Kickstart Cleveland County
Strategic Blueprint and Action Plan

November 2015
KICKSTART
CLEVELAND COUNTY
BUILDING on the Past
EMBRACING the Present
CREATING the Future

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Introduction

On February 12, 2015, Rison Shine Downtown Development met to explore the possibility of a countywide community and economic development initiative, building on the success and momentum already achieved in Rison through Rison Shine. This meeting emerged from discussions with Rison Shine Chairman Britt Talent and Cleveland County Extension Agents Les Walz and Diane Clement, with community leaders from throughout the county invited to participate. Mark Peterson, Professor - Community and Economic Development, was invited to speak to the group and to share insights and experiences from similar work in other communities through the Breakthrough Solutions Program.

As a result of this discussion, Kickstart Cleveland County was formed to create a countywide community development initiative to create economic opportunities and improve the quality of life in the county. These visionary leaders recognized that:

- It is important to work together as a county, because what impacts one part of the county impacts the whole county.
- Together we can do things we could never do by ourselves, because we will have more resources and assets to work with.
- Together we can shape our county’s future for our children and grandchildren.

This has led to a community engagement and development process with action teams formed, real progress made and enthusiasm throughout the county increasing.

Kickstart Cleveland County Steering Committee

Kickstart Cleveland County Steering Committee Members: (front row, left to right) Donna Sims, Kim Hooks, Tiffani Silvey, Summer Carter, Ozella Lee, Diane Clement, Shirley Morrison; (middle row) Karen Talent, Sharon Gray, Gwen Paul, Debbie Attwood, George Fox, Ray Morrison, Larry Hall, Britt Talent; (back row) Roy Phillips, Glenda Knowles, Gloria Johnston, Les Walz, Mark Attwood, Greg Jaggers, Brett Davis, Mark Peterson
A special thanks to these individuals for their excellent assistance in this development process:

- Breakthrough Solutions Partner Timothy Lee, UALR Small Business Technology and Development Center
- Breakthrough Solutions Partner Ed Levy, Cromwell Architects Engineers
- Clint Whitley, an architect with Cromwell Architects Engineers
- Beth Phelps, Kim Magee and Joe Waldrum, University of Arkansas Systems Division of Agriculture

A special thanks to the citizens and community leaders of Cleveland County for their great ideas, willingness to work together and welcoming of people from outside of their county. We look forward to great things happening in Cleveland County. Thanks to Britt Talent with the Cleveland County Herald for his leadership and for providing so many pictures for this publication, to Les Walz and Diane Clement with the Cleveland County Extension Office for their involvement and support, and from the University of Arkansas Systems Division of Agriculture – Chris Meux for graphic design, Cheryl Williams for publication layout and editing and the Print Media Center for printing.

Mark Peterson
Professor – Community and Economic Development
University of Arkansas Systems Division of Agriculture
The Breakthrough Solutions program is a partnership initiative with the purpose of equipping communities and regions in Arkansas to be vibrant, sustainable and resilient in the 21st century economy. The program supports communities and regions as they plan for and take action, has 20 Breakthrough Solutions partners and holds an annual conference. For more information about the Breakthrough Solutions program and partners, go to http://www.uaex.edu/business-communities/strategic-planning/breakthrough-solutions.aspx.

The Breakthrough Solutions Model 2.0 is a good fit for Kickstart Cleveland County, as it demonstrates that:

- Citizens and community leaders can really make a difference in their communities.
- An asset-opportunity mindset is effective to move toward action.
- Communities that come together and take action will be the ones that will survive and prosper, while those that do not will fade away.

The Breakthrough Solutions Model 2.0 provides a way for communities and regions to leverage their assets to realize their desired future, leading to results that can be measured. It has four basic steps:

1) **Discover** – Trends, Assets and Key Drivers  
2) **Dream** – Describe Your Desired Future  
3) **Design** – Identify Key Priorities  
4) **Deliver** – Strategies and Action Plans
Breakthrough Solutions provides a community or county with:

- A way to take a fresh look at their community – challenges and asset-based opportunities from several perspectives.
- A process to prioritize key issues and opportunities for their community.
- The opportunity to receive follow-up technical assistance from the University of Arkansas Systems Division of Agriculture and Breakthrough Solutions Partners.

