

**TOWN  
MEETING**



**A REPORT**  
**Spring, 1978**



STATE OF TENNESSEE

RAY BLANTON  
Governor

March 2, 1978

EXECUTIVE CHAMBER  
Nashville 37219

Greetings:

As Governor of the State of Tennessee, I want to take this opportunity to support and endorse the Town Hall Meeting concept. In the early days of this country, neighbors would come together to help each other build houses. The problems that we face now are complicated and in many ways frightening. However, if we can continue to come together to solve our problems, as our forefathers did to build houses, we will certainly be able to meet the challenges of the years to come.

I urge all Tennesseans to attend Town Hall Meetings and to become more involved in our democratic system of government. With full participation we can be assured of continued achievements in Tennessee.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature of Ray Blanton in black ink.  
Ray Blanton

## HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 177

By Gaia

A RESOLUTION urging Tennessee communities to initiate town meetings as a means of enhancing public participation in government.

WHEREAS, citizens throughout the United States are awakening to recognition of their responsibility for solving their communities' problems through local initiative; and

WHEREAS, there exists an increased need for local citizens to participate in making decisions which affect their future; and

WHEREAS, town meetings initiated by the Institute for Cultural Affairs at the national level in over 3,000 communities have proven their value in the examination of issues and development of practical proposals to address local needs; and

WHEREAS, it is in the public interest that encouragement and support be given to town meeting programs, which involve a broad cross section of the people in Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, That we commend the Institute of Cultural Affairs for its encouragement and initiation of town meetings as a means of strengthening the citizen participation in the governmental process of local communities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we urge that all communities of this state consider the town meeting for increasing their citizens' knowledge of local government and its programs and participation in the local governmental process.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be provided to Terrance McCabe and Ms. Pat Goad of Memphis, Tennessee.

ADOPTED: March 29, 1978



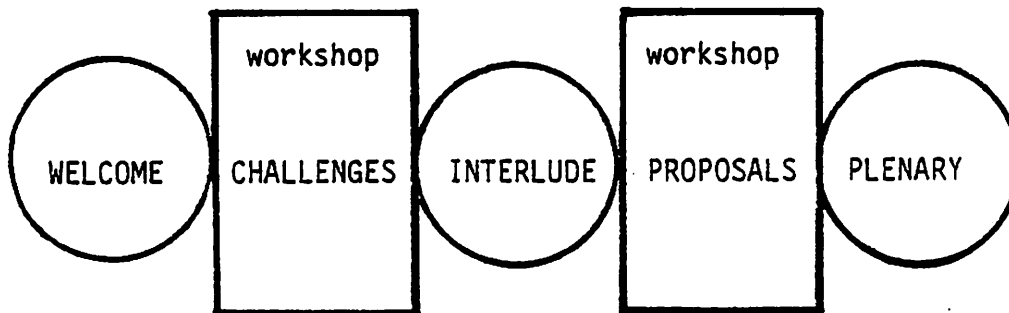
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

# 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



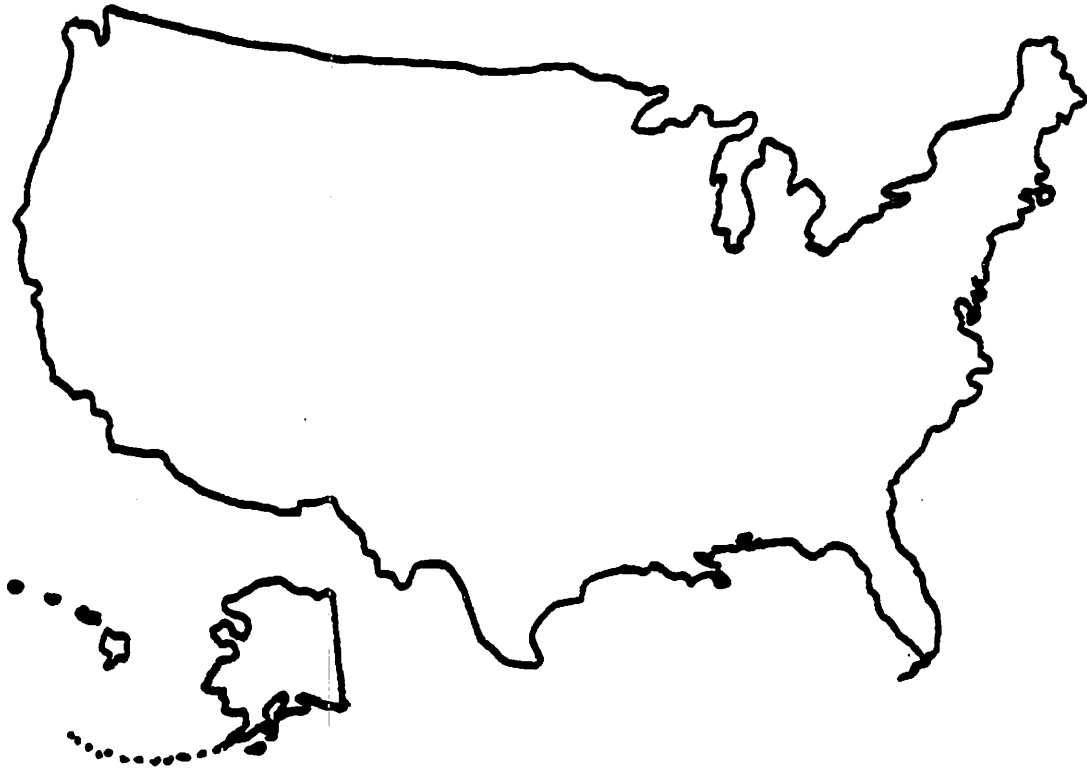
The TOWN MEETING consists of two workshop sessions, each introduced by a brief presentation. The citizens discuss their hopes and dreams for the community, identify for themselves the economic, political, and cultural issues, and then state the underlying challenges for their community's future.

