

## MINUTES

### HOUSE & SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

May 21, 2013

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The House and Senate Interim Committees on Agriculture, Forestry and Economic Development met on Tuesday, May 21, 2013, at the Marshall High School Gym, 950 Highway 65 North, in Marshall, Arkansas.

Committee members present: Representatives David Branscum, Acting Chair; Bob Ballinger, Charlotte Vining Douglas, Dan Douglas, Greg Leding, Homer Lenderman, Kelly Linck, Stephen Magie, Stephen Meeks, Betty Overbey (non-voting), and Tommy Thompson; Senator Alan Clark.

Other legislators present: Representatives Nate Bell, Ann Clemmer, Deborah Ferguson, John Hutchinson, Stephanie Malone, Mark McElroy, and Jeff Wardlaw; Senators Missy Irvin, Johnny Key, Michael Lamoureux, Eddie Joe Williams, and Jon Woods.

Representative Branscum called the meeting to order.

#### **Welcoming Remarks**

Representative David Branscum and Jim Smithson, Mayor of Marshall, welcomed committee members and guests to Marshall.

#### **Presentation on the Buffalo National River**

Kevin Cheri, Superintendent, National Park Service, presented an overview of the Buffalo National River, which was established as a national park in 1972. The economic benefits of the park include:

- 1,169,802 park visitors spent \$38,232,000 in communities surrounding the park in 2011
- 528 jobs supported in local area; 63% - lodging, food, and beverages; 17% - recreation and entertainment
- 11% - other retail; 7% - transportation and fuel; and 2% - wholesale and manufacturing

#### **Presentation by the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism**

Richard Davies, Director, presented an overview of the Arkansas's 52 state parks, which generated \$27.5 million in revenue for Fiscal Year 2012. The 2013 Spring/Summer marketing efforts include \$6,278,281 in print ads and broadcast by CJRW. Mr. Davies explained that marketing is essential in tourism development and that Texas has the largest market in the country.

#### **Presentation on Buffalo Farming**

L.C. Ratchford, Owner/Farmer, Ratchford Farms, gave an overview/background of Ratchford Farms. Products offered include bison, beef, pork, and strawberries and blueberries, assorted jams/jellies. Elk and Wild Boar are also available.

With no further business, the committees adjourned at 3:00 p.m.