

# Pushmataha County Listening Sessions Report

<http://www.dasnr.okstate.edu/oces/ocls/>



**October 21, 2002**

**October 22, 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.***



## Pushmataha County Listening Sessions

Pushmataha County held two separate Listening Sessions, one in Antlers (October 21, 2002) and one in Clayton (October 22, 2002). The small and large group discussions from each city are presented separately, followed by the section entitled Facts about



Pushmataha County. The Listening Sessions were 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 Pushmataha 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 Pushmataha County Listening Sessions. 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 Sessions. 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 Sessions 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 Pushmataha 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 their session.

**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?**

# Small Group Discussions

## Antlers

**T**hirty-four (34) individuals interested in a better future for themselves, their families, and their communities participated in the Pushmataha County Listening Session in Antlers. The following issues were discussed in one or more of the small group sessions.

- Expand and improve infrastructure
  - Athletic facilities
  - School buildings
  - Airport
  - Housing infrastructure
- Increase community pride
  - Buildings
  - Trash
  - Appearance
  - Protect environment
  - Replant trees after clear-cut
- Expand local tourism
  - Artisans and crafters
  - Micro-business
- More industry/jobs in Pushmataha County
- Drug issues
- Improve infrastructure
  - Long-range planning
  - Housing
  - Assisted-living facility for elderly
- Tourism and signage
  - Need for motel
  - Improve appearance of town
  - More entertainment opportunities
- Business opportunities
  - Promotion and retention of local businesses

# Small Group Discussions

## Antlers

- Develop and promote partnerships with local organizations and agencies
- Improve job opportunities
  - Manufacturing
  - Job opportunities for youth
- Build community
  - Sports facility for all ages
  - Walking trails
- Control hard-core drug dealers/manufacturers
  - Drug rehabilitation center/drug abuse
  - Crack down on theft
- Improve educational opportunities
  - Need vo-tech in Pushmataha County
  - Increase grade point average of students
- Incentive for using water locally
  - Protect water from sale out of Kiamichi Basin
- Market our resources
  - Develop tourism
  - Increase value-added products for timber and beef
  - Cow harvest facility
- Develop civic pride
  - Improve sidewalks
  - Develop parking
  - Clean up town
- Increase number of organized youth activities
- Funding for education
  - After-school programs
  - Bring teachers' salaries to the regional and national level
- Improve Highway 3 – a free four-lane highway

# Large Group Discussion

## Antlers

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 individuals participating in the Antlers Listening Session.

➤ **Expand and improve infrastructure**

- Athletic facilities
- School buildings
- Airport
- Affordable quality housing
- Develop parking spaces
- Improve sidewalks
- Improve county jail
- Assisted-living facility for elderly
- Long-range planning

➤ **Market our resources**

- Develop tourism/signage
- Increase value-added products from timber and beef
- Cow harvest facility
- Entertainment
- Artisans and crafters
- Micro-business
- Need for motel

➤ **Increase community pride**

- Buildings
- Appearance
- Clean up trash

# Large Group Discussion

## Antlers

- Protect the environment
  - Replant trees after clear-cut
  - Establish pine tree nursery
- **More industry in Pushmataha County**
- Jobs
  - Promotion and retention of local businesses
  - Jobs for youth
  - Education
  - Improve Highway 3 – a free four-lane access
- **Control hard-core drug dealers/manufacturers**
- Drug rehabilitation center/drug abuse
  - Crack down on theft

In the months following the Antlers Listening Session, Pushmataha 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 Pushmataha 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.



# Small Group Discussions

## Clayton

**S**ixteen (16) individuals interested in a better future for themselves, their families, and their communities participated in the Pushmataha County Listening Session in Clayton. The following issues were discussed in the small group sessions.

- Develop new recreational activities
  - Market existing activities
  - Tourism (public and private)
- Stricter drug enforcement
  - Drug education
- Support county hospital
- Keep water at home
- Encourage new jobs/businesses
  - Restaurants
  - Service industry
  - Support existing businesses
  - Provide/expand small businesses
  - Tax incentives/new industry to utilize local resources and provide local employment
- Better law enforcement
  - Eliminate drugs in city and school
  - Better pay; higher quality personnel
  - More community support of law enforcement
- Main Street facelift – buildings and sidewalks
- Use resources more efficiently to attract tourism
  - Develop Sardis Lake Reservoir, including land development
- Keep the schools updated
  - Keep small schools
- Water
  - Assurance of keeping water in state in order to get and keep industry

# Large Group Discussion

## Clayton

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 individuals participating in the Clayton Listening Session.