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



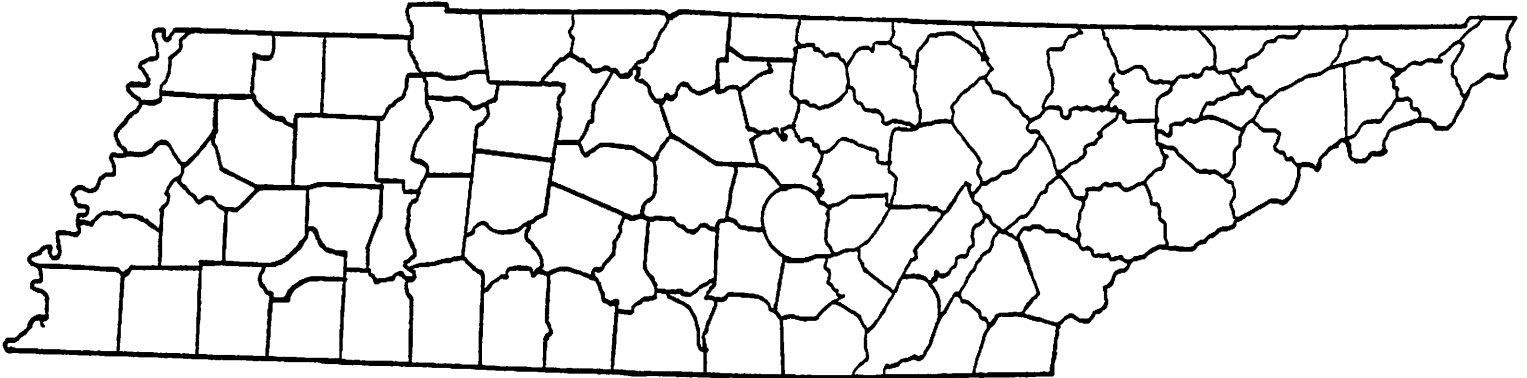
TOWN MEETING began in the Spring of 1974 as a program that brought together citizens of a community for a planning day. It was endorsed by the American Revolution Bi-Centennial Administration, under the name TOWN MEETING '76. 700 TOWN MEETINGS were held that year in urban centers in all fifty states. 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.

# TENNESSEE: 95 Town Meetings

## - held in every county



Memphis City-Wide  
Vol-Green, Memphis  
Longview Hts., Memphis  
Somerville  
Munford  
Ripley  
Dyersburg  
Ridgely  
Henry  
N.W. Gibson County  
Sunshine Community, Jackson  
Alamo  
Ralston  
Obion  
McLemoresville  
Douglass Community  
Holladay  
Eastview  
Grand Valley Lakes  
Henderson  
Savannah  
Lexington  
Parsons  
Ethridge  
Centerville  
Franklin  
Mt. Pleasant  
Clifton  
Linden  
Mountain City  
Luttrell  
Rutledge  
Blanche

