

**Clark County Strategic Plan Steering Committee
Compiled SWOT Analysis
CCSP Subcommittees
December 15, 2006**

STRENGTHS

Economic Development

- Two Universities
- Geographic Location/Environment
- HSU Small Business Development Center
- Available Land
- Banks
- Highly Educated Population
- Available Quality Workforce/Work Ethic
- I30 Access/Railway/Airport
- Lakes/Rivers
- Low Crime Rate
- Workforce Training/Facilities (SWATLC)
- Public Education System
- Industrial Park/Technology Park
- Water Supply
- Low Rent Base Downtown
- Volunteer base
- Wood Industry
- Metalworking Industry
- Tourism Resources
- Internet Access
- Centerpoint FFA Program
- Lack of close competition
- Hospital/Healthcare
- Reasonable Tax Condition
- Quality of Life
- Raw material base (timber)
- State political representation
- Major metro areas within 500 miles
- Business development organizations/Community commitment
- Variety of small businesses
- Ability to promote hi-tech industry
- Desire to grow
- No pollution
- Beauty of area

Education

- Potential of partnerships with universities and the community

- Local foundation support for education at all levels
- Partnerships and opportunities to work with retired educators
- Quality and number of facilities
- Small class size and quality of instruction at P – 4 level
- Outstanding level of parent participation
- Vocational, industrial, university, and public school resources that are available
- Educator training opportunities available through universities and coop
- Ample facilities are available through local educational institutions
- Community support via the tax base for education
- Unique educational programs available in the local schools (FFA and EAST labs)
- Quality Pre-K programs are available county-wide
- Quality Special Education and Special Needs resources are available
- Geographic location
- Dawson Cooperative
- Southwest Technology Learning Center
- Education Renewal Zone program at HSU
- Presence and resources of two universities
- Education level of citizens

Healthcare

- There are good physicians in Arkadelphia
- Arkadelphia Medical Clinic is doing a good job of bringing in specialists to see patients locally.
- HSU Nursing Program
- Availability of Baptist Medical Center's Mobile Unit
- Transportation (i.e., SCAT buses)
- Two veterinary clinics in Arkadelphia
- Response time of ambulance/EMTs
- Location and services of BMC

Housing

- Availability of land to subdivide and develop
- Quiet neighborhoods/low crime rate/geographic location
- Good utilities and public infrastructure
- Cost to build appears to be less here than in other cities
- Low interest loans and helpful banks
- Appears to be adequate available housing in certain types/ages
- Low housing costs compared to other areas
- Colleges create need for housing/rental property
- Good mix of housing types/prices/styles/etc.
- Lots of builders
- Low land costs

- Availability of land already subdivided
- Low taxes
- Availability of construction materials
- Good retirement facilities
- Real estate seems to sell quickly
- Lots of realtors
- Availability of handicap accessible properties
- Low income housing opportunities

Leadership

- High voter turnout
- Active Civic Organizations
- Two Universities
- Experienced/Willing/Knowledgeable Leaders
- Wise counsel from seasoned persons
- Volunteer base
- Charismatic leaders
- Create a community feeling
- Diversity of leaders
- Good standing in the state
- State government involvement
- Church leadership
- 2025 Commission
- Educated/knowledgeable citizens
- Local Industry leadership
- New ideas
- Professionalism
- Retirees
- Good Core of leadership
- Availability of leadership training
- Ability to accept criticism

Tourism

Leisure Travel Market

- Retirees-potential relocation
- DeGray Lake, Camping, Hiking
- Rivers-Caddo, Ouachita for tubing, canoeing
- Golf
- Geology-rocks
- Arkadelphia Water Park
- Interstate Signage is needed/billboard advertisement
- Clark Co. Museum
- Gun Club/skeet shooting (need)
- Caddo Museum

- Tennis Center-OBU
- Horseback Riding Club-expand
- Bluffs
- The Gurdon Light
- Feaster Trails
- Camp Winnamoka
- Wildflowers (hwy.)