➤ **Water**

- Assurance of keeping water in our state in order to get and keep industry

➤ **Encourage new jobs/businesses**

- Restaurants
- Service industry
- Support existing businesses
- Provide/expand small businesses
- Tax incentives/new industry to utilize local resources and provide local employment

➤ **Better law enforcement**

- Drugs in city and school (drug education)
- Better pay; higher quality personnel
- More community support of law enforcement

➤ **Use resources more efficiently to attract tourism**

- Develop Sardis Lake Reservoir and new recreational activities (including land development)
- Market existing activities
- Public and private tourism

➤ **Support county hospital**

# Large Group Discussion Clayton

In the months following the Clayton Listening Session, Pushmataha 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 Pushmataha 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.

# Facts About Pushmataha County

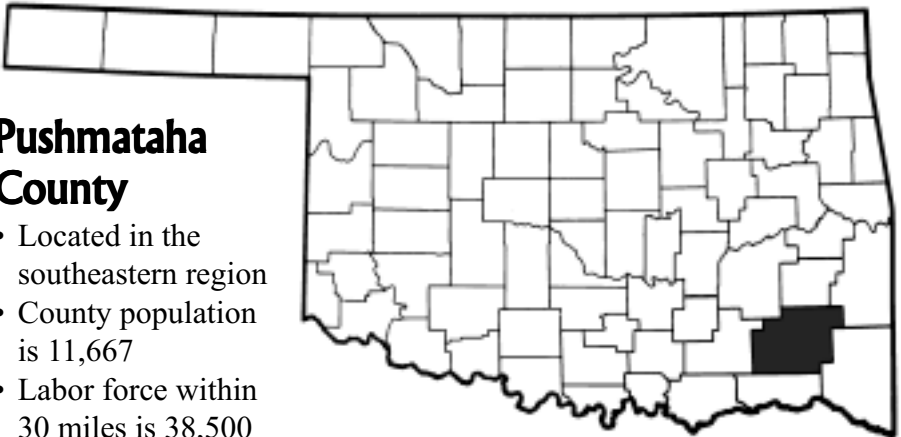
The intent of these data is to provide local perspective and context for discussion. Local circumstances can change the demographic and economic data; the following is the most up-to-date information that is currently available.<sup>1</sup>

## ◆ History

Pushmataha County is in the heart of the old Choctaw Nation. In 1803 the land that became Pushmataha County was acquired by the United States as part of the Louisiana Purchase. Beginning in 1830, the Choctaws ceded their land in Mississippi and moved to southeastern Indian Territory. Tuskahoma, the last capital of the Choctaw Nation, is the site of the Choctaw Council House, which was built in 1884 and is noted for its fine architecture. Pushmataha County was created at statehood in 1907, taking its name from the Pushmataha District of the Choctaw Nation. Both were named for Pushmataha, a Choctaw Chief.

## Pushmataha County

- Located in the southeastern region
- County population is 11,667
- Labor force within 30 miles is 38,500



<sup>1</sup> County statistics from Oklahoma Department of Commerce, Information Management, May 2000

# Facts About Pushmataha County

## ◆ **Industry**

Antlers, the county seat, is the site of several manufacturing companies that produce items such as custom mixed concrete, lumber, building materials, roof trusses, trailers, and fence posts.

According to the 1997 Census of Agriculture, Pushmataha County had 776 farms (averaging 330 acres). Average gate receipts were \$9,928 in 1997. Agricultural production was divided between livestock (95 percent) and crops (5 percent). Contrasted with the 1992 Census of Agriculture, average gate receipts in 1997 decreased 37 percent, from \$15,813 to \$9,928; the average farm size decreased 11 percent.

## ◆ **Profile**

Pushmataha County is located in southeastern Oklahoma. The county is comprised of 1,423 square miles of rugged hills and mountains. The average annual rainfall is 47 inches. Average temperatures range from 41 degrees Fahrenheit in January to 82 degrees Fahrenheit in July.

According to the 2000 census, the county seat, Antlers, had a population of 2,552 residents. The city is located 161 miles southeast of Oklahoma City.

## ◆ **Households**

Pushmataha County had 4,739 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 7.9 persons per square mile. The median age of the population is 40.1 years.

# Facts About Pushmataha County

## ◆ County Population - 2000

	<i>2000</i>	<i>Percent</i>
County population	11,667	100
Male population	5,607	48.1
Female population	6,060	51.9
Under 5 years	729	6.2
5 to 9 years	792	6.8
10 to 14 years	943	8.1
15 to 19 years	855	7.3
20 to 24 years	477	4.1
25 to 34 years	1,216	10.4
35 to 44 years	1,589	13.6
45 to 54 years	1,516	13.0
55 to 59 years	747	6.4
60 to 64 years	672	5.8
65 to 74 years	1,152	9.9
75 to 84 years	679	5.8
85 years and over	300	2.6

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

## ◆ Poverty

Poverty in Pushmataha County decreased by 19.4 percent between 1990 and 2000. In 1990 there were 3,278 individuals living below the poverty level. This number decreased to 2,641 by the year 2000. The poverty level for family households with related children under 18 years of age decreased 20.8 percent between 1990 and 2000. In 1990 there were 533 such families, but by 2000 the number had declined to 422 families. Poverty-level households headed by women having no husband present and with children under 18 years of age numbered 183 in 1990. By 2000 such households had declined to 173, a decrease of 5.5 percent.

