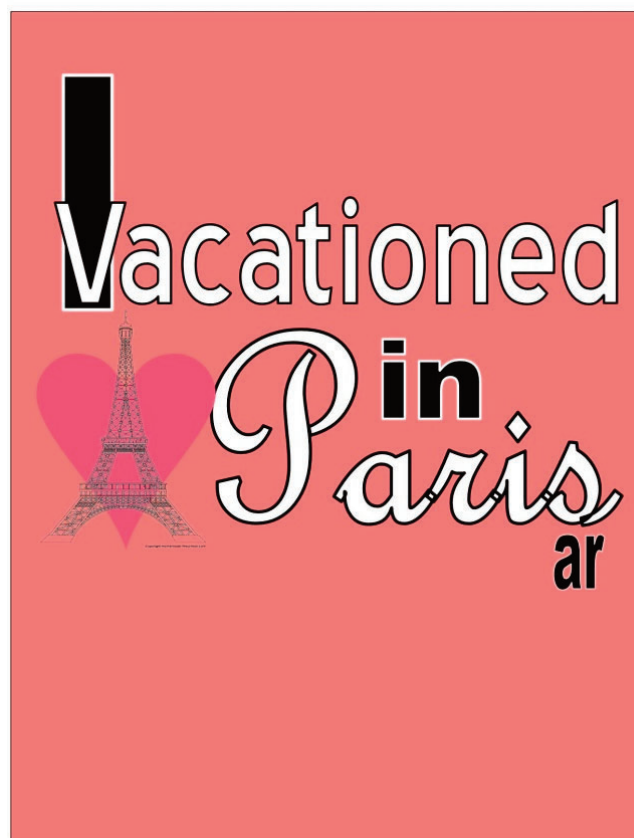


Community Development Kick Start Report for Paris, Arkansas



Community Development Institute Central 2014
University of Central Arkansas
Conway, Arkansas

In Appreciation

A special thanks to the following individuals for their leadership, cooperation and hospitality in welcoming the Community Development Kick Start team to their community:

- Dr. Lee Lane, chairperson, Paris Area Economic Development Council
- Mayor Daniel Rogers
- Chester Koprovic, AEDC commissioner
- Tonya Baumgartner, Director, Paris Area Chamber of Commerce
- Bob Harper, Logan County Extension agent
- Pat McHughes, editor, *Paris Express*

And thanks to the community leaders in Paris who came out and participated in the community meeting on August 5. The results of that meeting, which are the basis for this report, are significant because of your active participation and commitment.

A special thanks to Amy Whitehead, director, University of Central Arkansas Center for Community and Economic Development, and to Josh Markham, assistant director, for their support and laying the groundwork for this initiative. We look forward to continuing to work together to support Paris in their development efforts.

A big thanks to Laura Goforth, associate designer/editor and Chris Meux, design specialist, for their excellent work in formatting and editing this report, and creating the Paris logo in the text.

*Dr. Mark Peterson, professor - Community and Economic Development
Community Development Kick Start team leader and report editor
University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service*

University of Central Arkansas

CDI CENTRAL
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
INSTITUTE

UofA DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System
Community & Economic Development
Strengthening Arkansas Communities



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“A leader’s greatest obligation is to make possible an environment where people can aspire to change the world.”

*Carly Fiorina, Former CEO
Hewlett Packard*

Executive Summary

The Community Development Institute at University of Central Arkansas provides community and economic development professionals with the knowledge and skills to assist communities to be successful in this 21st century economy. Community Development Kick Start provides an opportunity for CDI graduates to use that knowledge and those skills in a real-life community situation. It uses the Breakthrough Solutions Model from the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service and its Breakthrough Solutions partners, which draws on experience with multiple communities in Arkansas.

Communities in Arkansas were invited to apply for this unique opportunity, and Paris was selected. A team of CDI graduates spent August 4 researching Paris to gather insights about the community. August 5 was spent in Paris interacting with citizens, taking a bus tour and meeting with community leaders. Finally, August 6 was spent pulling all of this together into a report, with recommendations for Paris to consider moving forward.

This is not a comprehensive analysis of all economic sectors of Paris, but it does represent a fresh look at the community from several outsiders who brought community and economic development experience and expertise into this setting.

Breakthroughs are advances, innovations or leaps forward that can transform a community and change the dynamics in a region by acting as catalysts to leverage other resources. Breakthrough solutions carry the breakthroughs into action.

The Kick Start Team found that the citizens, leaders, organizations and businesses in Paris have much to be proud of and are successful in many ways. So these potential breakthroughs really build on the good work that you are already doing.

Potential Breakthroughs for Paris:

- 1) **Fresh Branding and Marketing** – You have tremendous assets: proximity to Mount Magazine, a great courthouse and courthouse square, an attractive name, a winery, museums and other unique assets. Pulling them together with an effective, community-wide branding and marketing effort can bear fruit.
- 2) **Robust Education and Workforce Preparation** – You already have jobs. Supporting your employers through a robust and innovative education and workforce preparation initiative can further support your existing employers and potential new ones.
- 3) **Quality of Life and Place** – Creating a clean, attractive community with walkability and trail systems is attractive to residents and visitors.
- 4) **Support Employers and Identify New Job Opportunities** – Supporting your employers with a business retention and expansion program, robust education and workforce preparation and developing an entrepreneurship support system has real merit.

- 5) **Youth Involvement** – Youth are 25 percent of our population and 100 percent of our future. Involving your youth in the community in authentic ways insures they will be more likely to stay or return in the future.
- 6) **Enhanced On-Line Presence** – This is the age of the Internet. Enhance your on-line presence across the several Paris websites and active use of several social media venues.
- 7) **Long-Term Sustainability - Leadership** – Success in community and economic development depends on the leaders of a community. Enhance the leadership capabilities of your people by taking advantage of statewide leadership programs and creating local leadership development opportunities.
- 8) **Long-Term Sustainability - Funding and Finance** – Successful communities create ways for their citizens (and outsiders) to financially support community and economic development in their communities. Because people only support those things they believe in, this requires community involvement to create financing mechanisms that are good for the community over the long term.

The real experts are those of you who live and work in Paris. These recommendations are things to consider, for you to select the gold nuggets that may confirm what you have already known or describe a new opportunity you had not considered. The team was unencumbered by a knowledge of local politics and who owns what land or businesses; we leave that up to the people of Paris to work through.

NOTE: A large amount of secondary data about Paris and Logan County has been gathered through UCA and the UALR Institute for Economic Advancement and is available upon request. The PowerPoint presentation in Paris on August 5 is also available upon request.

