Garfield County
Listening Session Report

http://www.dasnr.okstate.edu/oces/ocols/

November 20, 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.
Forty-nine (49) individuals interested in a better future for themselves, their families, and their communities participated in the Garfield 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 Garfield 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 Garfield 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 website 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 reflect 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 Garfield County.
The Listening Session Process

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 that 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. They combined similar and overlapping issues and voted 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 issues were discussed in one or more of the small group sessions.

- Protect natural resources
- Provide adequate funding for education
  - Common
  - CareerTech
  - Higher education
- Increase awareness of agriculture among urban population and school children
- Mobilize church, civic, and other organizations to assist aging population
- Incentive to attract new businesses
- Add quality primary-sector jobs to the region
  - Retain jobs – Vance Air Force Base
  - Establish Oklahoma highway district
  - Expand agricultural diversity
- Improve schools
  - Funding
  - Respect for teachers
  - Improve student performances – Pre-K through college
  - Increase post-secondary school enrollment opportunities for CareerTech and higher education
- Provide affordable medical care and quality
  - Meet the needs of the aging population
  - Develop handicapped programs
- Improve Oklahoma’s national image and enhance Oklahoma tourism
- Social services
  - Provide information about everyday living skills
  - Stabilize the family
  - Substance abuse and poverty
- Create new jobs and industries that offer higher wages
  - Improve wages for existing work force
Small Group Discussions

- Reasonable changes in the tax laws
  - Enable economic growth
  - Provide incentive programs
  - Increase incentives for new businesses
  - Incentives for existing businesses to expand

- Fewer government regulations; fewer taxes

- Implement training for character building in grade schools

- Upgrade or establish overall education funding increases to provide flexible educational opportunities and delivery systems for all students

- Retain and create quality jobs

- Effective programs to reduce teen pregnancy
  - Intervene with at-risk families, including divorcing families; decrease divorce rates
  - Provide education for social services needs
  - Child abuse and neglect
  - Early childhood education

- Adequate funding to maintain and upgrade community and state infrastructure

- Replace health care authority with more effective and compassionate people

- Better financing for schools: common education, CareerTech, and higher education

- Increase revenue by creating new industry
  - Utilizing natural resources
  - Develop value-added products and reliable agriculture markets

- Study environmental issues
  - Water and air quality
  - Waste disposal
  - Water management – adopt a policy that rain stays where it falls
  - Decrease soil erosion; flood control
Small Group Discussions

• Improve roads, highways, and bridges
  o Improve communication infrastructure in rural areas through cable and Internet access
  o Build interstate from I-35 to I-25 (Colorado)
  o Do away with toll roads
  o New fuel tax restricted to capital improvements on existing state highways

• Provide better public health care
  o Health care costs
  o Quality care
  o Prescription drugs
  o Medicare
  o Emergency services
  o People without insurance
  o Take care of aging population
  o Specialists
  o Research
  o Increase the existing services

• Promote more funding for public education
  o Schools should have equal levels of technology
  o Tie funding to accountability
  o Inform teachers of their responsibilities when they are hired
  o Make sure money and mandates balance

• Create growth in economic development that offers higher wages
  o Support existing business and solicit new business

• Improve school funding to assist with state mandates
  o New funding system for education and aging facilities

• Keep Oklahoma water in Oklahoma and maintain its quality

• Redirect funding from jails to education and rehabilitation

• Eradicate drug culture

• Increase funding for county roads and bridge improvement

• Better cooperation between government entities (city and county)
The large group addressed the ideas that were generated during the small group discussions. Those ideas were then used as the basis for defining the five issues of most importance to Garfield County.

- **Economics**
  - Incentives that attract new businesses to area
  - Help existing businesses to expand – tax incentives and reasonable tax changes that encourage economic growth; training incentive programs
  - Focus on quality primary-sector jobs
    - Expand agricultural diversity
    - Create new jobs and industry that offer higher wages
    - Improve wages for existing work force
  - Promote Enid as a retirement community
  - Promote civic awareness and community pride
    - Support military base
    - Infrastructure maintenance
    - Barter system

- **Public education**
  - Adequate funding for our schools: common education, CareerTech, and higher education
  - Improve student performance; increase post-secondary school enrollment; and provide opportunities for CareerTech and higher education
  - Equal levels of technology for schools
  - Improve aging school facilities
  - Find alternative funding sources for public schools
  - Address unfunded mandates
  - Implement character-building education in grade schools, with emphasis on respect for teachers

