

**WASHINGTON COUNTY TOWN HALL MEETING  
SCRIBE NOTES  
DECEMBER 9, 2008**

Six Main Areas – First Voting Round Results

Health Care = 8

Infrastructure = 4

Workforce Development/Education = 2

Housing = 2

Tourism = 1

Transportation = 1

Discussion Points

**HEALTH CARE**

- Mental health remains a care issue, especially children's care
  - Levy has failed numerous times for funding care options
- Aging population is a concern – state funds remain critical to offering care options
- Community Health Council has three projects in mind:
  - Provide a free clinic for uninsured residents (there are 8,000 uninsured under 65)
  - Expand space and services of Dental Clinic
    - Hire new dentist, hygienist
    - Regular appointments booked until June 2009, space available for emergencies
  - Childhood obesity awareness/prevention
- Funding is difficult to find for free clinic – sliding fee scale method is challenging
- Access to mental health services is limited
  - No levy passage means no funds available
  - Medicaid takes over if client is uninsured

**HOUSING**

- Affordable housing options are limited
- Habitat for Humanity doing well, needs more land ready to build on
  - Already developed with water/sewer, etc.
- There is more need than resources
- Washington-Morgan County Community Action is an asset (offering many programs)

- Floods of 2004-2005 took away some available housing stock – has not been replaced
- Homelessness is a different problem in Appalachia
  - Families living together, friends taking one another in
- EVE is an asset
- Joe Gage at Buckeye Hills – Area Agency on Aging has written several grants to assist with foreclosure, homelessness
- Increasing need for senior housing
  - Especially assisted living facilities

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

- Large financial need
- Rural population shift adds to cost
  - More expensive to develop rural land than urban
- Broadband access critical, yet difficult to obtain due to rural location
- Sanitary sewer remains a large need

## **EDUCATION**

- Due to high cost of education, there is a lack of focus on employer needs
  - People are worried about paying off their education loans, rather than thinking about what their employer needs
- There remains an unfilled demand for high-skilled jobs (welding, plumbers, etc.)
  - More low-paying jobs being filled (service industry)
  - Lack of interest in training for high-skilled trades
  - Lack of interest among young people in planning for career/future jobs
- Difficult to reach young people with message of career opportunities
- Certification costs are too high for unemployed/underemployed to achieve
- Remains an overall emphasis on college rather than locally-needed skills that still pay well

## **TOURISM**

- “Country Tourism” is a new option worth exploring

- Wayne National Forest, trails, rivers are assets in this category
- Need to utilize our natural resources more to draw tourists here
- Fear of change (example – using Wayne National Forest as a draw is new, could be intimidating)
- Need for a convention center that can host 500 people
  - Look at Cambridge Pritchett-McLaughlin Center as example
- Visits by River Queens are an asset (Delta Queen, Mississippi Queen, etc.)

## TRANSPORTATION

- Explore option of using rivers more to transport freight
  - Take more freight off of roads, reduce infrastructure maintenance costs

### **Six Main Areas – FINAL Voting Round Results**

Infrastructure = 4

Health Care = 2

Transportation = 0

Workforce Development/Education = 0

Tourism = 0

Housing = 0