Introduction to Community Development Kick Start

The Community Development Institute Central (CDI), established in 1987 at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway, Arkansas, trains community and economic development professionals in Arkansas and surrounding states. The complete CDI experience is a three-year training program, with one week of training per year. Participants move through the program curriculum in cohorts and are exposed to a comprehensive, applied approach to the field of community and economic development. CDI is relevant for both new and seasoned professionals because it focuses on best practices and current trends. You can learn more about the Community Development Institute at <https://uca.edu/cdi/>.

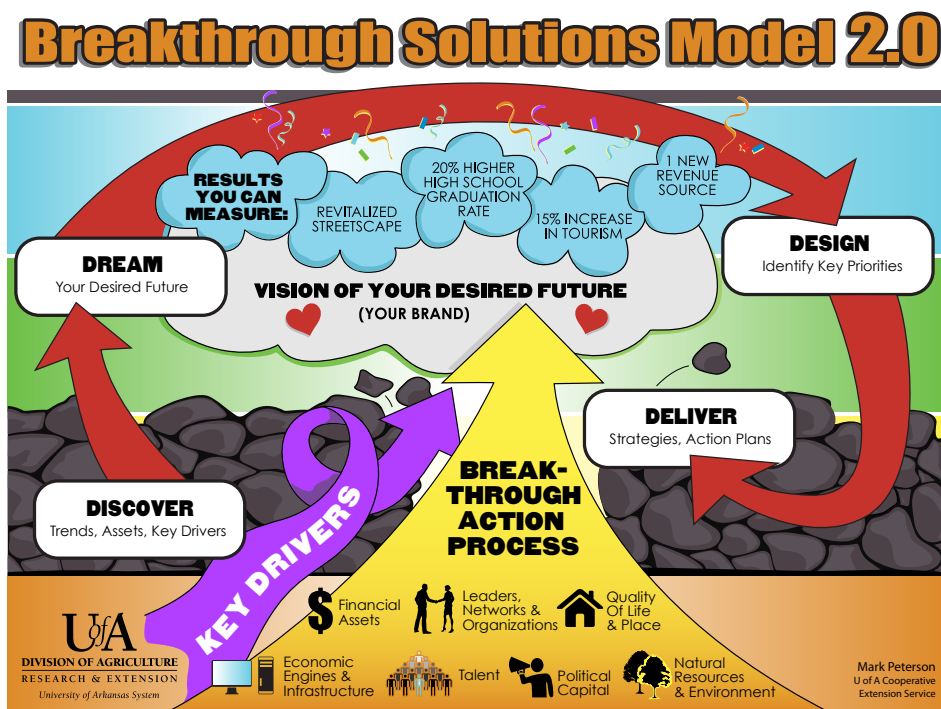
This year, Community Development Kick Start was created to provide a unique opportunity for CDI graduates to apply their knowledge and skills to a real-life situation and to kick start a community and the economic development process in one community.

Community Development Kick Start uses the Breakthrough Solutions Model from the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service, with Dr. Mark Peterson, professor of Community and Economic Development, serving as Class 4 director for this initiative. 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. You can learn more about Breakthrough Solutions at <http://www.uaex.edu/business-communities/strategic-planning/breakthrough-solutions.aspx>.

The Breakthrough Solutions Model 2.0 is a good fit for Community Development Kick Start, 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 that those do not will fade away.

The team of CDI graduates spent a day of orientation and researching the community on-line, a second day in the community interacting with citizens and community leaders about their most pressing issues and opportunities and a final day developing final recommendations for the community.



Community Development Kick Start provides a community with:

- A fresh look at their community – challenges and asset-based opportunities from several perspectives by community and economic development professionals
- A process to prioritize key issues and opportunities for their community.
- The opportunity to receive follow-up technical assistance from the Community Development Institute and the Breakthrough Solutions Program of the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service.
- A full-paid scholarship for one member of the community to attend the 2015 Community Development Institute and annual Breakthrough Solutions Conference.



Community Development Kick Start Team at work

Community Selection Process

The Community Development Institute publicized the opportunity for a community to participate in Community Development Kick Start. After reviewing applications and a telephone interview, Paris was chosen as the location for Community Development Kick Start. A special thanks to the following individuals for their leadership, cooperation and hospitality in welcoming the Community Development Kick Start team to their community:

- Dr. Lee Lane, chairperson, Paris Area Economic Development Council
- Mayor Daniel Rogers
- Chester Koprovic, AEDC commissioner
- Tonya Baumgartner, director, Paris Area Chamber of Commerce
- Bob Harper, Logan County Extension agent
- Pat McHughes, editor, *Paris Express*

And thanks to the community leaders in Paris who came out and participated in the community meeting on August 5. The results of that meeting, which are the basis for this report, are significant because of their active participation and commitment.

The Community Development Kick Start Team

The Community Development Kick Start Team brought a great deal of experience and expertise into this initiative, which contributed greatly to the insights and recommendations in this report. They are as follows:

Team Member and Current Position

- Gary D. Baxter, Mayor, City of Mulberry, Mulberry, Arkansas



Left to right: Mark Peterson, Gary Baxter, Sasha Grist, Regina E. Montgomery, Brooke B. Gregory, Phil Nanney; Absent - Katherine Whitworth