Lynville  
Belfort  
Wartrace  
Eagleville  
Adams  
Kingston Springs  
Whitehouse  
New Johnsonville  
Red Boiling Springs  
Erin  
Brush City  
Union Hill  
Hartsville  
Clarksville  
Cumberland City  
Watertown  
Fairview  
Dickson  
Riverside Community  
Nashville  
Decatur  
Pikeville  
Spencer  
Alexandria  
Charleston  
Lynchburg  
Powells Crossroads  
Auburntown  
Dunlap  
Sevierville  
Flagpond  
Rogersville  
Sale Creek

Hillsboro  
Estell Springs  
Spring City  
Palmer  
Centertown  
Benton  
Knoxville  
Harriman  
Friendsville  
Madisonville  
Athens  
Oliver Springs  
Caryville  
Oneida  
Coalfield  
Pleasant Hills  
Byrdstown  
Jamestown  
Rickman  
Algood  
Sparta  
Watauga  
Cumberland Gap  
Newport  
Baileytown  
Morristown  
Sneedville  
New Market  
Bluff City  
Limestone  
Lenoir City

# CHALLENGES - a summary

## DETERIORATING LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

- historical sights not preserved
- property allowed to deteriorate
- livestock in city limits
- stores unpainted

## UNPLANNED EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

- low educational level
- high school drop-outs
- unexpanded adult educational programs
- using education for the benefit of all

## LIMITED FUTURE GROWTH

- road system won't support larger industry
- town can't compete with big city business
- lack of available local funds
- lack of adequate sewer, water and health systems

## INADEQUATE RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

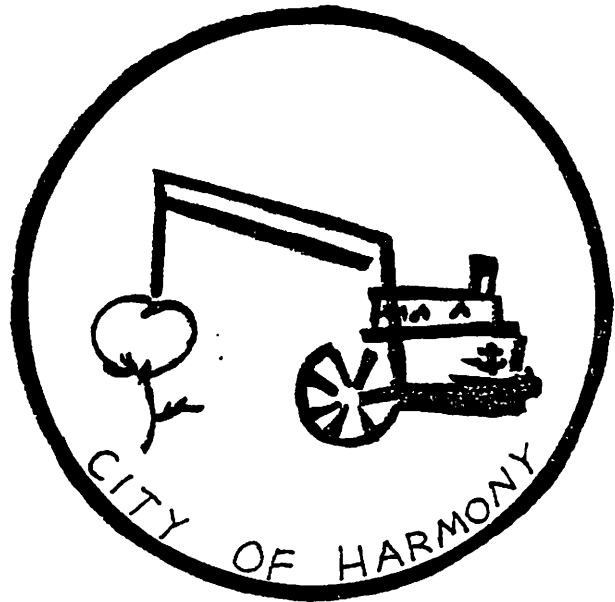
- finding land and facilities for family recreation
- lack of adequate senior citizen facility
- lakes, fishing, hunting not used by local people
- lack of church participation in recreation

## POOR BUSINESS POTENTIAL

- businesses are closing
- no factories or new sources of income
- the small population can't support big business
- people work out of town and support the town they work in

## UNINVOLVED COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

- prioritizing issues through projects
- low voter turn-out
- poor PTA attendance
- no long range town plan



Memphis, Shelby Co.

"Before this meeting I was scared of the problems. Now I see that others feel as I do and I'm no longer afraid."

# PROPOSALS - a summary

## INCREASE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

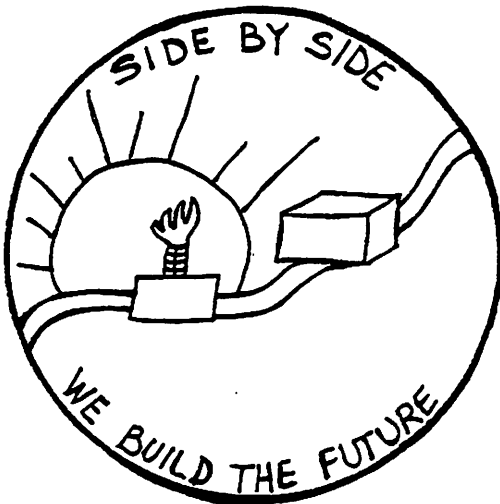
- bring back Labor Day parade
- community talent fair
- hold county-wide picnic
- hold street dance at end of clean-up week

## YOUTH-SENIOR CITIZENS ACTIVITIES

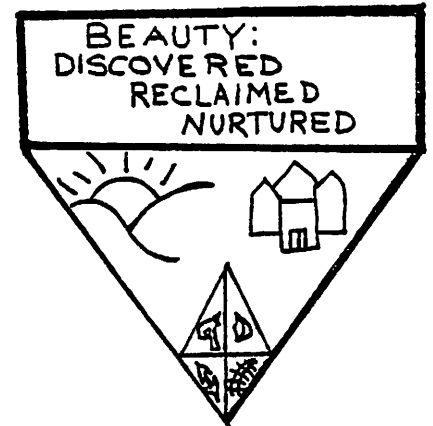
- provide facilities for a track
- form a carpool to transport senior citizens
- create effective youth sports groups
- expand senior citizens center

## HEALTH AND EDUCATION SYSTEMS

- form health/education facilities
- reduce the cost of medical care
- put black studies in school
- investigate getting a doctor



Mt. Pleasant, Maury Co.



