



Community Focus

*A Report for Springfield
and Greene County*

2009

www.SpringfieldCommunityFocus.org

Springfield and Greene County

Community Focus: A Report for Springfield and Greene County is a collaborative project that provides our community the opportunity to reflect on its strengths and weaknesses. The previous three reports have identified areas of success and challenges facing Springfield-Greene County. Since 2004, reports have produced meaningful action in terms of resources, volunteer commitment and grants as a response for those areas needing our attention.

This year is special as it serves as the fifth anniversary of the *Community Focus* report. Therefore, the primary goal of the 2009 *Community Focus* is to identify red flags from the 2004, 2005 and 2007 reports, provide trends and current indicators of those red flags, and discuss any progress made to address the red flags since originally identified. In addition, the report provides a brief review of community strengths (blue ribbons) acknowledged in previous reports. A new element presented in this year's report are issues identified as potential future challenges for Springfield-Greene County referred to as emerging issues.

Over the past year all eyes and ears in this community, the nation and around the world have been focused on headlines reminding us of the unprecedented economic conditions we are experiencing. Although the 2009 report recognizes the resilience of our community, the effects of the recent economic climate are clear and often referred to throughout the report. Therefore, at times, information in this report should be understood in terms of recent resource constraints.

While we are new to the *Community Focus* report, there are many volunteers who have come back again to work on this valuable project by serving on the steering committee or subcommittees. These volunteers and community leaders are some of the brightest, most passionate and caring people in

their fields who are truly committed to moving our community from good to great. In addition, we wish to thank our financial supporters—Community Foundation of the Ozarks, Junior League of Springfield, Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce, Springfield-Greene County Library District and United Way of the Ozarks—for making this project possible.

We believe *Community Focus* is being used to reflect on our community and good things are happening. The 2009 report will reveal continued progress and new initiatives developed to address red flags. Together we can, and we are, making a difference. This ongoing reflection is essential for a community that is truly committed to a better future for its citizens.

Sincerely,



Jill Reynolds

Jill Reynolds, CFP
Chair, *Community Focus*
Steering Committee



Cristina Gilstrap

Cristina Gilstrap, Ph.D.
Facilitator, *Community Focus*

Table of Contents

Red Flags: Our Progress.....	1
Arts and Culture.....	2
Business and Economic Conditions.....	4
Citizen Participation.....	6
Community Health.....	8
Early Childhood.....	10
Education.....	12
Housing.....	14
Natural Environment.....	16
Public Order and Safety.....	18
Recreation, Sports and Leisure.....	20
Transportation.....	22

Community Focus 2009

A Report for Springfield and Greene County

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For More Information:

The 2009 *Community Focus* report is a summary of information compiled by many individuals and subcommittees (see back cover for list of those people). Additional information, data and sources are available on a website dedicated to this report. Please visit: www.SpringfieldCommunityFocus.org.

RED FLAGS: Our Progress So Far

Red flags have been presented in *Community Focus* reports as a means of identifying issues needing attention within Springfield and Greene County. The fifth anniversary of *Community Focus* provides a unique opportunity to provide an in-depth assessment of the progress made in addressing red flags presented in previous reports.

As discussed in the 2007 *Community Focus*, progress has been made in responding to previously published red flags through initiatives, volunteer commitment, grants and legislature. However, our community continues to face challenges regarding access to health care, child abuse and neglect, education funding, and basic issues such as housing and hunger.

Access to Health Care

Springfield-Greene County has been recognized for its excellent medical arts facilities and professionals. However, all previous *Community Focus* reports have acknowledged problems low-income and uninsured citizens face accessing behavioral, medical and dental care. Unfortunately, uninsured and poverty rates have continued to rise, overshadowing many local and national health services. In addition, middle-class citizens are facing similar challenges due to high coverage payments, difficulty getting in to physicians, and a low citizen/physician ratio in



Springfield-Greene County. Although initiatives (including the Springfield-Greene County Regional Health Commission) have been developed to respond to access issues for the medically underserved, this continues to be an area of concern for our community.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Since 2004, *Community Focus* has identified higher child abuse and neglect rates in Greene County than state averages. In response, multiple educational programs and initiatives have been developed to address this concern in Springfield-Greene County including Isabel's House Crisis Nursery, Operation US, Child Witness Protection Act, Ambassadors for Children, and the Strengthening Families Initiative (see more initiatives in the report). Although substantiated child deaths due to child abuse/neglect rates have decreased slightly, hotline calls/reports remain high. Therefore, child abuse and neglect continues to be an issue and necessitates our community's attention.

Education Funding

Education budgetary concerns have been a top priority in all previous *Community Focus* reports. According to the 2007 report, Greene County districts have continually faced the challenge of receiving equitable and adequate state, federal and local funding. Currently, school funding remains a challenge with the percentage of state, federal and local revenue continuing to vary drastically



between districts and percentage of total state revenue continuing to decrease for all Greene County districts. Results of such cuts will require districts to rely more significantly on local revenue funding, including developing and maintaining a strong local tax base to fund schools and pay staff.