Cultural/Arts/Historical Travel Market

- Gurdon International Who – who
- Historic Homes and sites in Arkadelphia
- Comic Book archives @ HSU (Annette)
- Clark Co. Museum
- Music/Theatre performances at OBU and HSU
- Arkadelphia Little Theatre
- Jones Performing Arts Center
- Storytelling at DeGray SRP-Festival
- Iron Mtn. Marina Lights/Christmas
- Libraries-Genealogy study/University Libraries
- Summer camps held at Universities
- International Students/festivals at Universities
- Forest Festival-Gurdon
- Founder's Day-Arkadelphia

Business Travel Market

- Universities
- Dawson Educational Co-operative
- Quiet Peaceful location to have meetings such as DeGray, Iron Mtn. Rural environment is draw to city business people
- Safety, walking in area
- Proximity to large cities/Gateway
- Industries in County bring business travelers
- Find out number of rooms in Clark Co. (to do)
- Airport nearby
- Leisure market environment
- Amtrak

Sporting Events Market

- Tennis Center-OBU
- College sports-basketball, volleyball, football, softball (alternate football games where one or the other college is playing to have football every weekend during the season.)
- Sports complex will have soccer, baseball, softball fields
- Golf Courses

- Hunting/fishing
- Hiking
- Triathlon
- Lake/boating
- Youth sports/tourney
- Roads/highways for cycling, motorcycle rallies
- COMING SOON: Indoor rodeo arena
- Canoeing
- Chuck wagon races-Amity

Educational/Eco Tourism

- FFA farm (developing a hands on learning farm for school children grades 7-12)
- Ouachita Mountains-hiking
- Eagle watching
- Fall foliage
- Interpretive programs at DeGray SRP
- Capplinger Science Center at HSU (simulation facilities)
- Planetarium at HSU
- Indian culture/history
- DeGray visitors
- Clark Co. Museum
- Universities
- Lecture Series at universities
- Historical markers throughout the County (a historic marker tour is being developed)

WEAKNESSES

Economic Development

- Regional Location
- Complacency
- Transportation of commerce out of town
- Lack of vision
- Money to promote Clark County and local incentives
- Untrained workforce
- Available jobs vs. education
- Lack of theaters, other recreation and restaurants
- Good ole boys network
- Lack of housing
- Proximately to Little Rock
- Lack of restaurants and retail stores
- More Interstate exits
- Resistance to change and growth
- Lack of marketing

- Shopping variety
- College students in workforce
- Look of downtown stores and limited downtown area
- Interstate development
- Airport too small
- Lack of bond issues for economic development
- City and County regulations
- One party political system
- Lack of aggressive leadership in CCIC and C of C
- Personal property taxes and high sales taxes
- Lack of alcohol
- No rail spur in industrial site
- Declining population
- Lack of lease for businesses/ and other office space
- College students exit in summer
- City boundaries
- Transportation in recreation areas
- Lack of apartment space
- Lack of business incentives
- Lack of big tourist attractions
- Separation between counties and cities
- Lack of meeting needs of diversity
- Aging and retiring physicians
- No centralized recruitment effort
- Duplication of agencies
- Lack of attractions for college students
- No strong merchant organization
- Lack of younger leadership
- Poor communication
- Few large employers
- Appearance of county
- Minority businesses
- Not exposed to other sources of trades and businesses
- Vocational training
- Accountability of spending of local revenue
- No shopping centers
- Poor support of trucking
- Too much dependence on universities
- Failure to support humane society
- Failure to recycle

Education

- Socio-Economic issues affecting the view of secondary education
- Coordination of foundation efforts needs strengthening

- Partnerships and opportunities to work with retired educators
- Effect of private-schooled and home-schooled students on county districts
- Recruitment and retention of good teachers
- Need for expansion of early childhood program
- Expansion of technical program workers and retraining programs
- Curriculum that includes technology
- Partnerships and collaboration between education resources and industry
- Emphasize and develop local cultural opportunity programs in the colleges

Healthcare

- Lack of specialty care
- No surgeon in the county
- Physicians/difficulty seeing the number of patients needing service
- No OB/GYN care (people going out of town to have babies)
- BMC ER Care (waiting, doctors are “nonchalant”)
- Retirees placing increased demand on medical services
- Cost of medical care
- No availability of pharmacy on evenings, nights, Sundays
- Difficulty recruiting specialists and new physicians to Arkadelphia (includes unsuccessful recruitment of new veterinarians)
- Lack of mid-level medical care in the county, which could be provided by a Nurse Practitioner
- NO ability to fast-track services in the county
- No medical care in the Gurdon area
- No emergency service in the Amity area
- Lack of Spanish speaking medical professionals
- Difficulty recruiting/retaining nurses and pharmacists
- Emphasis on medical services in Arkadelphia rather than Clark County

