

# Strategic Development Plan

## Tamerica Management chosen to facilitate plan for Clark County growth



Ed Bee, left photo, made the presentation for Tamerica at last night's meeting. Among those in attendance were: Rick Mays, with microphone, and Mark Overturf, in the photo above; Martha Dixon, left in bottom photos; Dr. Daniel Grant; and Brenda Hagerich.



By DONNA HIXON  
Sittings Herald

Lockwood Greene made the presentations.

The strategic planning process can move forward, Tamerica Management Co. has been chosen, at a meeting on Tuesday, as the facilitator for Clark County's Strategic Development Plan.

The Clark County Strategic Development Committee's goal is to improve and enhance six aspects of Clark County, including economic development, education, health care, housing, tourism and leadership. Tuesday night's meeting was the third concerning the plan.

Nearly 200 people voted Tuesday night after hearing presentations from both Tamerica and CH2MHill/Lockwood Greene. Ed Bee, president of Tamerica, and Jennifer Tanner of

According to Dr. Wesley Kluck, co-chairman of the project, nearly 75 percent of those who voted supported the hiring of Tamerica. The firm will be paid through grants from Southern Bancorp, the Ross Foundation, the Olds Foundation and the Cabe Foundation.

Tamerica, based in Mandeville, La., will bring four consultants to Arkadelphia to create "practical, achievable goals," Bee told the crowd during his presentation. "Our philosophy is to change communities, not plan them."

He presented several statistics about Clark County, including figures showing the county's population declined nearly 3 percent from 2000 to

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2005.

He said the county's racial makeup is changing due to the migration of persons born in other countries who choose to live and work here. He said the county had gained 935 citizens who were born in the United States, 246 who were born in other countries and 91 citizens due to natural population growth.

Other factors are also changing, Bee said. In years past, most community growth could be attributed to the addition of manufacturing facilities in an area. While manufacturing can still spur growth, the types and methods of manufacturing have changed, he said. "Two-thirds of all new jobs in the 1990s were in the technology sector."

To help Clark County, Tamerica and Bee's team will focus on setting priorities and using available resources to spur growth. "There's been a lack of focus on resources in the community," he said.

Clark County will also be compared with other communities facing similar issues, and strategies may be copied or modified for use here, Bee said. In addition, Tamerica plans to work with the City of Arkadelphia, which is now in the process of updating its Comprehensive Use Plan so that work is not duplicated.

Officials from Tamerica plan to meet

monthly with local steering committees, he said, to ensure the process stays on track. Once the plan is developed, Tamerica's staff will guide Clark County through the implementation process and help make modifications as necessary.

After the two presentations, Kluck and co-chairman, Dr. Alan Wright, told the group that the two of them and a few others checked the references of the two firms.

"All were good. There were no bad recommendations," Kluck said. "They are both well-qualified firms."

Some of the persons attending the meeting expressed their opinions of the presentations. Rick Mays, pastor of Trinity Temple Assembly of God, urged the people to choose the firm that will develop a plan built on "the positives" of our community. "Let the problems take care of themselves," he said. He also reminded everyone that no matter which firm was chosen, "the firms are not responsible for the implementation of the plan."

Many audience members pointed to Bee's use of local statistics in his presentation, while, in their opinions, Tanner's was more generic. "You could tell he had done his research about Clark County," one person said.