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Dr. Kenneth Harris, right, and Dr. Stan Miller, both of Arkadelphia School District, meet with members of the education subcommittee of the Clark County Strategic Plan Tuesday evening. The group decided to have their first subcommittee meeting on Oct. 3 at 6 p.m. in the boardroom of the Arkadelphia School's Administration Building. All interested parties are invited to attend and participate.

Tamerica: Clark County population growth stagnant

By DONNA HILTON
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Clark County has seen virtually no population growth in the last 10 years, according to information gathered by Tamerica, a consulting company hired to facilitate the Clark County Strategic Planning process.

Ed Bee, president of Tamerica, presented the information to the planning committee Tuesday night at Central Primary School.

Tamerica compared Clark County with five other counties, four in Arkansas and one in Mississippi, and with the state and nation. All the counties chosen for comparison have similar popula-

tions or qualities to Clark County.

Those comparisons were made with Arkansas County, which includes Stuttgart; Johnson County, Clarksville; Lafayette County, Miss., Oxford; Pope County, Russellville; and White County, Searcy.

According to the statistics, Clark County's population was 23,038 in 1994. In 2004, it was 23,055. Only Johnson County's population decreased in the same period, from 21,199 to 20,115, a loss of 5 percent. The other counties' populations increased by more than 10 percent. Arkansas' population increased by 10 percent and the nation's by 12

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percent.

Clark County has a larger percentage of population 65 and over than all counties. Clark also has more 18-34-year-olds than all counties except Lafayette, Miss.

That could be seen as a very valuable resource to Clark County, Bee said. "Some communities are actively recruiting those folks to keep their community thriving."

Employment trends show Clark County's unemployment rate has been higher than both the state and national averages for the last several years, Bee said. That relates to the decline in local new jobs, he said. From 1998 to 2004, the county has seen significant losses in manufacturing jobs, finance and insurance positions, wholesale trade and con-

struction. However, small increases were seen in forestry and fishing, professional and technical services, health care, transportation and retail trade.

Per capita income continues to be lower than state and national levels in Clark County. In 2004, the per capita income in Clark County was between \$20,000 and \$25,000, Bee said. The state average is just over \$25,000 and the national average is nearly \$35,000.

Compared to other counties, only Johnson County's income was lower than Clark County. Arkansas County featured the highest per capita income among the counties at nearly \$30,000.

For more facts and figures presented during the meeting, see www.clarkcountyplan.org and click on data.