Cleveland County
Listening Session Report
http://www.dasnr.okstate.edu/oces/ocls/

October 21, 2002
The mission of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service is to disseminate information to the people of Oklahoma and encourage the adoption of research-based knowledge relating to agriculture, family and consumer sciences, 4-H youth development, and community development.
Fifty (50) individuals interested in a better future for themselves, their families, and their communities participated in the Cleveland County Listening Session. The Listening Session was an effort to get a broad base of citizen input to identify local issues so a plan can be developed to create a better economic, environmental, and social situation for Cleveland County. Participants from across the county provided input and identified, discussed, and defined their community’s needs and opportunities, while building on the assets that presently exist.

The purpose of this report is to share publicly the process and the information that was collected from the Cleveland County Listening Session. The report lists the needs and concerns of the county as identified during the open forum process. This report also will be used as a starting point for the upcoming Focus Forum in which an assembled group of stakeholders will define, discuss, and begin to address the needs and concerns identified in the Listening Session. Many of the needs and concerns of Oklahoma can be addressed through partnerships with other groups and organizations. The report can be found on the Oklahoma Community Listening Session web site at http://www.dasnr.okstate.edu/oces/ocls/.

The Listening Session revolved around a single, key question: “Considering the next 3 to 5 years, what are the critical issues in your community and in Oklahoma that need to be addressed to realize a positive future for you, your family, and your community?” The needs and issues identified by participants clustered around several broad areas of interest. Available data do not show that any one area is more significant than another, but they do show that all these issues are vitally important to the people of Cleveland County.
Listening Session participants were divided into small groups, usually not more than 12-15 participants. Small group participants considered the guiding question (see below) and suggested issues they felt were of most importance to their families and community. With the assistance of a group facilitator, each small group discussed its chosen issues, combined similar issues, and then voted to determine its top five issues.

Following the small group sessions, participants came together in a large group setting to discuss the results of the small group sessions, combine similar and overlapping issues, and vote to determine the top issues for the county.

“Considering the next 3 to 5 years, what are the critical issues in your community and in Oklahoma that need to be addressed to realize a positive future for you, your family, and your community?”
The following five interest areas encompass the concerns, needs, and issues cited most frequently by Listening Session participants in their large group discussion:

- **Improve public transportation and infrastructure (roads)**
  - Provide 24-hour access for injured, disabled, and senior citizens (using taxi-fare coupons)
  - Possible funding through increased gas tax

- **Prioritize funding for programs and services that benefit children, youth, and families**
  - Protect child abuse prevention programs
  - Improve child welfare systems

- **Increase funding for quality public school education and for life-long learning**
  - Increase teacher salaries
  - Decrease dropout and truancy rates
  - Decrease teen pregnancies

- **Address long-range water issues**
  - Protect ground water sources

- **Reduce the burdens of drug and alcohol abuse**
  - Meth labs
  - Reduce under-age drinking and tobacco use
  - Possible funding through increased taxes for cigarettes and alcohol
Small Group Discussions

In addition to the interest areas identified in the large group discussion, the following are issues that were also discussed in the small breakout group sessions:

- Improve public transportation and infrastructure (roads)
  - Provide 24-hour access for injured, disabled, and senior citizens (using taxi-fare coupons)
  - Possible funding through increased gas tax

- Prioritize funding for programs and services that benefit children, youth, and families
  - Protect child abuse prevention programs
  - Improve child welfare systems

- Increase funding for quality public school education and for lifelong learning
  - Increase teacher salaries
  - Decrease dropout and truancy rates
  - Decrease teen pregnancies
  - “Success by 6” — early childhood
  - Increase literacy

- Address long-range water issues
  - Protect ground water sources

- Reduce the burdens of drug and alcohol abuse
  - Meth labs
  - Reduce underage drinking and tobacco use
  - Possible funding through increased taxes for cigarettes and alcohol

- Create pro-business climate via education and structural changes

- Improve transportation
  - Roads
  - Buses
  - Especially for senior citizens and disabled (via taxi coupons)
Small Group Discussions

