Oklahoma Community Listening Sessions: State Summary

June 2003

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service
Oklahoma State University
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Oklahoma Community Listening Sessions: State Summary

by Bill Burton and Mike Woods

Introduction

The Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service (OCES), at the urging of the Oklahoma State Legislature, undertook the task of identifying the needs of individual Oklahoma communities. House Resolution 1044 and Senate Resolution 57, which were passed during the Second Session of the Forty-Eighth Legislature, encouraged Extension to focus its resources on this task. The legislature recommended that this be accomplished through a process that accommodated a broad cross-section of citizen input to identify issues of primary importance to communities.

In response to the House and Senate resolutions, the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service hosted community listening sessions in all 77 counties of Oklahoma. At each session, participants were asked to identify, discuss, and define their community’s needs and opportunities, while building on community assets that presently exist. A wide variety of citizens and community leaders were encouraged to participate. At each session the following guiding question was posed:

“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 Listening Session Process

In August 2002, four training sessions were held for Extension staff and lay leaders on how to conduct a community listening session. The training was divided into four separate components:

1. Presession activities
2. Responsibilities of a recorder
3. Responsibilities of a facilitator
4. Meeting agenda

County Extension directors were strongly encouraged to invite city and county government leaders, representatives from government agencies, local community leaders from agriculture, business, civic organizations, religious groups, public education, higher education, and the public at large to attend the community listening session in their county. This was accomplished using Extension mailing lists, public service announcements, and personal contacts. In some instances other agencies and organizations assisted in publicizing the listening sessions.

Between September 16 and December 16, 2002, 78 community listening sessions were conducted, with one county holding sessions in two communities. A total of 2,722 citizens attended local listening sessions. Participants were equally divided between men and women. Forty-four percent of attendees identified themselves as representing some organization or group, while 56 percent participated as private citizens. Participating organizations and groups included:

- City governments
- County governments
- State government
- Federal government
- Public education
- Higher education
- Vocational education

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1 Bill Burton, Area Agricultural Economics Specialist, 230 W. Okmulgee St., Suite B, Muskogee, OK 74401

Mike Woods, Professor and Extension Rural Development Specialist, 514 Agriculture Hall, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078
• Community economic development groups
• Law enforcement
• Chambers of Commerce
• Indian tribes
• NAACP
• Local business leaders
• Health departments
• Mental health agencies
• Salvation Army
• Church leaders
• Senior citizen groups

Following registration, the county Extension director explained the purpose of the listening session, reviewed the agenda for the meeting, and discussed how the information derived from the meeting would be reported and acted upon.

Then the participants were divided into small groups, usually not more than 10 to 12 participants, who were supported by a facilitator and a recorder. Facilitators were instructed to draw ideas and comments from the participants but not to guide the discussion or interject their own thoughts or ideas into the process. Each facilitator introduced the guiding question and asked the group to consider it carefully and respond with those issues that they considered most important. The recorder’s responsibility was to write the thoughts of the participants on flip charts so that everyone could see what had been mentioned.

Once all small group participants had shared the issues that they believed to be most important, the group discussed each issue. In some instances, closely related topics were combined. After all issues had been discussed and the combining process completed, the group voted to select their top five issues.

When all of the small groups had completed their work, they were assembled into a single large group in which the top five issues from each small group were presented. A facilitator led a discussion of each issue. With the concurrence of the participants, similar and duplicative issues were identified and combined. Following that discussion, the participants voted to select the top five issues for their county.

Issues identified during each listening session were shared with participants from across the state through a website maintained by the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service. The major issues for each county appear in Appendix A of this report. The raw data from each listening session were presented in a corresponding county report and were used for the analysis that serves as the basis for this statewide report.

Major Issues and Trends

When the major issues from each listening session (Appendix A) are considered, four common categories become apparent: Community and Economic Development, Family and Home, Schools and Education, and Infrastructure and Community Services. The occurrence and frequency of these categories, expressed also as a percentage of all counties, are presented in the following table. The shaded counties on the accompanying maps indicate those counties in which major issues related to each category were identified.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Issues</th>
<th>Number of Counties</th>
<th>Percentage of Counties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community and Economic Development</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and Home</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools and Education</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure and Community Services</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Oklahoma Community Listening Sessions
Each of the four major categories identified on the maps above is analyzed and discussed in the following sections.

**Community and Economic Development**

Community and Economic Development was divided into four subcategories: Business Development, Community Development, Agricultural Development, and Tourism. The following table represents the number of counties that identified these community and economic development issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community and Economic Development</th>
<th>Number of Counties</th>
<th>Percentage of Counties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Development</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Development</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Development</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seventy of the 77 counties mentioned **business development** as a critical issue. New business development and the creation of new jobs were the main focal points. Marketing the community’s strengths and attributes was mentioned frequently. A variety of concerns regarding taxes was expressed. Counties in which keeping young people in the community was a major issue and counties in which environmental issues were linked with economic considerations are indicated by shading on the following maps.
Several recurring topics were discussed that relate to community development. Community cooperation, citizen involvement, and civic pride were the leading topics. Leadership development and strategic planning for community improvement were mentioned frequently, as were tourism, enforcing clean-up laws, unfunded mandates, countywide zoning, and water resources. Water resource concerns and leadership development were identified as important issues in the counties shaded on the following maps.

Comments from community listening sessions that reflect concerns related to business development include:

**Garfield**  Focus on quality primary sector jobs; expand agricultural diversity and create new jobs and industry that offer higher wages; improve wages for existing work force

**Jefferson**  Equal taxation; alternatives to property taxes

**Johnston**  Better environmental control of water

**Kay**  Promote advantages of rural areas

**Major**  Provide for more economic development incentives not presently available to rural Oklahoma; develop high-paying jobs in new and existing industry

**Noble**  Incentives to keep young adults in Oklahoma

**Woodward**  Improve jobs and create new industry, with special emphasis on young people
The following comments from the community listening session participants are indicative of the wide array of community and economic development issues:

**Cimmaron**  
Need for community and county cooperation

**Haskell**  
Encourage environmental awareness: waste management, green box program, recycling program, clean up and beautify roadways, public parks, lakes, and campgrounds

**Latimer**  
Develop community pride: volunteerism, increase youth involvement with community service organizations, leadership development for youths and adults

**McClain**  
Increase conservation of natural resources and initiate land use planning to include county zoning/codes on land

**Okmulgee**  
Positive awareness of community; focus on community strengths

**Osage**  
Need a long-term comprehensive plan for economic development

**Pushmataha (Clayton)**  
Assurance of keeping water in our state in order to attract and retain industry

Within agricultural development, the issues mentioned most frequently were value-added agricultural products, agricultural product development, and concerns about the level of farm income. Counties in which agricultural development was identified as a major issue and counties in which value-added agricultural products were cited as a major issue are shaded on the maps below.
Some comments from the community listening sessions that relate to **agricultural development** include:

**Beaver**  Promote agricultural industry such as ethanol and white wheat development  
**Haskell**  Encourage sustainable economy; improve agricultural marketing  
**Kingfisher**  New ways of providing income for farmers through diversification and/or alternative enterprises to improve profitability of agriculture  
**Kiowa**  Promote agriculture by developing cooperative marketing and alternative forms of agribusiness  
**Muskogee**  Educate the public on the food supply and farming  
**Tillman**  Promote more value-added agricultural industry

Fifteen counties, as shaded on the following map, cited **tourism** as a way to achieve more community and economic development.

The following are some typical comments about **tourism** from the community listening sessions:

**Choctaw**  Upgrade scenic and historical sites for tourism  
**Custer**  Develop a tourism department  
**LeFlore**  Promote tourism countywide and statewide  
**Murray**  Attract investors to develop tourist-related business

### Family and Home

This category was divided into six subcategories: Drugs (Education and Abuse), Senior Citizen Issues, Affordable Housing, Parenting Skills, Recreation, and Teen Pregnancy. The following table gives the number of counties and the percentage of all counties for each subcategory:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family and Home</th>
<th>Number of Counties</th>
<th>Percentage of Counties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drugs (Education and Abuse)</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Citizen Issues</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable Housing</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Skills</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teen Pregnancy</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Oklahoma Community Listening Sessions_
counties that identified these issues as important. Although problems related to the manufacture, sale, and use of drugs was the most frequently cited issue in this category, affordable housing and issues related to senior citizens were mentioned frequently, as indicated by the shaded counties on the following maps.

![Affordable Housing Map](image1)
![Senior Citizen Issues Map](image2)

The following comments reflect the array of family and home issues expressed by community listening session participants:

**Cleveland**
Decrease teen pregnancies

**Comanche**
Life skills development for employment of youth and adults

**Garfield**
Stabilizing the family by intervening with at-risk families; provide education for social service needs

**Greer**
Remodel existing housing and construct affordable housing

**Haskell**
Encourage better work ethic, starting with the youth

**Latimer**
Educate public on drug problems and associated crime

**Noble**
Increase parental involvement, responsibility, and accountability

**Okfuskee**
Create a comfortable, safe recreation location for all citizens

**Seminole**
Provide adult leadership training, coordinate mentoring programs with youth and adults with incentives to become involved

**Texas**
Cross-cultural immigration issues/education

**Tulsa**
Improve parenting skills through education

**Wagoner**
Provide a senior citizens program to include new facilities
Schools and Education

Various aspects of public education were named as major issues in 72 counties. Specific issues can be divided into three categories: Educational Programs, Funding, and Educational Facilities. The following table gives the number and percentage of counties in which an issue within each category was identified as important.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools and Education</th>
<th>Number of Counties</th>
<th>Percentage of Counties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational Programs</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Facilities</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within the subcategory of educational programs, access to higher education in rural areas, after-school programs, youth issues, adult education, and child care were the main issues identified. Those counties indicated by shading on the maps below listed educational facilities and access to higher education as areas of concern.