It also taps and leverages the many assets of the county, as described in this strengths and assets map.

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### Breakthroughs in Cleveland County

A breakthrough is a major improvement, a leap forward in progress. Breakthroughs identified in the Kickstart Cleveland County development process to date include:

- **Forming Kickstart Cleveland County** to serve as a catalyst to bring citizens and leaders together from across Cleveland County is a breakthrough itself.

- **Developing the Brand Cleveland County** – “America's Homestead: Real. Simple. Life.” – is a real breakthrough because it distinguishes Cleveland County from the rest of the world and provides a valuable framework to develop and market Cleveland County.

- **Revitalizing the Pioneer Village** will be a breakthrough, as it has great potential for many events and experiences.

- **Revitalizing Downtown Rison** and the other communities in Cleveland County are breakthroughs, as people are seeking vibrant, attractive communities in which to live, regardless of where they work.
I. DISCOVER PHASE – Identify Trends, Assets and Key Drivers

What Is Going Well in Cleveland County – Accomplishments

- Second homesteading conference – April
- Homesteading and small farm workshops
- EAST labs in schools
- Poultry
- Two officers on Beta school system
- Top regional rodeo arena
- Movie making in Pioneer Village
- 40' x 60' exhibit hall at county fairgrounds
- Snow cone shack
- Great reputation for football
- Cleveland County Christmas Parade
- Three movies have been made here
- Farmers’ market
- River Ridge Equipment
- Pocket Park
- Treated materials pole plant
- New bank
- Good schools
- Revamped festivals
- Four RV hook-ups
- Rison Lions Club
- Trunk or Treat/Haunted House/Halloween events
- NWTF “Jakes Day”
- Rison Shine and Kickstart Cleveland County
- won the People’s Choice Award at the 2015 Breakthrough Solutions Conference

What Is Unique and Special About Cleveland County

- People help each other
- Family, relationships, community
- Active volunteers
- Small town atmosphere
- Simple living/compassionate life
- Sustainable living – rooted, connected
- Old-fashioned church services
- Outdoor lifestyle/pioneering spirit
- Back to basics
- Laid back, quiet, welcoming
- Homestead of the future
- Rison Community Garden
- Saline River
- History
- Marks’ Mills Battleground cemetery
- County fairgrounds
- Football and baseball
- Birthplace of Johnny Cash
- Bear Bryant’s birthplace
- Cash cemetery
- Schools and education
- Local produce, local foods, local restaurants
- Football, baseball and track state championships

Welcome to Cleveland County

Come Outside With Us
Reconnect in Cleveland County
Sustainable Living – Rooted, Connected, Natural
What We Do That Is Fun

Everything We Do – country/rural lifestyle activities like hunting, fishing, horseback riding and ATV riding; social activities; haunted house; people/farm; sports activities; baseball; city park; football Friday night; Rison in the Fall Festival; Veterans Park; sporting events (football, baseball); school, history – archaeology; genealogy; hunting; river; haunted house; Halloween activities, Mr. Kingsland Pageant; Lions Club

Key Drivers of Change Affecting Cleveland County

Local
People seeking low crime areas to raise families
Hunters who come here need food and lodging
Highest concentration of deer in the state – Cleveland County usually ranks among the top five counties in Arkansas for total number of deer harvested and is usually at the top in number of deer killed per square mile of area
Poultry is expanding – 75 growers in the county
Social media is growing, but we are not using social media to tell the Rison story
Enrollment gains due to school choice
Rison in the Fall (annual festival at the Pioneer Village) is growing
Entertainment is increasing, with rodeos at the fairgrounds