- **Health**
  - Provide quality health care at a reasonable price
  - Replace health care authority with more compassionate care
  - Provide medical care for persons with limited income/aging population
    - Medicare
    - Prescription drugs
    - Emergency services
Large Group Discussion

• Increase specialists; continue research
• Better access to basic health and mental care
• Develop programs for the handicapped

➢ Family resiliency
• Stabilize the family by intervening with at-risk families
  o Provide education for social service needs
  o Provide programs for marital stability
  o Develop parenting skills
• Reduce teen pregnancies
• Provide social services that assist with everyday life skills, substance abuse, and poverty; increase early childhood education
• Provide positive environment for aging population with individual living facilities, services, and activities

➢ Capital improvements
• Adequate funding to maintain and upgrade community and state infrastructure
• Improve county roads and bridges
• Eliminate toll roads
• Create a northwest Oklahoma highway district
• Use new fuel tax for capital improvements on existing state highways
• Increase revenue by better use of natural resources, geography, value-added products, and property rights

In the months following the Listening Session, Garfield 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 to devise action plans for Garfield 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.1

**History**

Originally a part of the Cherokee Outlet opened for settlement during the Land Run of September 16, 1893, Garfield County, Oklahoma Territory, was named for President James A. Garfield.

**Industry**

Enid, the county seat, has two major employers: Vance Air Force Base and Dyncorp Technical Services. Locally manufactured products include anhydrous ammonia, petroleum coke, drilling rigs, fabricated steel, dairy goods, and processed meats. Although oil has provided a great deal of revenue, Garfield County is best known for its wheat production.

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![Garfield County Map](image)

**Garfield County**

- Located in the northern region
- County population is 57,813
- Labor force within 30 miles is 76,200

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1 County statistics from Oklahoma Department of Commerce, Information Management, May 2000
Facts About Garfield County

According to the 1997 Census of Agriculture, Garfield County had 1,069 farms (averaging 575 acres). Average gate receipts were $77,621 in 1997, and the county had 26 farms with gate receipts in excess of $500,000. Agricultural production was divided between livestock (53 percent) and crops (47 percent). Contrasted with the 1992 Census of Agriculture, average gate receipts in 1997 increased 16 percent, from $66,894 to $77,621; the average farm size was unchanged at 575 acres.

◆ Profile
Garfield County is located in northern Oklahoma. The county is comprised of 1,059 square miles of agricultural land on level plains. The average annual rainfall is 33.8 inches. Average temperatures range from 40.6 degrees Fahrenheit in January to 80.7 degrees Fahrenheit in July.

According to the 2000 census, the county seat, Enid, had a population of 47,045 residents. The city is located 84 miles northwest of Oklahoma City.

◆ Households
Garfield County had 23,175 households in 2000. Statistics regarding those households are included in the table on the final page of this report.

◆ Population Characteristics
The population density of the county is 53.6 persons per square mile. The median age of the population is 37.7 years.

◆ Poverty
Poverty in Garfield County increased by 0.9 percent between 1990 and 2000. In 1990 there were 7,747 individuals living below the
poverty level. This number increased to 7,820 by 2000. The poverty level for family households with related children under 18 years of age increased 13.3 percent between 1990 and 2000. In 1990 there were 1,169 such families, but by 2000 the number had risen to 1,325 families. Poverty-level households headed by women having no husband present and with children under 18 years of age numbered 554 in 1990. By 2000 such households had risen to 639, an increase of 15.3 percent.

◆ Labor Force
The Garfield County labor force numbered 26,510 in 2000, with 74.1 percent of males and 52.5 percent of females employed. The county recorded an average annual unemployment rate of 2.8 percent in 2000. The per capita personal income for the county in 2000 was $23,815.
Facts About Garfield County

◆ **Tourism and Points of Interest**
The major waterways in Garfield County are the Red Rock and Black Bear creeks and tributaries of the Cimarron River.

Recreational facilities include a public golf course, parks, and a swimming pool. Also located in Garfield County is the Museum of the Cherokee Strip at Enid. An annual event of interest is the Tri-State Music Festival held in May for elementary and high school students.

◆ **Housing**
The county has 26,047 housing units, and 89 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 $58,800. Statewide, the median owner-occupied home value is $70,700. The median housing rental contract is $436 per month in Garfield County. Statewide, the median housing rental contract is $456 per month.

