

# Desha Forward

To: Members of the Desha Forward Steering Committee  
 From: Jennifer Tanner, Project Manager  
 Date: July 18, 2008  
 RE: Minutes from Kick-off Meeting July 10th

Members Present:

Eddie Allen	Marion Gill	Amy Bynum
Fred Denton	Michael Jones	Kim Tran
Helen Wesson	Sammye Owen	Jonathan Jacobs
Jack May	Sam Walls III	Jann Farmer
Kenny Gober	Sam Walls	Jay Wisner
Mike Smith	Jennifer Tanner	Jeff Weaver
Bill Bowman	Leslie Lane	Terry Hawkins
Charlotte Schexnayder	Kelly Lyon	

Copy Meeting Minutes to all Steering Committee and Consulting Team Members. Please send comments/corrections to Amy Bynum ([abynum@strategicgrowthinstitute.org](mailto:abynum@strategicgrowthinstitute.org) or 501.852.2930) by 7/23/08.

Agenda Item/Discussion	Action Required	Person responsible and complete by:
Introductory Remarks (John Heard) - Emphasized the need to get all information filled in on the sign-in sheet – List will be distributed and updated as needed. Introduced SGI/ConnectAR Consulting Team	Current List Attached at end of minutes – will be posted on website when available	SGi
Introductions of all Attendees – See Item 1 at end of minutes for responses to ice breaker (Favorite or significant moment in time in Desha County)	None	All
Consulting Team Presentation - PowerPoint Presentation will be posted on website when in place - Proposed Scope and Schedule was accepted by the meeting participants.	Place PPT on Website	SGi
<p>Review &amp; Discussion of Project's Stakeholder Organization. The project needs a nimble small group entrusted to manage the administrative and high level leadership/coaching needs of the project. The following organizational structure was confirmed by the attendees.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An Executive Committee (subcommittee of the Steering committee) will consist of: Co-Chairs: John Heard and Ken Shea and Co-Champions: Charlotte Schexnayder and Judge Mark McElroy</li> <li>2. The Steering Committee will encompass all stakeholders involved in the planning process</li> <li>3. A Communications Subcommittee was</li> </ol>	Contact two nominees and gain their agreement to participate on this sub-committee – report to Steering Committee via emailed announcement.	John Heard / SGI

Agenda Item/Discussion	Action Required	Person responsible and complete by:
<p>discussed and two people were nominated -</p> <p>4. Other committees to be determined after Town Hall Meetings</p>		
<p>Development of Draft Project Mission Statement – Small groups identified the core values and strategies necessary to make a planning process like Desha Forward successful. See Item 2 for the details and draft of mission statement</p>	<p>Present Draft of Mission Statement at Town Hall Meetings</p>	<p>Executive Committee/Consulting Team 8/18-19/08</p>
<p>The project’s name was changed to “Desha Forward” – and the group discussed the need to create a logo/brand for the project as we move forward to creating a website and marketing, etc. After the Town Hall meetings, logo options can be discussed.</p>	<p>Logo Development</p>	<p>Helen Wesson agreed to create a logo for the Desha Forward Project, and send three different options to Jennifer -</p>
<p>The Town Hall Meetings will be on August 18 and 19, 2008. On August 18, a lunch meeting will be held at 11:30 am and a dinner meeting will be held at 6 pm. On August 19, a lunch meeting will be held at 11:30 am. Each will be 90 minutes long and facilitated by SGI. The meetings will take place in Dumas, McGehee, and Arkansas City.</p> <p>The request was made to add the following language to whatever letters/announcements go out to the public: The town hall meetings are open to everyone. Please come, but if you cannot attend or know of someone who would like to participate, please share this invitation with them.</p> <p>The Meeting &amp; Communications Subcommittee will work with others in the county to set up locations and publicize these meetings. Newspaper advertisements, mailed letters, and radio announcements were all mentioned as possible strategies to get the word out. To promote an inclusive spirit, the notices would encourage everyone to invite others, and all advertisements would stress that everyone in the community is invited.</p>	<p>A communication plan will be prepared for the Town Hall Meetings. The communications committee will work with the Chambers and other groups to assist with invitations to the Town Hall Meetings</p>	<p>Executive Committee / Consulting Team / Communications SC</p>
<p>The agenda for the Town Hall Meetings will be as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Briefly frame the issues facing Desha County (Demographic/Economic Highlights, Trends, and Discussion on Necessity of Technology Use)</li> <li>§ Present vision of a county strategic plan and mission of the Desha</li> </ul>	<p>PowerPoint Presentation and agenda prepared to lead discussion.</p>	<p>Executive Committee / Consulting Team / Anyone else that volunteers??</p>

