

**SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON CITY, COUNTY, & LOCAL AFFAIRS  
HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON CITY, COUNTY, & LOCAL AFFAIRS  
SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**MEETING JOINTLY**

**NOVEMBER 12, 2013  
MINUTES**

Senate and House Interim Committees on City, County, and Local Affairs met jointly with Senate and House Interim Committees on Agriculture, Forestry and Economic Development Tuesday, November 12, 2013 at 1:00 p.m. in Room A, MAC Building, Little Rock, Arkansas.

City, County, and Local Affairs Committee members present were Senators Missy Irvin, Senate Chair, Ronald Caldwell, Stephanie Flowers, and Uvalde Lindsey, also present were Representatives David Fielding, House Chair, Scott Baltz, Eddie Armstrong, Kim Hammer, Mike Holcomb, Douglas House, Sheila Lampkin, Mark Lowery, and Mary Lou Slinkard.

Agriculture, Forestry and Economic Development Committee members present were Senators Bruce Holland, Senate Chair, Alan Clark, and Jonathan Dismang, and Representatives Bob Ballinger, David Branscum, Charlotte Vining Douglas, Dan Douglas, Jon Eubanks, Jeremy Gillam, Homer Lenderman, Kelley Linck, Walls McCrary, Stephen Meeks, Josh Miller, Betty Overbey, John Vines, and Tommy Wren.

Other members present were Senators Cecile Bledsoe, Linda Chesterfield, Jane English, Bobby Pierce, Jason Rapert, Larry Teague, and Eddie Joe Williams, and Representatives John Baine, Nate Bell, Harold Copenhaver, Jody Dickinson, Charlene Fite, Mary "Prissy" Hickerson, John Hutchison, Andrea Lea, John Payton, Sue Scott, and Jeff Wardlaw.

**Call to Order**

Senate City, County, and Local Affairs Committee Chair Missy Irvin called the meeting to order.

**Approval of Minutes**

A motion to approve the minutes of the October 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013 City, County, and Local Affairs Committee meetings was made by House Chair David Fielding and seconded by Senator Lindsey. The minutes were adopted unanimously.

**Discussion of the federal proposal by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to designate areas of Arkansas as critical habitat for the Neosho Mucket (Endangered) and Rabbitsfoot Mussel (Threatened), both fresh-water mussels. [Exhibit C-1, C-1a]**

Senator Irvin recognized U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Field Supervisor Jim Boggs and Endangered Species Coordinator, Chris Davidson. Mr. Davidson said the Center for Biological Diversity and Wild Earth Guardians filed a lawsuit against the USFWS regarding the listing of 251 candidate species as endangered or threatened, including 7 species found in Arkansas. Of the 7 species found in Arkansas, 5 have previously been listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The USFWS is required to designate critical habitat concurrent with a listing designation. Mr. Davidson said a consultation process is performed by the USFWS for the designation of critical habitat. Both the Neosho Mucket and Rabbitsfoot Mussel species have undergone the consultation process based on ESA regulations. Mr. Davidson reviewed the timeline the rule making process followed:

- October 16, 2012 proposed listing and critical habitat designation
- December 17, 2012 60 day comment period, now closed
- May 9, 2013 reopened comment period for 30 days and released draft NEPA and economic analysis
- June 10, 2013 30 day comment period closes, 2 requests to extend comment period for critical habitat
- August 27, 2013 reopened comment period for 60 days, draft NEPA and draft economic analysis
- September 17, 2013 final listing, rule published
- mid-January, 2014 final determination regarding proposed critical habitat

The USFWS has proposed that areas of the Illinois River be designated as critical habitat for the Neosho Mucket. Ten additional rivers have also been proposed for critical habitat designation, comprising approximately 806 river miles in Arkansas. Mr. Davidson said the USFWS is required to identify the physical and biological features essential to the conservation of the species. Examples are identifying areas of sedimentation that may present a prevalent threat to the mussels in ten rivers in Arkansas. He gave examples of special management considerations, which would help minimize threats to the mussels from sedimentation, including stream bank stabilization, tree planting along the riparian area, and incorporating Best Management Practices to minimize erosion.