Forty-six counties cited issues related to school funding as an area of concern. Stabilization of funding and better teacher pay were mentioned frequently.

Comments about schools and education from community listening sessions include:

- Beaver: Quality child care
- Dewey: Emphasize youth and adult education
- Harmon: Provide higher education opportunities in the county to educate the work force
- Seminole: Develop character and positive values in youth to encourage youth leadership
- Texas: More after-school activities
Infrastructure and Community Services

Seventy-one counties identified issues related to Infrastructure and Community Services as important to their communities. Specific issues and the number of counties in which they were expressed are presented in the tables below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Number of Counties</th>
<th>Percentage of Counties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roads and Bridges</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water and Sewer</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telecommunications</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solid Waste</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law Enforcement</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments from the community listening sessions about infrastructure and community services include:

- **Adair**: Protect the environment: water quality, solid waste, illegal dumps, and dumping
- **Atoka**: Continue to access technology (DSL, fiber optics)
- **Beaver**: Keep doctors, optometrists, and veterinarians
- **Bryan**: Provide adequate quantity and quality water supply for the entire county
- **Delaware**: Coordination of services for the mentally ill
- **Kay**: Retain community hospitals and health services
- **Noble**: Affordable and equal access to health care
- **Osage**: Increase and support law enforcement in outlying areas
- **Pushmataha (Antlers)**: Improve the county jail
- **Woodward**: More blacktopped roads in rural areas
Metropolitan/Non-Metropolitan Areas

Fourteen Oklahoma counties were classified as metropolitan by the 2000 census. These include Canadian, Cleveland, Comanche, Creek, Garfield, Logan, McLain, Oklahoma, Osage, Pottawatomie, Rogers, Sequoyah, Tulsa, and Wagoner. The metropolitan counties are indicated by shading on the map found on page 11.

The table below compares the frequency with which subcategories of the major issues – Community and Economic Development, Family and Home, Schools and Education, and Infrastructure and Community Services – were identified. Although they are classified together, Infrastructure and Community Services are treated separately in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>63 Non-Metropolitan Counties</th>
<th>14 Metropolitan Counties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community and Economic Development</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Development</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Development</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Development</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family and Home</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs (Education and Abuse)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Citizen Issues</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable Housing</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Skills</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teen Pregnancy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Schools and Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Programs</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Facilities</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Infrastructure</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roads and Bridges</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water and Sewer</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telecommunications</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solid Waste</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Services</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law Enforcement</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Metropolitan counties were not as concerned with agricultural development as were the non-metropolitan counties. They also were not as concerned with keeping young people in the community or with community issues as were the non-metropolitan counties. Neither was tourism identified as an issue in the metropolitan counties.

Schools and education were of greater concern in the metropolitan counties, however, with all 14 mentioning educational programs as an issue. All but three metropolitan counties cited funding for education as a concern, while nearly three-quarters of the non-metropolitan counties included it.

Family and home issues were mentioned in all metropolitan counties but one. Within that category, senior citizen issues and illicit drugs were cited most frequently.

Verifying the Results

As a means of confirming the information gathered at the Oklahoma Community Listening Sessions, OCES contracted with the Bureau for Social Research at Oklahoma State University to include as a part of its 2002 statewide omnibus survey of Oklahomans the same guiding question that was posed in each listening 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?”

The methodology used by the Bureau for Social Research, along with information on the demographics of those surveyed, is presented in Appendix B. The responses appear in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roads</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Security</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxes</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topics with less than 1% of responses</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Major issues of importance to communities that were identified in the community listening sessions cannot be compared directly with the issues generated from the verification survey. Nevertheless, when one compares the issues cited in the small group discussions held during each community listening session with the results of the verification survey, the similarity is apparent: both groups cited many similar topics of concern. The issues identified during the small group discussions are presented in the individual community listening session reports. County reports are available at www.dasnr.okstate.edu/oces/oclsl on the Oklahoma Community Listening Session website.
Community Listening Session
Major Issues by County

Major issues as defined by participants in each of the 78 Oklahoma Community Listening Sessions during their respective large group discussions are presented below. A complete report for each community listening session is available on the Oklahoma Community Listening Session website at: www.dasnr.okstate.edu/oces/ocls

Adair County
- Develop a community-based task force
  - Improve career opportunities
  - Foster economic development
  - Improve employment opportunities
  - Target existing resources
- Protect the environment
  - Water quality
  - Solid waste
  - Illegal dumps and dumping
- Increase funding for law enforcement and emergency services
  - Training
  - Equipment
  - Communications
- Improve education
  - Home/family
  - School
  - Community
  - Teacher/student ratio
  - Increased number of planned activities
  - Dropout rate
  - Teacher salaries
- Domestic water (potable, public) supply
  - Quality
  - Quantity

Alfalfa County
- Economic growth and development
  - Rural and small business opportunities
  - Encourage ideas for value-added products, crops, etc.
  - More industry; agricultural industry; more jobs
  - Economic attitude
  - Tourism expansion – attract tourism, showcase talents, and find ways to attract sportsmen
  - Improve county services in Alfalfa County
  - Ways to make more people want to live in the county – keep youth and talent in Alfalfa County by using incentives
- Health care for the elderly
  - Lack of medical services
  - General health care
  - Caregivers for families
  - No long distance charges throughout entire county; need 911
  - Suitable, safe housing for senior citizens
- Education
  - More dollars are spent on drugs and incarceration than on education – change this imbalance
  - Ways to get people involved in Extension programs; support education for Extension
  - Better educational opportunities; continuing education; reach audience that needs the education
  - Develop better self-esteem by educating youth and adults
  - Change of attitude
- Infrastructure
  - Family and home issues
  - Better communication between state agencies; lack of understanding of county government funding; improve tax allocations
  - Technology improvement – no access to the Internet for technology
  - City, county, and state infrastructure
  - Transportation for families; better rural county roads
- Natural resources and conservation
  - State constitution should change not only for conservation groups but for all people
  - Ideas for crop use – value-added products
  - Agricultural industry and agricultural economy
  - Conserve our natural resources
  - Large problem with cedar trees; flooding across county; soil erosion
- Grant information
  - Someone available for grant writing
Atoka County

- **Education**
  - Being aware of current services
  - Streamlining – give students an opportunity to start earlier in career tech programs such as health care services
  - Jobs and job training
  - High paying jobs
  - Job ethics training
  - Teacher retention and pay increase
  - Community/parental involvement
  - Adult literacy
  - Positive curriculum (basics)
  - Increase funding to schools for teaching supplies

- **Develop community**
  - Preserve historic buildings
  - Social facilities
  - Rejuvenate Lake Atoka
  - Local shopping
  - Public transportation to serve local areas
  - Infrastructure
  - Lower speed limit through town
  - Keep roads going through Atoka, not around it
  - Roads, water, natural gas
  - Adequate water supply
  - Improve access to highway
  - Continue to access technology (DSL, fiber optics)
  - Provide education for natural resource management – oil, gas, and minerals
  - Need for recreational activities/facilities
  - Complete community center, walking track, swimming pool
  - Youth and adult recreation center

- **Health care**
  - Expanded or new choices for funding of new hospital
  - Put a cap on cost of prescription drugs
  - Nursing home care
  - Medical support for children
  - In-home care for elderly

- **Economic development**
  - New industry – more jobs for young people
  - Other funding ideas for youth to raise money
  - Affordable, decent housing
  - Better laws to protect landlords
  - Better information for people running small farms
  - Tourism
  - Farmers’ market
  - Business diversity
  - Retention of small business

- **Educate the public about abuse (for example, child abuse)**
  - Empower the victims
  - Educate about substance abuse and effects on families
  - Establish or improve resources for families (preventive counseling)
  - Drug education

Beaver County

- **Economic development**
  - Bigger businesses
  - Development of work force acceptable to community
  - Actively pursue businesses to come to community
  - Provide incentives for closed businesses to re-open
  - Law enforcement improvement
  - Infrastructure
  - Environmental preservation
  - Availability of funding for programming
  - Functioning 911 system
  - Welfare work program
  - Early warning weather system
  - Community clean-up programs
  - Create a business environment that will stimulate economic development and generate high quality jobs that attract new people
  - Retain local college/technical school graduates
  - Increase tourism
  - Promote agricultural industry such as ethanol and white wheat development
  - Improve and maintain infrastructure to diversify the economic base beyond agriculture and oil/gas industry
  - Affordable housing for new people coming to the area

- **Health care**
  - Keep doctors, optometrists, and veterinarians
  - Optometrist recruitment
  - Attract young doctors
  - Insurance availability
  - Need for assisted-living services
  - Home health services
  - Develop local home health care agency that will generate better access to Medicare
  - Concerns about keeping hospital and nursing home open
  - Health care for elderly
  - Insurance costs