Housing

- Lack of affordable housing for middle class families
- Lack of affordable land
- Neighborhoods appear to be in decline/lack of upkeep/debris
- Extend infrastructure/services/sidewalks/curb and gutters
- No design/development plans/poor zoning enforcement
- Codes are too restrictive to builders/local govt. cooperation with developers
- Lack of accessible housing for retirees/assisted living
- Lack of low income housing
- Housing costs are not commensurate with local economy
- No patio/garden homes/condos
- Appearance of rental property
- Rental property focused on small families/students
- Poor city/county road conditions

- Unsightly mobile home parks/poor placement/zoning
- Un-enforced covenants/lack of POAs
- Lack of upkeep/redevelopment of historic homes/properties
- Lack of professional builders
- Lack of speculative development/high development risk
- Cost of infrastructure
- Lack of cultural events/entertainment opportunities
- High construction costs
- Interstate prohibits sense of community by dividing town
- Need to grow through annexation
- Lack of competition in supplies
- Excessive cost of commercial property for development/expansion
- Poor location of existing/proposed neighborhoods
- Lack of High Speed Internet service
- No neighborhood parks
- More people interested in renting than buying
- Lack of Zoning/Codes in the county
- Lack of jobs
- Lack of capital for development
- Banks unwilling to work with individuals/developers
- Need safer neighborhoods for children/retirees

Leadership

- Lack of effective governmental offices, city and county
- Lack of cooperation
- Protection of own interests
- Poor communication
- Poor governmental structure
- Frequent turnover in schools and churches
- Lack of properly trained and educated governmental leadership
- Inability to develop and implement plans
- Two party system
- Lack of competition between officials
- Lack of outside experiences of officials
- Lack of transparency in government
- Lack of involvement of university faculty
- Pessimistic attitude among leadership
- Divided economic leadership
- Leadership not promoting commercial growth
- Lack of new personnel in leadership
- Questionable financial/economic choices
- Lack of representation
- Lack of interpersonal skills
- Lack of courage

- Resistance to change
- Length of service
- Lack of vision
- Lack of diverse people willing to serve
- Lack of innovative and alternative thinking
- Uneducated citizens in positions of leadership
- No long range planning
- Lack of evaluation of personnel and programs
- Relying on universities' sets of values
- Lack of programs for youth and young adults
- Lack of attractiveness for college students

Tourism

- Lack of funding
- Too much income/dollars are currently leaving the county
- Lack of coordination with city plan and Clark County Strategic Planning process
- Not utilizing Internet—need Internet hub/exchange to develop tourism and other economies to offer high speed Internet
- Lack of follow through and implementation; we have not held ourselves accountable
- Could lose hospital
- Weather
- Do not have tourists friendly operations, i.e. hours of operations
- Declining student enrollment
- Land availability and affordability to develop hotels/attractions/shopping
- Need better working relationship with University so they don't provide services community should be providing for students.
- Crime
- Lack of open mindedness and intolerance to new ideas or different ideas. There is an undercurrent of lack of openness and understanding of different beliefs. Everyone thinks that everyone else thinks like they do. Perception: community controlled by few.
- Spreading ourselves too thin—trying to do too many things
- Leadership-other than government—need positive input from business leaders, business owners, bankers, lawyers, etc.
- Lack of participation by public citizens, lack of involvement and apathy.