## ◆ Labor Force

The Pushmataha County labor force numbered 5,013 in 2000, with 47.4 percent of males and 41 percent of females employed. The county recorded an average annual unemployment rate of 4.3 percent in 2000. The per capita personal income for the county in 2000 was \$14,517.

# Facts About Pushmataha County

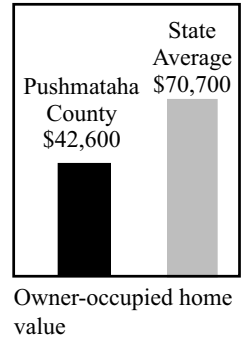
## ◆ Tourism and Points of Interest

The major waterways in Pushmataha County are the Kiamichi and Little rivers and their tributaries. The county is a sportsman's paradise, with the Kiamichi Mountains, Clayton Lake State Park, and Sardis Lake providing opportunities for sporting activities and sightseeing.

In Antlers visitors can see the historic Frisco Depot Railroad Museum and Antlers Spring Park; annual Jeep Jamborees are held in the Kiamichi Mountains near Clayton on Memorial Day and Thanksgiving.

## ◆ Housing

The county has 4,739 housing units, and 77.7 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 \$42,600. Statewide, the median owner-occupied home value is \$70,700. The median housing rental contract is \$276 per month in Pushmataha County. Statewide, the median housing rental contract is \$456 per month.



## ◆ Tax Structure

The average mill levy for ad valorem taxes in Pushmataha County is 71.40 mills. It generated \$2,108,603 in 2001-2002. Also, Pushmataha County received \$2,149,376 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.

# Facts About Pushmataha County

Pushmataha County collects sales tax at three levels: state, county, and local. The state sales tax rate is 4.5 percent; the county rate is 1 percent, generating \$450,570 in 2001-2002. The local sales tax rate varies from city to city, as shown below.

## Sales Tax Rates and Revenue, 2001-2002

City	Sales Tax Rate (%)	Revenue (\$)
Antlers	3.00	815,718
Clayton	3.00	207,786
Rattan	2.00	18,697

*Source: OTC State Payments to Local Governments FY 2001-2002 and "Oklahoma Ad Valorem Mill Levies, Fiscal Year 2002," by Notie H. Lansford, Jr., and Dondee Payne, Department of Agricultural Economics, July 2002, AE 02136*

## ◆ Education

There are 69 percent of Pushmataha 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 12.4 percent, compared to 17.8 percent statewide.



# Facts About Pushmataha County

## ◆ Primary Employers in the Area

Major Employers	Products/ Services	Number Employed	City/ Town
Pushmataha County Hospital	medical services	140	Antlers
Antlers Public Schools	education services	128	Antlers
Pushmataha County	government services	120	Antlers
State Department of Transportation	government services	80	Antlers
Clayton Public Schools	education services	62	Clayton
Julian Lumber Company, Inc.	lumber	52	Antlers
Antlers Nursing Home	health services	32	Antlers
Choctaw Nursing Home	health services	32	Antlers
City of Antlers	municipal services	32	Antlers
Pre-Paid Legal	legal insurance and services	30	Antlers
Department of Human Services	government services	25	Antlers
City of Clayton	municipal services	23	Clayton
Rowland-Ellis Clinic	health services	23	Antlers

Source: Oklahoma Department of Commerce, Information Management, May 2000

# Facts About Pushmataha County

## ◆ County Demographics – 1990 vs. 2000

	<i>1990</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>% Change</i>
County population	10,997	11,667	6.1
Hispanic/Latino population	136	191	40.4
White population	9,164	9,097	-0.7
Black or African American population	112	96	-14.3
American Indian and Alaska Native population	1,669	1,819	9.0
Asian population	6	12	100.0
Median age of all persons in the county	38.63	40.1	3.8
Labor force	4,277	5,013	17.2
Average annual unemployment rate	9.20%	4.34%	----
County per capita income	9,510	14,517	52.6
Poverty - families with related children under age 18	533	422	-20.8
Poverty - families with female householder with own children under age 18, no husband present	183	173	-5.5
Poverty - individuals	3,278	2,641	-19.4
Persons over age 25 with a high school diploma	2,475	2,780	12.3
Percent of persons over age 25 with high school diploma	57.8%	69.0%	19.4
Persons over age 25 with a college degree	574	974	69.7
Percent over age 25 with at least a Bachelor's degree	7.8%	12.4%	59.0
Households - family household with own children under age 18	1,399	1,429	2.1
Households - married couple family with own children under age 18	1,116	1,030	-7.7
Households - female householder, with own children under age 18, no husband present	222	310	39.6
County housing units	5,190	5,795	11.7
Owner-occupied housing units	3,346	3,682	10.0

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

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