- **Education**
  - Grants and scholarship opportunities for college students
  - Incentives to bring youth back to area
  - Teachers’ wages comparable to those in other states
  - Maintenance of schools
  - Expand and develop educational opportunities through Oklahoma resources
  - Expand agriculture awareness for all
  - Combine agriculture and youth activities to increase awareness of importance of agriculture
Youth issues
• Training youth in leadership skills
• Quality child care
• Youth activities/center
• Higher education access – distance issues (interactive television)
• Early childhood education/center

Community/county involvement
• Increased community cooperation
• Address consolidation of groups with similar goals – communities, schools, citizens
• Involve youth in community service projects
• Improve youth in community service projects

Beckham County
Schools
• Funding/salaries
• Quality
• Vocational education

Quality job development
• Alternatives to industry
• Youth retention
• Outward migration of population

Farm programs designed to meet the needs of area farmers
• Government programs

Address adult/youth issues/youth programs
• Teen pregnancy
• Drug and alcohol abuse

Advertising and marketing of western Oklahoma
• Tourism

Blaine County
Funding stability
• Local government
• Schools
• Health care systems
• Continuing education

Civic and community awareness
• Communication and coordination
• Hospital opportunities
• Unification of county
• Accountability and chain of command

Economic development
• Information
• Business development
• Community appearance – professionalism
• Youth work force
• 911 countywide
• Increase jobs
• Housing (affordable and assisted-living)
• Infrastructure (water, electric, roads)
• Tourism
• Value-added products
• Grant development

Bryan County
Maintain quality schools
• Adequate funding
• Explore mechanisms of private funding for public schools
• Quality education for all youth, especially elementary level
• Help young parents get education and skills
• More in-depth training for teens
• Beginning with day care, maintain quality of schools
• Cooperation between parents and schools (parental involvement)
• Parent accountability, reduce school dropouts

Provide adequate quantity and quality water supply for entire county
• Surface sources of water
• Keep water and electricity in state

Infrastructure
• Improve major highways to accommodate increased traffic and improve safety
• Road and bridge improvement throughout county
• Retain and maintain Carpenter’s Bluff bridge

Law enforcement
• More exposure
• More involvement in community
• More focus on drugs
• Increase funding
• Address rural theft, vandalism, trespassing on private property
• Eliminate trash dumping on county roads

Greater voice for rural communities in legislative issues on rural areas

Tax structure
• Tax burden falls on property owners
• Tax burden on agricultural landowners
• State income tax limits growth in Oklahoma
• Explore other revenue sources (sin tax, sales tax)
• No unfunded mandates

Caddo County
Quality and quantity of jobs
• Diverse employment opportunities
• Advertise the assets in Caddo County
Improve public education funding, reform, and support

- Need for quality rural health care that’s affordable, accessible, equitable
  - Mental health
  - Drug/alcohol awareness/counseling
  - Related community services

Increased awareness of personal life in the community
- Avoid complacency
- Need for stronger families

Agriculture awareness of production cost and the economic impact it has on Caddo County

Canadian County

- Appropriate education funding
  - Kindergarten through adult education
  - Vo-tech
  - Education for the disabled

- Secure long-term sources of water and improve disposal of wastewater

- Quality health care
  - Assisted living centers
  - Mental health
  - Prescription drugs
  - Diabetes
  - Infant care
  - Ambulance services
  - Medicare and Medicaid

- Implement an economic development authority
  - Tax incentives
  - Employment
  - Roads
  - New business
  - Maintaining a viable work force
  - Building codes

- Development of infrastructure
  - Fire, police, and EMS
  - Better cooperation between urban and rural communities for improving the county’s infrastructure and roads
  - Solid waste and water treatment issues

Carter County

- Improve the quality of our water resources and protect our existing supplies
  - Work more with renewable resources
  - Keep our water in our county
  - Stop all sales of water until accurate recovery data are available
  - Individual water rights

- Education
  - New nonfiscal approach
  - Youth training – attitudes
  - Rural schools

- Consolidation of school districts
- Focus on basics
- Not enough emphasis on education
- Increase student performance
- Teachers
  - College criteria and recruitment, salaries, quality/standards, more teachers

- God
  - Put Him first in everything
  - Encourage family values
  - Would solve many problems
  - Increase parent involvement – start at home
  - Reduce violence as acceptable behavior for youth, teens, and adults

Carter County economic development

- Attract industry
- More affordable housing
- Growth
- Keep citizens in the community
- Resources to implement a plan
- Small town survival
- Infrastructure/innovation
- Availability/affordability of utilities
- Fire districts – oversight in rural areas
- Cooperation (Springer, Gene Autry)
- Agricultural profit
- Rural water infrastructure
- Increase jobs in Carter County
  - Attract new business and industry
  - Promote higher paying jobs
  - Improve standard of living
- Better, safer roads and bridges in county and state
  - Increase funding – Oklahoma is 48th of 50 states
  - Increased usage – traffic today is faster and heavier
- Community beautification
  - Volunteerism

- Early education on drug use, especially methamphetamine

Cherokee County

- Economic development
  - Opportunities for youth shadowing, business incubators, job creation, mentoring programs, venture capital
  - Attract more clean industry for the tax base
  - Improve work force productivity and the perception of northeast Oklahoma to attract industry and small businesses

- Improved education
  - Create desire to get an education
  - Academics vs. extracurricular
  - Pre-K through 12 funding studied

- Planning for continued growth in county
  - Housing, roads, increased industry, green space, utilities
Better plans for roads and driving conditions
Promotion of human-powered transport (sidewalks, bike paths, trails, etc.)

- Develop a convention facility in Cherokee County
- Develop effective law enforcement programs for prevention and prosecution
  - Enforce traffic laws
  - Reduce drug and crime problems through county education programs for awareness
  - Self-preservation

### Choctaw County

- **Infrastructure**
  - Roads, rail, and air
  - Water and sewer
  - Housing
  - Development plan, building codes and enforcement, sidewalks
  - Rural telephone system, improve communication technology

- Develop a dynamic and stabilized economic plan
  - Economic plan, the planning and zoning committee, the need to be consistent and ongoing
  - Young entrepreneur development to employ local citizens
  - Alliance with schools and cities to improve economic progress
  - Improve and market quality of life and county assets

- **Tourism**
  - Upgrade scenic and historical sites for tourism
  - Comprehensive assessment plan to capitalize on resources

- Increase respect for law and order
  - Substance abuse education for youth and adults
  - Vigorously enforce current laws

- More diversified jobs, improved wages
  - Attract government-related jobs
  - Maintain and expand current businesses
  - Reduce poverty

### Cleveland County

- 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 groundwater sources

- Reduce the burdens of drug and alcohol abuse
  - Methamphetamine labs
  - Reduce under-age drinking and tobacco use
  - Possible funding through increased taxes on cigarettes and alcohol

### Coal County

- Improve county/community infrastructure
  - Sewage treatment and availability
  - Better roads
  - State highways and bridges
  - Recycling programs
  - Secure long-term, reliable source of drinking water

- More jobs
  - High paying jobs with benefits
  - Industry incentives and recruitment
  - Agricultural product market development and further processing

- Better education
  - Self-esteem for welfare recipients
  - School children and day care centers, including after-school programs
  - Loss of family living classes in the schools
  - Post-secondary preparation

- Elder care
  - Affordable health care
  - Meals on Wheels

- Drug problem
  - Address demand

### Cimarron County

- **Economic Development**
  - Need for community and county cooperation

- **Social/Economic/Cultural Integration**
  - Special needs of Hispanic community

- **Infrastructure**
  - Ports to plains (shipping route) logistics

- **Leadership**
  - Networking of agencies and services

- **Strategic plan for the county**

### Comanche County

- **Funding**
  - All inclusive
  - No more unfunded government mandates
➤ Improve the public educational system
➤ Improve water quality and availability
➤ Life skills development for employment (youth and adult)
➤ Insurance reform
  • Health
  • Property

Cotton County
➤ Economic development
  • Increase professional jobs
  • New means of revenue to keep young people in Cotton County
  • Lack of industry
  • Develop small business and industry
  • Increase and broaden tax base
  • Affordable high-speed Internet access
  • Compensation for taxes lost to schools and Native American land
  • Increase population
  • Keep pressure on politicians
  • High-tech jobs
  • Establish a group or forum to encourage political involvement on state level
  • Keep in touch with Southwestern Bell
  • Educate youth on voting and elections
  • Organize a summer program for youth over 12 years of age
➤ Provide quality schools using existing tax base
  • Prevent loss of rural schools
  • Better teacher salaries
  • More money for education
➤ Support local businesses
  • Encourage merchants to understand needs of residents
➤ Support law enforcement
  • Priority drug control (methamphetamine)
  • Add chemicals to anhydrous ammonia to prevent methamphetamine production
  • Eliminate out-of-state auto tags
➤ Improve county infrastructure
  • Rural water concerns
  • Improve roads and bridges

Creek County
➤ Roads
  • Improve maintenance – city and county
  • Bridge safety, including maintenance and load limits
  • Roadside dumping
  • Sign improvement
  • Negative impact on economic development because of poor roads
  • Accessibility for emergency personnel
  • Flood control
➤ Health care
  • Reduce costs of prescriptions
  • Increase affordable care and insurance
  • Lower-cost health care or free clinics with doctors and dentists
➤ More industry
  • More raw product through to end product
  • Attract more businesses to Oklahoma to utilize Oklahoma resources
➤ Education
  • Increase funding
  • Increase teacher wages
  • Improve quality
  • Parental involvement
  • School discipline
  • School accountability
  • Life skills and job training
➤ Economic development
  • Lack of dollars – need for new revenues
  • Quality jobs
  • Keep Oklahoma graduates in Oklahoma
  • Lack of affordable housing for all ages
  • Accessibility of rural water