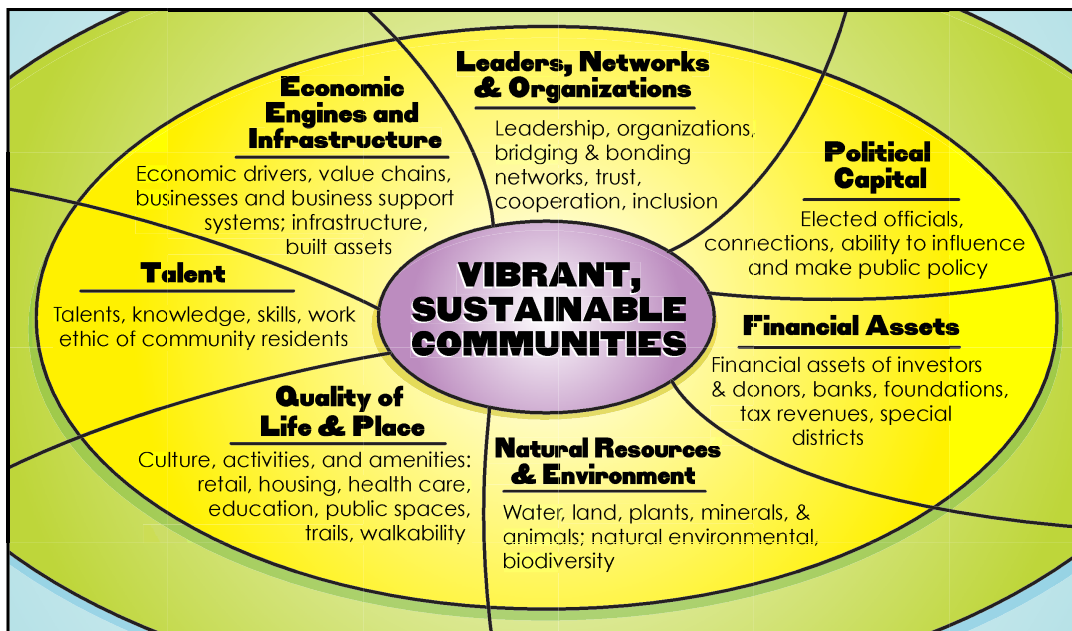
- Sasha Grist, interim executive director, Western Arkansas Planning and Development District, Fort Smith, Arkansas
- Regina E. Montgomery, Economic and Community Development specialist, Houseaboutit, Little Rock, Arkansas
- Brooke B. Gregory, community development officer, Southern Bancorp Community Partners, Arkadelphia, Arkansas
- Phil Nanney, executive director, Union County Development Association, New Albany, Arkansas
- Katherine Whitworth, senior program manager, Winthrop Rockefeller Institute, Morrilton, Arkansas

- Team Leader: Dr. Mark Peterson, professor - community and economic development, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service

Paris, like every other community, has a wide array of assets, as indicated on this asset map.

Strengths and Assets Map

Wealth in Your Community



Each of the individuals on the team was looking for a different set of assets to meet their needs.



Phil Nanney – Was looking for a family-friendly community to move his family.

Was looking for:

- Amenities for his family
- High quality of life
- Dependable broadband services
- Schools
- Churches
- Parks and recreation
- Youth organizations



Brooke Gregory – Small business owner looking for a vibrant community to locate my retail clothing business.

Was looking for:

- Number of visitors to Mount Magazine annually
- How many retail stores are available
- Spending power of the community
- Retail leakage
- Community involvement
- Space available for lease



Gary Baxter – Tourist

Was looking for:

- A place to visit for about three days with outdoor activities for his family



Regina Montgomery – Single 25 year old who wants to start a marketing and web design business.

Was looking for:

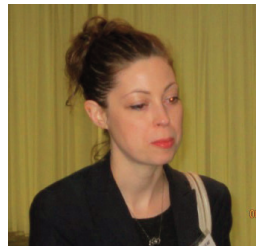
- Places where young adults network
- Types of businesses that appear successful in the area
- Locations that are available
- Supporting resources (educational, security, business, and financial)



Sasha Grist – Industrial prospect, looking for a community in which to locate a new manufacturing plant.

Was looking for:

- Industrial sites – building and land available, industrial park
- Available and skilled workforce
- Education opportunities for workforce and current education levels, certificate opportunities
- Transportation and infrastructure: highway, rail, air, water/port
- Utilities and services: water, sewer, electric, Internet
- Quality of life for employees and executives (as well as family)
- Healthcare: hospitals nearby
- Police and fire protection
- Tax breaks/incentives
- Other industry in the area



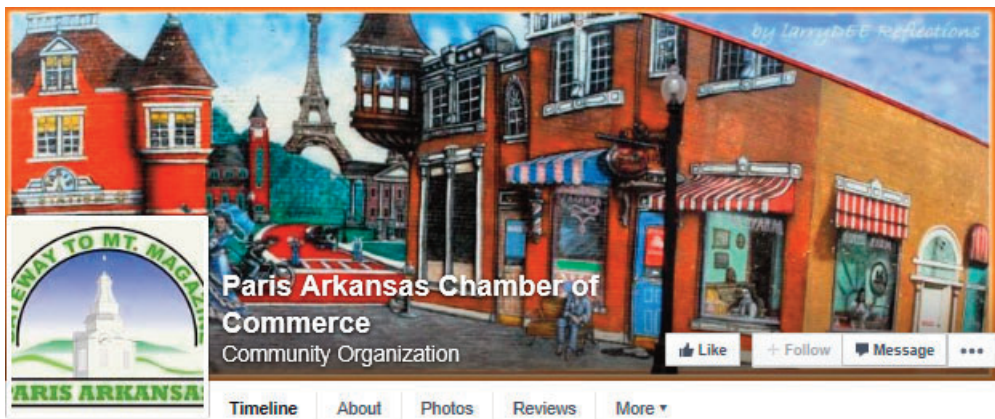
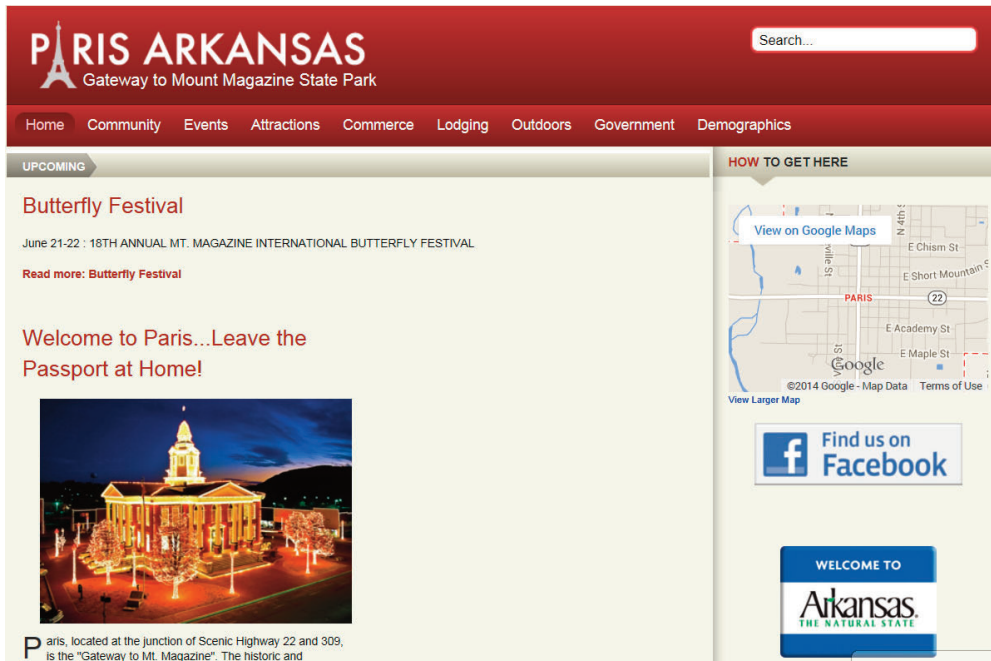
Katherine Whitworth – High school youth

Was looking for:

- Places to hang out with her friends
- Things to do
- Clues as to whether her family moving to Paris would ruin her life forever

Internet Search: Strengths and Weaknesses

In this Internet age, most people check out your community on-line before coming to visit. If they don't like what they see (regardless of the real situation in your community), they will probably never come. These notes reflect how outsiders (the Kick Start team) perceive your community by searching for Paris on the Internet.