- Increase creation of jobs that offer more than minimum wage
- Increase availability of out-of-school (including after school and before school) programs for children and youth
- Increase funding for mental health services
- Address health concerns of citizens, including obesity in children/adults and smoking reduction
- Create quality jobs to retain our workforce
  - Provide funding for educational opportunities for all ages
- Provide access to health care for all citizens
  - Affordable healthcare for disabled, elderly, low income, and alternative medicine
  - Expand health for friends (CHC)
- Increase economic development
  - Increase quality of entry-level jobs
  - Develop long range plans for economic growth
- Expand community emergency preparedness and education
- Critical infrastructure

Other priorities identified by Cleveland County Listening Session participants include:

- Expand bilingual services for citizens
- Social service, schools, city, and county government
- Cap real estate taxes (property)
- Promote parenting education for young parents
- Increase literacy programs (ESL, adult non-readers, family)
- Increase funding for fair facilities and staff
- Reform city sign ordinance (including county and state)
- Increase access and affordability of healthcare
- Create county- and city-wide volunteer coordination
Small Group Discussions

- Clean water programs
- Improve self-image of Oklahoma
- Create peer mentoring for high school youth
- Expand public library programs
- Increase focus on generation mixing
- Revamp Main Street in Norman
- Place school nurses back in Cleveland County
- Overhaul workers compensation
- Promote cultural diversity in arts
- Create a county-wide clean-up program
- Enhance cooperation for access to university resources
- Revamp the educational system
- Attract and grow businesses that provide high quality jobs
- Build an air-conditioned arena and provide RV hook-ups for the county fairgrounds
- Support economic development of Oklahoma grape crops
- Develop a grape crop database
- Review the powers of the municipal court system
- Continue funding for family orientated activities (OSU Extension)
- Improve rural roads
- Bike trails
- Address urban sprawl and loss of farmland
- Recognize the value of rural neighborhoods and protect those citizens
- Address litter problems
- Create more opportunities for community dialogue
- Address immigrant issues and concerns
- Rediscover an appreciation of our past
- Enhance public safety
- Terrorism prevention
- Establish zoning laws for unincorporated areas
Small Group Discussions

- Foster respect for natural resources by beautifying surroundings
- Enhance basic principles and ethics
- Improve roadways on the unincorporated areas
- Offer programs for aging population
- Build better roads
- Provide incentives to continue farming
- Improve transportation opportunities
- Seven-days-a-week education
- Increase hazardous waste collection
- Water quality
- Increase physical activity in schools
- Develop more foster homes in county
- Due to the low number of foster homes, children are placed out of the community
- Enhance collaboration and communication between agencies
- Take steps to acquire more green space

In the months following the Listening Session, Cleveland County Extension Educators will invite community leaders and representatives from organizations and agencies to a *Focus Forum* to consider what the people are saying and further define priority needs in Cleveland County. As Extension begins its long-range strategic planning process, the involvement of citizens in identifying needs and opportunities in the county and community will be extremely valuable. Through the upcoming *Focus Forums*, education and service providers will learn more about community concerns while forging new partnerships with other groups to address identified issues.
The intent of these data is to provide local perspective and context for discussion. Local circumstances can change the demographic and economic data; the following is the most up-to-date information that is currently available. Please contact us if you see information that needs to be updated.

◆ History
Opened to settlement in the Land Run of April 22, 1889, Cleveland County was one of the seven counties organized as the Oklahoma Territory in 1890. Its first citizens named it for President Grover Cleveland.

Osage Indians fought the Plains Tribes here, where settlers later built cities and broke the sod for farms. Explorers pushing westward marveled at the Cross Timbers in the eastern part of the county and the vast prairies beyond. Colonel A.P. Chouteau established a trading post near Lexington, and Jesse Chisholm ran one of his cattle trails through the county. Washington Irving killed a buffalo in the vicinity of present-day Moore and wrote about it in “A Tour on the Prairies.”