Craig County
➤ Due to the downsizing of Eastern State Hospital, establish care and supervision for those with mental health issues
➤ Quality of education, teachers’ pay, and standards
  • Parenting education
  • Discipline in school
  • Address needs through research-based strategies
➤ Health care issues
  • Reduce prescription costs

Custer County
➤ Economic development
  • Create quality jobs
  • Create value-added and increased income opportunities
  • Recreation
  • Education
  • Marketing skills
  • Attract and promote businesses, small businesses, rural job market, and youth in agriculture
• Cooperation among communities, corporate recruiting; marketing partnerships between cities and small towns

➢ Expand educational opportunities
• Improve public school funding/alternatives
• Keep schools solvent – adult, after school, ethnic, K-12, higher education, CareerTech
• Keep local
• Back to basics
• More civics

➢ Services for life skills training
• Happy, healthy children
• Parenting skills
• Conflict resolution
• Budget/money matters/credit management
• Marriage education
• Youth value system
• Responsibility/respect
• Drug education/eradication of methamphetamine labs
• Substance abuse
• Domestic violence

➢ Access to affordable health care
• Direct services
• Education/screenings
• Prevention
• Increase drug and crime awareness
• Healthy lifestyles

➢ Positive family entertainment opportunities
• Adults
• Youth
• Culture
• Recreation
• Public land
• Tourism department

Delaware County
➢ Water issues
• Rural water availability, quality
• Environmental issues
  o Legislative coordination
  o Resolve animal waste issues (improve communication between rural and urban areas; improve communication between producers and legislature)

➢ Social services
• Improve fair facilities and grounds
• Centralization and coordination of low income public services
• Medical care of indigent
• Homelessness
• Coordination of services for mentally ill
• Provide a safe, positive place for youth (YMCA)

➢ Education
• Early childhood
• Public school

• Funding
• Parenting
• Substance abuse
• Driving habits

➢ Raise educational standards
• Improve attitudes toward educational opportunities
• Expand educational opportunities for adults
• Funding

➢ Beautification
• Roadside trash
• Traffic
• Litter
• Recycling
• Community pride

Dewey County
➢ Improve funding for schools; keep small (rural, local) schools alive

➢ Protect property owner’s rights through legislation
• Protect property for the future
• Promote fair taxation for farmers (limit liabilities)

➢ Develop leadership for long-range plan of community development
• Improve or expand political base and relationship with legislators

➢ Emphasize youth and adult education
• Basic living skills, character development, and work ethics
• Focus on supportive groups for single parents, displaced homemakers, and displaced workers
• Provide easier access to higher education for rural citizens
• Eliminate drugs

➢ Improve job opportunities
• Create a program to provide incentives for high school graduates to stay/return to the area
• Provide grants or funding for graduates to attend college in return for a specified amount of community service
• Recruit and develop industry
• Develop farm production for the purpose of creating job opportunities and retaining youth

Ellis County
➢ Promote community cooperation within Ellis County
• Utilize existing resources
• Senior citizens as volunteers
• Promote economic survival and leadership development

➢ Maintain and adequately fund rural schools
➢ Improve and increase job opportunities and promote business growth

Oklahoma Community Listening Sessions
Improve low- to middle-income housing options
Increase population and retain youth through increased opportunities
Seek funding and/or grants for drug and alcohol abuse education and staff to eradicate drugs and their effects on the community
Sustain access to health care for rural Oklahomans – keep the rural hospitals open

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
  o Expand agricultural diversity
  o Create new jobs and industry that offer higher wages
  o Improve wages for existing workforce
• Promote Enid as a retirement community
• Promote civic awareness and community pride
  o Support military base
  o Infrastructure maintenance
  o 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
  o Medicare
  o Prescription drugs
  o Emergency services
• 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

Garvin County

Drug, alcohol, and tobacco education
Housing
County building improvement
• Jail
• Courthouse
• Expo center
• Senior citizens center

Use existing resources to market Garvin County

Economic development
• New business
• Opportunities for employment
• Training for jobs

Grady County

Community programs
• Funding for senior citizens
• Teach parenting skills and responsibility
• Reduce teen pregnancy
• On-the-job training
• Address drug and alcohol problems through prevention and treatment
• Law enforcement
• Training for at-risk adults (felony convictions)
• Identification of health resources and community support

Public education
• Reduce school drop-out rate
• Increase state funding
• Improve basic education skills
• Funding for rural schools

Health care and services for aging
• Medical and dental
• Restructure state insurance
• HMO/public and private
• Reduce the cost of prescription medicine

➢ Increase consistent funding for economic development
• Solid waste
• Attract businesses and jobs
• Improve roads and bridges
• Secure long-term water supply
• Public utilities

➢ Community-wide character education (school and business)
• Increase volunteerism
• Reduce child abuse
• Reduce elderly abuse
• Reduce domestic violence
• Teach work ethics
• Teach life skills

Grant County
➢ County growth and community development
• Bring new families into our communities and retain existing families
• County and community social events
• Countywide revitalization
• Bring youth programs together for noncompetitive events
• Community youth effort for charity

➢ Economic development
• New jobs and businesses
• Industrial development
• Support existing businesses
• Promote and market Grant County
• Utilize technology to create business
• Accept increased taxes
• Explore funding/grant opportunities
• Affordable housing: clean up housing and properties
• Create a local thrift store
• Agriculture diversification

➢ Church involvement in communities

➢ Public services
• Transportation
• Funding for county, city, and schools
• Restructure and unify existing county services
• Health care – provide for senior citizens
• Attract medical professionals and their families
• Improve and utilize public highway system
• Nursing homes

➢ Educate urban elected officials to recognize interdependence of cities, towns, and rural areas

Harmon County
➢ Maintain business base and attract new businesses/industry with livable wages to the area; develop job programs to bring back and keep young citizens in Harmon County

➢ Improve appearance of town/county to increase and promote community pride and positive attitudes

➢ Encourage youth and adult participation in healthy activities through activity centers and programs

➢ Provide higher education opportunities in the county to educate the work force

➢ Pursue value-added products for agriculture

Harper County
➢ Economic development
• Provide housing
• Quality jobs

➢ Support for education
• Public schools
• Continuing adult education

➢ Community leadership development

➢ Health care development and retention

➢ Strengthen families
• Education
• Services

Haskell County
➢ Encourage sustainable economy
• Improve agricultural marketing
• Encourage better work ethic, starting with youth
• Education on agricultural issues
• More prominent image for agriculture

➢ Quality jobs for all

➢ Community health care system

Oklahoma Community Listening Sessions
Encourage environmental awareness
- Waste management
- Green box program
- Recycling program
- Clean up and beautify roadways
- Public parks
- Lakes and campgrounds

Resolve drug problem
- Enforce laws on youth smoking
- Methamphetamine dealers

More stable funding sources for education

Hughes County
- Reduce unemployment countywide
  - Provide more opportunity for youth – reduce vandalism and delinquency
  - Create new jobs
  - Create jobs for youth
- Reduce drug abuse among all ages, races, and genders
- Improve education
  - Earmark funding
  - Teachers’ salaries
- Provide affordable quality health care
- Overhaul judicial system
  - Punishment for juveniles
- Leadership in all areas
  - Change of attitudes
  - Get involved
  - Look for role models

Jefferson County
- Strengthen the economy
  - Support and improve existing businesses, develop positive things, create jobs/industry, jobs for high school graduates and professionals
  - Improve tourism; housing; infrastructure; local appearance such as highways, shoulders, and four-lanes; maintain existing government
- Education/schools
  - Parenting skills/adult education
  - Better teacher pay
  - Maintain existing school systems
  - Improve quality school rating
- Change of taxation
  - Equal taxation, alternatives to property taxes, and broader tax base
- Control drug abuse
  - Reduce incarceration rate with increased treatment and counseling
  - Control over-the-counter drugs
- Hospital
  - Work to keep in good shape
  - Health care network

Johnston County
- Improve infrastructure city/county
  - Streets, roads, and lighting
  - Water tower
  - Fire
  - Enforce clean-up laws
  - County home Web page
  - Sewer, bridges, and funding
- Build dam or surface water reservoir
  - Better environmental control
  - Stop the sale of water
- Job opportunities
  - Create retail businesses
  - Create small industry
  - Increase business for more employment
  - Create incentives to recruit and retain industry
  - Industrial development
    - Attract new businesses
    - Add more manufacturing production
  - Jobs that allow workers to work locally
    - Research broader business opportunities
- Resources for youth and families
  - Increase activities – movies
  - More adult education
  - Reduce reliance on public assistance
  - More housing – single and multiunits
  - Need after-school programs
  - Quality rentals, apartments, houses, starter homes for college students and low to middle income bracket