On-Line Review of Paris – Strengths

- Multiple commercial sources for broadband
- Strong public schools
- Various denominations of religious organizations
- Youth activities
- Outdoor recreation
- Walkability
- Nationally recognized for historical locations

- Great Facebook page
- Laid back feel, living is easy
- Historical battleground
- Gateway to Mount Magazine
- Wineries – tourism opportunities
- Natural beauty
- Quaint downtown area and historic courthouse
- Involved community (though a small part)
- Fire and police protection (low crime rate)
- Affordable housing
- Fun festivals
- Retail leakage – 59 percent of clothing expenditures take place elsewhere
- Competition is limited
- Proximity to larger cities
- Cost of doing business
- Site Selector tool shows one building location: Elm Street manufacturing building
- Colleges located nearby for training and education of workforce:
 - Arkansas Tech University (approximately 40 miles away)
 - University of Arkansas at Fort Smith (approximately 40 miles away)
 - Arkansas Tech University at Ozark (approximately 20 miles away)
 - University of the Ozarks (approximately 20 miles away)
- Workforce numbers in Paris, Booneville and Logan County
- 2011 research shows 1,117 jobs in manufacturing in Paris Area (42.1 percent)
- Healthcare available – Hospital and Cooper Clinic

On-Line Review of Paris – Weaknesses

The screenshot shows a web browser window with a 404 error. The left side of the page displays a news article titled "WHAT'S HAPPENING IN PARIS, ARKANSAS?". It features two photos: one of a Christmas market stall and another of a lit-up courthouse at night. The right side of the page shows a 404 error message with the text "Ever feel like you're in the wrong place?" and silhouettes of people. Below the error message are instructions for site owners and visitors.

- On-line presence lacking
 - Chamber of Commerce website needs work and to be updated
 - Paris online newspaper is not free for visitors to view
 - Christmas time and Hanging Site are main events featured – what else is there?
- Paris has two logos
- Declining population and stagnant growth
- Lack of diversity

- Small population for new business
- Aging community – 48 percent over the age of 44 with only 21 percent in the 24-35 age group
- Untrained work force – 22 percent do not have a high school diploma or GED and only 11 percent have a bachelor’s degree or higher
- Online research was not clear on trained workforce/skilled workforce
- Low buying power – 42 percent with household incomes below \$25,000
- Low traffic counts
- Lack of young adult activities, locations and organization
- No training/educational resources listed on Chamber of Commerce website
- Chamber of Commerce website link for manufacturing/industry was not available
- City of Paris does not have a website or other social media
- Only one site was listed on the Site Selector property tool – no land was found on-line
- Possible incentives do not seem available based on online review
- No economic development commission based on on-line review or discussion of regional alliance affiliation
- Transportation is not listed, and city utilities are not listed on website

The team also reviewed websites from Newport, Booneville, Arkadelphia, Eureka Springs, Mulberry and Mena to gain insights about possible actions. Recommendations from the on-line review are listed in the recommendations section of this report.

Community Interviews and Tour Reports



Strengths

- Land is available for industry and an economic development group does exist with some funds available
- Downtown was engaged and busy
- Parks/green spaces, swimming pool, youth sports, Boys and Girls Club
- Farmers' market and courthouse
- Innovative thinking and engaged citizens
- Community pride and passion
- Available buildings downtown
- Growth potential for housing, retail and industrial
- Airport for industrial use
- Name of town is an asset
- Charm of area and shops



Weaknesses

- No way-finding signs
- Chamber of Commerce needs a larger sign at its office
- Code enforcement (dilapidated buildings/trash)
- Industrial park was not site-ready
- Sidewalks needed in some parts of town
- Lack of branding in the downtown area

Community Meeting Results

August 5, 2014



“WOW, what an exciting meeting. The energy in that room was amazing. Now all we have to do is harness it and direct it toward the much needed projects! Thank you for showing us we really are all looking toward the same goal – improving Paris. Thanks to all the advanced students for being so straightforward and for being so clear in their praise of our town and identification of our opportunities.”

Dr. Lee Lane, Chairperson

Paris Economic Development Commission

Present at the meeting:

Ronnie Adkison, Cloyes; Tonya Baumgartner, Paris Area Chamber of Commerce; Glen Constantino, Subiaco Abbey; Darwin Cross, Open Door Meals; Bill Elsken, Shelter Insurance; Bonnie Harmon, Scott's Flowers; Bob Harper, U of A Cooperative Extension Service; Ken Hart, SSI; Kim Hertlein, Cooper Clinic; Linda Hixson, Coal Miners' Memorial; Susan Johnson, COS; Lee Lane, Paris Area Economic Development Commission; Mark Limbird, Scranton; Les Mitchell, Elmer's PE; Doug Morris, COS and First Christian Church; Jan Reed, U.S. Forest Service; Debbie Reynolds, River Valley Tool; Lawrence Reynolds, River Valley Tool; Tracey

Richey, Paris School Board; Daniel Rogers, Mayor; Joe Schluterman, Paris Ford; Buddy Schwartz, Circle S Convenience; Richard Scott, Film Paris News; Tonya Varnell, Paris Schools; Kenny Vines, Grapevine and Big Red; Jarrod Yarnell, First National Bank

Things that are working well and we are proud of in Paris:

- Strong support of at-risk families
- Paris Boys and Girls Club facility (\$6M) improvements
- New business growth
- Local newspaper, the *Paris Express*, is doing well
- Active 4-H programs
- Good schools
 - Students are one-to-one (every student has a Chrome PC)
 - Middle school is a recipient of the Diamond Award
 - High school received *U.S. News and World Report* Silver Medal
- Chamber of commerce focused on growth
- The name “Paris”
- Establishment of the Merchants Association
- Outstanding square – neat and clean
- Community spirit
- Coal Miners’ Museum
- Infrastructure improvements
- Low cost of living
- Eiffel Tower to be constructed in downtown square where the farmers’ market will be permanently located
- County government just let bids for \$400K of work
- \$250K grants have been invested in infrastructure and courthouse
- Health clinic and hospital
- Community giving and compassion
- Subiaco Abbey – increase in enrollment and new monks
- Wonderful people
- Paris Without a Passport