Senator Irvin recognized AAC Executive Director Chris Villines and AAC Legislative Director Jeff Sikes; also Marc Kelley, Public and Environmental Policy Consulting, and Paul Pearce, President/CEO, National Forest Counties and Schools Coalition. Mr. Villines discussed the possible designation of 42 new endangered species in Arkansas. The AAC believes Arkansas is just beginning to face the issue of critical habitat designations. The AAC is the official organization who is filing responses with the USFWS on behalf of 13 coalition groups, including the Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce, Associated Industries of Arkansas, Arkansas Environmental Federation, Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts, Arkansas Forestry Association, Arkansas Farm Bureau, Arkansas

Timber Producers Association, Arkansas Poultry Federation, Arkansas Independent Producers and Royalty Owners, Agriculture Council of Arkansas, Camp Ozark, Arkansas Cattlemen's Association, and Energy and Environment Alliance of Arkansas. Mr. Villines said the AAC members passed a resolution stating their position regarding current and future listings of critical habitat designations. The resolution was given to county judges statewide with a request to pass similar resolutions in their counties. (Exhibit C-2) The AAC proposes that the USFWS shrink its critical habitat designation by 38%. Mr. Sikes asked that the legislative committees adopt a resolution urging the Arkansas U.S. Congressional delegation to work with the USFWS to adopt the scientific analysis procedures proposed by the ACC. The AAC believes the USFWS should change their economic analysis method from an incremental analysis to a cumulative analysis, which is the method it used prior to October, 2013.

Senator Irvin recognized Marc Kelley for a PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Kelley discussed a similar situation in California, which he believes is also applicable to Arkansas. He described a 30-acre housing development where portions of the development were designated as critical habitat by the USFWS for a species known as the California Tiger Salamander. Mr. Kelley told legislators the developers were required to erect a fence around the proposed critical habitat and they incurred expenses in excess of \$152,000. An additional cost of \$90,000 per year for 2 years was incurred to employ biologists to prove the absence or presence of the salamander. Mr. Kelley explained the costs to the housing developers was so prohibitive that the result was bankruptcy for 3 of the 5 developers.

Senator Irvin recognized Paul Pearce who discussed the history of USFWS critical habitat designation dating back to 1990 when the Northern Spotted Owl was listed as endangered. He explained the first designation listed in the federal register covered 6 million acres. In 1994, The Clinton Forest Plan was developed when President Clinton recognized the detrimental economic impact the designation had on 51 rural counties in the Pacific Northwest. The Clinton Forest Plan set standards for forests throughout the affected counties to help keep lumber mills open and retain jobs within the communities. Mr. Pearce said that in 2012, a critical habitat designation encompassing 13.9 million acres of private and state-owned lands in Oregon, Washington and California was proposed. The economic impact to the three states resulted in the closing of 320 privately-owned lumber mills and the loss of 33,000 mill workers' jobs.

Senator Irvin recognized Benton County Judge Bob Clinard and Montgomery County Judge Alvin Black. Judge Clinard gave a PowerPoint presentation (Exhibit C-3). He described an infrastructure project the county initiated in January 2012 to replace a bridge constructed in 1910. The bridge spans the Illinois River. Judge Clinard explained that the county was required to conduct an environmental and an economic impact study at a cost of \$30,000. The county incurred an additional cost of \$10,000 to pay for a report to determine whether or not any mussels existed within the bridge's construction area. 16 mussels were found against a stream bank. Judge Clinard asked the USFWS about the possibility of moving the mussels downstream during construction, which would allow the mussels to be measured and data recorded. He learned the

county would be required to conduct and pay for the relocation. Judge Clinard then voiced his concerns about the prohibitive costs to future plans for rebuilding 6 to 8 bridges within the county. Judge Clinard questioned the accuracy of the cost estimates to state and local governments, in addition to the impact on landowners and counties within the critical habitat designations.

Senator Irvin recognized Montgomery County Judge Alvin Black. Judge Black discussed the potential critical habitat designation by USFWS in Montgomery County, on a portion of the Ouachita River, which passes through privately-owned farmland. He said one of the largest businesses in Montgomery County, Camp Ozarks, is located on this part of the river. He is concerned about the possible financial impact to Camp Ozark, which is a major source of revenue for the county.

Senator Irvin recognized Beau Bishop, Coordinator of Local Affairs and Rural Development, Arkansas Farm Bureau (ARFB) and Pete Day, Camp Ozark, Montgomery County (Exhibit C-4). Mr. Bishop discussed the economic analysis from an agriculture standpoint. He said 31 counties statewide will be impacted by this critical habitat designation. Within the affected counties, there are 21,300 family farms with over 7.4 million acres of farmland valued at \$2.9 million. These farmers manage 78 million broiler chickens, 6 million laying chickens, 600,000 acres of rice, 780,000 acres of soybeans, and 76,000 head of cattle.

