Adair County
Listening Session Report

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

September 17, 2002
The mission of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service is to disseminate information to the people of Oklahoma and encourage the adoption of research-based knowledge relating to agriculture, family and consumer sciences, 4-H youth development, and community development.
Thirty (30) individuals interested in a better future for themselves, their families, and their communities participated in the Adair County Listening Session. The Listening Session was an effort to get a broad base of citizen input to identify local issues so a plan can be developed to create a better economic, environmental, and social situation for Adair County. Participants from across the county provided input and identified, discussed, and defined their community’s needs and opportunities, while building on the assets that presently exist.

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

The Listening Session revolved around a single, key question: “Considering the next 3 to 5 years, what are the critical issues in your community and in Oklahoma that need to be addressed to realize a positive future for you, your family, and your community?” The needs and issues identified by participants clustered around several broad areas of interest. Available data do not show that any one area is more significant than another, but they do show that all these issues are vitally important to the people of Adair County.
The Listening Session Process

Listening Session participants were divided into small groups, usually not more than 12-15 participants. Small group participants considered the guiding question (see below) and suggested issues they felt were of most importance to their families and community. With the assistance of a group facilitator, each small group discussed its chosen issues, combined similar issues, and then voted to determine its top five issues.

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

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

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

- **Domestic water**
  - Supply
  - Quality and quantity
- **Planning, marketing, and targeting relevant sectors of communities for economic development**
- **Stiffer penalties for crimes in a timely manner**
- **Increased funding for law enforcement and emergency services**
  - Training
  - Equipment
  - Communications
  - Funding or the lack of
  - Resources/training
- **Better infrastructure**
  - Drainage
  - Four-lane highway
- **More employment opportunities for youth**
- **Lack of quality, dependable, and consistent labor**
- **Improved school budgets**
- **Decrease school dropout rate**
- **State lottery**
  - Money earmarked for local law
  - Education/emergency services
- **More education opportunities for youth**
  - Vocational skills
  - Life skills
  - Scholarships and financial aid
  - Money management
- **Community-based task force**
Small Group Discussions

- Improve career opportunities
- Economic development
- Improve employment opportunities

• Improve education
  - Home/family
  - School
  - Community
  - Teacher/student ratio
  - School safety
  - Increase number of planned activities
  - Dropout rate
  - Teacher salaries

• Protect environment
  - Water quality
  - Solid waste
  - Illegal dumps/dumping

In the months following the Listening Session, Adair County Extension Educators will invite community leaders and representatives from organizations and agencies to a Focus Forum to consider what the people are saying and further define priority needs in Adair County. As Extension begins its long-range strategic planning process, the involvement of citizens in identifying needs and opportunities in the county and community will be extremely valuable. Through the upcoming Focus Forums, education and service providers will learn more about community concerns while forging new partnerships with other groups to address identified issues.
Facts About Adair County

The intent of these data is to provide local perspective and context for discussion. Local circumstances can change the demographic and economic data; the following is the most up-to-date information that is currently available.1 Please contact us if you see information that needs to be updated.

◆ History
Bordering Arkansas, Adair County was created at statehood and named for a well-known Cherokee Indian family. The county seat has been located in Stilwell since 1910.

Adair County
• Located in the northeastern region
• County population is 21,038
• Labor force within 30 miles is 86,600

1 County statistics revised May, 2000, Oklahoma Department of Commerce, Information Management
Industry
Primary industries of the county include food processing and canning, poultry production, cattle ranching, and horse breeding.

According to the 1997 Census of Agriculture, Adair County had 1,090 farms (averaging 207 acres). Average gate receipts were $68,183 in 1997 and the county had 28 farms with gate receipts in excess of $500,000. Agricultural production was divided between livestock (98 percent) and crops (2 percent). Contrasted with the 1992 Census of Agriculture, average gate receipts decreased 22 percent, and the average farm size increased by one acre.

Profile
Adair County borders the Arkansas state line, almost due east of Tulsa. The county is comprised of 569 square miles of rolling hills with three major stream systems. The average annual rainfall is 57 inches. Average temperatures range from 41.4 degrees Fahrenheit in January to 80 degrees Fahrenheit in July.

According to the 2000 Census, the county seat of Stilwell had a population of 3,276 residents. The city is located 91 miles southeast of Tulsa.

Population Characteristics
The population density of the county is 32 persons per square mile. The median age of the population is 33.2 years of age.
**Facts About Adair County**

◆ **County Population - 2000**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County Population</td>
<td>19,799</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Population</td>
<td>10,345</td>
<td>52.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Population</td>
<td>9,445</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 5 years</td>
<td>1,226</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 9 years</td>
<td>1,290</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 14 years</td>
<td>1,343</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 to 19 years</td>
<td>1,458</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 to 24 years</td>
<td>1,394</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 34 years</td>
<td>2,708</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 to 44 years</td>
<td>3,149</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 to 54 years</td>
<td>2,519</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 to 59 years</td>
<td>882</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 to 64 years</td>
<td>771</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 to 74 years</td>
<td>1,513</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 to 84 years</td>
<td>1,074</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 years and over</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

◆ **Households**

Adair County had 7,417 households in 2000. Statistics regarding those households are presented in tabular form on the final page of this report.