National and Global
Technology/broadband/knowledge economy
Back to the Land – homesteading, becoming more self-sustaining
Sustainability – green, energy conservation and sustainability
Globalization – marketing your goods and services to the world
Regionalization – achieving critical mass for tourism, work force, etc.
Localization – local foods, art, music, festivals, culture
Quality of Place – vibrancy, services, activities
II. DREAM PHASE – Describe Our Vision

Vision is seeing what life could be like while dealing with life as it is. 
Vision is having some sense of the inner pulse of the public soul and giving it voice.  
– William Van Dusen Wishare 
A World in Search of Meaning

Given all of these trends, assets and drivers of change, here is our vision for Cleveland County in 5 to 10 years.

Our Vision for Cleveland County in 5 to 10 Years

It is the year 2025, and Cleveland County, Arkansas, is a vibrant, thriving county known for:

- **Its rural, sustainable lifestyle** with close relationships, outdoor recreation, respect for the land and natural beauty.
- **Its leadership in the homesteading and small farm movement** in Arkansas and the South and attracting people from far and wide to learn about and experience “America’s Homestead – Real. Simple. Life.”
- **Vibrant communities** that actively engage their citizens in improving quality of life and economic opportunities.
- **Events and activities** that engage our people and attract visitors.
- **Strong businesses, new economic opportunities and entrepreneurship.**
- **Excellent schools** with outstanding sports programs.
- **Warm, friendly people** who care about their children and the future of their community.
Our Core Values

We want our development initiative to be known for its:

- Collaboration, showing the world how we can work together.
- Creativity, seeking breakthroughs that will move us forward.
- Being pro-active, with a can-do attitude that generates excitement and action.
- Inclusivity, seeking involvement across racial, social and age groups throughout the county.
- Promoting a rural sustainable lifestyle.

Our Organizational Format

We chose a hub-and-spoke organization, with the hub group (the large group) making the decisions, action teams working on particular issues and opportunities and engaging organizations in the county and external stakeholders as appropriate. It is similar to that of Paris Area Community Kickstart’s organization.
III. DESIGN PHASE – Set Priorities

The Most Important Opportunities and Issues to Address in Cleveland County

After considerable discussion of opportunities and issues facing Cleveland County, Kickstart Cleveland County formed action teams to move forward. Each of these is also addressing several issues and opportunities facing a community or the county. In part, this arose from the realization that population in Cleveland County is decreasing slightly (-2.8% since 2010). See Appendix I.

The action teams formed are:

- America’s Homestead Branding and Marketing
- Kickstart Kingsland
- Pioneer Village Commission
- re-New-ing Edinburg
- Rison Shine Downtown Development
- Wake-Up Woodlawn

In addition, a Cleveland County Asset Opportunity Tour was held on June 25, 2015, with Ed Levy, Cromwell Architects Engineers, and Timothy Lee, UALR Small Business Technology and Development Center, as consultants. They identified new opportunities for The Traveler (Bob Abbott) property, old Country Club property, Psalms Camp and Saline River. Those possibilities are described in Appendices II through V.
IV. DELIVER PHASE – Form Action Teams and Take Action

Branding and Marketing Action Team
(Communicate and Live the America’s Homestead Brand)

Branding is the art of setting yourself apart from everyone else, and making you the destination of choice for investment, business opportunities, and as the place to live and visit.

The entire idea behind branding is to import more cash into the community than you export when locally earned money is spent elsewhere.

- Roger Brooks
Roger Brooks International

Current Situation

Working Well:
- Homesteading Conference continues to grow and attract interest – in Rison and in other parts of the state.
- “America’s Homestead – Real. Simple. Life.” is a brand that is a good fit for Cleveland County, with great potential.
- Pioneer Homestead Village is a tremendous asset – a diamond in the rough.
- Rison community garden has succeeded in becoming a “training garden.”
- Homesteading and small farm workshops are very successful.