Challenges (many of these are also opportunities)

- Need jobs for families
- Need to diversify our economic base
- Workforce strong in technology
- Challenges to access the Internet
- Forecasting the future of Paris (what do we want to be in 20 years)
- Retaining young adults
- Capitalize on connection to the state park
- East end of town (appearance)
- Housing availability
- Getting students career ready
- Difficulty working with city council

- Behind in technology
- Change culture of workforce
- Move from surviving to thriving
- Keep dollars in community
- Support of museums
- Changing mindset to embrace technology
- Capitalizing on motorcycle groups that travel through Paris
- Losing population
- Regionalism
- Health issues – poverty, lack of insurance, competition
- Quality of life – what we will provide – walking trails
- Keeping people together and having follow through
- Involve young people in the processes

Issues Identified and Their Priorities



Setting priorities by voting with dots.

As part of the community meeting, those present identified and voted on their highest priorities. The following lists the issues identified and the number of votes they received.

- 14 – Tourism/Marketing/Branding
- 13 – Education and Workforce Preparation
- 12 – Quality of Life and Place
- 9 – Downtown Revitalization/Retail Development
- 6 – Jobs
- 5 – Activities for Youth

Furthermore, there were three larger issues that seemed to cut across the above issues and could be incorporated into strategies and actions to address them:

- Embracing technology.
- Cultural change – from surviving to thriving.
- Inspire higher aspirations among our youth and citizens.

As tourism and marketing is closely related to downtown revitalization, they might be combined into these possible action teams and issues under each:

- 1) Education and Workforce Preparation.
- 2) Quality of Life and Place.
- 3) Tourism, Marketing, Branding and Downtown Revitalization.
- 4) Jobs and Infrastructure.
- 5) Activities for Youth.

Overall Observations and Recommendations

The real experts are the citizens and community leaders in Paris. These recommendations are things for you to consider, to select the gold nuggets that may confirm what you have already known or describe a new opportunity you had not considered. The team was unencumbered by a knowledge of local politics and who owns what land or businesses; we leave that up to the people of Paris to work through.

The following is an elaboration of the potential breakthroughs identified in the executive summary. It starts with suggestions on how to organize for action.

Organizing for Action – Overall

Form an organizational framework within which the community can move forward without overlapping:

- Schedule meetings each month.
- Appoint chairs or co-chairs for each action team (tourism/downtown, education, economic development, leadership, etc.).
- Chair needs to meet with all chairs/co-chairs each month (or every other month) to come together and discuss what each group is doing. Co-chairs can then go back to their respective groups and report back.
- ACCOUNTABILITY for each chair/co-chair.
- Invite the whole town to participate in a community-wide meeting. Invite volunteers to sign up for each group to serve on each action team. Get e-mail addresses and keep people informed.

1. Fresh Branding and Marketing (Includes Tourism and Downtown Revitalization)

a. Overall Tourism

- 1) Create a brand that links Paris to Mount Magazine and use it throughout your community and websites. See example at right.
- 2) Consider changing your slogan from Gateway to Mount Magazine State Park to Home of Mount Magazine – claim Mount Magazine as yours! Remember, it has a Paris address. “Come to Paris to Visit Mount Magazine.”



NOTE: The U of A Cooperative Extension Service has access to a terrific video on branding your community, and you are welcome to see it.

- 3) Strengthen your connection with Mount Magazine State Park through web links, offering informational brochures at the lodge and other ways.

- 4) Take a road trip to Mountain View, because they have 11 festivals a year, each one with a different theme and often reaching different market segments.
- 5) Identify the most promising market segments for tourism development. Some possible market segments to consider:
 - Outdoor enthusiasts – bicyclists, mountain bicyclists, motorcyclists, hikers, backpackers, ATVers, horse camp people, butterfly people, bird watchers, hunters (for different kinds of critters), fishermen, extreme sports enthusiasts (hang gliders, kayakers, rappellers).
 - Sports enthusiasts – participants in soccer and softball tournaments and rodeo fans.
 - History buffs – people who like history, Civil War buffs, people interested in coal mining.
 - Religion – visitors to Subiaco Abbey, Christian motorcyclists.
 - Shopping and food experiences – people who like antiques, arts and crafts; people who like food and wine; agri-tourists.
 - Music – people who like country music/bluegrass music, Christian music
 - Demographic groups – families with young children (particularly if they have some connection to Paris), retirees.
 - Business travelers
 - Mount Magazine visitors – people who visit the mountain or have conferences/retreats up on the mountain.
 - The French Connection – people who have some affinity for Paris, France.
- 6) Paris Bucket list – one side can be events and sights for spring/summer and the other for fall/winter. Check it off!
- 7) Invite the tourism development folks with the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism to come and discuss how they can help you market your community.
- 8) Recruit motorcycle tourism (poker runs, driving tours, host a rally).
- 9) Online presence – city website; chamber to utilize Twitter and Instagram; coin a #hashtag for your area and each event. Market it! **USE YOUR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS!**
- 10) Conduct a retail survey to find out the gaps in the retail mix for your community.
- 11) Work with the UALR Institute for Economic Advancement or UCA to do a retail analysis.
- 12) Hold a Christmas in July week – light up the courthouse, Santa pictures, etc.
- 13) Look into Christmas stores (existing stores could do this). Sevierville, Tennessee, near Gatlinburg, Tennessee, is one of the largest sellers of Christmas things in the nation, with stores that specialize in everything Christmas: ornaments, decorations, paper goods, etc. People even go there in the summer to buy things for decorating their homes at Christmas.

- 14) Consider a Christmas market like they do in Germany and Austria.



- 15) Recruit a new hotel/motel.

- 16) Sidewalk Art – sidewalk chalk fun! Kids and adults can participate. Bring in a professional sidewalk chalk person. “Chalk it up, Ya’ll” during the butterfly festival, or hold a Sidewalk Art Festival. Close off one or more streets, give everyone who shows up some chalk and give prizes for the best sidewalk art.