OPPORTUNITIES

Economic Development

- Stable cost of living
- Proximity of urbanized communities
- Stop retail sales leakage
- Geographic location related to major markets

- Recreational development
- Services of universities
- Opportunities for several target industries
- Retiree recruitment
- Sales tax opportunities for economic development
- Create a better entrepreneurial environment
- Improve access to broadband
- Retail development utilizing existing resources
- Development of private clubs
- Wider variety of housing
- Expanded transportation opportunities
- Retain college graduates
- Downtown redevelopment for residential/entertainment
- Stable political climate
- Unified efforts are possible
- Potential to be a regional leader
- Technology development/biodiesel
- Ecotourism

Education

- Tremendous local resources in education
- Resources to provide continuing education locally
- Facilities and resources to train the graduates that we want that will ultimately serve the needs of the community; just need to develop more/better programs – better IT /math programs to draw in industry.
- Set up to help college faculty learn the challenges of 9-12 teachers to see how the process goes – classroom swap.
- Take advantage of alternative certification instead of focusing on math/science ed majors
- Universities need to find a way to make Middle School and Secondary Education in math and science more attractive to compete for students – good students to become good teachers locally.
- Create list of retired teachers for resources
- Two 4-year colleges
- Two 2-year colleges
- Create more awareness in parents as to importance of education for their children
- Availability of data to drive and improve instruction
- Identify comparable counties and make comparisons on a wide variety of indicators: K-12, community, and college opportunities: determine what makes some successful.
- Continuity with programs we start
- Be less defensive about identified weaknesses – attack them head-on
- Apprenticeship Program – Metalworking Connection
- Basic Skills – Secondary: “Industry Basic Skills”

- Focus on Non-College bound students

Healthcare

- The Subcommittee addressing housing issues had just announced the addition of a sub-division (Billy Bunn) for adults 55 and older, offering a central location for medical services and a community center. There will be 42 separate homes, beginning with 15 in initial construction. A second sub-division (Teddy Gardner) is being planned with 100 housing units, not age limited. Both of these will offer opportunities for those in the medical field.
- We currently have some excellent specialists spending days at the Arkadelphia Medical Clinic and as long as clinics and practices like this exist locally, we can continue to attract these services. The threat is outlined above; in terms of predictions being that in years to come a Family Practice may be a thing of the past.
- Baptist Medical Center has the opportunity to provide a lot of services. The Threat is the fact that lack of funding limits the opportunity.
- The HSU Nursing Program has the opportunity to expand its program, to recruit more teaching staff and to expand the program. The fact that most students leave the area when they graduate may be addressed through involving students in local medical services for experience and possibly offering a stipend to assist nurses in completing their education, with an agreement that they would work in Clark County for a specified period of time. It was recommended that Spanish be added to the curriculum so that students and nurses could be encouraged to remain in the area and assist with the medical needs of the Hispanic population. The Threat is the fact that it has become very difficult to recruit teaching personnel/faculty at HSU.
- There is at least some opportunity to explore options to regionalize medical services with surrounding counties. The Nevada County Hospital closed a number of years ago. The hospital in Hope and Nashville are reported to be on tenuous ground. Bismarck has been trying to re-establish a local clinic for several years.
- Wellness is a focus in Arkansas, due to the concerns about obesity. We have a Wellness Center at HSU available to faculty, staff and students. And there are other isolated options. Funding for a community and/or county wellness oriented center of services, available regardless of income, was suggested. Wellness Insurance for the elderly is something “new” being offered by some companies.
- BMC could add beds, with additional funding. There is one hospitalist on staff and a second one coming in July. With this support the ER can more rapidly deter patients to mid-level providers (i.e. Hot Springs) and decrease the waiting time for less critical patients.

- Community Clinics that are open 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. four days a week are new options. Nurse Practitioners play a critical role in clinics and areas where doctors are not immediately available but they are being recruited by specialty clinics also.
- More technology is becoming available to streamline services. Companies such as Blue Cross are offering special programs and assistance to the people on their plans.
- The Clark County Health Department could be the focus of more services. This is the group that we will rely on in the event of a flu epidemic or similar crisis.
- We have basically a large “captive audience” at both OBU and HSU of students who are graduating with plans to pursue various medical degrees. We could actively recruit students, involve them in the community and, again, possibly offer a stipend or some other type of financial support in order to reach a contract or commitment to return to Clark County to practice, after graduation. We need to do a better job of selling our area to students to encourage them to return here to live and work. It was recommended that the first step in the process was to conduct “research” and find out who these students are.