Challenges:
- Restoring and developing Pioneer Homestead Village to its full potential.
- Fully branding Cleveland County as “America’s Homestead – Real. Simple. Life.” across the state and country through electronic, social and traditional media.
- Delivering on the brand promise – developing the brand product (what people can see and experience in Cleveland County).
- Infrastructure improvements in the city of Rison and other areas.

Our Five-Year Goals
- Utilize multiple media, including electronic, social and traditional media, to successfully brand Cleveland County as “America’s Homestead – Real. Simple. Life.” leading to state and national publicity, drawing 20,000 people to the county to visit each year, increasing Cleveland County’s population by 1,000 and creating fresh economic opportunities for local people and communities.
• Establish Kickstart Cleveland County as a leader in the homesteading and small farm movement in the South and our nation.
• Promote activities, events and projects that deliver on the brand promise of “America’s Homestead – Real. Simple. Life.”
• Launch the Arkansas Homesteading Academy.

Our Assets
• Pioneer Village
• Homesteading Conference
• America’s Homestead brand
• Excellent media capability and relations
• EAST students and coordinators
• Strong interest and community support

Our Top Three Priorities
1) Continue series of seminars on homesteading, small farming and entrepreneurship.
2) Establish an on-line/social media presence utilizing videos created by EAST lab students and others.
3) Seek 501(c)3 status from the IRS, to be used for Kickstart Cleveland County projects across the county.

Actions Taken to Date
• Cleveland County agreed to be a pilot community in the Breakthrough Solutions pre-conference branding workshop, leading to the brand “America’s Homestead – Real. Simple. Life.”
• Recently held our second Homesteading Conference in Rison, plus a third in northern Arkansas.
• Excellent media coverage of Kickstart Cleveland County since its inception.
• Small farm workshops on “Small Acreage Farming With High Tunnels” and “Big Markets for Small Farms.”
• Grants awarded – funds from NRCS to support the restoration of Pioneer Village, the three farmers’ markets in the county and a museum for Kingsland.
• Events in the county – Rison in the Fall (October 17) and Halloween Blowout (October 31).

Work Underway
• Starting a series of seminars on entrepreneurship for people interested in small acreage farming:
  ○ Two sessions related to small farms have been held with more planned in the future, primarily targeted to developing markets for small farms.
  ○ Future session – Jarrod Norwood will speak on small business services from UALR SBTDC, how they can do a market survey for a small business at no cost and leasing agricultural and forestland for hunting.
• Judge Spears has applied for funding to support the farmers’ markets as well.
• Derrick Simms will teach a filmmaking class in Rison.
• EAST lab students are going to shoot 30-second YouTube videos to promote the county, including the Zombie Run, Trunk or Treat, Haunted House, Pioneer Village, Cleveland County history and scenes of deer hunting, nature tours, football, the Saline River, Traveler, courthouse, Johnny Cash history, the Christmas Parade and Bear Bryant’s birthplace.
• Exploring the maximum use of social media, Facebook, Instagram and our website.
• Create a homesteading blog/newspaper column and share with newspapers in the state.

Additional Opportunities

Marketing and Communications
• Create YouTube videos on various topics, a YouTube channel with a playlist for each topic and post them to YouTube.com and Pinterest.
• Create a Cleveland County asset map of things to see and do and use it on-line, on billboards, restaurant place mats and other places.
• Create a way-finding system for the county so visitors can easily find important sites.
• Create an ultimate bucket list of things to do in Cleveland County.

NOTE: The following are ideas for brand product (what Cleveland County could become as America’s Homestead).