- 17) Look for strategic partners to invest resources for the promotion, design and implementation of the ideas/plans.
- 18) Branding with logos, colors, etc., throughout the region (street signs, storefronts, street banners, festivals, etc.)
- 19) Research Main Street Arkansas/Downtown network.
- 20) Research advertising and promotion tax (on restaurants and motels), with funds to be used to market for Paris and Mount Magazine (brochures, street banners, events, tournaments, websites).
- 21) Create a play based on real events and history in the community, drawing from the experience of Colquitt, Georgia (population 1,939), which developed a play called Swamp Gravy, which has been shown to over 90,000 people.

b. Downtown Look and Appeal

- 1) Continue restoration and beautification of the courthouse to create a central focus for downtown (trim trees, plant flowers, exterior painting/repair to building).
- 2) Find funding to offer a Façade Grant Program – make it a matching grant. Partner with all community banks to donate money for the grants and offer low interest loans for small business owners to do repairs downtown (awnings, new signage for small business, paint, exterior upgrades, new doors/window, historic restoration, planters).
- 3) Increase pedestrian friendliness – crosswalk awareness for drivers and function of systems for pedestrians.
- 4) Recruit artists/crafters and live music to the farmers’ market to add to the ambiance.
- 5) Install street banners for light poles for each season and special occasions.
- 6) Install a banner over the street coming into town: “Welcome to Paris, Ya’ll.”
- 7) Vacant buildings – put in signs that say “Coming Soon, Your Business Here” or artwork in the windows.

c. Way-Finding Signage



- 1) Start at the downtown square and move outwards as funding is available.
- 2) First step – make it easy to find major attractions (museums, Mount Magazine, Paris landmark, historic sites).
- 3) Create excellent signage to and from Mount Magazine to encourage tourists to return to Paris.
- 4) Extension has access to a terrific way-finding video you would be welcome to see – shows how to create a way-finding system for your community.

d. Weekend French Festival

- 1) Spring/summer outdoor French bistro style dining. Start with existing restaurants to see if they will participate. Sell tickets, recruit chefs and utilize farmers’ market

for produce (maybe coordinate during the outdoor movie nights and show a France-related movie).

- 2) Decorate with French flags, offer wine and cheese tastings, take tourist pictures in front of the Eiffel tower (light the tower at night with colored lighting that changes, like they do in France).
- 3) Partner with the winery to offer discounts on tours or participate by offering wine for the dinner at a special price.
- 4) See if the winery will design a wine label for the festival and offer it for sale at the event or part of the ticket price.
- 5) Dress servers in black berets and red silk scarfs.
- 6) Hold French cooking classes or demonstrations.
- 7) Invite Fort Smith and Little Rock news media (television, newspapers, radio, bloggers) to come, and give them a free passport.
- 8) Invite food and travel magazines to come as your special guests.
- 9) Play music outdoors and string Christmas lights over the bistro seating.



- 10) Use the tower in branding efforts (logo, signs, brochures, etc.).
- 11) Put up signs for people leaving town: “Bon Jour, Ya’ll.”

- 12) Create a passport brochure, with tourism sights, stores, etc., as destinations. Once all sites have been visited and stamped they can be turned in for a Paris prize or a large drawing. (See sample brochure below.)


SPEND AN EVENING IN PARIS!
NO NEED TO BRUSH UP ON YOUR FRENCH!

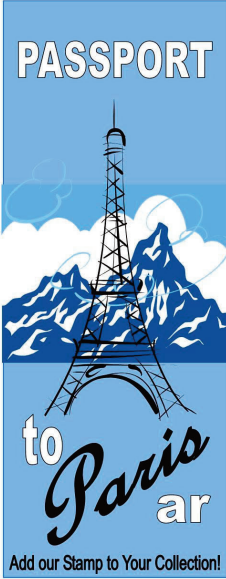
May 10th. 2015
7pm-11pm
\$75 Couple

Outdoor Bistro Dining
Under the Stars
with Award-Winning French Chef








Bottle of Commemorative Paris, AR Wine from Cowie Winery

Outdoor Movie & Popcorn





PASSPORT TO PARIS

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Retail</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Warren Shoes</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Scott's Flowers Shop</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Holly Hocks</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit our selected sites • Shop • Eat & Drink • Grab a Stamp at Each • Turn in to the Chamber • Win a Paris T-Shirt* • Enter for a chance to Win \$500*  <p style="text-align: center;">Cowie Winery's</p> <p style="font-size: small; text-align: center;">*you must visit each site to win a t-shirt and be entered in the drawing.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Restaurants</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Grapevine</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Hwy. 22 Cafe</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">El Parian</p> 
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e. Additional Opportunities Related to Paris

- 1) Develop a sister-city relationship with Paris, France, a French town in the U.S. or another community with the name Paris.
- 2) Seek assistance with the International Trade Council in northwest Arkansas for assistance in exploring business opportunities related to France and importing French products that could become part of the Paris AR mystique.

- 3) Seek out organizations, companies or individuals in Arkansas with some connection to Paris, France.
- 4) Create a network of all the communities in the U.S. with the name Paris and encourage tourists to visit them all (another passport opportunity).
- 5) Invite Paris Hilton to attend your Paris French Festival.

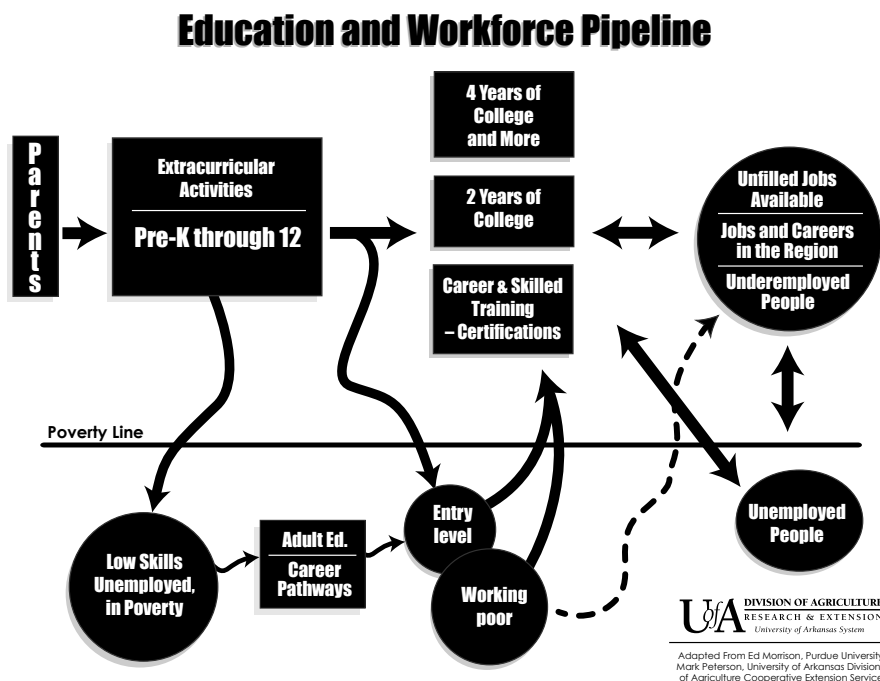
f. Rodeo grounds in disrepair and in need of funding for events

- 1) Consider using the space for multiple uses – kid’s rodeo, walking horse competitions, horse shows, pet parades (be inventive).
- 2) Search for additional funding options (sponsors, etc.).
- 3) Find out how successful rodeos in the state finance their operations.

