



University of
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CENTER FOR
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RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System
Community & Economic Development
Strengthening Arkansas Communities



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT KICK START REPORT: HEBER SPRINGS

Spectacular by nature

IN APPRECIATION



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

- Benny Rorie, Operations Project Manager, Greers Ferry Lake Project, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Carol Johnson, Interim Vice-Chancellor, ASU-Beebe
- Dara Samuel, Director of Office of Economic Development, Cleburne County
- Dr. Chris Boyett, Vice-Chancellor, ASU-Heber Springs
- Ina Brown, Special Projects Manager, Heber Springs Area Chamber of Commerce
- Jerry Holmes, Cleburne County Judge
- Jim Lay, Heber Springs A & P Commission
- Jimmy Clark, Mayor
- Julie Murray, Executive Director, Heber Springs Area Chamber of Commerce
- Mary Margaret Couch, Director, Downtown Heber Springs
- Michelle Mobley, Cleburne County Extension Agent

And thanks to the Quality Inn and Conference Center – Heber Springs and the Heber Springs Community Center for hosting the Kickstart meetings.

We appreciate the community leaders in Heber Springs who came out and participated in the community meeting on August 5th. Your active participation and commitment is essential to launching the Kick Start development process in your community. Thanks to Amy Whitehead, Director, UCA Center for Community and Economic Development, Josh Markham, Assistant Director, and to Shelby Fiegel, Project Coordinator, for their support and laying the groundwork for this initiative. We look forward to continuing to work together to support Heber Springs in their development efforts.

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

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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 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.

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 Wisnare
A World in Search of Meaning*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community Development Institute at the 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, using the Breakthrough Solutions Model from the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service.

Communities in Arkansas were invited to apply for this unique opportunity, and Heber Springs was selected. Heber Springs has great assets, and is doing many things very well. It is a mark of leadership to look to the future, and tap strategic resources that can help move your community forward.

The challenges identified by community leaders in Heber Springs are shared by many other communities in our state and nation:

- When they finish school, many of our young people have to leave the community to find jobs,
- As a community with a strong tourism base, our economy is a 4 month economy, while we need it to be a 10 month economy,
- Other tourist destinations have made major investments in new attractions, which have hurt our attendance,
- Our manufacturing employers report that it is difficult to find motivated, skilled workers who will pass a drug test,
- It is a continuing challenge to develop our downtown as a vibrant tourist destination,
- Our local governments struggle with limited resources, and
- Our community has good citizen involvement and leadership, but we need strategic direction in this time of rapid change.

Our goal is that this development process will equip the community of Heber Springs to become a model for the nation as it identifies and implements breakthrough solutions to realize its full potential and desired future.

As in the real world, people check out communities on-line before visiting them, so a team of CDI graduates spent August 3rd researching Heber Springs to gather insights about the community. August 4th was spent in Heber Springs, interacting with citizens, taking a bus tour, and meeting with community leaders. And August 5th was spent in a community meeting in Heber Springs, then pulling all the information together into a report with recommendations for Heber Springs to consider moving forward.

This is not a comprehensive analysis of all economic sectors of Heber Springs, 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 Heber Springs 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 Heber Springs:

1. **The Next Big Thing** - Create a state-wide or national contest for The Next Big Thing in Heber Springs. Build on the tremendous success of the cardboard boat races, and Heber Springs' reputation as an innovative, fun place by seeking ideas from all over the nation or world. and extend the season for tourists and visitors.
2. **Community Identity and Brand** - Develop a powerful community identity and brand that differentiates Heber Springs from other communities and attracts people to the community.
3. **Enhanced On-Line Presence** - Enhance your on-line presence across the several Heber Springs websites with a common look and brand that is mobile friendly, and create a community app for mobile devices.
4. **Quality of Life and Place** – Create a clean, attractive community with walkability and trail systems for a vibrant downtown, and entrances to the city that are attractive to residents and visitors.
5. **Support Employers and Identify New Job Opportunities** – Support your employers with a business retention and expansion program, robust education and workforce preparation, and development of an entrepreneurship support system has real merit.
6. **Long-Term Sustainability Through New 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.

As the real experts are those of you who live and work in Heber Springs, 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, so we leave that up to the people of Heber Springs to work through.

NOTE: A large amount of secondary data about Heber Springs and Cleburne County has been gathered through UCA and is available upon request.

INTRODUCTION



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, where participants are exposed to a comprehensive, applied approach to the field of community and economic development. You can learn more about the Community Development Institute at www.uca.edu/cdi

Community Development Kick Start was created last year 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 economic development process in one community. Paris, Arkansas was selected in 2014, and Heber Springs in 2015.

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 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 here: <http://www.uaex.edu/business-communities/strategic-planning/breakthrough-solutions.aspx>

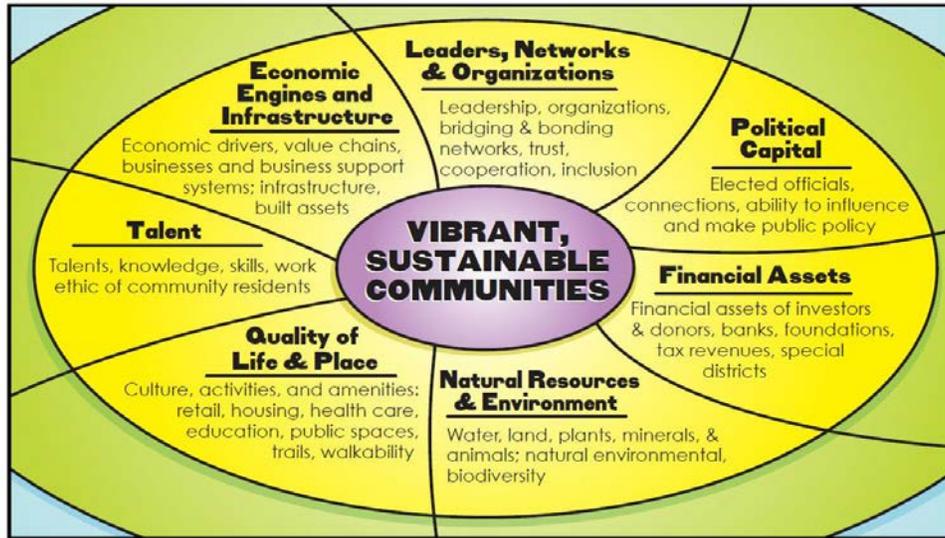
The Breakthrough Solutions Model 2.0 is a good fit for Community Development Kick Start, as it demonstrates that:

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

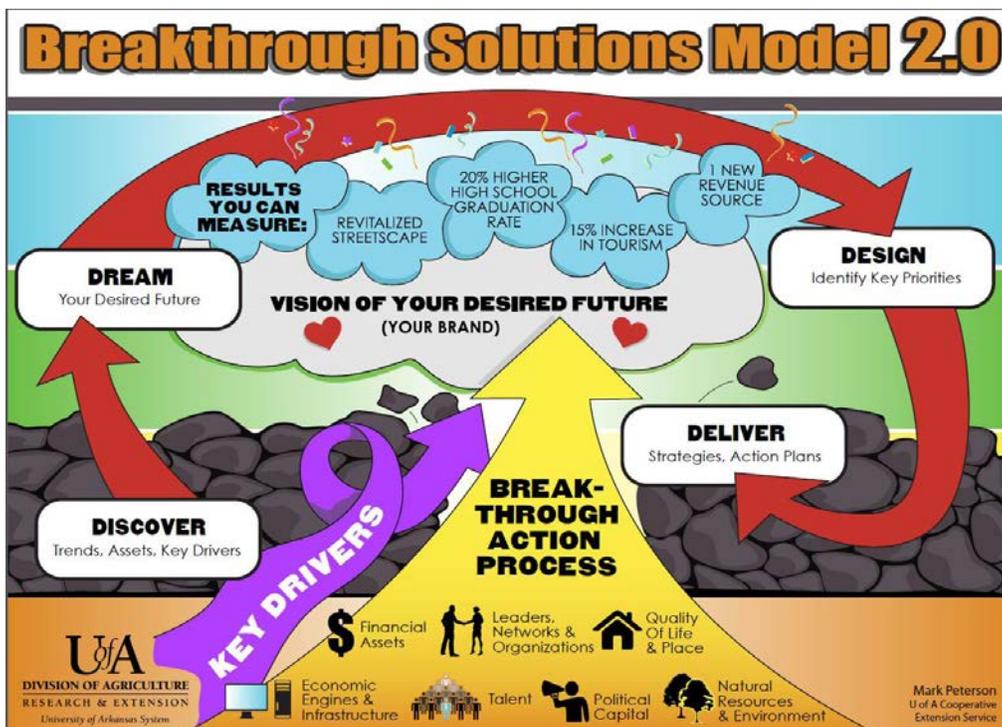
Heber Springs, like every community, has a wide array of assets, as indicated on this asset map:

