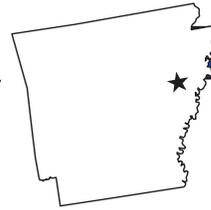


# ST. FRANCIS COUNTY

## Arkansas



Plan "Snapshot"

This is our community. Whether we live in Colt or Forrest City, Madison or Wheatley, Hughes or Palestine, Caldwell or Widener, we are all bound by our love of St. Francis County and East Arkansas. It's a unique place full of history and promise for the future. Our culture has shaped us, blending a richly diverse people into a force of unstoppable passion. We believe in our community and are willing to work to make it better.

Our desires for the community are no different than most. Safety, health, opportunity, friendship, peace, pride – these are values that we consider important. At the end of each day, how we measure success is not always quantifiable. Instead, it is a feeling that permeates the very fiber of the community. If each person feels valued, we have won.

This is our time. Mark Twain once said there are "people who accomplish things, and people who claim to have accomplished things." These words guide us, giving us purpose. We have the ability and the desire to make real, positive change. We cannot rely on others to do it for us. Instead, we will lead the way and form partnerships to assist us with our goals.

A legacy is only as good as those who carry it forward. Teaching our children the value of getting involved, giving back and making a difference will serve not only St. Francis County, but any community that is blessed to call them citizens. Now is the time to share these lessons.

This is our plan. It's ambitious, far-reaching and comprehensive. We know we face challenges, some that will be more difficult to overcome than others. Yet we believe in ourselves and know this plan will only be the first step to ensuring that St. Francis County will thrive in the years to come.

We have chosen many strategies to build upon. Not only do we wish to attract new industry, we want to cultivate those businesses we already have, making them stronger and more viable. Education is crucial to achieving success, and we will enhance opportunities for our citizens of all ages to expand their minds and their horizons. Visitors are always welcome here, and we want to see more of them. The health of our citizens is a major concern. We want to reverse the trends, encouraging our citizens to be among the healthiest in the state. Taking care of our cultural and historic assets will safeguard these priceless resources for future generations.

In the vast green region that is the Delta of East Arkansas, there is a special place. It's defined by its people, a group of remarkably dedicated champions. Why do we take the time to get involved? The answer is simple. This is St. Francis County. This is our home.

### PLAN DIRECTOR

**Gary Hughes**  
County Judge  
St. Francis County

### STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Judy Baynes**  
City of Wheatley

**Brett Kinman**  
CEO

Forrest City Medical Center

**Kirk Billingsley**  
President  
Forrest City Area Chamber  
of Commerce

**Dr. Florine B. Milligan**  
Community Volunteer &  
Faith-based Leader

**Tim Bothum**  
Boar's Head

**Larry Nash**  
Mayor  
City of Wheatley

**Larry Bryant**  
Mayor  
City of Forrest City

**Larry Owens**  
Mayor  
City of Hughes

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**Larry D. Freeman**

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Quorum Court Member  
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City of Madison