2. Robust Education and Workforce Preparation

a. Opportunities

- 1) Continue to work with Arkansas Tech University - Ozark to establish an on-site training facility.
- 2) Workforce development – with assistance from the Arkansas Economic Development Commission, contract with universities to offer training for the local work force.
- 3) Open conversations between local schools (colleges, high schools, vo-tech) and existing industries about the industrial needs. The following diagram may be helpful, particularly when data for Paris is added to it:



- 4) Establish partnerships, offer mentorship programs and training programs.
- 5) Research successful programs to emulate.
- 6) Explore offering career readiness in the middle schools and high schools (resumé training, interview techniques, dress code, expectations of holding a job). Partner with industries/businesses to come in and share their expectations.
- 7) Offer a career readiness certificate as part of adult education classes.
- 8) Offer a Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy certificate as part of adult education classes.
- 9) Invite youth, their parents and teachers from the school to tour the local plants and discuss job and career opportunities.

3. Quality of Life and Place



a. Opportunities

- 1) Sponsor a community cleanup and involve youth and youth organizations.
- 2) Encourage community beautification.
- 3) Explore the Safe Routes to School Program with the Arkansas Highway Department, which supports sidewalk development.
- 4) Create a trail system in the community.
- 5) Create a trail system that uses former railroad right-of-ways.
- 6) Create a trail system that goes from Paris to the Mount Magazine State Park lodge.
- 7) Refinance city bonds for development of community spaces.
- 8) Sponsor sporting events.

4. Support Employers and Identify New Job Opportunities



a. Support Existing Employers

- 1) Develop a Business Retention and Expansion Program; it supports your local employers and often leads to new jobs (make sure your existing businesses are happy). The Arkansas Economic Development Commission can help with this.
- 2) Involve employers in workforce development efforts to insure that the work force meets their needs.
- 3) Tap the resources of the Arkansas Manufacturing Solutions group within the Arkansas Science and Technology Authority.

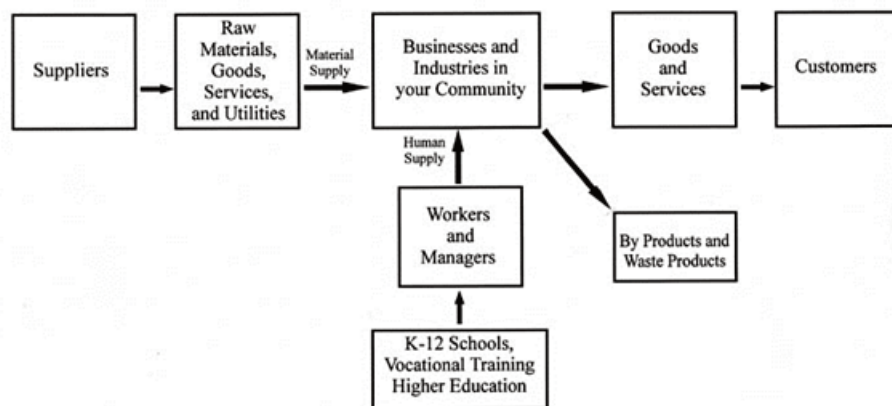
b. Industrial Recruitment

- 1) Work to make your site “shovel ready” in regards to industrial recruitment (utilities on-site, not just available; additional road requirements; water capacity, sewer and broadband).
- 2) Make sure all of your sites are on the Arkansas Site Select web page: http://www.energy-arkansas.com/economic_development/select_sites.aspx.
- 3) Seek training for Select Sites from the Arkansas Economic Development Commission.
- 4) Join relevant associations (Arkansas Community Development Society, Arkansas Economic Developers, Southern Economic Development Council, etc.).
- 5) Market the airport; many communities your size do not have such a great facility.
- 6) Research ways to fund incentives to encourage businesses to come (financial incentives are only one type).
- 7) Consider passing an economic development sales tax, which could be used to create incentives and for site preparation.
- 8) Update property (building and land) profiles on the chamber of commerce website – does the city have additional properties?

c. Economic Development

- 1) Develop and offer a short course on entrepreneurship and small business development, tapping resources from community colleges, universities and the UALR Small Business Technology and Development Center and their affiliates around the state.
- 2) Start a youth entrepreneurship program in your school system.
- 3) Branch out from “smokestack industrial recruiting” by offering incentives in a business incubator (low rent, free rent, shared administrative duties/phone/Internet). It could be located in a vacant storefront downtown.
- 4) Explore new economic development opportunities related to your existing employers with the following diagram.

Local Businesses as Strategic Assets*



*Source: “Stimulating a Renaissance Through Strategic, Systems Approach to Community and Economic Development,” Mark Peterson, Presentation to the 2014 Community Development Society Conference, Dubuque, Iowa, July 23, 2014.

d. Economic Development Strategies Related to Existing Employers (some are within the company and some in the community or region)

- 1) Opportunities Within the Business
 - a) Could your business purchase inputs jointly with other businesses in the community or region at reduced prices?
 - b) Could your business take on larger jobs by partnering with other businesses in the community (or region)?
 - c) Does your business have excess capacity that could be used for new product lines or leased to another business?
 - d) Can you use your capabilities, resources and technologies to create new products?
 - e) Can the products you produce be used for other purposes? (Example: Microplane in Russellville produces wood files and now markets them for food processing and orthopedic surgery.)
 - f) Are there ways to add more value to your products?

