

SIFTINGS HERALD

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

From the Plan, EDCCC emerges

The following is the second of a series of articles informing the public on how the county's economic development effort is set up.

By Joe Phelps

Siftings Herald

In 2007, a group of community leaders formed the

Clark County Strategic Plan, a non-profit organization set up so the county could possibly see measurable, tangible results in growth by 2017.

One of its first and main goals was to push for a seven-year, 1/2-cent sales tax that would fund a public agency to consult with in-

dustries and, hopefully, get them to locate in Clark County to create new jobs and generate a growth in population.

After an overwhelming percentage of voters passed the tax, that public agency — the EDCCC — was born.

The Economic Development Corp. of Clark Coun-

ty acts much like a Chamber of Commerce, only it is funded by tax dollars rather than private dues from businesses and Chamber members. It is also on the same level as the Clark County Industrial Council, which also depends on private funds and memberships. The 1/2-cent sales tax is expected to

bring in \$1.25 million annually to fund the EDCCC, and is to be used only for economic development purposes.

Of that projected \$1.25 million, the Quorum Court formulated the EDCCC's operating budget. The

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business for the EDCCC. Harvel left the EDCCC and Clark County in 2009, and Carrier was later chosen to head the organization.

In 2009, a state law was passed that allowed public-funded organizations such as the EDCCC to boost its number of voting members, setting the limit at 15. Before Harvel left, he suggested that the board make the change, which was then approved by the Quorum Court.

Now there are 15 voting members (who were appointed by Daniell and approved by the Quorum Court) and minimal advisory members, which include presidents of chambers of commerce, the county judge and state legislators whose district includes any part of Clark County.

Another change made last year was the frequency of meetings. It initially met monthly, but now it meets quarterly.

Harvel was best known in Clark County for reshaping the organization of all economic, business or industrial development organizations in the county. He set up the Arkadelphia Regional Economic Development Alliance, the umbrella organization that includes and unifies the EDCCC, the CCIC and all chambers of commerce in the county. The idea of the Alliance is to funnel the EDCCC's public funds into a public/private entity that, in turn, aids in the operation of the chambers of commerce and the CCIC. The CEO of the EDCCC is also CEO of the Alliance, and that person answers to the voting members of each panel.

budget is as follows:
70 percent for capital, incentives and reserve fund (\$875,000)

12 percent for business retention and expansion programs (\$150,000)

11 percent for administrative costs (salaries and benefits, employee-paid taxes and unemployment insurance) — (\$137,500)

7 percent for purposes of expected and normal operating expense (\$87,500)

The tax, however, has been collecting more than what was projected. About \$1.4 million was collected in 2008.

Five unpaid voting board members were appointed by County Judge Ron Daniell and approved by the Quorum Court to head the EDCCC. It was in the EDCCC's blueprints that the board include leaders who would provide equal representation for the entire county (based on demographics such as race, gender and area of representation).

The original voting board was: Eudias Goza, Conner Eldridge, Becky Jester, Frances Nelson and Randy Sorrells. The advisory board nominated which office each member would hold.

Shortly after the EDCCC was formed, Paul Harvel was hired as chief executive officer of the organization. Harvel was known throughout the state as a successful Chamber of Commerce president.

Harvel brought on board with him Shawnie Carrier to assist him in day-to-day