Senator Irvin recognized Pete Day, Camp Ozark. Mr. Day said the camp was built in 1949 along the Ouachita River. Over the past 65 years, the camp has served over 6,000 youth from 35 states. Mr. Day said the camp generates \$10 million annually, which impacts the local economy both directly and indirectly. There are only 50 full-time total employees in Montgomery county, which is a county with very limited business resources. Mr. Day said the Ouachita River is vital to Camp Ozark for recreational purposes and the camp will be jeopardized by this critical habitat designation.

Senator Irwin recognized Roland McDaniel, Principal and Senior Scientist, GBM and Associates, Jim Metzger, President, HISTECON Associates, Inc., and Director Chris Travis and Associate Chad Wood, Gill Ragon Owen Attorneys, P.A. (Exhibit C-5, C-5a) Mr. McDaniel told legislators that GBM and Associates is an environmental consulting firm located in Bryant, Arkansas. The AAC hired GBM to review the scientific methods USFWS used for the proposed critical habitat. GBM spent 60 days trying to determine a rational scientific basis for the critical habitat designation. Mr. McDaniel said the USFWS proposal covers 769.2 river miles in 31 counties, which is approximately 42% of the watersheds within those river miles. It is the opinion of GBM that USFWS should reduce the amount of critical habitat, which is outlined in their report (Exhibit 5c). The GBM review proposes a modification of 6 critical habitat units, 4 of which should be reduced in length, and 2 eliminated. GBM believes it presents credible evidence in support of reducing the critical habitat areas.

Senator Irvin recognized Jim Metzger, President, HISTECON Associates. Mr. Metzger said the AAC hired his firm to prepare an economic study of the proposed critical habitat

designation. The firm consulted with the UALR Institute for Economic Advancement. Also, county and business officials were polled, with an emphasis on potential economic impacts to developments in identified areas. Mr. Metzger said the incremental analysis used by the USFWS focuses primarily on public agency costs and does not consider the actual cost to local economies incurred due to delayed or prohibited economic development.

Senator Irwin recognized Chad Wood, Gill, Ragon, and Owen Attorneys. Mr. Wood said the impact to Arkansas by this critical habitat designation encompasses the largest percentage of watersheds in a single state for a species in the history of the ESA. He discussed the incremental analysis method used by the USFWS and recommends a more comprehensive study.

Mr. Boggs was asked if the USFWS could use a different approach to protect the species and their environment without jeopardizing the local economy. Mr. Boggs answered that the USFWS has begun work with the Arkansas Farm Bureau and the AAC to establish a coalition of diverse interests to be known as the Arkansas Unpaved Road Initiative. He believes this is a good start because there are 64,000 miles of unpaved county roads within the state that cause substantial sedimentation in rivers and streams, which is a significant threat to many endangered species.

Chris Davidson was asked if the USFWS is allowed to use a different type of economic analysis in the designation of critical habitat. Mr. Davidson explained that listing a species as threatened or endangered is based on science and does not take into account economic impacts. He was then asked if the economic analysis prepared by HISTECON will be considered. Mr. Davidson said HISTECON submitted its economic analysis in the latest public comment period, which will allow it to be considered during the final determination.

Senator Holland made the following motion, "the Committees resolve to ask the Arkansas Attorney General to intervene on behalf of the state, review this proposed designation, and make recommendations". Representative Meeks seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Senator Irwin made the following motion, "the Senate and House Committees on City, County, and Local Affairs and the Senate and House Committees on Agriculture, Forestry and Economic Development shall submit resolutions to be prepared by the staff of the Arkansas Bureau of Legislative Research to be submitted to the Arkansas Legislative Council for consideration at its November 15, 2013 meeting". The motion was seconded by Representative Douglas. The motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON CITY, COUNTY, & LOCAL AFFAIRS  
HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON CITY, COUNTY, & LOCAL AFFAIRS

MEETING JOINTLY

JANUARY 30, 2014  
MINUTES

Senate and House Interim Committees on City, County, and Local Affairs met Thursday, January 30, 2014 at 2:00 p.m. in Rogers, Arkansas. The meeting was held during the 2014 Winter Conference of the Arkansas Municipal League.

Committee members present were Senator Missy Irvin, Senate Chair, and Representatives David Fielding, House Chair, Eddie Armstrong, Douglas House, Mark McElroy, George McGill, and Richard Womack.