Strengths and Assets Map

Wealth in Your Community



The Breakthrough Solutions Model provides a way for communities and regions to leverage their assets to realize their desired future, leading to results you can measure:



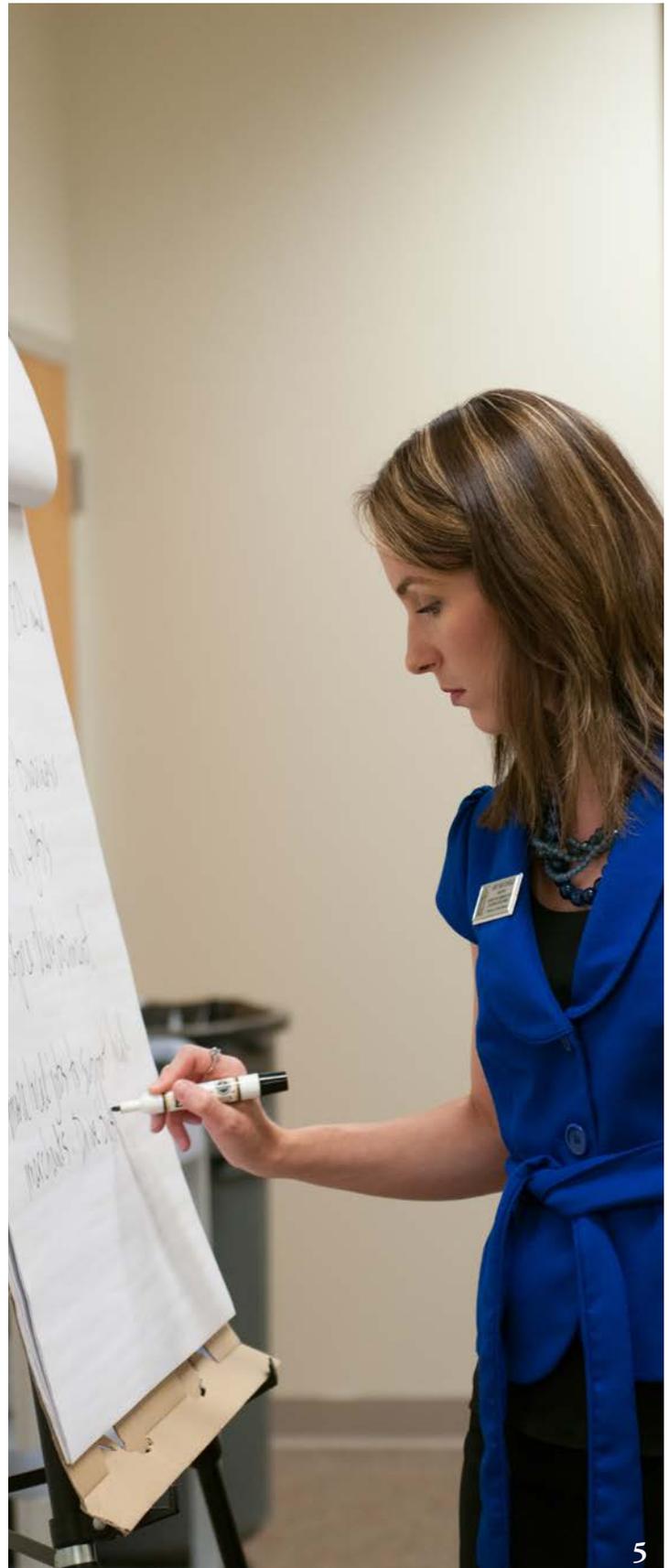
This report identifies many of the assets in the community, and describes possible strategies and action steps that can move the community forward.

The team of CDI graduates spent a day researching the community on-line (in addition to homework ahead of time), a second day in the community interacting with citizens and community leaders about their most pressing issues and opportunities, and a final day interacting with community leaders in a community meeting and developing final recommendations for the community.

Benchmark communities were chosen to compare to Heber Springs not because they are similar to Heber Springs, but because they have some activity or assets that are worthwhile for Heber Springs' consideration.

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, and
- A full-paid scholarship for one member of the community to attend the 2016 Community Development Institute and 2016 Breakthrough Solutions Conference.



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:

Amanda Adaire, *Central Arkansas Planning and Development District*

Kick Start Assignment:

High school student whose family may move to Heber Springs



Team Member:

Suzanne Wiltgen, *Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund*

Kick Start Assignment:

Family seeking to relocate



Team Member:

Harvey Joe Sanner, *Des Arc Ind. Dev. Corp.*; *President, Moving Prairie County Forward*; *Farm Activist*

Kick Start Assignment:

Potential retiree



Team Member:

Mayor Veronica Post, *Altus*

Kick Start Assignment:

Tourist family with children



Team Member:

Dr. Michael Yoder, *UCA Geography Department*

Kick Start Assignment:

Single 25-year-old who wants to start a business



Team Member:

Sherry McDonnell, *Energy Arkansas*

Kick Start Assignment:

Looking for an industrial site



Team Member:

Josh Hawkins, *City Administrator, Ashland, MO*

Kick Start Assignment:

Young single tourist looking for a good time



Team Leader:

Dr. Mark Peterson, *Professor – Community & Economic Development, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service*



Left to right: Michael Yoder, Mark Peterson, Veronica Post, Suzanne Wiltgen, Josh Hawkins, Amanda Adaire, and Harvey Joe Sanner

Not pictured: Sherry McDonnell

INTERNET SEARCH



In this digital era, 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. So these notes reflect how outsiders perceive your community by searching for Heber Springs on the internet.

Websites related to Heber Springs:

- State of Arkansas - www.arkansas.com/places-to-go/cities-and-towns/city-detail.aspx?city=heber+springs
- Heber Springs Area Chamber of Commerce - www.heber-springs.com/, Chamber Facebook, Chamber Twitter
- City of Heber Springs - www.cityofhebersprings.com/
- City of Heber Springs Park and Rec - www.heberspringsparksandrec.com/
- Cleburne County - www.cleburnecountyar.com/
- County Facebook
- Visit Greers Ferry - visitgreersferrylake.org/home/4588389407
- Heber Springs School District - www.hssd.k12.ar.us/
- Arkansas Site Selection Center - www.arkansasiteselection.com/



On-Line Review of Heber Springs - STRENGTHS

- Chamber website was great; the city website was also representative of the area
- Organized and active chamber
- Good social media presence to market community
- Variety of dining options
- One ad on YouTube was great
- Websites and the pictures of the area were beautiful
- Calendar of events with updated information and events for both the community and chamber persons
- Logo consistency
- Good presence on Arkansas.com
- Ample lodging listings
- In general, a good road map for tourists and visitors



On-Line Review of Heber Springs – WEAKNESSES

- Need YouTube channel; loading more videos would be an asset to attract more people; then link to city and chamber webpages
- City websites, chamber and county (economic development) websites could use more cohesion and connection (See Newport as an example: newportarcity.org/)
- “We’ve got Lakes to Swim, Rivers to Fish, Bluffs to Climb, Trails to Hike, and Much, Much, more!” should be a link that lists all of these things in an easily assessable and viewable format. It is hard to find lake access, fishing opportunities, bluffs and trails on the website.
- Difficult to find information about school district
- “Downtown Heber Springs” website did not come up on a web search of the city, and if it was linked on another site, it was not prominent enough that we ran across it. community

COMMUNITY TOUR

The Community Development Kickstart team toured Heber Springs as part of their assessment.

Strengths and assets:

- The new community center and aquatic center is just one sign of visionary leaders with strong community support in Heber Springs.
- Heber Springs winning the Volunteerism Community of the Year for several years is another indication of a strong and active community.
- Heber Springs participation in regional organizations – the Greers Ferry Lake Tourism Alliance, the Greers Ferry Trails Council, and the Greers Ferry Lake and Little Red River Association, is another healthy sign.
- Trail systems are increasingly important to attract people of all ages, and the presence of two active trail groups, the Greers Ferry Lake Trails Council and Sugarloaf Mountain Trails Council is impressive.
- Heber Springs and surrounding area has many other assets, including Greers Ferry Lake and Dam, visitors' center, JFK park, trout hatchery, Collins Creek, dam site park and marina, Baptist Health Hospital, industrial park, ASU – Heber Springs, Sugarloaf Mountain Trails, resorts, Spring Park, K-12 schools, Sandy Beach, Greers ferry lake Trails, downtown, new Cleburne County Library, Ruland Junction, Ozark Country Market, Bridal Veil Falls, and the city park.





