Roger Mills County Listening Session Report

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

October 24, 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.
Twenty-five (25) individuals interested in a better future for themselves, their families, and their communities participated in the Roger Mills 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 Roger Mills 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 Roger Mills 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/oclsls/.

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 Roger Mills 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.

- Increased consistent funding for economic development
- Economic development
  - Out-migration
  - Better paying jobs to retain young adults
  - Tourism and supporting services
  - Small industry or big industry development
  - Develop new and existing resources – task force that works with businesses
  - Improve and build quality national park facilities
- Drug and alcohol concerns among youth and adults – interaction
  - Improve law enforcement to reduce drug activities
- Place for organized youth activities
  - Utilize existing or develop new facilities
  - Include community incentives to attract businesses for youth (i.e., bowling center)
- Emphasize that education is for everyone – especially those who remain in Roger Mills County
  - Education that promotes a positive Oklahoma image
  - Post-high school education
- Medical health for elders
  - Hire qualified care givers
  - Improve pay and incentives for medical staff
  - Cost of medical insurance
  - Improve rest homes and retirement centers
  - Provide extended care facility
- Community cleanup to include housing development
Small Group Discussions

- Identify and obtain grants
  - Improve funding sources
  - Encourage legislature to increase funding
- Keep businesses and add new businesses to bring more jobs to the communities
- Better services for tourism
  - Low-cost family entertainment
  - Laundromat
  - Hunting
  - Motel swimming pool
  - Movie theater
  - Golf course
  - Community swimming center
- Provide jobs for young people
  - Youth retention
  - Help young people prosper and grow
  - Get young people involved in the community
- Needs and services for senior citizens
  - Improve rest home retirement centers
  - Provide extended care facility
  - Hire qualified care-givers
- Improve and maintain infrastructure
  - Bridges
  - Airport
  - Water systems
  - Roads and highways
  - County roads
Large Group Discussion

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 six issues of most importance to Roger Mills County.

➢ Economic development
  • Out-migration
  • Better paying jobs to retain young adults
  • Tourism and better supporting services for tourism
    o Low-cost family entertainment
    o Laundromat
    o Hunting
    o Motel swimming pool
    o Movie theater
    o Golf course
    o Community swimming center
  • Small industry or big industry development
    o Keep businesses and/or add new businesses to bring more jobs to the community
  • Develop new and existing resources – task force that works with businesses
  • Improve and build quality national park facilities

➢ Identify and obtain grants
  • Improve funding sources
  • Encourage legislature to increase funding to grant sources
  • Improve and maintain infrastructures
    o Bridges, airport, water systems, roads and highways, and county roads

➢ Medical health care for elders
  • Hire qualified care-givers
  • Improve pay and incentives for medical staff
Large Group Discussion

- Cost of medical insurance
- Improve rest homes and retirement centers
- Provide extended care facility

➢ Place for organized youth activities
  - Utilize existing or develop new facilities
  - Include community incentives to attract business for youth (i.e., bowling center)

➢ Emphasize that education is for everyone – especially those who remain in Roger Mills County
  - Education that promotes positive Oklahoma image
  - Post-high school education important

➢ Drug and alcohol concerns among adult and youth – interactions
  - Improve law enforcement to reduce drug activities

In the months following the Listening Session, Roger Mills 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 Roger Mills 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**

Bordering the Texas panhandle, Roger Mills County was opened to settlement in the land run into the Cheyenne and Arapaho reservations on April 19, 1892. It was designated County “F,” and Cheyenne was the county seat. In November 1892, an election changed the name to honor Roger Q. Mills of Texas, a former U.S. Senator.

The Antelope Hills once marked the international line between the United States and Mexico, and Coronado made mention of them as a campsite in 1541. The California Road to the gold mines of the West crossed the area in 1849, and it is commemorated by a marker north of Roll. West of Cheyenne is the marker commemorating the Battle of the Washita, where General George Armstrong Custer raided a Cheyenne Indian village on November 27, 1868.

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### Facts About Roger Mills County

- Located in the western region
- County population is 3,436
- Labor force within 30 miles is 25,900

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

◆ **Industry**
Roger Mills County lies atop the rich Anadarko Basin and has many oil and gas wells. It enjoyed a boom period in the late 1970s and early 1980s, but agriculture is the mainstay. Most of the large ranches are still owned and operated by the same families who first established them. The construction of the first series of upstream dams in the late 1940s at Sandstone followed the ruinous dust storms of the 1930s. These pioneering efforts helped develop land and water conservation projects throughout the United States.

According to the 1997 Census of Agriculture, Roger Mills County had 680 farms (averaging 1,016 acres). Average gate receipts were $40,458 in 1997, and the county had three farms with gate receipts in excess of $500,000. Agricultural production was divided between livestock (83 percent) and crops (17 percent). Contrasted with the 1992 Census of Agriculture, average gate receipts decreased 5 percent, from $42,392 in 1992 to $40,458 in 1997; the average farm size increased 4 percent.

