

# Survey gives leadership low marks

## Community's strengths, weaknesses discussed at CCSP meeting

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Residents of Clark County feel the community has many strengths, including low crime rate, air quality and adequate health care, but are dissatisfied with local government and leadership. The results of a survey were announced Tuesday evening during the county's Strategic Planning Committee meeting at Central Primary School.

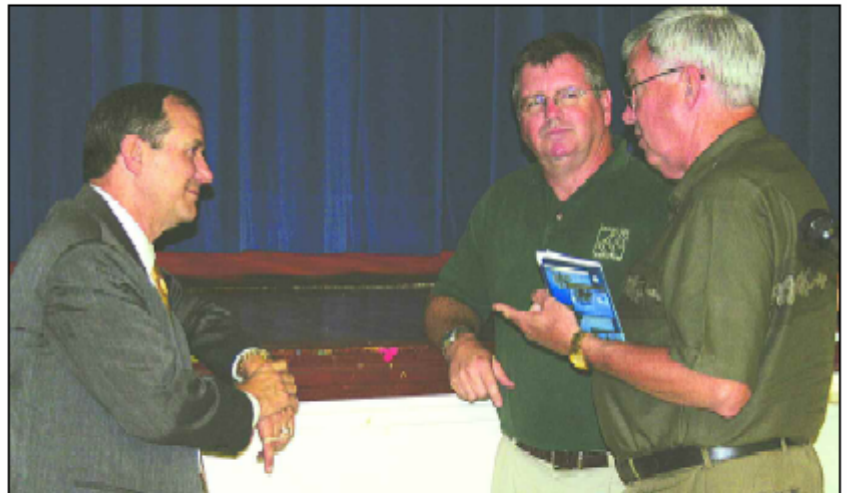
The results were from a community-wide survey and were tabulated by Ed Bee and personnel from TaimERICA, a consulting firm hired to facilitate the planning process.

Of the 1,221 responses, the majority of those who completed the survey were residents of

Arkadelphia. The same survey has been used by TaimERICA in other communities, Bee said. Many of the items in the Clark County survey received more votes than in any other in TaimERICA's history of using the survey, Bee said.

Among the strengths listed in the "Quality of Life" section of the survey, 56 percent chose the level of crime as a strength, while 52 percent felt the level of air quality was a strength. The other two strengths in that category were attractiveness of physical environment, 34 percent; and adequate health care, 32 percent.

Specific weaknesses listed in that category were: The rate of population growth in the county, 77 percent; presence (lack



Ed Bee, left, talks with Jerry Simmons, center and James Calhoun, after the Clark County Strategic Planning Committee meeting. The meeting included the results of a recent survey compiled by Bee's associates at TaimERICA, the consulting firm hired to facilitate the process.

of) major sporting events, 57 percent; level of cultural activity and facilities, 53 percent and availability of moderate

cost housing, 51 percent.

There were no strengths in local government listed in the survey results. However, sev-

eral weaknesses were listed with high percentages. The

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item receiving the most votes was the lack of long-range planning for municipal improvements and capital budgeting. Next was the lack of local planning and zoning followed by availability of community and local government information online. The local government's annexation policy was cited by 49 percent of the respondents as a weakness, and 43 percent indicated the lack of cooperation of local government with business was a weakness.

With no reported strengths listed in the local leadership category, the chief weakness listed, 70 percent, was the level of funding for economic development programs. The next weakness listed, at 64 percent, was the lack of citizen awareness regarding local development programs.

All weaknesses listed in the category received more than 50 percent of the total response. The others and their percentages were: Leadership commitment to economic development, 62 percent; communication and cooperation between various organizations, 57 percent; cooperation with other develop-

ment organizations serving the area, 55 percent; and involvement of both the public and private sectors in development programs, 51 percent.

In the Workforce category of the survey, the availability of unskilled and semi-skilled workers was listed as a strength, while the availability of quality jobs for the local workforce was seen as a weakness by 78 percent of the respondents. The wages and salaries paid in the county was also considered a weakness by 70 percent of those completing the survey.

Forty percent of those taking the survey cited local major highways as a strength, but only Arkadelphia residents considered commercial air service in Little Rock as a strength, Bee said. Among the weaknesses listed in transportation were the lack of public transportation, 68 percent, and the condition and maintenance of local streets and roads, 38 percent. Other weaknesses cited were the lack of public parking in commercial areas, 33 percent, and the availability of rail service for industrial sites, 32 percent.