OUTSIDERS' PERSPECTIVE

A 25-year old looking to start a business

By: Michael S. Yoder, Ph.D.

In my real life:

- Professor of Geography at UCA and Director of the Master of Science in Community and Economic Development
- Research Interests: small cities of Arkansas, urban layout, economic development and promotion, transportation
- My role: as a 25 year old entrepreneur I am looking to establish a retail store for sales to walk-ins and on line.
Possible types of products: art supplies, musical instruments, and/or sheet music.

WHAT AM I LOOKING FOR?

- Downtown storefront for lease
- Favorable retail market
- Area with a healthy, diverse economy and low unemployment rate
- Aesthetically pleasing and healthy downtown area

CHARACTERISTICS OF MILLENNIAL ENTREPRENEURS

- Problem solvers
- 45 percent of new MBA graduates start up their own companies
- Entrepreneurship is increasingly included in high school classes
- **Note:** Seeking to attract and retain entrepreneurs is a good strategy

STRENGTHS OF HEBER SPRINGS

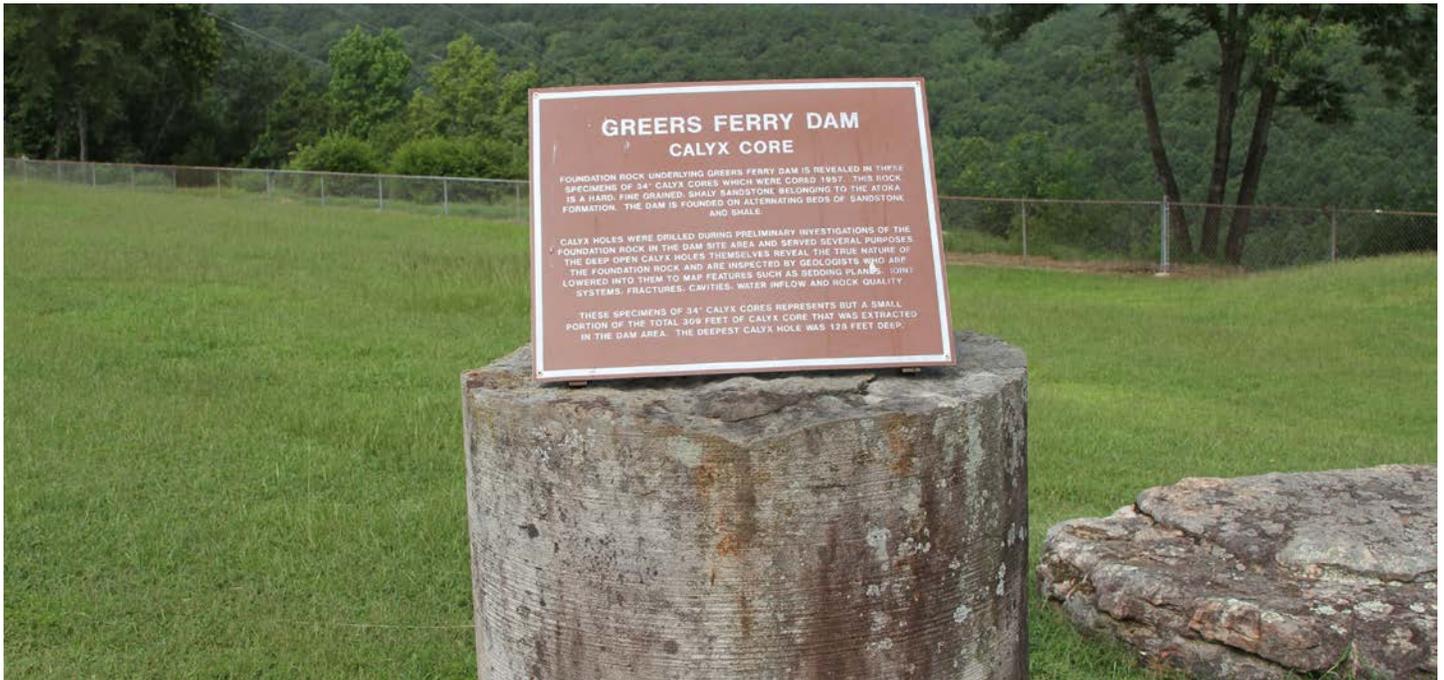
- Relaxed lifestyle with excellent outdoor amenities
- Low crime rate
- Attractive main street
- Active theater in downtown
- Attractive courthouse
- Affordable leasable retail space available outside downtown

WEAKNESSES OF HEBER SPRINGS

- Lack of data on number of visitors
- Limited public computer resources
- No library at ASU-Heber Springs campus
- No business incubator
- Dry county

BENCHMARK COMMUNITY - NORTH LITTLE ROCK

- North Little Rock offers amenities for start-up businesses:
- Resources for entrepreneurs (The Innovation Hub)
- Available retail store fronts in downtown
- A strong 24/7 downtown "scene"
- Active theater
- Argenta District is a public investment



Potential retiree looking for a place to retire

By: Harvey Joe Sanner

In my real life:

- Chair, Moving Prairie County Forward and agriculture
- My role: I am looking for a place to retire

STRENGTHS:

- Impressed with the volume of information available on websites about Heber Springs
- However, the volume of information was overwhelming

SUGGESTIONS:

- Suggest a "potential retirees" page or button with information about:
- Health care facility locations
- Home healthcare
- Facilities suited for seniors
- Bingo
- Senior dancing
- Pharmacy locations
- Where and how to interact with other seniors
- Activities for grandchildren
- Available housing for purchase or rent, condo facilities, grocery stores, etc.
- Simply put, a simpler way to learn about what Heber Springs has to offer retirees
- Learn about Mountain Home and how they attract retirees from Chicago
- Create an advisory council of retirees for attracting retirees and responding to their needs

A young single looking for tourist destinations

By: Josh M. Hawkins

In my real life:

- City Administrator, City of Ashland, MO
- My Role: I am a young single guy, looking for a good time and new tourist destinations

STRENGTHS

- Greers Ferry Lake appears to be clean and scenic with ample recreation opportunities (fishing, boating, trails, etc.)

WEAKNESSES

- No nightlife
- When you search for lake tourism opportunities, your online presence is dwarfed by Bull Shoals, Ouachita and Beaver Lakes
- Dry county narrows your audience

SUGGESTIONS

- Have you explored fitness competitions and festivals?
- A topic for community discussion – dry/wet: asset or liability?
- Ask - why do or should people come to Heber Springs?
- Who is your market geographically - Little Rock, Memphis, northwest Arkansas, northern Louisiana, Missouri?
- Who is your target market demographically and what are you promoting? Young fun with alcohol and partying, or quality recreational time on the lake for the family?
- Possible promotional idea: “This is a family-friendly campsite where you can go and your kids can go to bed on time.”



An industrial prospect

By: Sherry McDonnell

In my real life

- Manager, Community Programs Entergy-Arkansas, Business Development and Community Development Institute Board Member

In my role, I am looking for:

- Certified industrial sites or controlled sites with due diligence completed
- A skilled and available workforce
- Good transportation infrastructure
- Local incentives as well as state-wide incentives
- Existing industry that speaks highly of the business climate in Heber Springs
- A solid business retention and expansion program

STRENGTHS

- Diverse mix of industry
- ASU – Heber Springs (proximity to industrial park is also a positive)
- Aesthetics/planned layout of Heber Springs Industrial Park

WEAKNESSES

- Unemployment rate higher than state average (6.4% vs state average of 5.7%)
- One 43 acre industrial site listed on the Arkansas Site Selection Center
- Only 3 buildings available
- No local incentive identified – only state incentives are available
- Lack of local economic development revenue
- Proximity to an interstate - 41 mi. to I-40, 32 mi to US 67/167
- No information about target industries or existing industry programs

BENCHMARK COMMUNITY - NEWPORT

- Population: 7,876
- Dedicated economic development revenue
- Sites: one 96 acre certified site; additional property adjacent within industrial park
- Currently doing an evaluation for additional industrial property
- Programs for existing industry training



A family with children who are looking to relocate

By: Suzanne Wiltgen

In my real life:

- Field Director, Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund
- I work in communications, branding, public relations, nonprofit management.
- My role: A family with children who are looking for a place to move; will do work online, so they can live anywhere in the country. I am seeking these family amenities: parks, schools, quality of life, churches, parks, and broadband internet access

I AM LOOKING FOR:

- Quality of life
- Access to consumable & durable goods
- Family leisure, recreation, entertainment
- Faith life
- Lessons, camps, activities, tours
- Post-secondary education
- Health and safety
- Pet care
- Job opportunities if employment situation changes
- Public internet locations
- I ask these questions - will I belong? How easily will I fit in?

