fisherman

## PROGRAM SUPPORT

Exxon, USA: Memphis

Generous Alabama citizens  
Many towns and communities

## HOUSING AND OFFICE

### Montgomery:

The Whitley Hotel  
Ramada Inn  
Westminster Presbyterian Church  
Holiday Inn: Selma, Greenville

## PHONES, PRINTING, SUPPLIES

### Montgomery:

Blount Brothers  
Alabama Development Office  
Copy Center  
John M. Patterson State Technical College  
Knowles Frank Agency  
Harbin's Office Supply  
Skinner Office Supply  
Southern Publications

Engineered Process Equipment: Birmingham  
John C. Calhoun State Community College: Decatur

## SPECIAL THANKS

Bill King  
Executive Assistance to  
Governor Wallace

Jack Galassini  
Galassini & Rogers Advertising

Dot Moore  
Montgomery citizen

Jim Cunningham  
Alabama Hotel Motel Association

Nat Sonier  
State Representative  
Mobile

# WHAT'S NEXT?

**TOWN MEETING ALABAMA** will continue to be offered to towns throughout Alabama - taking the event to several towns in each county. Towns may also want to have a second meeting as a way to involve more citizens. In the larger towns, TOWN MEETINGS will be held by neighborhoods to give the residents a closer identification with their city.

**LENS - LIVING EFFECTIVELY IN A NEW SOCIETY** is a think tank seminar for businesses and organizations. This demonstration of problem solving and human motivation methods may be used to unblock particular issues or to create plans for a new program.

**GLOBAL WOMEN'S FORUM** is a program especially designed for women. This program addresses the depth questions of identity and personal priorities as they relate to the world's and community's needs. The program uses workshop methods to draw from the women their own concerns.

**COMMUNITY YOUTH FORUM** is a one day program for youth that awakens them to their own sensitivity and enables them to reflect on the happenings of this century and how they might practically participate in the future.

**HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS** - Besides seminar and workshop programs the Institute of Cultural Affairs also assists in creating demonstration communities around the world. Twenty-four such show places exist in 20 nations. The Institute staff live in the communities for two years working with the people toward economic self-sufficiency and social-dependence. The town of Pace, Mississippi is one of these show place communities. Located in the upper Delta, it is a town of about 600 people facing typical problems of rural American communities. Last year a one week consultation was held involving hundreds of citizens and 50 guest consultants to help create a detailed two year plan for revitalizing the community. At the end of the first year fifteen major changes in the life and well-being of the community could be noticed. Within a half days drive of Alabama, Pace citizens always welcome visitors, work groups and short term staff.

"I have seen a spark of hope in the eyes of our citizens, both young and old, and a change in the town that we have long prayed for."



TOWN MEETING is offered under local sponsorship by a nationwide volunteer staff of specially trained community leaders. TOWN MEETING was developed 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 consultants in 47 American cities work with local groups to coordinate program development and provide resources, training and follow-up services upon request. For further information, contact ICA.

IN CONSULTATION WITH



THE INSTITUTE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

1925 Milam  
New Orleans, LA  
70115  
504 895 2810

1210 Peabody  
Memphis, TN  
38104  
901 726 1839