Other legislators attending were Senators Cecile Bledsoe, Uvalde Lindsey, and Jon Woods. Also attending were Representatives Jonathan Barnett, Debra Hobbs, Charlene Fite, and Kelley Linck.

**Discussion by Legislative Panel Regarding the 2014 Legislative Fiscal Session and Other Legislative Issues**

Committee members attended a conference seminar facilitated by Little Rock Mayor Mark Stodola, First Vice President, Arkansas Municipal League (AML). Mayor Stodola introduced seminar panelists Senators Cecile Bledsoe, Missy Irvin, Uvalde Lindsey, David Johnson, and Jon Woods.

Mayor Stodola recognized Senator Cecile Bledsoe. She was asked to describe Act 276, legislation passed during the 2013 legislative Session, also known as the Arkansas Video Service Act. Senator Bledsoe told conference attendees this legislation evolved from a statewide cable franchising bill introduced during a Senate Insurance and Commerce Committee meeting. She said that after reading the draft legislation, she determined that several issues in the bill could potentially cause municipalities problems. The Arkansas Municipal League (AML) also reviewed the legislation and gave testimony before the committee outlining the problems municipalities would experience. Senator Bledsoe said committee members, proponents of the bill, and staff of the AML worked together to amend the legislation to minimize its impact on cities and towns. The changes resulted in passage of the bill. Senator Bledsoe summarized components of Act 276:

- contains compromises on issues concerning franchise fees
- video service providers won't be exempt from compliance with lawful political subdivision land use regulations
- public access channels are protected

- retains local ability to review services by calling a local phone number, or a 1-800 number
- includes requiring service providers to notify customers of changes in rates, programming, services, or channel positions

Mayor Stodola introduced Senator Irvin who was asked to explain Act 1502, the Annexation, Detachment, and Transparency Act, passed during the 2013 legislative Session. Senator Irvin said the legislation provides a clear communication link between cities and residents of elected annexation areas. The Act clarifies to mayors and residents of annexed areas that scheduled services are to be offered; plus outlines the reporting methods to be used by cities. Senator Irvin explained that the Act sets out the procedures mayors and/or city managers of incorporated towns are to follow when filing a written notice of services. This notice is to be provided following annexation elections that have become final. Senator Irvin described the following steps cities are to use in the written reports:

- written reports are to be filed with the city clerk annually beginning March 1, 2014
- list scheduled services that will be provided to annexed areas
- cities will be allowed the opportunity to prepare a plan for providing the scheduled services
- should a city be unable to provide services in a timely manner, the annual report directs the city to communicate with residents on its progress and sets a date when services will be provided

Mayor Stodola introduced Senator David Johnson who discussed the Property Assessed Clean Energy Act (PACE). Senator Johnson told attendees that Arkansas is one of 30 states with a PACE program. The program offers cities and counties economic development opportunities. He gave the following description of how the program works:

- cities or counties create a PACE district
- residents and businesses within the district can voluntarily join
- PACE districts have bonding authority, which can be offered to members
- bonding authority allows members to finance energy improvements they make to real estate within the PACE district

Senator Johnson gave an example of the benefits of the program - a business with a 30 or 40 year-old building that needs improvements in insulation, new duct work, and/or new windows to offset high energy costs, can receive financing for these projects spread out over a number of years. He said the benefit to the business are the energy cost savings, which are often projected to be greater than the annual cost for the bond financing. Senator Johnson explained that residential homeowners can also participate in the same way as a business. However, it is more challenging for homeowners because mortgage lenders don't permit participation in the program. However, a homeowner who owns his own home is allowed to participate.

Senator Johnson discussed similar legislation passed during the 2013 legislative Session that provides a specific opportunity for government entities, including cities and

counties, in the form of performance and benchmark contracts. Senator Johnson explained the legislation by giving the following example:

- an entity owns a building they want to retrofit for specific energy efficiency benchmarks, or
- an entity wants to build a new building with specific energy efficiency benchmarks
- once approved, energy efficiency benchmarks are then incorporated into the building contract
- upon completion of the retrofit or new construction, an energy audit is conducted
- if a building receives satisfactory audit results, contracts are completed
- if a building does not meet satisfactory audit results, the contractor is obligated to ensure that the building is brought up to the benchmark standards, and pay to have the standards met