- Jackson County
  - Create an environment of economic opportunity
    - Address the need for a growing and diverse economy
    - Insure stability of existing local industry
    - Jobs competitive with those in other states
    - Stabilize and improve economy
    - Reinforce educational efforts by recruiting industry in local communities for young people
    - Small, locally owned manufacturing business
  - Develop a business-friendly economy
    - Tax code
    - Workers compensation
    - Economic development
  - Create effective family programs to address child/adult issues
    - Encourage married couples to stay together
    - Parenting
  - Public education
    - Funding for school facilities
  - Address rural community deterioration
    - Population
    - Facilities
➤ Improve medical/dental/mental health
  • Accessibility
  • Affordability
  • Prescriptions
  • Education
    o Resources and access
    o Health care facility with federal funding
    o Keep health care workers in Oklahoma
  • Attract doctors to rural area

Kay County
➤ Community and social issues
  • Increase availability of trained child-care staff
  • Higher wages for child-care providers
  • Live-in center that provides training/education for teen mothers
  • Decrease in domestic violence
  • Affordable counseling
  • Community awareness of family services
  • Prevention education
    o Availability of 24-hour child care
  • Needs for senior citizens (transportation, housing, utility cost)
  • Better financial information about annuity and retirement plans
  • Prison reform
  • Increase community service sentencing for non-violent offenders
  • Substance abuse education and treatment in lieu of prison
  • Make prisoners productive while in prison
  • Advocacy of youth programs
  • Retain youth in communities
  • Faith-based social programs
  • Medical services, parenting, and victimization awareness and education
  • Upkeep and monitoring of teen pregnancy program
  • Money handling
  • Change child welfare laws for earlier intervention to avoid tragedies

➤ Mental health
  • Increase mental health funding and preventive services for mentally ill
  • Support/awareness for adult and child mental health issues
  • Police training in mental health issues
  • Violence prevention
  • Equality of funding within community health settings
  • Create support systems and erase stigma of mental illness in communities
  • Maintain behavioral medical unit at ViaChristi
  • Create affordable or no-cost rehabilitation program for youth/adult methamphetamine users
  • Provide help for disabled citizens with dental, vision, medical, and housing needs
  • Assessment of homeless problems

➤ Health care
  • Address factors that cause health care to be inadequate or unavailable – accessibility and cost
  • Nursing shortage
  • Affordable insurance for all
  • Decrease administrative costs
  • Wellness program
  • Adequate coverage for non- and underinsured
  • Retain community hospitals and health services
  • Recruit more physicians who will accept Medicare/Medicaid patients
  • Provide affordable prescription drugs for elderly
  • Reduce paperwork required of service providers for Medicare/Medicaid, thus increasing time available for medical services

➤ Economic development
  • Increase volunteer effort and sense of community
  • Protect and conserve water quality
  • Infrastructure – improve communication systems for rural communities
  • Assessment of infrastructure capacities in future developments, capabilities, and needs (basic utilities)
  • Tax reform
  • Give legislators more input on funding priorities
  • Definition of “rainy day” fund
  • Family business
    o Increase skill training
    o Increase job opportunities
    o Increase small business
  • Retain business
  • New business recruiting
  • Increase salaries and benefits in jobs
  • Decrease business regulations
  • Decrease utility fees
  • Retain tax structure for services
  • Tort reform – loser pays
  • Decrease insurance costs for business
  • Regional economic development
  • Improve transportation (rail, road, air, etc.)
  • Eliminate state income tax and restructure tax base
  • Protect Oklahoma military bases
  • Promote advantages of rural areas
  • Utilize the retired population
  • Keep funds in Oklahoma (commerce, trade/purchase, lottery, teachers’ jobs)
  • Accountability of local and state agencies

➤ Education – improve school systems
  • Social workers/counselors needed
  • Charter schools – private schools – vouchers
  • Survival of rural schools
  • Increase funding
  • Increase mentoring
  • Increase volunteers
  • Provide creative and challenging curricula
  • Increase test scores and student retention
• Take advantage of early childhood educational programs in the state
• Help families, including grandparents, to be a functional component of education in schools
• Increase access to college level courses for high school and post-high school students
• Assist schools having decreased funds to maintain quality programs
• Need community support
• Improve discipline in schools
• Streamline administrative costs of education
• Educate people on pros/cons of voucher system
• Extend after-school programs
• Quality education at all levels

Kingfisher County

➢ Reduce illegal drug usage and provide access to long-term rehabilitation care facilities
➢ Find new ways of providing income for farmers through diversification and/or alternative enterprises to improve profitability of agriculture
➢ Infrastructure
  • Improve county roads and bridges
  • 911 – road signage
  • Traffic accident prevention
  • Quality water supply
➢ Improve assistance to aging population
  • Increase availability of senior housing
  • Improve health of baby boomers
➢ Improve education
  • Increase teacher pay
  • Maintain local control of schools
  • Improve juvenile behavior and programs to keep young people in school

Kiowa County

➢ Draw population back to area by attracting and expanding industry
  • Encourage capital investment
  • Retain youth and adults
➢ Improve services
  • Water, sewer, streets
  • Maintain our county schools
  • Increase educational opportunities through adequate funding
➢ Finish State Highway 183 – four-lane highway project
➢ Improve housing and eliminate deteriorating buildings
➢ Promote agriculture
  • Develop marketing cooperatives
  • Develop alternative forms of agribusiness

Latimer County

➢ Economic development
  • Attract new business; create new jobs; tax incentives
  • Attract retail and entertainment businesses to rural communities, i.e., grocery stores and restaurants
  • “Value added” for natural resources; cooperative for ranchers
  • Retain local youth through job market
  • Attract industry; increase tax base
  • Extend educational opportunities for youth
  • Build mentoring program
  • Improve job skills
➢ Higher education and CareerTech opportunities for all students
  • Accessibility of scholarships, financial aid
➢ Create a better community infrastructure
  • Increase quantity of water; establish long-term goals
  • Water treatment expansion
  • Long-term plans for disposing of solid waste
➢ Stop crime and drug use
  • Educate public on drug problems and associated crime
  • Encourage law enforcement to be more aware of issues concerning the public
➢ Develop community pride
  • Volunteerism
  • Increase youth involvement with community service organizations
  • Leadership development for youths and adults
➢ Improve health care services
  • Improve hospitals, ambulance services
  • Countywide health education
  • Affordable health care rates
  • Elderly prescriptions
  • Better-equipped facilities for elderly

LeFlore County

➢ Improve quality of education at all levels
  • Improve teacher quality
  • Expand school facilities
  • Examine restructuring
  • Adequate funding
  • Expand accessibility of four-year degree
➢ Decrease drug usage
  • Education (youth and adult)
  • Rehabilitation center
  • Address methamphetamine issues
➢ Improved countywide infrastructure
  • Roads and bridges
  • Rural water system
  • Public transportation
  • Telecommunications
  • New jail, crime prevention, and proper sentencing
Create quality jobs
• Support state infrastructure for recruiting industry (water, sewer, and roads)
• Develop sustainable criteria for recruiting industry
• Financial help for small businesses, including attracting investors to the area
• Safe small town environment

Instill pride in community and state
• Beautification and litter education
• Clean up abandoned property
• Promotion of tourism county and statewide
• Lake Wister golf course

Lincoln County
➢ Countywide development
  • Leadership in economic development
  • Grants
  • Road identification plan (911)
  • New sources of revenue
  • Create jobs and business
  • Develop high paid tech jobs
  • Keep jobs in Lincoln County
  • Plan for pairing workers with potential employers
  • Training for jobs

➢ Improve education
  • Restructure education
  • Emphasize 3-r’s
  • Teacher incentive pay raises/awards
  • Smaller class size
  • Complete education
  • Increase funding
  • Raise levels of education
  • Prepare kids for college and life
  • Decrease dropout rate

➢ Better roads and bridges
  • Rural roads
  • Upgrade infrastructure (bridges, roads, safety)
  • Roadside conservation and silt control
  • Better roads and bridges throughout the county and state

➢ Law enforcement
  • Provide better pay
  • Better equipment
  • Reduce/eliminate crime
  • Harsher penalties for rapists
  • Training for officers

➢ Affordable health care and prescription costs
  • All age groups
  • Improve nursing home/assisted-care living

Logan County
➢ Creation of high tech/high-paying jobs
  • Economic development
  • Rural development

Love County
➢ Water rights and access
  • Sale
  • Control
  • Safety

➢ Economic development to improve tax base
  • Job opportunities
  • Small/large businesses
  • Quality housing
  • Keeping people in Love County

➢ Professional assistance with capital improvement
  • Applications engineers
  • Grant writers
  • Planners

➢ Eliminate youth access to alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs
  • Comprehensive prevention
  • Drug testing
  • Education

➢ Infrastructure maintenance
  • Roads
  • Bridges

➢ Seek to repeal personal property tax at no revenue loss

Major County
➢ Improve family structure through education
  • Educate young families
  • Parenting and financial skills
  • Improve cooperation between agencies and churches

➢ Emphasize teamwork in problem solving (i.e., religious, government, and civic groups)
  • Increase public participation and volunteerism

➢ Develop value-added agricultural products

Oklahoma Community Listening Sessions
➢ Take charge of education – make it locally relevant
   • Teach life skills, financial education, where food comes from, etc.

