

Breakthrough Solutions Community and Regional Success Stories

Harrison C.O.R.E. - Revitalizing the Heart of Harrison and Boone County (Our Pilot Breakthrough Solutions Community)



Harrison C.O.R.E. Community

Leaders Celebrate the Rollout of their Strategic Plan

Front row: Elizabeth Locke, Sherri Hinrichs, Jeanette Fitton, Susan Sangren, Layne Ragsdale, Nita Cooper; Back row: Dave Fitton, Jack Moyer, George Holcomb, Cloyd Baltimore, Terry Cook, Dr. Mark Peterson, Ed Levy

When leaders from Harrison, Ark. attended the 2009 Breakthrough Solutions Conference, they were seeking direction and assistance to revitalize the core area of their community. Vacant store buildings and a declining retail sector in downtown became a real concern of the community, leading to the formation of Harrison C.O.R.E. (Central Organization for the Revitalization and Enhancement of Harrison). The conference piqued their interest, leading to Harrison C.O.R.E. being selected as the first pilot community for the new Breakthrough Solutions Program. Harrison C.O.R.E. has learned that a vibrant, healthy downtown can:

- lead to a vibrant, healthy community and county,
- draw people to Harrison and Boone County to visit, live, and work,
- become a catalyst for jobs and economic development.

Harrison C.O.R.E. has completed a strategic plan for the C.O.R.E. district, and is now implementing that plan. They have been very successful, and received awards and recognition for their efforts.

21st Century Vision Initiative Completes Strategic Plan for Region, Targets High Potential Clusters

With six manufacturing plants closing in the last two years and a negative impact of over \$14 million, the North Central Arkansas Regional Economic Development Corporation (**NCARED**) commissioned the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service Breakthrough Solutions Program to implement 21st Century Vision, a strategic planning initiative to move the region forward. Community leaders, citizens, and high school youth from throughout the region were involved in the process, and the NCARED board set priorities for the coming year:

- Education
- Entrepreneurship, business development, and industrial recruitment
- Tourism and attracting retirees
- The creative economy
- Value added agriculture

The board emphasized that they welcome initiatives and activities in other issue areas but felt the need to focus on these top priorities for the coming year.

Breakthrough Solutions builds on its VISION 2010 predecessor which:

- involved over 9,000 citizens in community development initiatives in 21 communities
- generated over \$70 million in local funds invested, grants, appropriations, and taxes
- involved 20 Breakthrough Solutions Partner organizations
- was selected to receive the Community Development Society's Outstanding Program Award has been used in communities, with the Community Development Institute at the University of Central Arkansas, the Community Development Society, and with communities, organizations and businesses.

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