RESIDENTIAL INTERNET ACCESS

- Multiple providers (4)
- Satellite, DSL, cable
- Adequate bandwidth for home office and multiple users (15+ Mbps)
- Tiered pricing

SCHOOLS, PARKS, CHURCHES

- Schools: good information available through outside sources; schools rank in upper half in Arkansas; more than one option for families; 14 sports, 1 clubs;
- Public K-12
- Private K-12
- Preschools and daycares
- Parks are hard to find; all/most information is not in the same place; not presented clearly, easily; we found information about the beach after two days of reviewing websites
- Where is information about the trails?
- Are there kid activities/lessons/camps associated with these attractions?
- Assets: 15 parks, three recreational trails, outdoor and water recreation, five marinas, movie theater, four Redbox kiosks, gaming center planned, and community center
- Churches: Many options for Christian faith; other faiths will have to go out of community: 32 churches, 17 denominations



INTERNET SEARCH STRENGTHS

- Information is present; a lot of content
- Beautiful photography and video
- Social media presence

INTERNET SEARCH WEAKNESSES

- Information is there, but not connected
- Not a cohesive presence
- Relocation page focuses on real estate; does not link to Area Info or Relocation Data in text
- Only searched Heber Springs; didn't search Cleburne County webpage or consult social media for answers to my questions.
- Deep searches for children and youth activities, such as lessons, recreation, what to do – Where are the trails and parks?
- Videos? Kids in action?
- Make sure private schools are listed on the appropriate websites

WEBSITES VISITED

- heber-springs.com
- heberspringschamber.com
- heberspringsparksandrec.com
- schooldigger.com
- greatschools.org
- childcarecenter.us
- Familywatchdog.us
- churchfinder.com
- churchangel.com
- blazewifi.com
- suddenlink.com
- <http://internetproviders-internetservicehotline.com/>

BENCHMARK COMMUNITIES

- Conway, AR: choice of children's activities
- Frisco, CO: water activities and town-marina website
- Eureka Springs, AR: downtown charm
- Newport, AR: Cohesive first impression website

SUGGESTIONS

- Make relocation information easier to access on the chamber's web site.

A young family looking for a tourist destination

By: Veronica Post

In my real life:

- Mayor of Altus, Wine Capital of Arkansas, a small tourist town in Northwest Arkansas
- I have 22 years in banking and concurrently 25 years in public service.
- My role: as a tourist, I am looking for recreation and activities that are appealing to me for a young family with children and teenagers to enjoy.

STRENGTHS

- Heber Springs has a website for both city and chamber, with good social media marketing presence.
- A good YouTube summary of the city
- Ample lodging and dining listings
- Variety of dining options
- Good presence on Arkansas.com
- Several shopping locations were listed which included Walmart and furniture stores. Walmart could be helpful as a tourist for necessary items or to replace items left at home in my haste to get out of town for the weekend.



WEAKNESSES

- My on-line assessment in looking at Heber Springs as a place to visit did not really give enough information on actual things to do and where to go for activities
- Website says “always something fun to do” but where are these things listed?
- How do we find the “Things To Do?”
- Would like to see: “Where to Rent”: paddle boats, jet skis, fishing boats, bicycles, water skis, pontoon boat
- Would like to see: “Hiking Trails”: Easy access info is needed, including a list of their location and length of trails
- Need more “attractions” actually listed on website
- Websites visited to find the “beach” www.cityofhebersprings.com, www.heber-springs.com, www.cleburnecountyar.com “AHA! I found the beach!”

THINGS I WOULD LIKE TO SEE AS A TOURIST WITH A FAMILY PLANNING A VISIT

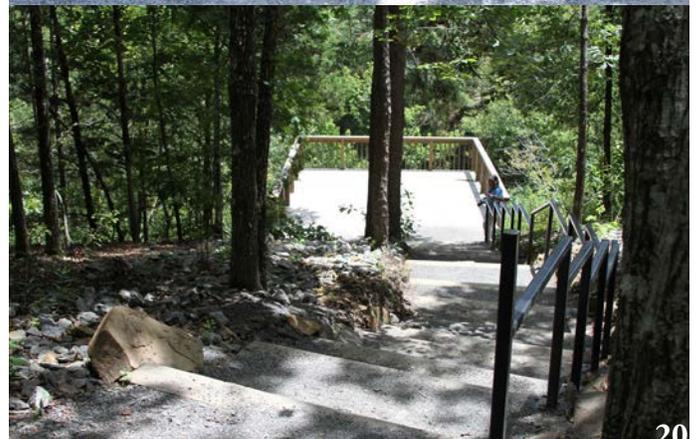
- Fishing Lessons
- Water Ski Lessons
- How to Bait a Hook
- How to Cast a Fishing Line
- Romantic Evening Dinner Boat Cruise
- (These activities could provide employment for young people)

BENCHMARK COMMUNITY – GREER’S FERRY

- On the Greer’s Ferry chamber of commerce website: Vacation & Recreation, Fun Things to Do, Where to Stay, Where to Eat
- Information is right there

SUGGESTIONS

- Create family-friendly things to do
- Factory tours, such as an Aromatique plant tour
- School field trips so children will be interested when they graduate; show the kids how to make a living in your city
- Teacher continuing education to learn about the manufacturing jobs. Teacher in-service tours!
- Aquarium at welcome center that shows the fish that swim in the lake and river and education about them





Heber Springs through the eyes of a (almost) teenager

By: Amanda Adaire, CFM, PCED

In my real life:

- Serve as Program Manager at Central Arkansas Planning and Development District in Lonoke
- Am a Certified Floodplain Manager
- Assist Central Arkansas municipalities with Community and Economic Development
- My Role: as a high school student, my parents are considering moving to Heber Springs, so I am searching for activities for youth, sports teams, availability of technology and other amenities

STRENGTHS

- Greers Ferry Dam and Lake
- Little Red River
- Fishing
- Trails
- Camping
- School district offers a variety of sports programs

WEAKNESSES

- The various websites about the community seem to be geared toward retirement and vacation housing
- Not many chain stores
- No technology offerings apparent – wi-fi availability



ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

As the real experts are the citizens and community leaders in Heber Springs, 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 Heber Springs to work through. If at least one of these ideas does not strike you as crazy, then we are not doing our job.

The following are key issues that emerged out of the team's work in the community, and include some possible strategies and action steps. Key issues include:

1. **Organizing for action**
2. **Quality of life and place**
3. **Economic development focus and strategies**
4. **Tourism development, off-the-lake activities, and season extension**
5. **Robust education and workforce preparation**
6. **Community identity, branding, and marketing**
7. **Long term projects**



1) ORGANIZING FOR ACTION

Form a steering committee of community leaders and interested citizens to guide the development process within the community:

- Schedule meetings of the steering committee on a monthly basis (may go to every other month as the action teams become active)
- Create action teams to address key issues, with chairs or co-chairs for each team
- Form a small executive committee, to include action team chairs, to meet to ensure that steering committee meetings are productive, and action teams are making progress.
- Engage the citizens of the Heber Springs community and invite them to serve on action teams.
- Get e-mail addresses and keep people informed through multiple media.

Community organizations should be invited to the steering committee's monthly meetings to share what they are doing and what they would like to see happen in the community. Monthly meetings should include some or all of the following, and would ensure that community and economic development efforts support each other. These organizations should be invited to participate in the Kick Start development process:

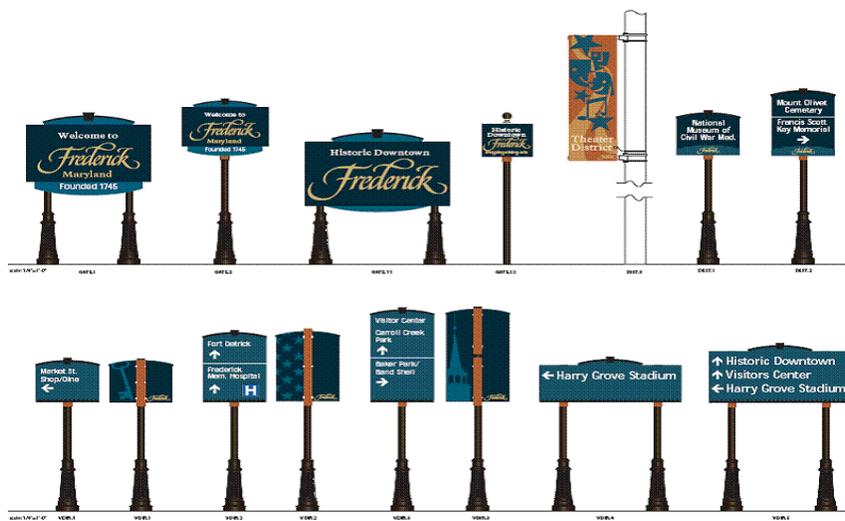
- City of Heber Springs (mayor and city council)
- Cleburne County (judge and quorum court)
- Cleburne County Economic Development
- Chamber of Commerce
- Advertising and Promotion Commission
- ASU Heber Springs
- Baptist Health Medical Center Heber Springs
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- Schools (public and private)
- White River Planning and Development District
- Local business leaders
- Churches and non-profits
- U of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service
- Greers Ferry Lake & Little Red River Tourism Association
- Cleburne County Library
- Interested citizens