Agenda Item/Discussion	Action Required	Person responsible and complete by:
<p>Forward's Steering Committee</p> <p>§ Seek input through facilitated small group discussions (issues/needs/assets/liabilities &amp; keys for success)</p> <p>§ Present next steps to attendees: what will happen with this information – when will they hear the results – invitation to next Steering Committee Meeting</p>		

Item 1: What was your favorite or most significant moment in Desha County?

Wedding Day	Passing 1¢ sales tax in McGehee—everyone came together to make something happen
Built Yellow Bend Port through political will	Progress since tornadoes
Making a home—Helen Wesson moved to Dumas 7 years ago, and she immediately felt right at home	End of WWII—most exciting day in the county
Sales tax passed for Yellow Bend Port (early 1980s)—gave hope for the future	Train from St. Louis pulling in McGehee on Saturday nights and when Potlach opened
Moving to McGehee	Family heritage/history (moving back home to be close to my parents and in-laws)
Going to the lake	Working
Applied for and received grant money to rehab Chamber of Commerce building	Right now! Especially at the stoplight and seeing how the town has come back from the tornado
Working for Charlotte at the Dumas Clarion	Serving as Chairman of Yellow Bend Port
Living and Working	Driving backroads after Friday night games
Showing Governor Beebe and Congressman Ross around my hometown after the tornado	Riding around with grandfather in pickup truck
Helpful people	Coming to Dumas for Team Delta announcement
War War II ending and VJ Day	Seven years ago (Friday at midnight) when I relocated to be with my husband
Having two sets of great grandparents here	Having grandparents at Snow Lake then relocating here in 1980 to work for the bank
Moving here in 1974 and now having a 3-day work week and looking forward to retirement	

Item 2: Development of Draft Mission Statement

Core Values and Strategies for Success were identified to identify mission statement elements

:Embrace and include all people (4)	Create grassroots support
Inclusion & Cooperation (2)	Create something positive for the Delta
Engage people to get involved in positive change	Bring Dumas and McGehee together!

Improve technology and implement its use	Focus on the future
Communication (2)	Strength
Develop county self-esteem	Identify assets (including tourism) (2)
Use previous ACE information	Leadership
Community involvement	Honesty
Trust (2)	Educate people
Educate the public on economic development	Media involvement
Involve youth	Careful crafting of town hall guest lists to include <u>all</u>
Include all races	Focus groups
Involve churches	Advertisements
Research	Use of different kinds of media for communicating
Identify ways to overcome liabilities	Coordinate regional, state, and federal resources
Transparent process	Set goals which can be reached on both short term and long term basis
Resolve	Create a vision that can be sustained
Dedication	Momentum

Groups identified as needing to be involved both as participants and beneficiaries include:

Chambers	Include all races
Open to all people of Desha County	Youth
Leaders	Chamber of Commerce leaders
Health providers	Bankers
City government	Churches
Dumas, McGehee, and all incorporated towns	Include smaller communities
Election officials	Judge
County officials	Local government officials
Merchants	Business owners
Farmers	Schools, children, and educators
Non-profits	All segments
Any interested person who self-identifies	

The draft mission statement reads:

Desha Forward will create and implement a strategic planning process for the county that is inclusive of all its citizens incorporating these core values: honesty, cooperation, trust, and focus on the future.