Arkansas Homesteading Academy
• Make your own canoe
• Blacksmithing school
• Year-round school on sustainable farming
• A farm where people can stay and learn

Food Related
• Garden tours
• Chocolate rolls (like in Marshall)
• Farmers’ markets (three in the county now)
• Brand America’s Homestead Tomatoes
• Develop an America’s Homestead Café that features 18th century dishes (see Old Washington State Park in Hope, Arkansas)
• Restaurants feature local produce
• Rison Shine brand for local food products
Lodging Related

- America’s Homestead Restaurant and Hotel
- New housing
- Vo-tech could build them
- Build yurts or tiny houses and rent them out
- Tiny house telecommuters
- Build your own log cabin conference
- Build cabins for people who want to escape for a few days
- Airbnb and vrbo (vacation rentals by owner)
- Create an RV park and attract RV rallies

Events

- Traditional music fest with fiber arts, quilting and sheep-to-shawl
- Valentine’s Festival
- Chuck Wagon Days
- Area-wide flea market – “Bargains Galore on 64”
- GreenFest
- Heritage Day, where there is camping and cooking
- Farmers’ market
- Marks’ Mills reenactment
- Rison in the Fall
- Christmas Parade
- Cemetery Walk
- Christmas Market
- Kickstart Your Year
- Veterans Day event
- Woodland tours

Economic Development Opportunities

- Create a tiny business village, as they did in Tionesta, Pennsylvania (population 500)
- Horse outfitters
- Antique shops
- DIY – Do It Yourself, build your own furniture
- Year-round RV storage
- Manufacture high tunnels, chicken coops and tiny houses (Contact Arkansas Manufacturing Solutions for assistance.)
- Homesteading supply store with seeds
- Flea markets
- Small animal agriculture and processing facility
- Green products
- Agricultural cooperative idea
- Glamping (luxury camping)
- Horseback expeditions

Other Ideas

- Old-fashioned church services
- Day lilies, shrub roses, intense planting in public and private spaces
- Seed swaps
- Build a museum
- Quilting club, barn quilts and quilt show
Kickstart Kingsland Action Team

Current Situation

Working Well:
- Close-knit community
- Derrek Sims – made a movie “Come Morning”
- Rich history, including the birthplace of Johnny Cash and a concert by Johnny Cash in Kingsland

Challenges:
- Was thriving 20 years ago
- Younger people want more things to do
- No sports any more
- No one wants to sell their land

Our Five-Year Goals
- Establish a community center featuring a section devoted to Johnny Cash’s connection to Kingsland.
- Create an annual music festival that could be a tribute to Johnny Cash.
- Start a cemetery walk at Marks’ Mills Cemetery in cooperation with New Edinburg
- Develop at least two more activities for the kids, including turning the tennis court into a splash court.
- Attract three more businesses, including a major business within the city, another convenience store and a restaurant.
- Johnny Cash Memorial in Kingsland has a new fence and gate, a new marker, a statue and more information available through audio and video format.
- Directional wayfinding signs installed to point people to Johnny Cash’s birthplace and a monument at the birthplace site.

Our Assets
- Birthplace of Johnny Cash, Bear Bryant and Corey Carr
- K-5 school
- One convenience store
- The school allows the community to use its playground as a park when the school is not in session
- Timber farming
- Trucking company
- Chicken growers
- Community involvement – people are always willing to help
- A few vacant buildings
- Good location
- Many cemeteries, including one that has relatives of Johnny Cash buried there
- Highways 97 and 79 both come through town
Our Top Three Priorities

1) Johnny Cash Museum is already in motion; just waiting for a clear title to the building
2) Music festival and cemetery walk at Mark’s Mill Civil War Cemetery, in partnership with New Edinburg (It could be at the cemetery with Johnny Cash’s relatives on alternate years.)
3) A community center

Actions Taken to Date

• Have been working with the owner of a building to be donated to the city for a museum; will then apply for the building to be on the National Registry, which will allow us to apply for grants to develop the museum.
• Have received $1,000 from grant.
• Community had a cleanup day in May.

Work Underway

• Will talk with to county judge to begin planning a two-day festival event, co-sponsored by Kingsland and New Edinburg to include:
  ○ A music festival on Saturday with bands or groups playing all day.
  ○ Music and potluck on Sunday at Marks’ Mill Civil War Battleground.
  ○ A cemetery walk in the evening at the battlefield.
  ○ Will publicize in the paper.