2) QUALITY OF LIFE AND PLACE

A) Community Appearance and Signage

- Ask a high school class or EAST Lab (Environmental And Spatial Technology) high school students to go out and take pictures of the community, identifying:
 - o what they like about the community,
 - o what they would like to see changed in the community, and
 - o what they would like to see new in the community,
 then present that to community leaders
- Form a small action team to enter into the community as if they were doing it for the first time, take pictures, and ask:
 - o What did you see (the good, the bad, and the ugly)?
 - o How did you make that feel?
 - o What would you like to see preserved?
 - o What would you like to see changed?
- Upgrade all welcome signs to be consistent with Heber Springs branding. Sign on Highway 25 could perhaps be in a different location? (A new location across the highway might be more effective)
- Present a more welcoming message that says we are glad you are here and we want you to stay! Great place to raise your children!
- First impressions matter; search for ways to make incoming highways more attractive
- Improve streetscapes and aesthetics
- Create a community wide cleanup event and involve the youth
- Connect different parts of town with bike paths and sidewalks that meet ADA standards
- Create a comprehensive system of attractive, decorative wayfinding signage that points people to the community center, Sandy Beach, and other points of interest (videos from <http://www.rogerbrooksinternational.com/> are a tremendous resource for this purpose).

Wayfinding signage example:





B) Development and Use of Parks

- Develop a parks and recreation master plan/strategic plan:
 - Seek community Input: public meetings and/or community surveys
 - Leadership visit other communities/parks to benchmark against existing amenities and services and gather new ideas
 - Develop priorities: needs vs. wants
 - Evaluate and plan for using or upgrading existing park infrastructure (Spring Park, skate park, amphitheater)
 - Establish goals and identify funding sources
 - City council adopt an official plan and implement accordingly (post plan on city website; promote transparency and public buy-in)
- Connect parks, schools, downtown, and attractions with a trail system
- Put GPS coordinates for trails on the websites
- Include youth, adult and senior programming
- Utilize natural assets: lake, river, mountains and trails
- Develop and promote Seven Springs as a tourism asset; make the springs in the park more attractive
- Brainstorm what the community can do with the vacant fairgrounds and ball park

C) Downtown Development

- Convert four lane downtown to three lanes with center turn lane to create a road diet
- Recommend retail study of Heber Springs and downtown - who is shopping, and what are the gaps, and opportunities
- Recommend increased/staggered hours of operation to promote sales, increase revenues, and meet needs of shoppers (Clinton is trying this). When retailers are open 8-5 Monday through Friday, they really cater to the unemployed and retired.
- Create an Aromatique presence downtown
- Build on presence of local artists downtown
- Develop funding source to offer a façade grant program – make it a matching grant or 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)
- Recruit vegetable and fruit growers to create a farmers’ market downtown, and artists/crafters and live music to add to the ambiance
- Vacant buildings – put in signs that say “Coming Soon, Your Business Here”, or art work in the windows
- Take a road trip to Harrison, because they have attracted over 30 new businesses into their downtown area in the last few years.

3) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOCUS AND STRATEGIES

A) Manufacturing

As tourism is a seasonal economic sector, businesses and industries in the Heber Springs area provide valuable stability and tax base throughout the year.

- The industrial park is very clean and pristine; the land next to it closer to the road would lend itself to small manufacturers, perhaps on 5 acre lots.
- Create a formal business retention and expansion program
 - The Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC) and Entergy can be very helpful
 - Tap expertise from Arkansas Manufacturing Solutions within AEDC to address needs identified
- Define your target market (think niche industries, such as Aromatique)
- Promote the welding program at ASU-Heber Springs and seek out companies to relocate to the community to take advantage of this key asset.
- Make sure all of your industrial sites are on the Arkansas Site Select web page: http://www.energy-arkansas.com/economic_development/select_sites.aspx, and seek AEDC training for Select Sites

B) Economic Development Organizations

- Co-locate the chamber of commerce, county economic development office, and Main Street program at one location in downtown Heber Springs. (Conway is one example of shared agency space).
- Take a fresh look at the chamber of commerce board, Main Street board, and A and P Commission, to see if:
 - a. there is a regular rotation of board members,
 - b. there are board members who would prefer to retire from those responsibilities, and
 - c. new board members could be recruited with particular skills, talents, connections, or resources.
- Who needs to be on these boards (such as young people) that is not currently there?
- Recommend the Chamber of Commerce, Main Street program, and A and P Commission have a joint annual planning retreat, to set goals, identify who is best able to do what tasks, and to see how they can support each other. Invite some outside resource to come and bring everyone up to date on changes taking place in economic development and tourism
- Community leaders involved in community and economic development should take advantage of professional development opportunities such as the UCA Community Development Institute, the U of A Cooperative Extension Service LEADAR Program, the annual Breakthrough Solutions conference, the Arkansas Economic Developers annual conference, the Arkansas Community Development Society annual conference, and the Mid-South Basic Economic Development Course.
- Consider developing a leadership program for Cleburne County for emerging leaders; visit with Johnson County Leadership Program, Van Buren County Leadership Program, and New Vision Newport in Newport AR to learn more. Create a steering committee of community leaders who can help promote, support, and recruit participants for the program. (The U of A Cooperative Extension Service also has resources to support a leadership development program).

C) Support Small Businesses and Entrepreneurship

- Create an environment and support system that supports entrepreneurship and small business development:
 - Offer workshops and short courses on entrepreneurship through ASU- Heber Springs and the UALR Small Business Technology and Development Center (Harrison has a great model for this)
 - Create a business support center and incubator in vacant storefronts (preferably downtown) - a facility with wifi and business support services that provides business support for start-ups, small businesses, and telecommuters.
 - Encourage ASU-Heber Springs to teach entrepreneurship courses.
 - Start a youth entrepreneurship program in your school system.
 - Create a SCORE chapter to tap the expertise of retirees in the area and provide entrepreneurial and small business support.
 - Create a “WOW Business Club of chamber members – brainstorm opportunities for one business/month, and discuss the “How of Wow Discussion Guide”, available from Simpletruths.com.

Resources:

- Appendices I and II - Heber Springs and Entrepreneurialism
- UALR Small Business Technology and Development Center
- North Little Rock Innovation Hub

D) Funding and Financing Community and Economic Development

Heber Springs citizens have demonstrated their strong support of the community, as evidenced by tremendous volunteerism efforts and establishing the community center and aquatic center. Creating additional funding mechanisms for financing community and economic development enables the community to implement important projects. Some possibilities:

- Establish economic development priorities via a strategic plan; plan the work, then work the plan
- Incentives – what is the community prepared to offer existing and new businesses who want to expand?
 - The Newport Economic Development Commission has been very successful at attracting new industries and expanding their existing industries by offering an attractive set of incentives, made possible by an economic development sales tax.
- Downtown development funding mechanism – in Newport, 130 people pledged \$15 per month for 5 years to support downtown development, and authorized that the money be automatically withdrawn from their bank accounts. The local bank then lent the funds (over \$100,000) to the Newport Economic Development Commission and donated the interest to the commission at the end of the year.
- Consider forming a Fifty for the Future, an organization formed of local people who annually donate some amount of money (\$500, \$1000, etc.) to be used for development projects. Hot Springs is an example.
- Strengthen and support the Cleburne County Community Foundation.
- Consider a hamburger tax on food served in restaurants and/or increasing the bed tax.
- Consider annexing residential and business areas adjoining Heber Springs to provide them with services and increasing tax revenues (this may require a close look at infrastructure capacity and utility rates for replacement and expansion)
- Work closely with the White River Planning and Development District for funding and support

4) TOURISM DEVELOPMENT, OFF-THE-LAKE ACTIVITIES, AND SEASON EXTENSION

A) *The Next Big Thing*

- Create a nation-wide contest to identify “The Next Big Thing” for Heber Springs
 - a. To garner state-wide (and perhaps national) publicity give \$1000 in prizes - \$500 for the Next Big Thing and \$500 for the best idea to extend the season in Heber Springs
 - b. Brag on the cardboard boat races and how innovative and fun Heber Springs is as a community
 - c. Consider second and third prizes, and even a youth division
 - d. Recruit famous people to be on the judges panel – Arkansas Tourism Director Joe David Rice, television personalities, elected officials, and other celebrities
 - e. Make a big splash when you announce it, and another big splash when you announce the winner

B) *Reinvent the Cardboard Boat Races and Other Crazy Ideas*

The crazy idea of cardboard boat races was truly a breakthrough, as it turned the lake into an exciting event that draws thousands of people to Heber Springs. The cardboard boat race has been around for quite a while, so what are some other crazy, breakthrough ideas that have merit? What is the next big idea that will land Heber Springs on the front page of the Arkansas Department of Tourism’s Calendar of Events?