➢ Provide economic development incentives not presently available to rural Oklahoma
   • Develop high-paying jobs in new and existing industry

Marshall County
➢ Complete State Highway 70
   • Determine final route

➢ Keeping water here
   • Do not sell water
   • Protect present resources

➢ Improve public education and public schools
   • Educate youth about government and laws
   • Increase education funding for books and supplies
   • Develop “vocation track”
   • Local access to vocational education
   • Eliminate unfunded mandates

➢ Recreation and tourism
   • Lake Texoma area
   • Convention center
   • Youth center
   • Improve and maintain Texoma State Lodge and facilities
   • Finish State Highway 70 linking Ardmore to Madill

➢ Economic development
   • Repeal state income tax
   • Increase industry in southeastern Oklahoma
   • Tribal revenue issues

Mayes County
➢ Senior issues
   • Need adult day care
   • Training on dealing with Alzheimer’s
   • Low-income problems

➢ Decrease tax burden of property owners

➢ Countywide solid waste management
   • Littering, public dumping, recycling, and dead animal disposal

➢ Increased drug rehabilitation versus incarceration
   • Drug court
   • Increased community involvement in providing drug rehabilitation

➢ High prescription and health care costs

➢ Higher standards for public education literacy

➢ Alternatives for dealing with juvenile crime
   • Present court system does not work

McClain County
➢ Take steps to alleviate problems of youth and adults
   • Violence
   • Domestic violence
   • Drugs and alcohol
   • Teen pregnancy
   • Provide recreational opportunities for youth

➢ Address mental health and family issues
   • Provide funding for services
   • Provide shelter for homeless, battered women, and mentally ill
   • Provide services for seniors
   • Build low-income housing

➢ Increase conservation of natural resources and initiate land use planning to include county zoning/codes on land, roads, and housing

➢ Provide educational programs and coordination to help improve utilization of existing government programs and services

➢ Improve phone services
   • Address the limited range for local calls (too many calls are considered long distance)
   • Address the multitude of phone companies offering service in the area

McCurtain County
➢ Education
   • Keep dependent schools open
   • Better schools
   • Better pay for teachers (salary and benefits)
   • Funding cuts in schools
   • Back to basics

➢ Sustaining farm enterprises due to our agriculture base
   • Health issues, especially nutrition

➢ Health care
   • Prescription drug prices
   • Affordable medical insurance (private and state)
   • Health care for the working middle class and self-employed

➢ Economic development
   • Increase wages
   • Job skills training
   • More industry in county/sustain the industry that we have
   • Taxes
   • Encourage usage of local resources
   • Management plan

➢ Substance abuse programs
   • Awareness for youth
   • Support for families
   • Law enforcement
   • Drug eradication
McIntosh County

- Economic and recreational development at Lake Eufaula
  - Attract youth to stay in Eufaula – quality jobs
  - Recycling program – clean up
  - Additional housing
  - Affordable housing

- Drug abuse
  - Education
  - Awareness
  - Availability of illegal substances
  - Enforce underage smoking laws
  - Reduce methamphetamine labs

- Infrastructure plan
  - Economic development
  - Tourism
  - Industrial development
  - Environmental protection
  - City water quality

- Funding for after-school programs
  - Reduce necessity for latchkey children
  - Tutoring for youth
  - Mentoring for youth
  - Teen center for youth (boys and girls clubs)

- Create environment for recruiting new businesses and retaining present businesses within the community

Murray County

- Rural economic development
  - Improve coordination in recruitment of industry among local, county, and state entities
  - Develop tourism as industry – improve current facilities and sites
  - Increase job training for displaced or low-wage employees
  - Bring new business to Murray County and encourage competition
  - Develop high tech career/job training to keep youth in Oklahoma
  - Promote resources
  - Adequate accommodations/housing
  - Waste disposal and rest areas
  - Community infrastructure
  - Attract investors to develop tourist-related businesses
  - Promote shopping locally
  - Increase money for roads

- City council, civic clubs, etc. all working together
  - County teams to promote county as a whole
  - Entertainment events to increase tax base
  - Improve our streets and roads
  - More funding for smaller communities
  - Main Street programs
  - Revitalization

- Build a community center where people with similar interests can gather
- Teen activities
- Recreational activities

- High-quality, well-financed school system
  - Focus on character education K-12
  - Increase teacher pay – starting salary is below poverty level for a family of four
  - Greater emphasis on academics
  - New system of financing education in Oklahoma

- Preserve water resources
  - Develop long-term plan for water usage and preservation
  - How to use and protect water; concerned about selling our water

- Better management by decision-makers of all state-appropriated revenues
  - Budget requirements for educational funding
  - Changes in political structure
  - Increase source of revenue (trailer tags) and return it to the county
  - Statewide sales tax for education
  - Unite all Oklahomans to pay fair share

Muskogee County

- Telecommunications in rural areas
- Lack of industrial growth
- True worker’s compensation reform
- Improve rural road
- Highways and bridges
- Funding
- Water and sewer
- Reduce number of toll roads

- Education
  - Amount of money kept at state level
  - Eliminate unfunded mandates
  - Funding
  - Retain quality teachers
  - Stabilize funding

- Educate public on food supply and farming
  - Plight of farmers
  - Fairness in lending
  - Corporate and independent farmers

- City and county cooperation to equalize county funding for roads and bridges – maintenance and lighting

- Prioritize government spending
  - Less waste
  - State agency accountability

Noble County

- Local and rural economic growth
  - Invite more retail and industrial businesses to area to bring more employment opportunities beyond minimum wage jobs
• Support and incentives for small businesses
• Advertise, encourage, and create tourism
• Increase retail sales
• Increase government funding in agriculture (family farm)
• Create community advertisement board
• Promote community assets through city and county survey
• Sell Oklahoma to local citizens
• Generate more dollars for citizens and communities
• Identify and promote community strengths (senior housing)
• Equalize taxation
• More availability of utilities to rural areas (availability of water)
• Incentives to keep young adults in Oklahoma

➢ Restructure education
  • Examine administrative costs
  • Funding formulas
  • Lack of funding
  • Increase quality
  • Keep local schools, especially rural schools
  • More local control (guidance)
  • More volunteerism in schools
  • Eliminate unfunded mandates

➢ Mental and physical health care
  • Affordable and equal access to health care
  • Better intermediate and long-term health care (nursing homes, adult day care)
  • Identify mental health needs
  • More programs about early childhood development
  • Support for parenting education
  • Support groups
  • Control costs and provide insurance for poor

➢ Citizenship involvement
  • Increase communication between community and legislators
    o Make public officials more accessible
    o Concerns for cuts in state budgets for all agencies
    o Keep school-to-work program
    o Enforce term limits for state and federal government positions
  • Voter education
    o Promote voting
    o Voter participation at local level
    o Education about ballots and information on ballots
    o Collaboration among organizations
  • Encourage youth and have more positive youth activities

➢ Increase parental involvement, responsibility, and accountability
  • More parent involvement with their children
  • Increase involvement of people in community needs

• Work to reduce crime
• Increase citizens’ willingness to stand up for morality issues
• Increase financial skills

Nowata County
➢ Infrastructure – city and county, utilities, roads
  • Highway 60
  • Highway 169
  • County roads
  • City streets
  • Water distribution (quality and availability)
➢ Develop recreational opportunities for youth and seniors
  • Increase swimming pool use
  • Hiking trails
  • Public golf
  • Lake areas
  • Promote tourism
➢ Community involvement and support
  • Public safety
  • Better communications
  • County/citywide clean up
  • Enforce existing laws
  • Implement zoning laws
➢ Health care
  • Pre-hospital
  • EMS
  • County health department
  • Affordable health care
  • Advanced health care
➢ Increase jobs
  • More businesses
  • Competition between businesses
  • More handicapped parking spaces in front of businesses

Okfuskee County
➢ Improve formal and nonformal education opportunities for all ages
➢ Improve economic development of the county
  • Increase jobs for adults and youth
  • Increase tourism in the county
➢ Reduce drug and alcohol use in the county, especially among youth
➢ Improve infrastructure in the county, especially between Okemah and Weleetka
  • Internet
  • Roads
  • Utilities
  • Area codes
➢ Create a comfortable, safe recreation location for citizens
➢ Improve housing opportunities in the county
➢ Stabilize the state revenue source
Oklahoma County

- Improve all levels of education
  - Adequate funding
  - Limit responsibility of schools to core subjects
  - School safety issues – including bullies on buses and adult monitoring
  - Eliminate super majority for bond issues
  - Facilities
  - Consolidate small school administrations
  - Literacy
  - Affordable tuition for higher education
  - Raises for teachers
  - Accountability of funding

- Healthy families
  - Child abuse and neglect
  - Support of military families during deployment
  - Address lack of awareness of families’ needs
  - Address lack of awareness of unique challenges of step-families
  - Low or no cost quality child care
  - Provide child care during adult programs
  - Improve life skills of public assistance recipients

- Improve and implement public health education programs
  - Prenatal to seniors
  - Early child care and assessment
  - Prevention programs
  - Reduce teen pregnancy
  - Reduce child obesity
  - Reduce child abuse
  - Reduce depression
  - Senior self-sufficiency
  - Medicine costs
  - Strengthening families

- Coordinate radio communications among emergency responders (cities, towns)

- Seniors and low-income persons
  - Food assistance
  - Access to medicine and health care
  - Transportation
  - Wellness checks for homebound

- Planning infrastructure for growth
  - Immediate improvement of bridges, roads, and rights-of-way
  - Immediate improvement of mass transit to inner city and outlying areas

Okmulgee County

- Improve infrastructure
  - Improve city, county, and state roads
  - Improve sewage treatment
  - Improve public transportation
  - Increase amount of livable housing
  - Improve rural housing options for the elderly
  - More safe bicycle routes and racks
  - Standardize rural fire protection