Cleveland County
- Located in the central region
- County population is 208,016
- Labor force within 30 miles is 925,000

1 County statistics revised May, 2000, Oklahoma Department of Commerce, Information Management
Facts About Cleveland County

Cleveland County is home of the state’s largest comprehensive university, the University of Oklahoma, in Norman. While other cities were battling to become the capital, Norman’s mayor skillfully directed a bill through the Territorial Legislature designating Norman as the site for the university.

◆ Industry
Cleveland County is the eighth smallest county in Oklahoma; however, it has the third largest population and two of the state’s nine largest cities, Norman and Moore. Farming, oil production, and horse breeding are important industries in the county.

According to the 1997 Census of Agriculture, Cleveland County had 1,017 farms (averaging 160 acres). Average gate receipts were $11,969 in 1997 and the county had two farms with gate receipts in excess of $500,000. Agricultural production was divided between livestock (68 percent) and crops (32 percent). Contrasted with the 1992 Census of Agriculture, average gate receipts decreased 4 percent, and the average farm size decreased 12 percent.

◆ Profile
Cleveland County is located in central Oklahoma. The county is comprised of 558 square miles of level plains. The average annual rainfall is 47.1 inches. Average temperatures range from 42 degrees Fahrenheit in January to 80.8 degrees Fahrenheit in July.

According to the 2000 Census, the county seat of Norman had a population of 95,694 residents. The city is located 19 miles south of Oklahoma City.
### Facts About Cleveland County

#### County Population - 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County Population</td>
<td>280,016</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Population</td>
<td>104,427</td>
<td>50.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Population</td>
<td>103,589</td>
<td>49.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 5 years</td>
<td>13,139</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 9 years</td>
<td>13,693</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 to 14 years</td>
<td>14,628</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 to 19 years</td>
<td>18,270</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 to 24 years</td>
<td>21,748</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 34 years</td>
<td>30,285</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>35 to 44 years</td>
<td>33,630</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>45 to 54 years</td>
<td>28,221</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
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<td>55 to 59 years</td>
<td>9,605</td>
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<tr>
<td>60 to 64 years</td>
<td>7,260</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>65 to 74 years</td>
<td>10,243</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 to 84 years</td>
<td>5,519</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 years and over</td>
<td>1,775</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census 2000

#### Population Characteristics

The population density of the county is 325 persons per square mile. The median age of the population is 32.2 years of age.

#### Households

Cleveland County had 79,186 households in 2000. Statistics regarding those households are presented in tabular form on the final page of this report.

#### Poverty

The poverty status in Cleveland County increased for individuals by 13.8 percent. In 1990, there were 18,436 individuals living below the poverty level. This number increased to 20,977 by the year 2000. The poverty level for family households with related children under 18 years of age increased 4.5 percent between 1990 and 2000. In
Facts About Cleveland County

1990, there were 2,462 such families, but in 2000, the number increased to 2,573 families. Female households with no husband present and with her own children under 18 years of age living below the poverty level numbered 1,095 in 1990. These households increased 34.3 percent to 1,471 by the year 2000.

**Labor Force**

The Cleveland County labor force was 113,159 in 2000. Participation rate in the county labor force constitutes 47.44 percent of males and 40.95 percent of females. The county recorded an average annual unemployment rate of 1.83 percent in 2000, and the per capita personal income for the county was $23,874 in 2000.

**Housing**

The county has 79,186 housing units and 67.0 percent of these are occupied by owners. Statewide, 68.4 percent of housing units are occupied by owners. The median owner-occupied home value in the county is $88,500. Statewide, the median owner-occupied home value is $70,700. The median housing rental contract is $526 per month in Cleveland County. Statewide, the median housing rental contract is $456 per month.

**Tax Structure**

Cleveland County does not have a county sales tax, but the state sales tax rate is 4.5 percent, and local sales tax for cities in the county will vary. City sales tax rates and revenues for six population centers are: in Hall Park, a 3 percent sales tax rate generates $44,749; in Lexington, a 3.5 percent sales tax rate generates $232,308; in Moore,
Facts About Cleveland County

a 3 percent sales tax rate generates $9,771,090; in Noble, a 4 percent sales tax rate generates $1,027,362; in Norman, a 3 percent sales tax rate generates $31,699,132; and in Slaughterville, a 2 percent sales tax rate generates $56,601. The ad valorem average mill levy for Cleveland County is 98.45 mills, which generated $84,407,474 in 2001-2002. Also, Cleveland County received $3,860,471 from the state for the county’s proceeds from the gas, diesel, and special fuel tax; the gross production tax; and motor vehicle collections.