Here are a few:

- Create a museum of cardboard boats - the very best ones from over the years, and put it in a vacant building in town. Why not have a cardboard boat in bronze at each entrance to Heber Springs?
- By the way, recruit a cardboard manufacturer to Heber Springs? What a great PR advantage!
- Create a Governor's Cup Race, with our governor getting a ride around the lake in the winner of the cardboard boat race.
- Invite travel writers, bloggers, and state and national media celebrities from far and wide to come and stay at a cool place on the lake, be treated to a great dinner, and get to ride in one of the cardboard boats during the race.
- As Heber Springs has the World Champion Cardboard Boat Races, why not encourage cardboard boat races in other communities and states, with the winners from other states then coming to Heber Springs to compete for the world championship?
- Create a duck race. The ducks are already at Sandy Beach. So if Conway can have a toad race, why can't Heber Springs have a duck race? See www.tripadvisor.com/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g31522-i21096719-Conway_Arkansas.html
- Speaking of animals, why not have a doggy swimming contest?
- A concrete boat race - this could be held during the off season, for only the hardest of souls (to draw people to the community off season. See www.uah.edu/student_life/organizations/ASCE/Articles/YoungHistory/Youngarticletext.htm
- Create a high tech division for cardboard boats that have no persons in them and have remote operators; you could have different classes by size or weight.
- Host a 24 hour marathon cardboard boat race. Some of you are familiar with film festivals, in which film teams are given a topic, and 24 or 48 hours to create a video/movie around that theme. What if teams were given a pile of materials in the gym at the community center, and they have 24 hours to build a cardboard boat and race it 24 hours later?
- Have a collegiate division of the cardboard boat races. Invite every college and university in the state or nation to bring a cardboard boat and team and compete. Also have a high school division. And a senior citizen division? How about a blindfolded team division?
- Challenge some team to build a dinner cruise cardboard boat.
- Borrow this idea from Austin TX – show the movie “Jaws” to theatergoers who are floating on inner tubes: www.travelandleisure.com/articles/watch-jaws-on-the-water-austin-alamo-drafthouse.
- What if there was a zip line that ended in the lake? How about a zip line from the dam down to the river? Build one coming down from Sugar Loaf Mountain.
- Were there houses and communities that were flooded when the dam was built? What if there was an underwater town that people could visit? It might be the only underwater ghost town in the world, and scuba divers could give tours.
- You have this incredible lake; why not consider a dinner in the sky experience over Greers Ferry Lake; see dinnerinthesky.com/

C) Additional Tourism Strategies

- Engage the artists, musicians, theater group in discussions how they can have maximum impact on the community, using the amphitheater, theater, and other resources.
- Example: Delta Visual Arts Show in Newport, which attracts over 100 artists
- Example: Swamp Gravy Institute in Colquitt GA (pop. 1942), which developed a play featuring local stories that has been shown to over 90,000 people
- Acquaint citizens of Heber Springs about the potential to rent out their homes, apartments, cabins, and RVs through www.airbnb.com
- Brainstorm what use can be made of the abandoned fairgrounds and ballfield
- Advertising and Promotion Commission seek new markets and develop a strategic marketing plan
- A and P members term-limited, ensure program continuity with new members through established goals and following a plan.
- Coordinate between multiple organizations (Chamber, Main Street, City, County, ASU, etc.)
- Develop a mobile app that shows tourists where to find all of the things to do; could be “The Heber Fever App”. (Mountain View and Newport have apps)
- Ensure that all businesses are listed on Google maps, and that businesses know how to encourage positive comments on-line.
- Explore hosting these active tourism events for millennials: Warrior Dash and Zombie Runs (really).
- Promote Heber Springs and Cleburne County for conferences and retreats at these facilities: City Parks and Recreation Community Center, Red Apple Inn, and Quality Inn.
- A chamber and/or economic development presence at these events could promote Heber Springs for plant relocation, residential relocation, and tourism.
- Work closely with the AR Department of Tourism and invite them to come and speak to the chamber, downtown, and A&P commission.
- You have a beach just like Florida – it is an incredible asset to market – how many communities in Arkansas have a great beach?
- You have a Tri-the-Lake triathlon; why not consider an Iron Man Competition (or Half Iron Man Competition)?
- Brainstorm with these individuals how you can maximize their impact – artists, theater group, and visual arts, to use the amphitheater and other assets.
- Use creative graphics when promoting specific events, such as “Catch the Heber Fever.”

D) Extended Season and Off the Lake Activities

- Identify seasons, assets and markets
- Connect the dots and package each season/market
- Water/boating season, fishing season, retail season, hiking season, holidays
- Coordinate efforts among stakeholders
- Create an 18-month-out calendar
- Take a road trip to Mountain View, because they have 11 festivals/year, each one with a different theme, and often reaching different market segments.
- Embrace tourist destination identity and reputation
- Create a storytelling festival and involve retirees and youth in the community

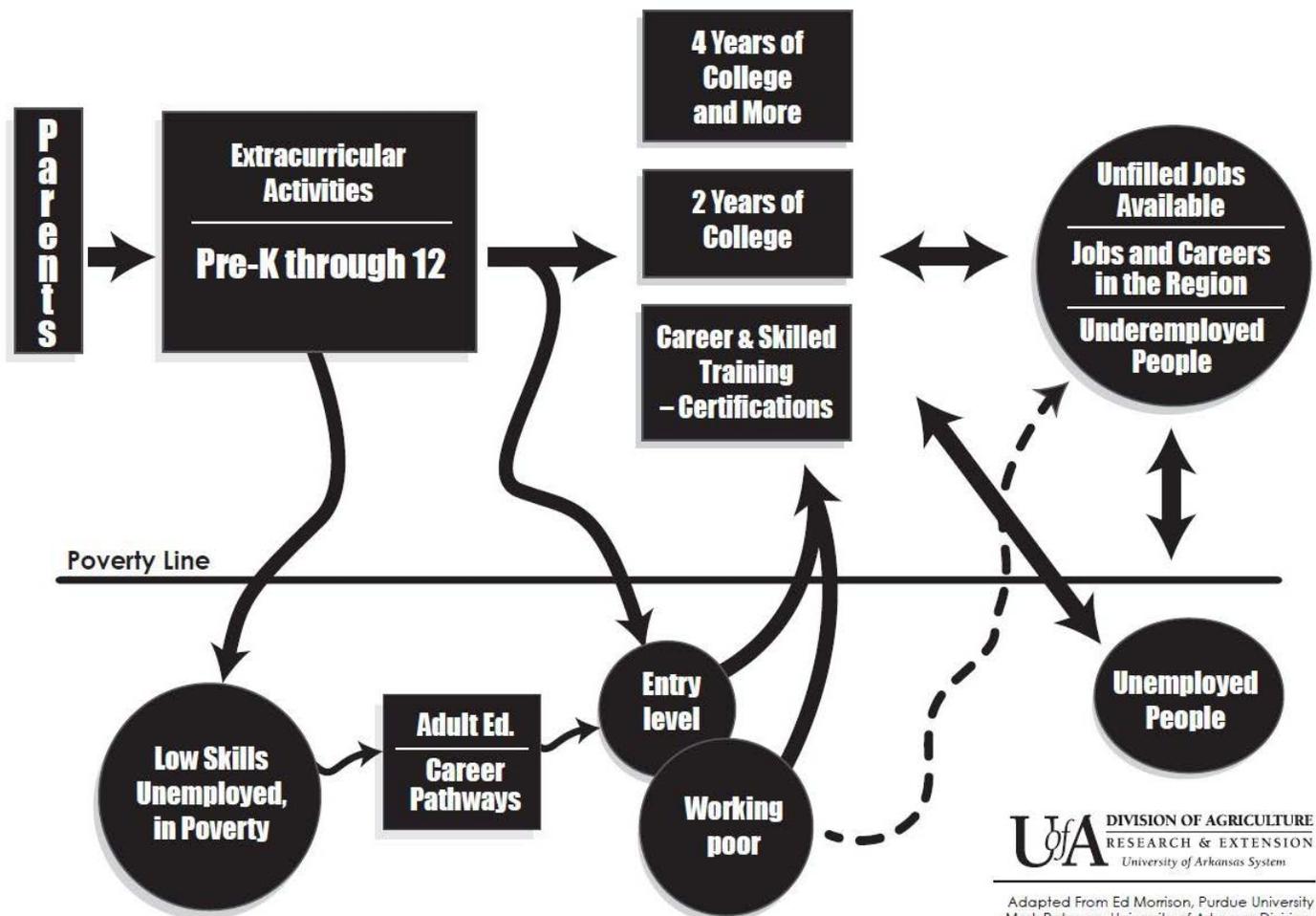


- Develop a homecoming weekend for everyone who has ever lived in Heber Springs. Fill it with fun activities and invite the alums to participate and consider having it in the off-season
- Use it to entice people to return to Heber Springs to start a business or retire
- Great example: Stanton IA Homecoming (pop. 664)
- Seek to be known for outstanding service and professionalism
- Arkansas Hospitality Association training is free www.arhospitality.org/education-training/about-the-education-foundation/
- Make it easy to be a visitor - showcase "Southern Hospitality"
- Visit communities that do this well:
 - o Newport
 - o Eureka Springs
 - o Hot Springs
 - o Branson
 - o Mountain View
 - o Study other tourism communities that have successfully made this transition
 - o Park City, UT has reinvented itself to be more year-round
 - o Mountain View has a festival event every month except January