- Common vision for education
  - Head Start to the university level
  - Increase funding – teacher pay
  - Increase parent involvement
  - Stronger leadership
  - Increase academic expectations
  - Increase importance of higher education

- Community development
  - More jobs – industry expansion

- Positive awareness of community
  - Focus on community strengths
  - Countywide approach
  - Identify good community resources
  - Increase community cohesion
  - Increase awareness of safety issues – crime, fire safety

- Clean up community
  - Improve recycling opportunities

Osage County

- Secure stable and constant funding for education – involvement in all areas
  - State leadership
  - Parenting skills
  - Prime directive (direction of public education)
  - Unfunded mandates
  - School accountability (academics and standardized tests; are we educating or raising?)
  - Motivate youth – leadership/higher education/political involvement

- Violence
  - Child abuse and neglect
  - Teen pregnancy
  - Elder abuse (reporting and legal steps)
  - Drugs and gangs
  - Methamphetamine labs, limited knowledge
  - Drug and alcohol abuse
  - Drug awareness/training for rural areas (educate on what to look for)
  - Increase and support law enforcement in outlying areas

- Health care
  - Lack of physicians
  - Lack of county health department, health programs
  - Physical therapy
  - Senior care
  - Cost of health insurance (information for lower cost; information on cost efficiency)
  - Provide low cost, available, adequate health care; insurance for everyone
  - Help publicize services for the developmentally challenged (i.e., transportation)
  - Senior citizen help (i.e., centers, care, health)

- Increase responsiveness of state government – decision-making capabilities
- Strong family programs – increase parenting skills
  - Prevention of child abuse
  - Prevention of drug abuse

- Economic development
  - Need long-term comprehensive plan
  - Jobs and industry
  - Decrease industrial electrical cost (modify territories)
  - Decrease gross production tax (i.e., stripper wells)
  - Increase rural development and tourism (roads and transportation, security and law enforcement)
  - Improved livability (homes and families)
  - Utilities/phone services
  - Jobs (stop exit of youth and young families from rural areas)
  - Industry
  - Preserve and promote what we have (access)

Ottawa County
- Funding for education
- Elderly issues
  - Health care
  - Wellness center
  - Transportation

- Agriculture profitability
- Rising health insurance costs
- Work ethic/job skills

Pawnee County
- Create community centers to provide youth and adult noncompetitive activities and programs
  - Mentors
  - Tutors
  - Substance abuse
  - Teen pregnancy
  - Parenting skills

- Better health care
  - Insurance
  - Lower prescription costs
  - Mental health
  - Availability of health care
  - Needs of the elderly

- Expand job opportunities to keep people in the community
  - Attract new business
  - Retain small community identity

- Develop more affordable community housing with diversity

- Increase 4-H and FFA involvement in schools
  - Parental support of programs

- Retain current tax structure (i.e., retain grocery tax)
- Make youth accountable for negative actions

Payne County
- Improve roads, state highways, and rural bridges; improve cooperation between entities that service (impact) roads
- A comprehensive mental health system with a decrease in drug and alcohol abuse in county and state
- Education
  - Reduced class size
  - Increase funding for curriculum and teachers
  - No unfunded mandates
  - Parental cooperation
  - Improve positive interactions between rural and urban populations (improve/increase involvement)

- Improve environmental conditions: brush removal, less trash and roadside dumping equals safer roads, and water pollution
- Health care and prescription drug availability and affordability in light of maturing population and insurance limitations

Pittsburg County
- Drugs
  - Tougher laws
  - Enforce present laws
  - Increase drug and tobacco prevention
  - Eliminate drugs
  - Drug awareness
  - Prevention in a “cool” way

- Economic development
  - Better housing, tax incentives, attract professionals, develop industry – retain youth
  - Land care codes
  - Take advantage of natural resources
  - Promote transportation system
  - Develop skills to enable workers to get jobs beyond entry level
  - More higher level, higher paying jobs
  - Support existing business – bring businesses to the area
- A mall in Pittsburg County
- More rental housing
- Reduce unemployment

- Increase health education
  - Awareness and prevention
  - Heart disease
  - Teen pregnancy
  - Responsive health care system (public/private)
  - Service-oriented
  - Accessible
  - Drug abuse
  - Methamphetamine labs
- Employment in health-related areas
- Reduce price of prescription drugs
• Insurance for low-income people
• Life-style changes to address poor health
• Support for people with chronic diseases/senior citizens
• Improve compensation for McAlester Regional Health Center and all regional health care workers
• Enhance existing health care programs

Children and youth programs
• Increase enrollment in colleges, universities, and trade schools
• Child abuse prevention
• Increase opportunities for young people
• Reduce juvenile crime
• Lower death rate from drugs, alcohol, etc.
• More affordable child care
• More after-school activities for youth
• Continue to offer family living/home economics classes in schools
• Create youth center
• More structured supervised activities
• Educate youth/young parents on life skills

Revamping of education
• Newer equipment
• More dollars/more accountability
• Voucher system
• After-school program
• Tougher school system/honor system
• Character Counts!SM
• More 4-H
• Address the high cost of college
• Mentoring programs – elderly to youth
• Keep all county schools open
• More effective use of financial support
• Discover why financial support for schools has diminished
• No unfunded mandates
• Property tax for financial support
• Consolidate administration – not schools
• Incentives to keep teachers in Oklahoma
• Address administrative salaries
• Improve higher education

Pontotoc County

Economic development
• Shopping facilities and entertainment
• Evaluate small business, self-employment, and agricultural companies
• Build more low- and middle-income housing
• Focus on business retention

Strengthen rural infrastructure
• County roads
• Increase funding/tax base
• Waste management systems, both private and public
• Highway connections, four-lane highway to Interstate 35 and Interstate 40

Ensure adequate water supply for Pontotoc County
• Stop water sales from Arbuckle aquifer
• Stop water sales out of state

Improve youth services
• Community center and YMCA
• Transportation (rural)
• City employee to coordinate youth services

Improve preventative health issues
• Health care available for everyone
• Low-cost alternative care
• State law to provide anyone insurance

Increase funding for education (students and educators)
• Common education, higher education, technical education

Pottawatomie County

Look at better methods for funding education
• Make school district bonding 50/50 instead of 60/40
• Remove 10 percent bonding cap
• Investigate ways for additional funding
• Improve funding for common education
• Increase value of teachers
• Career guidance/technology center
• Lottery

Improve infrastructure
• Jail, water, sewer, public school, courthouse, public facilities
• Expand water treatment plant
• Improve roads and bridges
• More signage around schools
• Install traffic speed signs on county roads
• Rural 911
• Improve phone system in St. Louis area

Improve public safety
• To deal with crime
• Increase access to countywide 911 and health care
• Roadside dumping needs to be decreased and fines increased
• Improve roads and streets with signs posted, develop study for better flow of traffic
• Better cooperation between departments; make fine fit crime
• Property and personal protection, fire, police, drug task force, bioterrorism
• Establish visibility of law
• Increase number of officials with appropriate education
• Increase efforts to rule out substance abuse, methamphetamine labs

Improve environment
• Clean trash from rivers
• Clean up trash from roadsides
• Leave wildflowers on roadside until they go to seed
• Trim trees from highways
• Control stray animals, rural issues

- Increase economic resources/industry by building a strong job base
  • Attract business so community members can work locally
  • Retention of existing business
  • Better educated work force, recruit jobs, computer education, technology center, adult education

- Improve public education/K-12
  • Parent involvement
  • Identify K-3 at-risk youth
  • Higher test scores
  • Produce quality students
  • Lower dropout rates
  • Target early childhood education

Pushmataha County – Antlers

- 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
  • 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

Pushmataha County – Clayton

- Water
  • Assurance of keeping water in our state in order to attract and retain 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

Roger Mills County

- Economic development
  • Out-migration
  • Better paying jobs to retain young adults
  • Tourism and better supporting services for tourism
    • Low-cost family entertainment
    • Laundromat
    • Hunting
    • Motel swimming pool
    • Movie theater
    • Golf course
    • Community swimming center
  • Small industry or big industry development
    • 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
    • Bridges, airport, water systems, roads and highways, and county roads

- Medical health care for elders
  • Hire qualified caregivers
  • Improve pay and incentives for medical staff
  • 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

Rogers County

➢ School funding
  • Class size
  • Teacher pay
  • Consolidation

➢ Infrastructure to handle growth
  • Regional approach – sewer, water, ambulance, parking, trash service, safety
  • Countywide public transportation – roads, tolls, congestion, railroad congestion

➢ Establish and enforce uniform zoning and planning regulations
  • Education to increase awareness of regulations and methodology

➢ Promote economic development
  • Attract new businesses and keep existing ones
  • Quality jobs
  • Training for jobs

➢ Increase access to affordable health care, including mental and dental

Seminole County

➢ Provide adult leadership training, coordinating, and mentoring programs to youth and adults with incentives to become involved

➢ Increase quality, quantity, and diversity of jobs and industry
  • Utilize vocational educational system
  • Use of industry-sponsored programs

➢ Create a working dialogue

➢ Encourage youth leadership
  • Develop character and positive values in youth

➢ Build community and self-pride through cultural enlightenment

Sequoyah County

➢ Drug issues
  • Prevention
  • Education
  • Decontamination center
  • Abatement of illegal drug use and manufacturing