Housing

- Low interest remodeling loans for improvements/additions
- Low interest loans/grants for low income owners for home maintenance
- Free design/architectural advice
- Free construction advice
- Home remodeling/home construction fair
- Tour of remodeled homes in the area
- More flexible setback and lot coverage standards to allow for larger homes
- Education on housing maintenance skills
- Education on home ownership basics
- Education on code requirements

Leadership

- Change in local political leadership
- Change in state/national leadership
- Better utilize the talents of persons brought in by our universities
- Take advantage of geography and history of area.
- Place emphasis on the available activities at the universities
- Become a “leader” community in SW AR
- Use local retreat centers
- Establish a leadership team
- Develop youth and adult leadership program
- Survey local business and industry for leadership needs
- Utilize existing leadership models/programs
- Stable government structure

- New legislative leaders/term limit opportunities
- Corporate support for leadership programs
- Local change as positive growth agent
- State surplus may offer new opportunities
- Need for community expansion as a growth agent
- Active political/social organizations provide connections/experience
- Large number of community organizations

Tourism

Physical Structures/assets needed to develop Clark Co. tourism program:

- Visitors Center (2) at each Interstate exit to the city
- Signage at all four entrances to city (Arkadelphia)
- Gurdon Light signage, parking and attraction development
- Renovation of Gurdon Train Depot
- Camping facilities at Gurdon Lake
- Parking downtown Arkadelphia, re-do Main Street parking, dangerous; secure grants to develop downtown; plus, directional signage to downtown
- Riverfront Development, piers, river walk, fishing access
- Create Dogwood trails by encouraging everyone to plant dogwood trees
- Bike trail development for experienced cyclists to include but not limited to Lake DeGray bike trail in Caddo Valley area; plus expand Fester Trail; paved trails connecting cities
- DeGray Lake Sports Center to have biking, orienteering etc.
- Miniature Golf at Central Park
- Public transportation-tour bus
- ATV trails-anywhere in county
- Hotel/motel development at Wal-Mart exit; Interstate development
- Outlet mall
- Bird watching center including an interpretive center and viewing locations
- Sports shops such as Bass, etc.

Governmental/Legislative Support /Changes to develop Clark Co. tourism program:

- Need legislative action to secure a funding stream, then can create tourist commission/board and hire executive director
- More chamber involvement in tourism development
- Secure a CLG (certified local government) need city to pass an ordinance and apply for funds for DT revitalization.
- Have city allow private sale of alcohol
- Have city establish zoning regulations
- In Gurdon. . . Kansas Rd-change from county road to state road
- Use Diamond Lakes Foundation \$\$ to do (better coverage) of a county page. Use it for co-op with tourism businesses or something.

Non-Tangible Development of Infrastructure needed to develop tourism program:

- Marketing to include brochure, website, DVD, comprehensive calendar of events, publicity.
- Special all county day to show off the county, perhaps a progressive festival
- Ball tournaments/sports tournaments, use the stadiums; soccer tournaments in Gurdon, utilizing the existing fields; AAU tournaments
- Drama festivals utilizing colleges, high schools and middle schools
- Canoe Races, skiing events – sports using the rivers and lakes
- Continuous yard sale or Trade Days-Gurdon
- Recruitment staff to secure sporting events and tournaments
- Need to offer export of local economy on the Internet

THREATS

Economic Development

- Growth of surrounding communities faster than ours
- Better jobs/pay in other places
- Declining work force
- Increased energy costs due to lack of competition/cost of traveling
- Revenue shortages
- Inadequate I-30 access through & to city
- Lack of growth affecting industries
- Lack of variety of eating establishments w/in 1 hr. drive
- Regional focus on other areas
- Global market place/job outsourcing
- Loss of population – older/youth/universities
- Saturated tourism in region
- Lack of state/federal involvement in recruitment/retention/growth
- Cost of living vs. local wages
- National/state economic issues
- State reputation
- State education level
- Apathy
- Healthcare availability & usage

Education

- Socio-Economic issues affecting the view of secondary education
- Coordination of foundation efforts needs strengthening
- Partnerships and opportunities to work with retired educators
- Effect of private-schooled and home-schooled students on county districts
- Recruitment and retention of good teachers
- Need for expansion of early childhood program
- Expansion of technical program workers and retraining programs