5) ROBUST EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE PREPARATION

- Form a drug task force with law enforcement and the judicial system to address the drug issue in the community
- Create a partnership between the schools, ASU Heber Springs, the chamber of commerce, county economic development office, and the business community to address workforce and curriculum issues
 - o Create mentoring and internships for students and local employers
 - o Host K-12 field trips to local employers
 - o Celebrate October as Manufacturing Month in Arkansas <http://www.mfgday.com/>
 - o The following diagram may be helpful, particularly when data for Heber Springs is added to it:

Education and Workforce Pipeline



6) COMMUNITY IDENTITY, BRANDING, AND MARKETING

Community Identity/Brand: This flows from your master strategic plan and is developed from a shared vision, understanding of your sense of place, and what you want to be known for.

- Review the Outsider's Analyses in this document to see what how your on-line presence could be improved.
- Undergo a comprehensive strategic planning process and develop a strategic community and economic brand..
- Take a fresh look at your community identity – your brand
- For a small community, there was not a unified, cohesive image or look and feel (e.g. at least four logos on promotional materials and content)
- Suggest taking a fresh look at the brand identify for Heber Springs in light of Roger Brooks' definition of an economic development brand (one that draws people to your community) vs. a feel good brand that does not differentiate your community from the world. See rogerbrooksinternational.com. Then interact with the community as a whole to learn about and confirm Heber Springs's logo and brand identity.
- Implement a year round marketing plan that is intentional and strategic.
- Recommend a marketing audit of all collateral material, including print, electronic, signage, etc.
- Reassess primary marketing vehicles; seems print heavy which is not how people get information now.
- Identify and prioritize the most promising market segments for promoting tourism. Some possible market segments: families with children, church/youth groups, outdoor enthusiasts (fishing, water recreation, sailing, bicyclists, mountain bicyclists, motorcyclists, ATVers, bird watchers, etc., senior citizens, fitness enthusiasts (trail runners, hikers, climbers, backpackers, etc.), sports enthusiasts - participants in soccer and softball tournaments, history buffs – people who like history, civil war buffs, etc., music – people who like country music / bluegrass music, Christian music, wellness enthusiasts (yoga, herbalists, naturalists); recovery groups such as AA, holiday lights/decoration enthusiasts, day users, weekenders, extended stay tourists, family reunions, destination weddings, similar niche events, corporate retreats/conferences: promote the conference center and the Community Center heavily for multiple groups, such as leadership groups. and business travelers.
- Make sure your websites are mobile friendly
- Discuss with other chambers of commerce the pros and cons of contracting with the Trip Advisor destination page
- Look at websites from these communities for good examples of a comprehensive website with links to city, chamber, parks, etc.: Conway, Hot Springs, Newport, Greenville KY, and Park City UT
- Budget driven:
 - o How is A& P budget used?
 - o Is it strategic or responsive?
 - o Is it targeting your identified priority market segments on websites and printed materials?

7) LONG TERM PROJECTS

While long term projects take much longer and are typically expensive, they can be a breakthrough for a community. The Greers Ferry Dam and Lake is one obvious example. Long term projects under consideration include:

- Water garden
- Larger Sandy Beach
- Waterfront Development
- Wet, Dry and Private Clubs: More restaurants as private clubs would attract more tourists and new residents.



SUMMARY

This report is a culmination of the Community Development Kick Start team and their interactions with citizens and leaders of Heber Springs, 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 Heber Springs are the experts about Heber Springs, 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 Heber Springs.

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Appendix I: Young Entrepreneurs and Their Relevance to Heber Springs, a Preliminary Assessment

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Introduction: Millennials and Entrepreneurship

The motivation for being an entrepreneur is far more than simply making money. Entrepreneurship is also about contributing to one's community by producing and selling something meaningful. By starting a small business, an entrepreneur has the opportunity to both do something that he or she values and to offer a product or service that solves a problem or provides assistance for someone else. (Kelsey Brain 2013: 122.)

A growing number of public policy and urban analysts are making the case that cities and towns should focus on capturing entrepreneurs to start new businesses, rather than to spend resources attempting to sway existing companies to relocate to such communities (Florida 2014; Whitney 2015). They observe that the entrepreneur's love of community is paramount, and economic developers in towns and small cities should work with planning departments to enhance a community's abilities to attract new entrepreneurs, or retain people from the community who might want to start a business.

After all, youth from towns and small cities are flocking to cities where economic opportunities, including entrepreneurial ones, are healthier. This trend makes it difficult for leaders in towns and small cities to compete for young entrepreneurs oriented toward creative activities. Such community leaders will increasingly need to fight to land satellite campuses of universities specializing in digital media and related technologies such as 3-D printing. The omnipresence of broadband makes it theoretically possible for small cities to compete with larger ones to attract or retain young talent (Spence 2013).

Entrepreneurship has increased among all age cohorts since the end of the 2008-2009 Great Recession, though economic developers are looking especially at millennials. Eighteen percent of the millennial work force was self-employed in 2014 (Rogers 2015). Jack Schultz (2013), author of the often-cited book *Boomtown USA: The 7-1/2 Keys to Big Success in Small Towns*, wrote in 2013 that economic development officials in towns and small cities are finding that their efforts to retain young entrepreneurs is in many cases a better investment than attempting to attract new businesses, such as branch manufacturing plants, to relocate to such places. The key is to focus on connecting young people to their communities. The process requires deliberate efforts on the part of such communities; it rarely happens automatically. Fortunately, entrepreneurship is becoming more commonplace in public school education (Clifford 2015). For knowledge-based activities, telecommuting is increasingly becoming commonplace, which theoretically enables asset-rich towns and small cities to attract entrepreneurs and others who prefer a less urban lifestyle (Whitney 2015).

Economic developers, however, need to be aware that the data on millennial entrepreneurship are not definitive. Some writers on the topic point to data indicating that millennials may not necessarily be the "entrepreneurial generation." Shane (2014) points to UCLA surveys of incoming freshmen dating back to the early 1960s, indicating that Baby Boomers entering college in the 1960s polled higher than today's freshmen in terms of expressing a desire to be self-employed upon graduation.

He points to three reasons for the drop: 1. The desire for young people to have more diverse activities in life, including family and social activism, and to avoid being tied down with a business; 2. The relative lack of preparedness of today's young generation to run a business compared to Baby Boomers as evidenced by the lower that it is not as lucrative to run one's own business today as in the past (Shane 2014).

One reason that recent graduates with four-year degrees refrain from starting their own business right away is that they carry student loan debt which, coupled with the lack of business experience, prompts them to seek jobs with companies. That said, rates of new MBA graduates starting their own businesses is 45 percent, higher now than ever before (Clifford 2015). Millennial writers who have started their own businesses point out that one important consequence of the Great Recession is the need for recent college graduates to create their own jobs (Hysen 2014). Thus, there exists some inconsistencies in the literature on millennial entrepreneurialism. Some surveys indicate that millennials are less keen on becoming an employee stuck in a corporate cubicle, and express a preference for starting one's own business, owing to an increased sentiment for independence, flexibility, and creativity (Ashgar Rob 2014). Furthermore, the propensity of millennials to be less trustful of traditional societal institutions than prior generations, and to embrace crowd-funding and other digital trends, is tied to entrepreneurialism, according to some finance analysts (Hanft 2014). Finally, the millennial entrepreneurial "trend" is largely characterized by new college graduates working first for companies, getting training, and then deciding to go it alone within a short time (Kadokia 2014). Community leaders in small cities need to take note of these tendencies and counter-tendencies, and to ensure that funding and networking opportunities exist for entrepreneurs. Spence (2013) asserts that "(T)he best solution to rural economic development problems would be for local communities to forget about attracting industry, and focus on retaining people, especially creative, entrepreneurial types who don't need to go to big cities to start companies."