Harriman, Roane Co.

"We learned that we could do anything-  
if we work together."

## BUILDING COMMUNITY PRIDE

- create community newsletter
- clean-up and renovation campaign
- advertise town's greatness
- clean-up, paint-up, fix-up week

## CREATING COMMUNITY STRUCTURES

- form community council
- form neighborhood block clubs
- intra-community job file
- create downtown revitalization group

## INCREASING CITY SERVICES

- establish fire protection
- extend city limits
- complete sewage system
- widen Main street



# Song

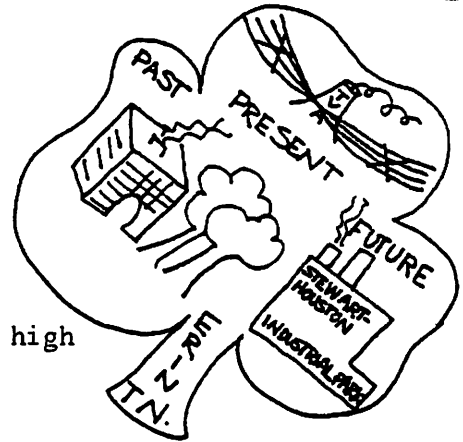
Ripley Town Meeting Song, Lauderdale Co.  
(Tune: Battle Hymn of the Republic)

Ripley Town was very good many years ago  
It served the people well when it began to grow  
Change was slowly brought about and still continues, so  
We shall struggle on.

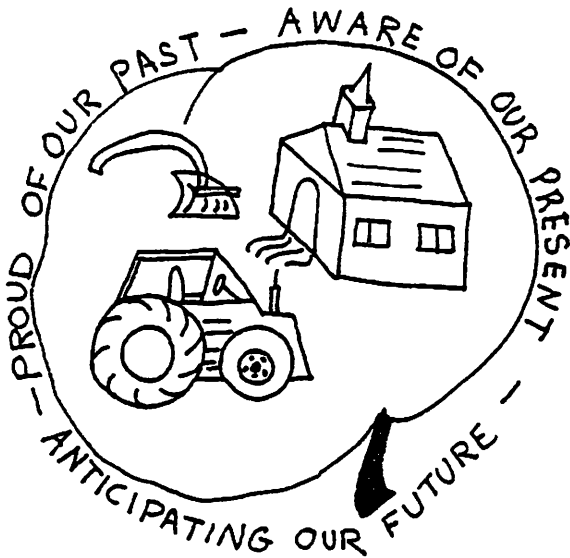
Our lives could be better still if it's God's Holy will  
People must have a willing heart and an open mind.  
We can build a better future if we take the time,  
Our town goes marching on.

We are climbing up the mountains that are rough and are high  
But if we keep on climbing we'll get there by and by.  
Don't you get weary until you reach the top,  
Our town goes struggling on.

Chorus: Glory, Glory, Hallelujah...



Erin, Houston Co.



Somerville, Fayette Co.

# Symbol

Harriman Town Meeting Song, Roane Co.

(Tune: I'm Lookin' Over a Four-Leaf Clover)

I'm lookin' forward to a town named Harriman  
That really wants to grow  
A place where beauty abounds ev'rywhere  
People together can show that they care.  
I'm lookin' forward to a day when people  
Will start to believe they can  
Realize potential and make a future  
Where we grow and expand.

# Story

In the early 1800's they came across the mountains - Elizabethan speech, pioneering spirit, unwavering courage - a sense of who they were and little else. But they were men and women of integrity.

They found a valley - rich in resources - waters' with healing powers - and soil rich and fertile. They used their minds and backs to utilize these resources and to acquaint the south and much of the other parts of our country with their discovery.

They planted and they built. They built cabins, developed the springs, and soon hotels sprang up as others learned of the water. And by the 1920's they came by buggy, by rail. by the Model T - but they came.

They utilized the rich soil and the virgin tender to produce the food and lumber needed for a growing community.

