



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Desha Forward to release results of county competitive assessment at public meeting  
Countywide economic development initiative seeks additional input

Desha County, Arkansas (January 14, 2009) – Desha Forward, a strategic planning project that is working to create a Comprehensive Community & Economic Development Plan for Desha County, will hold a public meeting on January 22 at 6:00 p.m. at the Desha County Courthouse in Arkansas City. During the meeting, results of a Desha County community analysis and business survey will be presented. During the discovery process 40 local stakeholders were interviewed and over 50 businesses participated in a survey to gather their opinion of the business climate in Desha County. Ideas and initiatives for the plan will also be discussed.

Leaders from Arkansas City, Dumas and McGehee, who partnered to create Desha Forward, will attend the meeting.

Results of the analysis will be discussed by leaders of the Strategic Growth Institute at the University of Central Arkansas. Desha Forward's consulting team, consisting of the Strategic Growth Institute (SGI) and Connect Arkansas, was selected to assist in the planning process and in the development of a Strategic Plan.

"Desha County's residents and partners have come together to build on the assets, tackle challenges, and think of innovative ways to grow and diversify the region's economy, said Jennifer Tanner, SGI Project Manager. With this presentation, the real work of strategic planning begins."

In addition to the interviews of local stakeholders, focus groups and a SWOT analysis contributed to the information that will be released at the meeting. This information will ultimately be used in the development of Desha Forward's Strategic Plan.

The Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC) serves in an advisory role in the development of the strategic plan.

The public is encouraged to attend and provide input.

For more information on this meeting, contact Amy Bynum at the University of Central Arkansas' Strategic Growth Institute at 501-269-9009.

Additional information on Desha Forward can be found at [www.deshafoward.org](http://www.deshafoward.org).