Certainly not all entrepreneurship is related to high-tech activities. As the opening quote suggests, today's entrepreneurs tend to be driven by the desire to solve specific problems, and millennials naturally look to smart phone apps and other forms of digital technology to do so. However, entrepreneurship can take the form of inventing useful products, opening retail stores that sell needed products, philanthropy, and even establishing a food truck to cater to those in need of inexpensive but unique cuisine (Hysen 2014). Towns and small cities need to be aware of the resource and social capital requirements of potential young entrepreneurs.

Appendix II: Heber Springs and Entrepreneurialism

If, for example, someone 25 years of age was looking potentially to start a business in Heber Springs, population 7,365 (2015 estimate by ESRI), several factors would need to be researched, including availability of leasable office or retail space, or possibly leasable workshop space if the activity involved assembly or manufacturing; the unemployment rate; the average annual number of visitors to the city; Quality of life indicators such as number of restaurants; technology available; business support services; the spending power of the community; and retail leakage.

Commercial Real Estate and the Retail Economy:

- Retail (Storefront) Vacancies (space for lease). Doug Magee of Remax Real Estate estimates that there are approximately 20 retail/office store fronts available for lease in Heber Springs. He indicated that there is no place on the internet to find a comprehensive list of leasable retail space. One would have to drive around the community and look. My own search of retail space for sale indicated that there are three strip malls for sale, each with leasable shop space. The typical price is \$12 per square foot per year for a 2,000 square foot store or office on Highway 25B, a hub for such strip malls. The total number of units in the three buildings is 25. Square footage ranged from 1,000 to 3,000 per storefront.
- Workshop Vacancies (space for lease). Very few, if any. Most of these facilities are for sale.
- Unemployment rate: In June 2014, unemployment in Heber Springs was an estimated 7.1% compared to AR average of 6.5% (City-data.com. ESRI estimates the unemployment rate in mid-2015 at 6.4%.
- Community's Spending Power and Retail Leakage. Heber Springs has 99 businesses involved in retail trade, including restaurants. The most significant retail activities exhibiting leakage in Heber Springs are: groceries (food, beverage and alcohol); books; music; gasoline; and health/personal care. The most significant activities capturing business from elsewhere (a.k.a. "surplus," the opposite of leakage) include: restaurants; new automobiles; apparel; building materials; and general merchandise. On balance, Heber Springs has a net surplus in the retail marketplace, including restaurant sales, of \$146.3 million per year (2015 ESRI estimate).

Technology Access is quite limited. The Cleburne County Public Library offers computers for use by the general public, and the City of Heber Springs offers wi-fi in its Community Center, according to web sites of the library and city, respectively. The Jitterbug Coffee House on Main Street offers wi-fi.

Business Support Services. A total of 24 banks and other lending services in Heber Springs (ESRI). According to the web site of the City of Heber Springs, the Heber Springs Conference Center, operated by the Department of Parks and Recreation and located in the Community Center, has meeting rooms available that offer Power Point technology and wi-fi, though no computers for use by citizens. The branch campus of Arkansas State University, a two-year community college located in Heber Springs, does not have a library facility, nor does it appear at present to have a business incubator (as does the main campus in Jonesboro) nor any programs geared toward promoting entrepreneurialism.

Annual Average Visitors to Heber Springs. According to the Heber Springs Chamber of Commerce, no data exists on number of visitors to the city, including lodging in the city's six motels. Receipts from the A&P (Advertising and Promotion) Tax exist, however. It is recommended that the Chamber of Commerce begin to collect data (numbers of guests) from the city's lodging establishments and restaurants.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (2015) provides data from 2012 of visits to and other recreational uses of Greers Ferry Lake. According to that data, there were 7.4 million total visits (person-trips) to the lake in 2012, including: one million picnickers; 62,000 campers; nearly 2.8 million swimmers; .38 million water skiers; 1.49 million boaters; .93 million sightseers; one million fishermen; and 4.3 million other visits.

These visits resulted in \$244 million in visitor spending; \$114 million in sales; 2,184 jobs; \$43.9 million in labor income, and \$69.2 million in value added within 30 miles of Greers Ferry Lake. The U. S. Corps of Engineers (2015) further report that in 2012, multiplier effects from the visits to Greers Ferry Lake resulted in an additional \$164.3 million in total sales, 2,706 additional jobs; \$59 million in labor income; and \$98.5 million in value added. Quality of Life: Number of Full-Service Restaurants = 25 (City-Data.com). Total number of food service & drinking establishments = 40 (ESRI). Number of Arts/Entertainment/Recreation businesses = 8 (ESRI)

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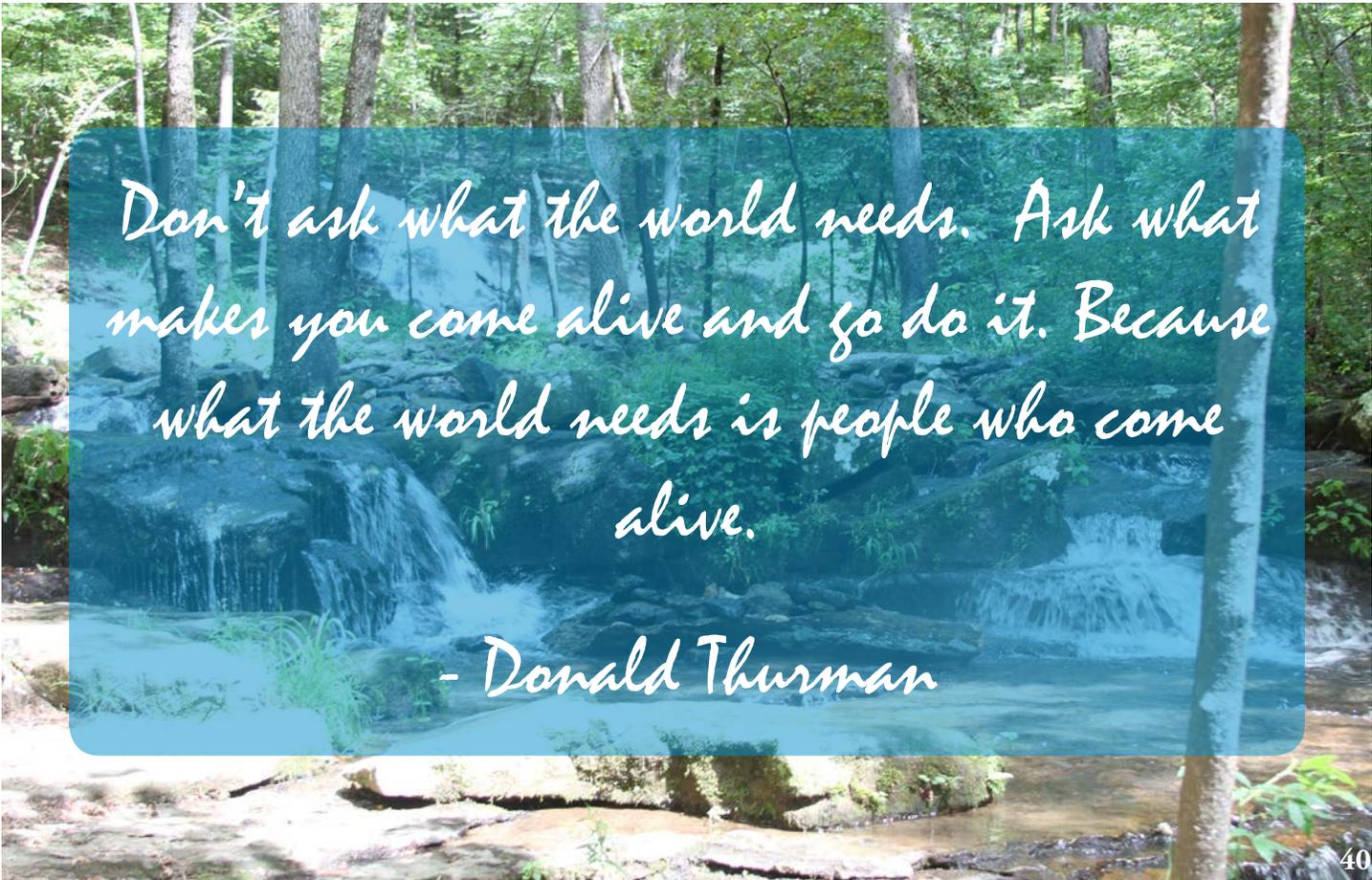
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Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who come alive.

- Donald Thurman