We still have the same resources. And it is hoped that the present population has leaders of similar spirit, courage and vision as our forebearers to build on the past and go forward to even greater achievements.

Really it wasn't the springs, or trees, or the soil, but honest people with dreams who made the difference - and it will take the same for our community to keep pace with the Twentieth Century.

Red Boiling Springs, Macon Co.

# CONTRIBUTORS

## MEALS

Angelos, Nashville  
Arby's, Nashville  
Armour Foods, Memphis  
Bonanza, Nashville  
Burger King: Memphis, Nashville  
Buring Food Group, Inc., Nashville  
Captain D's, Nashville  
Chao, Nashville  
Colonial Bread, Memphis  
Cork 'N' Cleaver, Nashville  
Granny's Oven, Nashville  
Houston, Nashville  
Ireland's, Nashville  
Jolly Ox, Memphis  
Judge Chambers, Nashville  
Krispy Kreme Donut Co., Nashville  
Krogers, Nashville  
La Baguette French Bread & Bakery, Memphis  
McDonald's: all over Tennessee  
Mando's of Tennessee, Inc., Memphis  
Mayer Myers Paper Co., Memphis  
Mid South Produce, Memphis  
Morrison's Cafeteria, Memphis  
Mrs. Drake's Sandwiches, Memphis  
Robert Orr & Co., Nashville  
Overton Square Corporation, Memphis  
Pizza Hut, Memphis  
Shoney's, Nashville  
Steart's Sandwiches, Nashville  
Tasty Sandwiches, Memphis  
Wendy's, Nashville  
Western Sizzlin' Steak House, Nashville

## TRANSPORTATION

Chevrolet Division of General Motors, Memphis  
Ford Motor Company, Memphis  
Pontiac Motor Division of General Motors, Memphis  
Pryor Oldsmobile Company, Memphis

## PHONES, PRINTING & SUPPLIES

A.R. Taylor Co., Inc., Memphis  
BLT Enterprises, Memphis  
East Tennessee State University,  
Johnson City  
1st Tennessee National Bank:  
Memphis, Nashville, Chattanooga,  
Knoxville  
Gestetner Corp., Memphis  
Hessey, Inc., Nashville  
Olivetti Corp. of America, Memphis  
PIP Printers, Nashville  
Sears Roebuck & Co., Memphis  
Tension Envelope, Memphis  
Xerox Corporation, Memphis

## LODGING & OFFICE

Downtown Presbyterian Church  
Hilton Inn: Memphis, Nashville  
Holiday Inn, Memphis  
Pilot House Motor Inn, Memphis  
Quality Inn, Nashville  
Ramada Inn: Memphis, Nashville  
Red Carpet Inn, Nashville  
Sheraton: Memphis, Nashville  
St. Mary's Villa, Nashville

Deep appreciation is expressed to Xerox Corporation for the printing of this report and to all the individuals, businesses and organizations for their support that made TOWN MEETING TENNESSEE possible.

# WHAT'S NEXT?

TOWN MEETING TENNESSEE will continue to be offered to towns throughout Tennessee-- 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 staff of the Institute lives in the communities for two years working with the people toward economic self-sufficiency and social independence. The town of Pace, Mississippi, is one of these showplace 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 few hours' drive of Tennessee, 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."

Pace, Mississippi

THE TENNESSEE STATE TOWN MEETING SONG

(Tune: "Hey, Look Me Over")

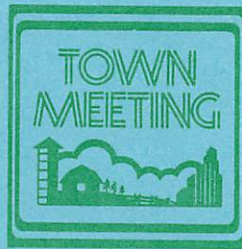
Hey! Tennessee  
What a great place to be  
'Mid all the mountains  
And rivers running free  
Makin' your music  
All through the day  
Blues and country, rock and roll  
With stories that are yet untold, so  
Look! Tennessee  
All your beauty so fair  
East, West and Middle  
The greatness that is there  
And you'll never give up  
You're volunteers  
Forever you shall stand  
Tennessee! We think you're grand!

Say! Tennessee  
We're a people so tall  
Memphis to Kingsport  
The nation knows them all  
The Chattanooga Choo-Choo  
The Memphis Queen  
Elvis, Handy, Minnie, Isaac,  
Grand Ol' Opry, Gatlinburg. So,  
Up! Tennessee  
Show the world how to live  
Show it a people with so much to give  
And we'll never give up  
We're volunteers  
Forever we shall stand  
Tennessee! We think you're grand!

(written by a native Tennessean)

TOWN MEETING: TENNESSEE 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:

ICA



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