- g) Can you package goods you produce with other goods to sell packages or more complete solutions?
- h) What other needs do your customers have that you could meet?
- i) What are the major forces and trends impacting your industry, and do you have a plan to position your company for success in the next 5-10 years?
- j) What new technologies or business models are emerging that could make your business obsolete, and how can you take advantage of them?
- k) Do you take advantage of resources from Arkansas Manufacturing Solutions, UALR Small Business Technology Development Center, colleges and universities in the state?
- l) Are there opportunities to expand your markets to new market segments through Internet sales or exporting?
- m) Do you take advantage of the Arkansas Procurement Assistance Center to sell your products to the public sector?
- n) What one thing could local city government or the community do that would make the most difference for the success of your company, and how will you communicate that to them?
- o) Do you have a plan for leadership succession in your business, and if not, what would it take to develop one?

2) Opportunities Within the Community

- a) Identify all inputs, including raw materials, goods, services and utilities. Could any of these be provided by local sources in the community (or region)?
- b) Can any of the inputs be purchased in a more raw form and value added before using them by the company?
- c) Does the community have land and buildings that could be attractive to the businesses' major suppliers?
- d) Identify the by-products and waste stream from the business; are there potentials to use or recycle any of this?
- e) Conduct a survey of employees to find out:
 - Where they live, if they would be interested in moving into Paris and what kind of housing would interest them.
 - Their needs for day care or eldercare.
 - Unmet needs for retail trade.
 - Health care/wellness needs.
- f) Engage the school system, community colleges serving the area, Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, employees and the employer to identify and address needs and potentials for workforce development and training, creating a pipeline of qualified workers for the foreseeable future.
- g) Work with employers to foster programs for mentoring, shadowing and exposing parents, youth and high school teachers to the job/career opportunities with local employers.
- h) Create a business retention and expansion program for your businesses.

2) Opportunities Within the Region

- a) Tap into or create a regional organization for businesses in your economic sector.
- b) Tap into or initiate a study for your regional economic cluster that describes threats and opportunities.

5. Youth Involvement



Paris Through the Eyes of an (Almost) Teenager

One of the Kick Start team members assumed the role of a teenager when she visited Paris. Her observations are as follows.

Strengths:

- * The school system appears to be very good, and a teenager dropped into the high school mid-year could expect to find plenty of activities to get involved with.
- * The athletics are especially strong, as well as the marching band, which makes for an exciting school year and guarantees something fun to do.
- * The strength of the Boys and Girls Club is another great asset, as is the community pool.
- * Paris is well represented on Facebook, both via the Chamber's page and through various other Paris-related pages. A "Things to Do in Paris" page has nearly 2,000 likes (so, half the town) and 11,000 check-ins, so people there are engaged with social media and showing a pro-Paris attitude. That's good!

Weaknesses:

- * A teenager coming from a bigger city who was used to a more vibrant extracurricular scene might complain about the lack of entertainment options.
- * No apparent live music options for teenagers.
- * As a teenager (and a girl), I wondered where there was for me to shop and where young people go on dates – out of town?

Opportunities:

- * Many of the bars in Little Rock (for example) will have special nights that are either all-ages or 18-plus, so younger kids can occasionally get to go to shows, too.
- * It's too bad that both the movie theaters burned down. If another theater should come along in the future, I would think a film festival celebrating the work of Paris native James Bridges would draw quite a few out-of-towners.
- * Not much Paris-related activity on Twitter, but Instagram has a lot of potential, with quite a few people posting things tagged with #parisarkansas. Definitely room to capitalize on that!

a. Additional Opportunities for Youth

- 1) Move from doing for youth to doing with youth by involving youth in the community and develop activities that promote their development.
- 2) Connect youth with arts, culture and heritage.
- 3) Provide authentic opportunities for youth voices, such as a Mayor's Youth Council.
- 4) Use a vacant downtown storefront for a youth club.
- 5) Provide disposable cameras to a high school class or organization, ask them to take pictures of what they like and dislike in their community and present them to the community.
- 6) Initiate a social media campaign to involve youth; use hashtags.

6. Enhanced On-line Presence

a. Increase your on-line presence with these steps.

- 1) Update Chamber website to say “under construction – please visit our Facebook page.”
- 2) Possibly speak with the newspaper about offering a set number of articles for free before paying.
- 3) Appoint/seek a coordinator to monitor web pages and their content.
- 4) Enhance your websites and fully embrace social media – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram (keep updated).
- 5) Website needs to include workforce data, demographics, incentives, things to do, calendar of events and partnerships.
- 6) Look at other websites to gain insights, such as this one from Newport, which has a common website for the city of Newport, the Newport Economic Development Commission, Jackson County government and the Newport Chamber of Commerce.



7. Long-Term Sustainability – Leadership

a. Build up the leadership capacity in your community for the long term.

- 1) Recruit people to participate in the Community Development Institute, LeadAR (a U of A Cooperative Extension Service program) and other statewide leadership programs.
- 2) Consider developing a leadership program for Paris or Logan County that includes:
 - a) Knowledge of the community(s), county and region.
 - a) Knowledge of issues and opportunities facing the community/county/region.
 - a) Skills such as leading effective meetings and handling publicity.
 - a) Resources in the community, county, region and state.
 - a) Key drivers of change and how to position your community in this environment.
- 3) Visit with Johnson County Leadership Program, Van Buren County Leadership Program and New Vision Newport in Newport, Arkansas, to learn what works best for them.
- 4) The U of A Cooperative Extension Service also has resources to support a leadership development program.

8. Long-Term Sustainability – Funding and Finance

a. Explore funding sources to support community and economic development in your community/county.

- 1) Form a community foundation to support community and economic development in the community or county and become affiliated with the Arkansas Community Foundation.
- 2) Refinance city bonds for development of community spaces.
- 3) Consider passing an advertising and promotion tax (on restaurants and motels), which would provide funds to be used to market Paris and Mount Magazine (brochures, street banners, events, tournaments, websites).
- 4) Consider passing a sales tax for economic development.
- 5) Look at private sector funding, such as the Fifty for the Future group in Jonesboro.
- 6) Continue to work closely with the Western Arkansas Planning and Development District for funding to support city and government services and infrastructure projects.

Summary

This report is a culmination of the Community Development Kick Start team and their interactions with citizens and leaders of Paris, Arkansas. It is a rare opportunity for a community or organization to receive a fresh look from the outside of how they are perceived, and more importantly, what are the strategic opportunities they see for your community.

Remember that you who live in Paris are the experts about Paris, but sometimes outsiders can spot nuggets of great potential that you might have overlooked.

Thanks to all who have been involved with this initiative so far, and we look forward to seeing great things happening in Paris.

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“Don’t ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who come alive.”

– *Donald Thurman*



Sign on highway as you are leaving Paris

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