Mayor Stodola introduced Senator Uvalde Lindsey. Senator Lindsey discussed Senate Bill 825 introduced during the 2013 legislative Session. He told attendees the bill would have directed the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration (DF&A) to create a new quarterly report requiring cities and counties to accurately report the sales and use taxes they collect. He said that collecting good data will allow cities and counties to project their expenditures accurately and prepare precise budgets, which has been a challenge for a number of years. Unfortunately, the bill was strongly opposed by representatives from the Arkansas business community who believed the report would reveal sales numbers and compromise competition. The bill supporters failed to convince the opposing parties that the sales numbers would be shielded. Senator Lindsey contacted DF&A and asked if a new report could be developed. He was told the information could be created, but would require six months to develop. DF&A created a new report starting October and November of 2013 and using two municipalities as test sites. Senator Lindsey said that with completion of the report, cities and counties now have the ability to collect and provide accurate reporting of sales and use taxes. The report form is now available online and easily accessible.

Mayor Stodola introduced Senator Jon Woods. Senator Woods discussed Act 779, legislation passed during the 2009 legislative Session, when numerous mayors requested his help with infrastructure issues their cities were experiencing when annexing new lands. He learned that problems developed following the annexations because rural water authorities refused to sell the rights to underground water lines and physical structures to the cities. Senator Woods said the municipalities met further obstacles when the water authorities refused to discuss or negotiate alternate payment methods for providing water other than payments made directly to the authority. Senator Woods said he also learned there is nothing compelling authorities to enter into discussions with the cities. To assist the cities, Senator Woods arranged meetings with the Natural Resources Commission, the Association of Arkansas Counties, and the Arkansas Municipal League to address the problems. The group agreed to recognize the Natural Resources Commission to serve as a Board with the ability to bring the two parties



together for discussions and infrastructure negotiations. This has allowed the municipalities and water authorities to work together to resolve their issues.

Mayor Stodola introduced the additional legislators present and invited them to speak. He recognized Representative Jonathan Barnett who discussed the highway program, which includes turn-back funds given to cities and counties. He also discussed House Bill 1418, introduced during the 2013 Session, which failed to pass. Representative Barnett said that passage of HB1418 would have diverted sales taxes on new and used vehicles to supplement funding of the highway system. Although the legislation failed during the 2013 Session, Representative Barnett believes there will be opportunities to secure additional revenue for city and county highway infrastructure in future legislative sessions.

Mayor Stodola recognized Representative David Fielding. Representative Fielding, House Chair of the House City, County, and Local Affairs (CCLA) Committee, discussed the collaborative efforts by the members of the committee during the 2013 Session. He said committee members faced a number of challenges in their efforts to balance the needs of both cities and counties. He commended representatives of both the AML and the Association of Arkansas Counties (AAC) for working with the legislators and each other in resolving their issues.

Mayor Stodola recognized Representative Eddie Armstrong, House Vice Chair, House CCLA Committee. Representative Armstrong reviewed legislation introduced during the 2013 Session that benefited municipalities. He thanked the members of the House and Senate CCLA Committees for their commitment to fairness regarding all parties involved.

Mayor Stodola recognized Representative Douglas House. Representative House discussed legislation introduced during the 2013 Session known as the Public/Private Financing Partnership. He said that although the legislation failed, he believes it deserves more study and could be a useful tool for cities, counties, and educational institutions.

The conference session ended at 3:10 p.m.

Following adjournment of the conference session, Senator Irvin announced she and Representative Fielding, Committee Chairs, and Representative Armstrong and Senator Burnett, Committee Vice Chairs, can't attend the Friday, January 31<sup>st</sup> committee meeting, due to prior commitments and the threat of inclement weather. Committee members present voted to appoint Representative Douglas House to preside at the January 31<sup>st</sup> meeting on behalf of the Chairs and Vice Chairs.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

**SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON CITY, COUNTY, & LOCAL AFFAIRS  
HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON CITY, COUNTY, & LOCAL AFFAIRS**

**MEETING JOINTLY**

**JANUARY 31, 2014  
MINUTES**

Senate and House Interim Committees on City, County, and Local Affairs met jointly Friday, January 31, 2014 at 9:00 a.m. in Rogers, Arkansas. The meeting was held during the 2014 Arkansas Municipal League's Winter Conference.

Committee members present were Representatives Dan Douglas, Douglas House, Mark McElroy, George McGill, and Richard Womack.

Other members present were Representatives Debra Hobbs, Les Carnine, Sue Scott, and David Whitaker.