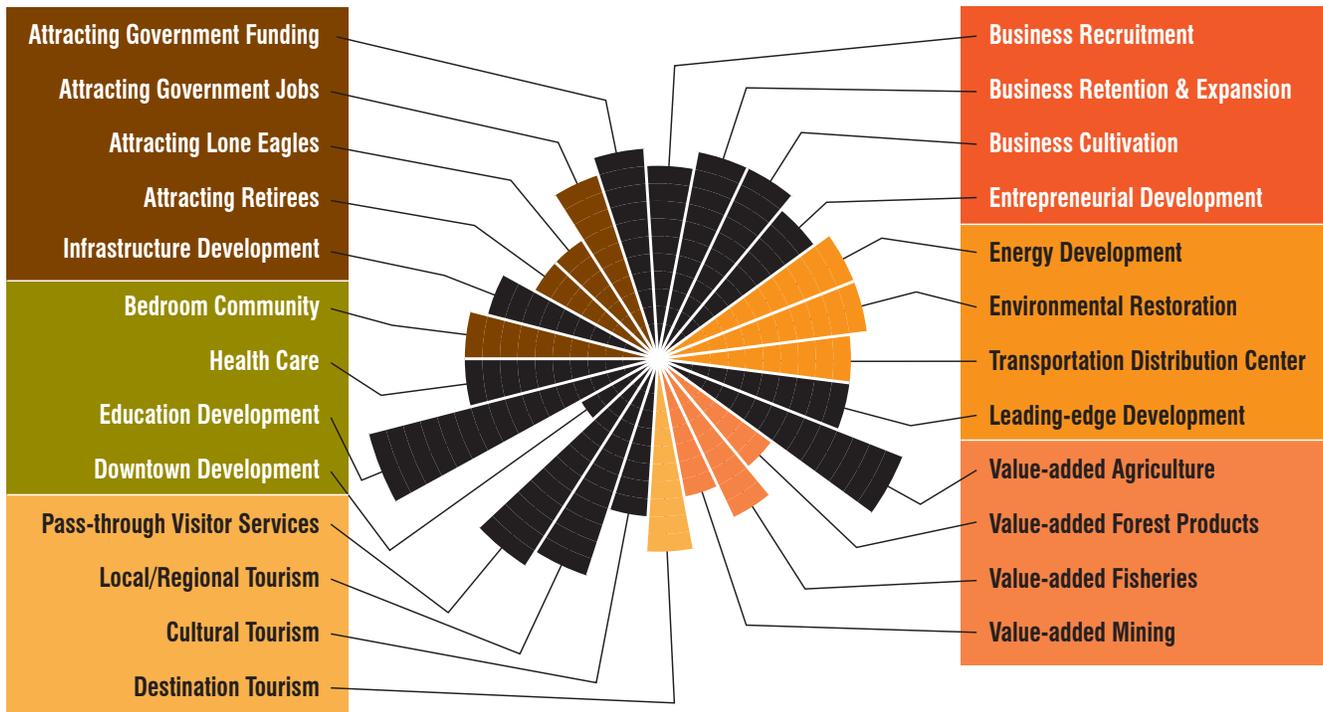
**Chris Heigle**  
Assistant to the President  
East Arkansas Community  
College

**Jammie Willis**  
Assistant Manager  
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**Carl Horton**  
Woodruff Electric  
Cooperative

## ST. FRANCIS COUNTY STRATEGY “THUMBPRINT”

The strategy “thumbprint” depicts twenty-five community and economic development strategies in terms of St. Francis County’s potential to successfully implement each of the strategies. The longer the “spoke,” the greater the likelihood that St. Francis County could see success in pursuing that strategy. Black spokes indicate strategies that have been selected for implementation by the St. Francis County Steering Committee.



<b>SELECTED STRATEGIES &amp; INITIATIVES</b>	
<b>Affordable, Quality Housing</b>	<b>Creation of home-buyer and down payment assistance programs.</b>
<b>Attracting Funding</b>	<b>Collaboratively advance priority projects for funding.</b>
<b>Business Cultivation</b>	<b>Identification of products and services that can be produced locally.</b>
<b>Business Recruitment</b>	<b>Engage and prepare leadership and community for recruitment.</b>
<b>Business Retention &amp; Expansion</b>	<b>Development of outreach program to assist our existing businesses.</b>
<b>Civic Engagement</b>	<b>Leadership training and communications to improve engagement.</b>
<b>Cultural Tourism</b>	<b>Development of musical, Civil War and Native American sites.</b>
<b>Downtown Development</b>	<b>Organization of Main Street program for Forrest City.</b>
<b>Education Development</b>	<b>Expanding post-secondary institutions; improving Pre-12 schools.</b>
<b>Entrepreneurial Development</b>	<b>Training and assistance for existing and potential local businesses.</b>
<b>Health &amp; Safety</b>	<b>Healthy foods, feral animal programs and crime/drug use abatement.</b>
<b>Health Care Expansion</b>	<b>Expansion of preventive and traditional health care services.</b>
<b>Infrastructure Development</b>	<b>Development of infrastructure around new bypass.</b>
<b>Local/Regional Tourism</b>	<b>Additional parks, recreational, hunting and fishing areas.</b>
<b>Pass-through Visitor Services</b>	<b>Creation of a welcoming atmosphere to encourage travelers to stop.</b>
<b>Value-added Agriculture</b>	<b>Determination of best options to increase value-added ag industry.</b>