Additional Opportunities

• Johnny Cash’s relatives want to help with the museum

Pioneer Village Action Team

Current Situation

Working Well:

• Homesteading conference, community garden, hoop house and old fair buildings are in decent shape; just had another wedding in the village.
• On November 3, 2015, the City of Rison established the seven-person Pioneer Village Commission, a committee that will oversee the operation, maintenance and development of the Pioneer Village.

Challenges:

• No activity for 5+ years, historical buildings in need of repair, lack of financing, resources and volunteers; more emphasis on improving the facility from the city and volunteers; need updated hook-ups for RVs.

Our Five-Year Goals

• Fully restore the Pioneer Village with a new fence, landscaping, upgraded restrooms with showers, cottage restored as a bed and breakfast, a climate-controlled Homesteading Training Center, commercial cannery and kitchen and solar powered wi-fi.
• Actively utilize the Village for multiple events, some of which generate revenue, including monthly tours, weddings in the chapel, the Homesteading Conference and Academy, Annual Rison Homecoming, revivals, barn sales, reunions, paint parties, a community Christmas bazaar and candlelight service, craft fairs, concerts, food preservation and workshops, a Civil War reenactment and storytelling festival, fireworks stand, a bluegrass music festival with Dutch oven competition and a quilt show.

• Develop financial sustainability for Pioneer Village through revenue-generating events, crowdfunding and grants that use the 501(c)3 status of Kickstart Cleveland County from the Sturgis Foundation and other sources.

• Publicize the Pioneer Village and related activities through signage on the highway, a website, social media and news media in cooperation with the Branding and Marketing Action Team.

**Our Assets**

• There is only one town named “Rison” in the U.S.

• Movie scene shot from Pioneer Village

• Individuals and organizations
  ○ Blacksmithing group
  ○ Historic society
  ○ High school and college students

• Historic buildings and exhibit buildings

• Community garden

**Our Top Three Priorities**

• Building restoration

• Signage/streets/infrastructure

• Restrooms with showers

**Actions Taken to Date**

• Held annual homesteading conferences

• Building and utilizing the high tunnel and raised beds have been very successful

• Progress – got water line to the high tunnel and raised beds

• Established the Pioneer Village Commission through the City of Rison
Work Underway

- Work with the city of Rison to create a Pioneer Village Commission that would work under the umbrella of the city to give leadership to refurbishing and maintaining the facility, as well as finding revenue sources to support the village.
- Put tarp on mercantile building until roof can be repaired.
- Board up broken windows in buildings until can be repaired.
- Clean out vines in fence.
- Seek funding for restorations through grants, donations and Christmas at the Village as a fundraiser.

Additional Opportunities

- Add a train depot, then have “Polar Express Night” for children.
- Recruit partners, networks and volunteer base in the entire state to revitalize the facilities.
- Connect with other similar organizations and networks.
- Bring in busloads of children to the Pioneer Village for educational purposes.
- Families can experience life off the grid.
- Hold an annual homecoming that engages all previous residents and interested people in activities and events, such as alumni band, alumni choir, antique car display, barbecue competition, musical memories, alumni art show, softball tournament, golf tournament, fun run and cleanup committee.

re-New-ing Edinburg Action Team

Current Situation

Working Well:

- Willingness to volunteer
- Historical buildings
- Willingness to clean up
- Farmers’ market
- Catfish meal
- Marks’ Mills Battleground
- Community center
- Halloween activities

Challenges:

- Need to change mindset
- Lack of industry
- No school
- Neglected properties

Our Five-Year Goals

- Spruce up four buildings in New Edinburg and fill them with businesses.
- Establish an annual New Edinburg Festival, building on our rich history in the Civil War.
- Attract greater attention and community involvement in the revitalization of New Edinburg and increase pride in the community.
- Investigate incorporating New Edinburg as a city and offer city services.
Our Assets

- Psalms Camp for retreats
- Saline River/fishing tournament; deer hunting
- Marks’ Mills Battleground
- Restored hotel
- Birthplace of Bear Bryant
- Historical buildings
- No crime