- Curriculum that includes technology
- Partnerships and collaboration between education resources and industry
- Emphasize and develop local cultural opportunity programs in the colleges

Healthcare

- A threat that is considered to be “looming large” in the next 5-7 years is related to the fact that a large contingent of the current physicians came to Arkadelphia at roughly the same time and will be retiring at the same time. There should be some serious concern given to the fact that there is no guarantee that new physicians will be moving in to replace them. The competition for new physicians and the salaries for both new graduates from medical school and physicians already in practice are rapidly growing. We will be competing against sub-specialties that make very lucrative offers to physicians and will likely attract many, decreasing the number that will be going into family practice in rural areas.
- We currently have some excellent specialists spending days at the Arkadelphia Medical Clinic and as long as clinics and practices like this exist locally, we can continue to attract these services. The threat is outlined above; in terms of predictions being that in years to come a Family Practice may be a thing of the past.
- We do not have enough volume (demand for services) to support a local surgeon so people go to hospitals outside the area for surgery. Ultimately they begin using services outside the County.
- Baptist Medical Center has the opportunity to provide a lot of services. The Threat is the fact that lack of funding limits the opportunity.
- The HSU Nursing Program has the opportunity to expand its program, to recruit more teaching staff and to expand the program. The fact that most students leave the area when they graduate may be addressed through involving students in local medical services for experience and possibly offering a stipend to assist nurses in completing their education, with an agreement that they would work in Clark County for a specified period of time. It was recommended that Spanish be added to the curriculum so that students and nurses could be encouraged to remain in the area and assist with the medical needs of the Hispanic population. The Threat is the fact that it has become very difficult to recruit teaching personnel/faculty at HSU.
- See above. If we maintain the status quo/a local hospital without pursuing the opportunities of merging services, our hospital may go into the decline that we have seen in other counties.
- In terms of BMC and related services, the following was considered: medical services are generally under funded; there are more uninsured people seeking medical care resulting in more write-offs/increasing costs; more people with no health plans; the hospital is overburdened by expectations in the face of no tax support; the medical profession is changing; specialty clinics are the future; lifestyle changes will dictate that more medical school graduates become specialists; there are more

foreign graduates; the hospital may not be able to support in-patient beds in the future; medical school graduates are looking for salary guarantees; solo physicians are going “out”; recruitment of hospitalists to work the ER; 5% decrease in Medicaid payments; pharmacists and nurses are equally difficult to recruit to this area.

- Community Clinics that are open 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. four days a week are new options. Nurse Practitioners play a critical role in clinics and areas where doctors are not immediately available but they are being recruited by specialty clinics also.
- Two local dentists just retired and many of the local dentists are the same age/same future problem as anticipated with doctors. The status quo is good in Arkadelphia and Amity but Gurdon does not have a dentist.

Housing

- Perception that the county does not need to change
- Loss of population
- Lack of quality jobs
- Weak city/county leadership
- Rental property not maintained
- Retiree housing
- Lack of pride in property appearance/upkeep
- Streets and entrances are not attractive
- Code restrictions keep development from occurring
- Lack of housing in the \$100K to \$175K range
- Retention of young people
- Current Chamber of Commerce is ineffective
- Tax leakage
- Cost of living is too high

Leadership

- No teamwork at all levels
- Apathy
- Lack of money for training
- Loss of younger population in rural areas
- Local & national economic conditions
- Overall fear of change
- Geographic association with economic/population decline
- Loss of population/leaders-aging population
- Lack of diversity
- Low priority of participation in community

Tourism

- Lack of funding
- Too much income/dollars are currently leaving the county

- Lack of coordination with city plan and Clark County Strategic Planning process
- Not utilizing Internet—need Internet hub/exchange to develop tourism and other economies to offer high speed Internet
- Lack of follow through and implementation; we have not held ourselves accountable
- Could lose hospital
- Weather
- Do not have tourists friendly operations, i.e. hours of operations
- Declining student enrollment
- Land availability and affordability to develop hotels/attractions/shopping
- Need better working relationship with University so they don't provide services community should be providing for students.
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- Leadership-other than government—need positive input from business leaders, business owners, bankers, lawyers, etc.
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