**Update on Municipal Subjects of Interest from the U.S. Congressional Delegation's Perspective**

Pea Ridge Mayor Jackie Crabtree, President, Arkansas Municipal League (AML), introduced U.S. Senator Mark Pryor and U.S. Congressman Steve Womack. Senator Pryor discussed pending federal legislation, commonly referred to as the Farm Bill. He believes passage of this bill will be good for rural America. He described the following components of the bill:

- a strong emphasis on conservation programs
- ensuring a safe and affordable food supply
- stabilizing rural electric rates
- enable deployment of rural broadband service
- enact the Payment in Lieu of Tax Program (PILT), providing payments to local governmental entities in districts with tax-exempt federal land to offset tax revenue losses
- create a \$23 billion deficit reduction

Congressman Womack discussed legislation referred to as the Market Place Fairness Act. Congressman Womack said that passage of the bill will provide future revenue growth. He believes the reason it has not yet passed is a misconception that the bill will cause a tax increase. He explained a loophole that currently exists in the federal tax policy that has caused local retail merchants to lose sales to online retailers who aren't required to pay taxes. Congressman Womack believes this is unfair to local retail merchants and should be rectified. He encouraged local government leaders to support passage of the bill.

## **Good Planning Makes Good Sense – Advocating For A New Transportation Future**

Mayor Mark Stodola introduced guest speaker John Robert Smith, Co-Chair, Transportation for America Campaign. Mr. Smith described his background in local government that has spanned twenty years, during which time he served as a city councilman, then as Mayor of Meridian, Mississippi. During his tenure in public service, he learned that the economic vitality of cities and towns relies on creating stable economic and vibrant regions. These form the foundation for a strong national economy.

Mr. Smith discussed the following development models municipalities have used to build budgets:

- a low-density suburban development model with a greater infrastructure cost is currently in use throughout the U.S.
- a model referred to as Smart Growth Development was the norm during our grandparents lifetime with neighborhoods built on grids, multiple uses, higher density development, walkable neighborhoods, and several public transportation options
- a model used during the past twenty years is based on a more expansive sprawling development, with lower-density, segregated land use, a vehicle-centered design, poor street connectivity, and less pedestrian infrastructure

Mr. Smith discussed housing and transportation preferences for two of the largest sectors of the population, those persons ranging in age from 20 to 30 years old, and the growing number of senior citizens. He described data the Smart Growth America organization has compiled featuring these two population groups regarding housing and transportation preferences. The results indicated the following:

- 47% prefer to live in a city or suburb with a mix of houses, shops, and businesses
- 40% prefer a rural or small town
- 12% prefer a suburban neighborhood with houses only

The transportation preferences indicate that both populations are driving less and utilizing public transportation more. The research found that the ideal community for the overall population in the U.S. is a mix of houses, with sidewalks and walking and biking trails, and amenities within easy walking or driving distances. It also indicated the following:

- 77% of Americans want pedestrian-friendly environments
- 88% place more value on the quality of the neighborhood than the size of a home

Mr. Smith discussed a program titled "Complete Streets". He defined Complete Streets as right-of-ways that are planned, designed, operated, and maintained to provide safe access for all users. He gave the following specifics:

- Complete Streets incorporates street designs for many uses by all people, and are cheaper to build and maintain

- incomplete streets are unsafe, inadequate, hinder access, exacerbate traffic problems, and create dangerous and uninviting environments

Mr. Smith said Hot Springs, Arkansas was recently named as one of the communities to receive technical assistance from Smart Growth America for participation in the Complete Streets program. He gave the following program details for Hot Springs' community redevelopment:

- requires a policy approach
- includes all types of users
- applies to all projects, agencies, and roads
- accommodates exceptions
- creates a network
- sets design criteria
- responds to community context
- defines performance measures
- outlines future steps to aid implementation

Mr. Smith encouraged attendees to attend a workshop scheduled for April 3, 2014 in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Topics will include financial resiliency, land use, and transportation. He then discussed federal transportation issues that Transportation for America is focusing on to increase local control and accountability. He described a sample letter and resolution that is available to local officials to use to send to congressional leaders urging support for increased revenue for transportation. He offered to provide the documents electronically to interested municipal officials.

Mayor Stodola introduced Paragould Mayor Mike Gaskill who discussed the recently implemented State Aid street program. He explained that the program is being administered by a committee comprised of nine mayors appointed by the Governor, the Speaker of the House, and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate. The committee reviews grants to fund transportation projects submitted by municipalities. He summarized a booklet titled "Procedures for Development of State Aid Construction Projects for Cities", which was distributed to conference attendees.

There being no further business, the session ended at 11:25 a.m.