◆ **Poverty**

The poverty status in Adair County decreased for individuals by 1.6 percent. In 1990, there were 4,846 individuals living below the poverty level. This number decreased to 4,770 by the year 2000. The poverty level for family households with related children under 18 years of age increased 10.9 percent between 1990 and 2000. In 1990, there were 778 such families, but in 2000 the number had increased to 863 families. Female households with no husband present and with her own children under 18 years of age living below
the poverty level numbered 365 in 1990. These households declined 2.7 percent to 355 by the year 2000.

◆ **Tourism and Points of Interest**
  - Recreation area - Golda’s Bidding Springs
  - Major water systems - Illinois River, Sallisaw Creek, and Little Lee Creek
  - Museums and historic sites - Golda’s Bidding Springs Grist Mill

◆ **Labor Force**
  The Adair County labor force was 9,374 in 2000. Participation rate in the county labor force constituted 65.4 percent of males and 49.3 percent of females. The county recorded an average annual unemployment rate of 4.2 percent in 2000, and the per capita personal income for the county was $16,465 in 2000.

◆ **Housing**
  The county has 8,348 housing units, and 73 percent of these are occupied by owners. Statewide, 68.4 percent of housing units are occupied by owners. The median owner-occupied home value in the county is $30,200, and statewide, the median owner-occupied home value is $70,700. The median housing rental contract is $143 per month in Adair County. Statewide, the median housing rental contract is $456 per month.

◆ **Tax Structure**
  The county tax rate in Adair County is 0.5 percent and generated $292,602 in Fiscal Year 2000-2001. The state sales tax rate is 4.5 percent, and local sales tax for cities in the county varies. City sales
Facts About Adair County

tax rates and revenues for four population centers are: in Adair, a 3 percent sales tax rate generates $125,219; in Stilwell, a 3.5 percent sales tax rate generates $1,476,290; in Watts, a 2 percent sales tax rate generates $11,156; and in Westville, a 3 percent sales tax rate generates $307,722. The ad valorem average mill levy for Adair County is 72.38 mills, which generated $4,616,120 in 2001-2002. Also, Adair County received $1,624,591 from the state for the county’s proceeds from the gas, diesel, and special fuel tax; the gross production tax; and motor vehicle collections.


◆ Education

In Adair County, 50.5 percent of persons over 25 years of age have a high school diploma, and 9.8 percent are college graduates. Statewide, high school graduates in the same age range total 74.6 percent, and the percent of college graduates over 25 years of age is 17.8 percent.
### Primary Employers in the Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Employers</th>
<th>Products/ Services</th>
<th>Number Employed</th>
<th>City/Town</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baldor Electric Co.</td>
<td>Electric Motors</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>Westville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyson Foods</td>
<td>Poultry Processing</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>Stilwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stilwell Foods, Inc.</td>
<td>Frozen Foods</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>Stilwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherokee Nation Industries</td>
<td>Electric Relays</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>Stilwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorial Hospital</td>
<td>Health Services</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>Stilwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CN Medical Clinic</td>
<td>Health Services</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Stilwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facet International</td>
<td>Filters</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Stilwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stilwell Nursing Home</td>
<td>Health Services</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Stilwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank of Commerce</td>
<td>Financial Services</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Stilwell</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# County Demographics – 1990 vs. 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County population</td>
<td>18,421</td>
<td>21,038</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino population</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>657</td>
<td>168.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White population</td>
<td>10,235</td>
<td>10,207</td>
<td>-0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American population</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>850.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Indian and Alaska Native population</td>
<td>8,065</td>
<td>8,938</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian population</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age of all persons in the county</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor force</td>
<td>8,533</td>
<td>9,357</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average annual unemployment rate</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County per capita income</td>
<td>$11,212</td>
<td>$16,465</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty - families with related children under age 18</td>
<td>778</td>
<td>863</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty - families with female householder with own children under age 18, no husband present</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>-2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty - individuals</td>
<td>4,846</td>
<td>4,770</td>
<td>-1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons over age 25 with a high school diploma</td>
<td>3,229</td>
<td>4,860</td>
<td>50.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of persons over age 25 with high school diploma</td>
<td>56.1%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons over age 25 with a college degree</td>
<td>1,050</td>
<td>1,247</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent over age 25 with at least a Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households - family household with own children under age 18</td>
<td>2,531</td>
<td>2,790</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households - married couple family with own children under age 18</td>
<td>1,995</td>
<td>2,059</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households - female householder with own children under age 18, no husband present</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County housing units</td>
<td>7,124</td>
<td>8,384</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner-occupied housing units</td>
<td>4,660</td>
<td>5,483</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census 2000*
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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Samuel E. Curl, Director of Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma. This publication is printed and issued by Oklahoma State University as authorized by the Dean of the Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources and has been prepared and distributed at a cost of $130.00 for 130 copies.