Education

The county is home to the University of Oklahoma and the private Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College. In Cleveland County, 88.1 percent of persons over 25 years of age have a high school diploma, and 28 percent are college graduates. Statewide, high school graduates in the same age range total 74.6 percent, and the percent of college graduates over 25 years of age is 17.8 percent.
## Facts About Cleveland County

### Primary Employers in the Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Employers</th>
<th>Products/Services</th>
<th>Number Employed</th>
<th>City/Town</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Oklahoma</td>
<td>Education Services</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>Norman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norman Public Schools</td>
<td>Education Services</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>Norman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norman Regional Hospital</td>
<td>Medical Services</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>Norman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York International Corp.</td>
<td>Heating/Air Conditioning</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>Norman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Norman</td>
<td>Government Services</td>
<td>659</td>
<td>Norman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Griffin Memorial Hospital</td>
<td>Medical Services</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>Norman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Design Corp</td>
<td>Stone Sculptures</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>Noble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Postal Tech. Training Center</td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>Norman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hitachi Computer Products</td>
<td>Computer Peripherals</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>Norman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noble Public Schools</td>
<td>Education Services</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>Noble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOAA</td>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>Norman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiland Dairies</td>
<td>Dairy</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>Norman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDF, Inc.</td>
<td>Photo Developing</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>Moore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaklee Health Products</td>
<td>Nutritional Products</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>Norman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexington Public Schools</td>
<td>Education Services</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>Lexington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morris Latex Products</td>
<td>Latex Dipped Items</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>Noble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunset Manor Nursing Home</td>
<td>Nursing Care</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Lexington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma Tank Service</td>
<td>Oil Field Hauling</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Moore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-H Metal Fabricators</td>
<td>Metal Fabrication of Steel</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Moore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexington Nursing Home</td>
<td>Nursing Care</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Lexington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Noble</td>
<td>Government Services</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Noble</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## County Demographics – 1990 vs. 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County population</td>
<td>174,253</td>
<td>208,016</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino population</td>
<td>4,655</td>
<td>8,396</td>
<td>80.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White population</td>
<td>154,153</td>
<td>173,909</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American population</td>
<td>5,271</td>
<td>7,403</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native population</td>
<td>8,959</td>
<td>9,162</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian population</td>
<td>3,930</td>
<td>5,913</td>
<td>50.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age of all persons in the county</td>
<td>29.67</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor force</td>
<td>94,641</td>
<td>113,159</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average annual unemployment rate</td>
<td>4.23%</td>
<td>1.83%</td>
<td>——</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County per capita income</td>
<td>15,959</td>
<td>23,874</td>
<td>49.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty - families with related children under age 18</td>
<td>2,462</td>
<td>2,573</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty - families with female householder with own children under age 18, no husband present</td>
<td>1,095</td>
<td>1,471</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty - individuals</td>
<td>18,436</td>
<td>20,977</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons over age 25 with a high school diploma</td>
<td>27,267</td>
<td>33,829</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of persons over age 25 with high school diploma</td>
<td>83.90%</td>
<td>88.10%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons over age 25 with a college degree</td>
<td>26,661</td>
<td>35,464</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent over age 25 with at least a Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>25.90%</td>
<td>28.00%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households - family household with own children under age 18</td>
<td>24,345</td>
<td>26,571</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households - married couple family with own children under age 18</td>
<td>19,532</td>
<td>20,070</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households - female householder with own children under age 18, no husband present</td>
<td>3,911</td>
<td>4,947</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County housing units</td>
<td>71,038</td>
<td>84,844</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner-occupied housing units</td>
<td>40,377</td>
<td>53,047</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census 2000
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