◆ **Profile**
Roger Mills County is located in western Oklahoma. The county is comprised of 1,146 square miles of wide prairie, including a large area of national grasslands. The average annual rainfall is 30.6 inches. Average temperatures range from 41.4 degrees Fahrenheit in January to 80.2 degrees Fahrenheit in July.

According to the 2000 census, the county seat, Cheyenne, had a population of 778 residents. The city is located 138 miles west of Oklahoma City.

◆ **Households**
Roger Mills County had 1,428 households in 2000. Statistics regarding those households are included in the table on the final page of this report.
Facts About Roger Mills County

◆ Population Characteristics
The population density of the county is 3.6 persons per square mile. The median age of the population is 41.7 years.

◆ County Population - 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County population</td>
<td>3,463</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male population</td>
<td>1,722</td>
<td>50.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female population</td>
<td>1,714</td>
<td>49.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 5 years</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 9 years</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 14 years</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 to 19 years</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 to 24 years</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 34 years</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 to 44 years</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 to 54 years</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 to 59 years</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 to 64 years</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 to 74 years</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 to 84 years</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 years and over</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

◆ Poverty
Poverty in Roger Mills County decreased by 23.3 percent between 1990 and 2000. In 1990 there were 722 individuals living below the poverty level. This number decreased to 554 by the year 2000. The poverty level for family households with related children under 18 years of age decreased 16.2 percent between 1990 and 2000. In 1990 there were 99 such families, but by the year 2000 the number had declined to 83 families. Poverty in households headed by women having no husband present and with children under 18 years of age numbered 28 in 1990. By the year 2000 such households had declined to 22, a decrease of 21.4 percent.
Facts About Roger Mills County

◆ Labor Force
The Roger Mills County labor force numbered 1,983 in 2000, with 47.4 percent of males and 41 percent of females employed. The county recorded an average annual unemployment rate of 2.5 percent in 2000. The per capita personal income for the county in 2000 was $20,501.

◆ Tourism and Points of Interest
The major waterways in Roger Mills County are the Washita and Canadian rivers and tributaries to the North Fork of the Red River. Roger Mills County is the home to the Black Kettle Museum, Washita Battlefield, and the Pioneer Community Museum complex at Cheyenne.

◆ Housing
The county has 1,428 housing units, and 78.7 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 $39,000. Statewide, the median owner-occupied home value is $70,700. The median housing rental contract is $314 per month in Roger Mills County. Statewide, the median housing rental contract is $456 per month.

◆ Tax Structure
The average mill levy for ad valorem taxes in Roger Mills County is 76.79 mills. It generated $4,137,989 in 2001-2002. Also, Roger Mills County received $5,506,073 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.
Roger Mills County collects sales tax at three levels: state, county, and local. The state sales tax rate is 4.5 percent; the county rate is 1.05 percent, generating $652,589 in 2000-2001. The local sales tax rate varies from city to city, as shown below.

**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>Cheyenne</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>321,623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hammon</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>66,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reydon</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>15,384</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Education**

There are 79.3 percent of Roger Mills 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 15.8 percent, compared to 17.8 percent statewide.

**Primary Employers in the Area**

There are no primary employers outside the normal infrastructure support of the area. The land is used for agriculture and cattle production. In addition, Roger Mills County has many oil and gas wells.
## Facts About Roger Mills 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>4,147</td>
<td>3,436</td>
<td>-17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino population</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White population</td>
<td>3,948</td>
<td>3,153</td>
<td>-20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American population</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>233.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native population</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian population</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age of all persons in the county</td>
<td>36.05</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor force</td>
<td>1,991</td>
<td>1,983</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average annual unemployment rate</td>
<td>4.54%</td>
<td>2.45%</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County per capita income</td>
<td>13,147</td>
<td>20,501</td>
<td>55.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty - families with related children under age 18</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>-16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty - families with female householder with own children under age 18, no husband present</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>-21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty - individuals</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>-23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons over age 25 with a high school diploma</td>
<td>1,069</td>
<td>925</td>
<td>-13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of persons over age 25 with high school diploma</td>
<td>72.1%</td>
<td>79.3%</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons over age 25 with a college degree</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent over age 25 with at least a Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>66.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households - family household with own children under age 18</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>-23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households - married couple family with own children under age 18</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>-28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households - female householder, with own children under age 18, no husband present</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>-8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County housing units</td>
<td>2,048</td>
<td>1,749</td>
<td>-14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner-occupied housing units</td>
<td>1,254</td>
<td>1,124</td>
<td>-10.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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