➢ Economic development
  • Be more aggressive in economic development activities
  • Incentives for rural, small town businesses
  • More industry to community for jobs

➢ More conservation practice education
  • Air, land, and water
  • Reduce litter (increase punishment), recycling program

➢ Child and youth development services
  • Character
  • Leadership
  • Respect
  • Recreation
  • Education
  • Funding
  • 4-H
  • After-school programs
  • Teen pregnancy
  • Exercise and health

➢ Improve funding for schools
  • More permanent sources
  • Broad based (not just ad valorem)
  • Better pay for teachers

Stephens County

➢ More equal opportunity in high school for students to receive higher education
  • Grants
  • Scholarships
  • Increase awareness and necessity for higher education and vocational schools

➢ Increase after-school activities (other than sports) and provide youth activities on weekends as deterrents to crime and drugs (place to hang out)

➢ Provide funding for drug abuse prevention
  • Address methamphetamine labs

➢ Need affordable health programs, including health insurance premiums and prescription drugs

➢ Develop a plan to address substance abuse problem
  • Cigarette smoking
  • Underage drinking/abstinence
  • Teen pregnancy/abstinence

➢ Promote family relations – parenting education
Texas County

- **Education issues**
  - Vo-tech schools needed
  - More after-school activities
  - College accessibility
  - Summertime educational activities
  - Improved education for Hispanics to enhance leadership roles
  - Encourage civic participation
  - More parental involvement
  - Cross-cultural immigration issues/education

- **Youth activities and facilities**
  - More volunteers – youth and adults working together
  - Build and expand recreational facilities and activities for youth
  - Encourage civic participation

- **Cross-cultural issues**
  - Cultural sensitivity that goes both ways
  - Improve education for Hispanics to enhance leadership roles
  - Encourage civic participation
  - More parental involvement, immigration issues/education

- **Economic development**
  - Community facilities for recreation
  - Industrial transportation
  - Aquaculture industry
  - Reduction of imports
  - Alternative crops
  - Water management
  - Highway 54 expansion
  - Encourage civic participation in economic development
  - Develop community pride

- **Health-care issues**
  - Transportation
  - Day care
  - Assisted living – outreach to elderly
  - Medical cost and care
  - More resources for elderly
  - Domestic violence
  - Drug/alcohol abstinence
  - Encourage civic participation in health care

Tillman County

- **Agriculture – natural resources**
  - Promote value-added agricultural industry
  - Serve the needs of local agricultural industries and insure their continued success
  - Educate the public on agriculture in general and agricultural policy

- **Provide job opportunities**
  - Keep people in community and state

- **Education**
  - Address funding problems
  - Improve education
  - Provide cultural opportunities
  - Provide opportunities for young people
  - Keep small county schools open
  - Insure quality education
  - Keep teachers in Oklahoma

- **Build hometown loyalty (keep dollars spent in the county)**
  - Commitment to county unity

- **Promote tourism**
  - Provide entertainment
  - Improve the attractiveness of communities

Tulsa County

- **Improve accessibility and affordability of health care**
  - Seniors in home health and nursing home
  - Take lead in Tulsa Hospital Authority
  - Improved mental health services
  - More clinics

- **Decrease teenage smoking, drinking, and pregnancy**
  - Promote abstinence

- **Eliminate drugs in Tulsa County**
  - Methamphetamine labs
  - Stiffen penalties for drug offenses

- **Improve parenting skills through education**

- **Improve the quality of education**

Wagoner County

- **Create a positive environment by recognizing and encouraging new and existing businesses**

- **Provide a senior citizen program to include facilities**

- **Focus on county development of infrastructure**

- **Student-focused education, with a tight rein on administration expenses / help budget shortfalls**

- **Address methamphetamine problems**

Washington County

- **Education**
  - Teacher facilities
  - Curriculum
  - Resources that support education in the state
  - Master Teacher Program
  - Local control
  - Funding
  - Career technology center

- **Character and youth leadership development**
  - Education
  - Keeping good leadership programs, such as 4-H and FFA

- **Adequate water supply**
Accessible and affordable health care
- Medicaid and Medicare prescriptions

Economic development – all levels (state, county, etc.)
- Infrastructure
- New businesses to increase revenue

Washita County
- Stop out-migration
  - Create better jobs
  - Keep young people and senior citizens in the county
  - Develop leadership programs
  - Increase farm income
  - Career counseling
  - Attract industries

- Improve government attention to western Oklahoma
  - Public services
  - Minimize funding cuts
  - Housing
  - Law enforcement
  - Teachers’ salaries
  - Public education
  - Increase school funding

- Reinvent rural community and strengthen political clout
  - How we think about the rural community
  - Structure of government
  - Economy
  - Demographics
  - Develop resource directory
  - Senior citizen retention and services
  - Health care
  - Affordable housing
  - Access to affordable health insurance
  - Reawaken the frontier spirit of self-efficiency

- County schools coordinate with each other
  - Educational efforts
  - Youth court
  - Out-of-school youth activities
  - Adult education

- Infrastructure – maintain and expand
  - Roads
  - All basic utilities
  - Communications
  - Public schools
  - Health care
  - Resource directory

- Improve healthy environment
  - Water, air, and soil
  - Security/safety
  - Value of life

- Recruit industry to retain young people by creating high-paying jobs that are environmentally friendly
  - New and more jobs
  - Encourage youth to stay in college at Northwestern Oklahoma State University or do post-high school work

- Agriculture business education/continuing education
  - Improve farm markets and agra-tainment opportunities (rodeos, trail rides)

- Recruit grocery store and a good family dining establishment

Woodward County
- Infrastructure
  - More blacktopped roads in rural areas
  - Improvements in rural areas
  - Cooperative effort between county and community to improve infrastructure
    - Plan for growth
    - Roads
    - Utilities
    - High-speed Internet
    - Graded ditches and waterways

- Public school systems
  - Improve public school systems
  - Stabilize funding and sources
  - Improve funding and sources
  - Retain teachers and programs

- Create jobs and new industry
  - Improve jobs and create new industry, with special emphasis on young people
  - Attract new and diversified jobs
  - Improve standard of living – bring new jobs to Oklahoma
  - Increase opportunities for rural areas and rural living

- Drugs
  - Prevent risky behavior by youth
  - Address heavy usage of drugs
  - Drug-free community
  - Closed campus during lunch at high school
  - Be tougher on criminals

- Health care
  - Bring additional specialized health care to the area
  - Maintain and enhance state-of-the-art facilities
  - Keep good doctors

- Improve access (highways) to Alva
  - Increase awareness of tourism opportunities in our area

- County schools coordinate with each other
  - Educational efforts
  - Youth court
  - Out-of-school youth activities
  - Adult education

- Infrastructure – maintain and expand
  - Roads
  - All basic utilities
  - Communications
  - Public schools
  - Health care
  - Resource directory

Woods County
Appendix B
Validation Study Conducted
by the Bureau for Social Research

Introduction

To test further the validity of the issues of major importance to local communities as identified through the Oklahoma Community Listening Sessions, the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service contracted with the Bureau of Social Research to include the guiding question in their 2002 Oklahoma Social Indicator Survey. Information about the 2002 survey and the demographics of its sample population are presented in the table on page 36.

Methods and Procedures

Survey Overview

The 2002 Oklahoma Social Indicator Survey (OSIS 2002) was the first annual omnibus survey of Oklahoma adults (age 18 and over) that was conducted by the Bureau for Social Research (BSR) at Oklahoma State University. Data collection was conducted from September to November 2002. OSIS is an “omnibus” survey: individual organizations or departments define and pay for questions that are of special interest to them. A total of 1,200 telephone interviews were completed for OSIS 2002. The overall response rate was 30 percent, and the cooperation rate was 53 percent.

Households were selected randomly from all Oklahoma telephone exchanges. Selection procedures guaranteed that every household in the state had an equal chance to be included in the survey, and once the household was sampled, every adult had an equal chance to be included.

Sampling Design

The survey sample consisted of households selected randomly from all Oklahoma telephone exchanges. Known business telephone numbers were excluded from this sample. In addition, the selected random digit telephone numbers were screened for disconnected numbers.

Selection of respondents occurred in two stages: first, a household was randomly selected, and then an adult was randomly selected for interviewing from within the household. The selection of the adult within the household was done using the Most Recent Birthday Selection Method.

Coding Open-Ended Questions

The guiding 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?” is an open-ended one to which many different responses were received. In order to organize the responses into a meaningful form that could be analyzed, the following steps were used:

• Short (1 to 2 word) descriptions of the verbatim responses were used to characterize each individual response.
• Common and similar descriptors were grouped into categories.
• A numbering scheme was developed for the categories.
• Raw data were coded.

The coded results of the survey are presented in the Verification and Results section of this publication.
## Demographic Profile of the Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age of Respondent</strong></td>
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<td>18-24</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
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<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>19.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>23.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>14.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>65 and older</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>4.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>6.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
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<td>Male</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Level of Education</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Some high school</td>
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<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some technical school</td>
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<td>Technical school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
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<tr>
<td>College graduate – Bachelor’s degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-graduate degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>Separated</td>
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<td>Worked part-time</td>
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<td>Retired</td>
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<td>Democrat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Married without children</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Single, no children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two persons</td>
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<tr>
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