Our Top Three Priorities

1) Clean up
2) Contact building owners, request spruce up/change uses
3) Funding for projects

Actions Taken to Date

- Dutch oven cooking demonstration
- Strong community involvement in the community center and events in that facility

Work Underway

- Clean up historic buildings
- Contact building owners
- Identify funding

Additional Opportunities

- New businesses in old buildings
- Cemetery event
- Hotel Livingston
- Scottish festival and games
- Sorghum Festival
- Rendezvous
- Goat roast
- Old Days Festival
- History – drama
- Pie Shop
- Christmas Market
- Sister city with other Scottish towns
- Wild pig hunt and BBQ

Rison Shine Downtown Development Action Team

Current Situation

Working Well:

- Pocket Park
- Farmers’ market
- City buy-in to revitalization, property owners accountability
• Walking trail
• Snow cones at park
• One less vacant building
• Two new buildings (Gateway Bank and Taylor Shay’s Florist, Home Décor & More)
• New Dollar General is coming

Challenges:
• Deferred maintenance
• Lots of cleanup (including refrigerators, cars on blocks)
• Vacant, abandoned buildings
• Abandoned building at entrance to town
• Need more streetlights and a railroad overpass

Our Five-Year Goals
• Beautify downtown Rison, attract 10 new businesses, fill all buildings with thriving businesses, including a coffee shop and movie house.
• Upgrade Rison’s infrastructure and city services (water, streets, sewer, sidewalks, 24-hour police patrols) and establish them on a sustainable financial basis.
• Spruce up the entrance to Rison, so it is attractive and welcoming, including the Dairy Dip building.
• Meet the needs of our youth through more youth programs and a school-based health clinic.
• Support Rison’s organizations and events, including a garden club, horse camp, country club transformed into a veterans retreat center and Zombie Run.
• Install faster broadband infrastructure in the entire county.
• Lighting the overpass coming into downtown.

Our Assets
• Downtown has a small town feel
• Existing businesses in the downtown
• Pocket Park, Veterans Park, Powell Park
• Rison Lions Club sports complex
• Greenhouse cottages – Southern Hills Nursing Home
• Strong support from the community

Our Top Three Priorities
1) Cleanup and beautification of downtown/deck in Pocket Park
2) Enforcement of ordinance
3) Encourage entrepreneurship
4) Pursue grants and donations for projects

Actions Taken to Date
• Pocket Park established and actively used for events.
• Zombie Run plans set in motion.
• Submitted grants for funding
- Painted a large wall in downtown.
- Met with city council regarding poultry in the city limits.

**Work Underway**
- Implement the Zombie Run.
- Continue to seek funding for downtown revitalization.
- Develop new events for the community.
- Continue ongoing beautification projects.

**Additional Opportunities**
- Paint the Town party (involve students)
- Grants – school-based clinics/Plum Creek grants/streetscaping
- Beautification
- City ordinances enforcement
- Groups to buy abandoned lots
- Flags for courthouse
- Old Dollar General building will soon be available
- Spruce up downtown with streetscaping – check out grants available
- Outdoor movies in the park
- Restore building facades
- Enhance the farmers’ market with music, arts, crafts, etc.
- Create a small business incubator
- Restaurant/coffee house
- Social media

**Wake-Up Woodlawn Action Team**

**Current Situation**

**Working Well:**
- New farmers’ market, three convenience stores, a grocery store
- A new Dollar General is coming
- Timber, poultry, cattle
- A walking and fitness trail at the school

**Challenges:**
- Very rural, no restaurants, no retail

**Our Five-Year Goals**
- Establish the Woodlawn Farmers’ Market with co-directors, covered space and good signage on the highway.
- Develop a robust website for Wake-Up Woodlawn, access to 501(c)3 (or become a 501(c)3 organization), and become active with fundraising and grants applications.
• Fully develop and re-brand our community center and park and bring in ball tournaments.
• Improve our fire department so that the Woodlawn area has a lower ISO rating.
• Attract two more retail stores to the community, including a hunting supply store and a restaurant.