◆ **Tax Structure**
The average mill levy for ad valorem taxes in Garfield County is 85.97 mills. It generated $23,549,904 in 2001-2002. Also, Garfield County received $3,715,170 from the state for the county’s proceeds from the gas, diesel, and special fuel tax, as well as from the gross production tax and motor vehicle collections.

Garfield County collects sales tax at three levels: state, county, and local. The state sales tax rate is 4.5 percent; the county rate is 0.25 percent, generating $831,332 in 2001-2002. The local sales tax rate varies from city to city, as shown on the following page.
Facts About Garfield County

Sales Tax Rates and Revenue, 2001-2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Sales Tax Rate (%)</th>
<th>Revenue ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Covington</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>50,219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2,569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drummond</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>22,404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enid</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>16,667,338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairmont</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>7,865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garber</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>98,797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hillsdale</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1,273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>9,335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kremlin</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>15,629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lahoma</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>17,599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Enid</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>24,756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waukomis</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>91,333</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


◆ Education

The county is home to Northwestern Oklahoma State University – Enid campus, Northern Oklahoma College, and the Autry Technology Center. There are 82.2 percent of Garfield County residents over 25 years of age who are high school graduates, compared to 74.6 percent statewide. College graduates 25 years and older number 19.6 percent, compared to 17.8 percent statewide.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Employers</th>
<th>Products/ Services</th>
<th>Number Employed</th>
<th>City/Town</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vance AFB</td>
<td>military</td>
<td>1,450</td>
<td>Enid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyncorp Technical Services</td>
<td>aircraft maintenance</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>Enid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enid Public Schools</td>
<td>education services</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>Enid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integris Bass Baptist Health Center</td>
<td>medical services</td>
<td>925</td>
<td>Enid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Oklahoma Resource Center</td>
<td>social services</td>
<td>875</td>
<td>Enid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advance Food Company</td>
<td>processed meats</td>
<td>759</td>
<td>Enid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Mary’s Mercy Hospital</td>
<td>medical services</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>Enid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Enid</td>
<td>government services</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>Enid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United America Advertising</td>
<td>advertising</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>Enid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Machine and Tool</td>
<td>foundry and machine shop</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>Enid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnston Grain</td>
<td>grain/seed/fertilizer</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Enid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County of Garfield</td>
<td>government services</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>Enid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamm &amp; Phillips</td>
<td>fluid/hauling</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>Enid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continental Resources</td>
<td>oil exploration/production</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>Enid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greer Center</td>
<td>social services</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>Enid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Oklahoma College</td>
<td>education services</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>Enid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enid News and Eagle</td>
<td>publishing</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>Enid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmland Nitrogen</td>
<td>anhydrous ammonia</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>Enid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uni-Steel-Singer Division</td>
<td>structural steel</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>Enid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autry Technology Center</td>
<td>education services</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>Enid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Oklahoma Department of Commerce, Information Management, May 2000
# Facts About Garfield County

## 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>56,735</td>
<td>57,813</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino population</td>
<td>1,086</td>
<td>2,387</td>
<td>119.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White population</td>
<td>52,403</td>
<td>51,253</td>
<td>-2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American population</td>
<td>2,020</td>
<td>1,885</td>
<td>-6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native population</td>
<td>1,234</td>
<td>1,219</td>
<td>-1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian population</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>-0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age of all persons in the county</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor force</td>
<td>26,817</td>
<td>26,510</td>
<td>-1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average annual unemployment rate</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County per capita income</td>
<td>17,233</td>
<td>23,815</td>
<td>38.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty - families with related children under age 18</td>
<td>1,169</td>
<td>1,325</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty - families with female householder with own children under age 18, no husband present</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>639</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty - individuals</td>
<td>7,747</td>
<td>7,820</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons over age 25 with a high school diploma</td>
<td>13,587</td>
<td>13,552</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of persons over age 25 with high school diploma</td>
<td>76.5%</td>
<td>82.2%</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons over age 25 with a college degree</td>
<td>6,461</td>
<td>7,443</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent over age 25 with at least a Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households - family household with own children under age 18</td>
<td>7,400</td>
<td>7,282</td>
<td>-1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households - married couple family with own children under age 18</td>
<td>5,811</td>
<td>5,245</td>
<td>-9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households - female householder, with own children under age 18, no husband present</td>
<td>1,281</td>
<td>1,544</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County housing units</td>
<td>26,502</td>
<td>26,047</td>
<td>-1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner-occupied housing units</td>
<td>15,522</td>
<td>16,291</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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