Our Assets

• School
• New Dollar General Store
• Hunting
• Good water
• Good people
• Low crime rate
• Great fire department and low ISO insurance rating
• Community center
• Not a lot of mosquitoes
• A grocery store
• Walking trail at the school
• Good location on Highway 63 between Bradley County and Pine Bluff

Our Top Three Priorities

1) Fully develop our park, including ballfields, walking trail and picnic area.
2) Apply for grant to support park development.

Actions Taken to Date

• Have established a farmers’ market.

Work Underway

• Checking into grant opportunities.
• Checking with Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism about grants to develop the park.
• Working with EAST students to develop a website.

Additional Opportunities

• Hunting supply store/equipment repair shop
• Small farm supply store with supplies for quick repairs
• Pizza place
Summary

This Kickstart Cleveland County blueprint and action plans represent the culmination of multiple interactions with the citizens and leaders of Cleveland County, Arkansas, including their vision for the future of their county, five-year goals and action plans to realize those goals. It recognizes the rich history, leadership and hard work of generations of citizens and leaders in the county, and it provides a blueprint for moving forward in this time of rapid change. It also identifies many assets in the county and strategies of how to leverage those assets. As the environment is constantly changing, this is a snapshot in time, and the goals, strategies and action plans will change moving forward.

Thanks to all who have been involved with this initiative so far, and we look forward to seeing great things happen in Cleveland County, America’s Homestead.

Dr. Mark Peterson
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Vision is seeing beyond the immediacy of the day; it is understanding the temper of the times, the outlines of the future, and how to move from one to the other. Vision is seeing the potential purpose that is hidden in the chaos of the moment, yet which could bring to birth new possibilities for a people.

– William Van Dusen Wishare
A World in Search of Meaning
Appendix I. Population of Cleveland County

Population, 1960-2010
Cleveland County

Number of People

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>6,944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>6,605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>7,868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>7,781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>8,571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>8,689</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2014 Est. 8,449 (-2.8% since 2010)

Appendix II. The Traveler (Bob Abbott) Property Possibilities

Bob Abbott Property Possibilities
Restaurant (steakhouse like Georgia’s in Magnolia)
Weddings in the chapel – stay on-site
Retreat center
Fishing derby for children
1903 Oldsmobile driving trail
Develop workforce and move Oldsmobile plant
Increase production and marketing of the cars
Appendix III. Old Country Club Property Possibilities

Mayor Dollar is providing leadership and vision to transform this property into a facility that can host events and retreats for our armed forces veterans.

**Working Well**

Under the leadership of Mayor Dollar:
- Have hosted soldiers from England, including a member of the British Parliament
- Boy Scout troop from Little Rock held a campout on the property

**Old Country Club Property Possibilities**

Veterans Worldwide Assistance Program
Purchase the property – perhaps use Kickstarter crowdfunding
Renovate clubhouse
Tap state/vets volunteer base to improve property
Warrior Dash
Add greenhouse type cottages for vets
Gardens
Trails
Horses and other livestock
Appendix IV. Psalms Camp Possibilities

Psalms Camp Possibilities
Spruce the place up
Kickstart your year (Jan-Feb)
Tap wider volunteer base
Men’s/women’s retreats
Open house for pastors and Christian leaders
Look at other camps and see what they are doing
Weddings in the chapel – stay overnight
Increase visibility through social media
Register facility with on-line data bases
Marketing, marketing, marketing
Appendix V. Saline River Possibilities

Stakeholders to Engage
Landowners
Arkansas Game and Fish Commission
Outfitters
Fishing guides
Outdoor organizations

Saline River Possibilities
Establish put-in and take-out locations
   for float trips
Develop overnight campgrounds
Outfitters and shuttles
Annual river cleanup
Develop an annual paddle event
Little Rock canoe club
Great race (run, bike, paddle)

Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn’t do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bow lines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Explore. Dream. Discover.

– Mark Twain