Home Issues

Issues related to home life have played an important role in each *Community Focus*. Although housing and hunger have been highlighted in the past, they have become more important concerns due to our current economic conditions.

Housing challenges have increased for citizens of Springfield-Greene County. In the last four years housing permits have decreased, homeless statistics have increased and housing costs continue to rise despite falling average wage rates and per capita income levels. A more recent problem is the rising foreclosure rates in this area. Although several initiatives have been developed to address foreclosure rates and affordable housing needs, such as the Neighborhood Stabilization Program and Housing Counseling for Springfield and Greene County, several issues continue to be areas of concern, including vacancy rates due to foreclosures, homeless children and adolescents, and shrinking financial resources needed to address homelessness and housing.

As annual income rates decrease, unemployment rises and job growth stalls, hunger issues have grown in the Springfield-Greene County community. As discussed in this year's report, more Springfield Public School students are eligible for the free and reduced lunch program than in the past. In addition, the rising



numbers of individuals served and pounds of food distributed in Greene County each month by Ozarks Food Harvest Member pantries and congregate feeding sites function as strong indicators of the hunger issue in this region.

Arts and Culture

“The arts are nothing less than the expression of our lives. It is the arts that describe our humanity.”

— Sally Baird, Chair,
Community Foundation of the Ozarks 2008

With vision, leadership and service, the arts and cultural opportunities in Springfield and Greene County have grown at a steady pace, offering new experiences to the community as well as continuing annual traditions. Education and regional outreach have become essential and powerful ways to communicate the importance and viability of arts and culture.

From a continued audience of thousands at First Friday Art Walk to the creation of the new Springfield Shakespeare Festival in Jordan Valley Park, it is hard to question the economic impact of arts and culture to downtown Springfield. Due to such successful growth, a concentrated effort towards sustainability has taken center stage.

BLUE RIBBONS (2004 – 2007)

- Collaborative Efforts
- Quality and Attendance
- Facilities

Springfield Arts Related Facilities

Gillioz Theatre
The Creamery Arts Center
Drury University's Pool Arts Center
Evangel University's Barnett Fine Arts Center
History Museum for Springfield and Greene County
Juanita K. Hammons Hall for the Performing Arts,
Missouri State University
Landers Theatre
Moxie Cinema
Springfield Art Museum
The Skinny Improv Comedy Theatre
Vandivort Center Theatre

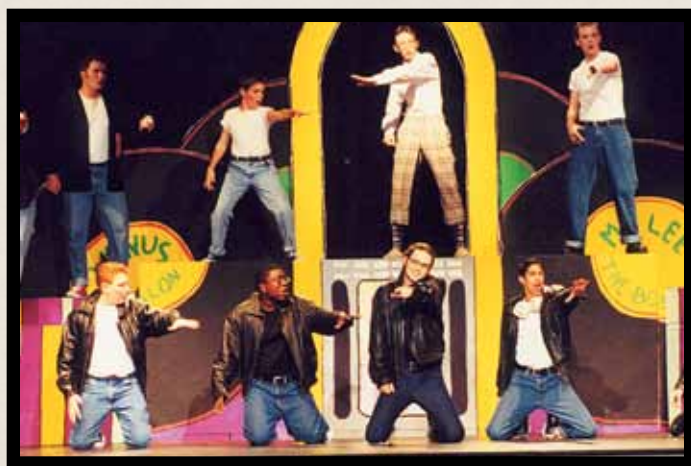
CURRENT STATUS OF 2004 – 2007 RED FLAGS

Operating Revenues and Funding

Funding for arts and cultural organizations has been a red flag highlighted in all previous *Community Focus* reports. To improve the quality of life in Springfield, consistent and sustainable funding is needed. However, according to the 2005 and 2007 *Community Focus* reports, the majority of arts and cultural organizations were not able to fully reach their missions because they relied heavily on volunteers, few paid staff and irregular forms of support.

In response to funding needs, the Arts Programming Sustainability Initiative was developed as one of the 2008-2009 Board Goals of the Community Foundation of the Ozarks. It addresses funding issues by working with organizations in growing their individual endowment through planned giving strategies.

Although operating revenue and funding has continued to be an issue due to the economic downturn, a majority of arts and culture organizations have found creative ways to find new sources of revenue. For example, organizations such as the Springfield Ballet, Springfield Symphony, Springfield Regional Opera and Missouri Film Alliance have explored new programming, endowments, fundraisers and use of web services to solicit new sources of income. Two new theatre organizations, Swan Repertory Theatre and Poor Thespian Productions, have emerged to provide live classical and accessible theatre opportunities. The Springfield Regional Arts Council more than tripled its membership by creating special categories for individual artists, children and military families. In addition, the Council also purchased a 16-foot box truck for member organizations to use to cut costs in transporting sets, props and instruments.



Stage production at Juanita K. Hammons Hall for the Performing Arts

Human Resources

The 2007 *Community Focus* report identified the need for area arts organizations to share staff to directly reduce the financial burdens on organizations and their sponsors and donors indirectly. As recommended, arts and culture organizations have worked to share human resources as a consistent way of cutting overhead costs.

The implementation of the Arts Programming Sustainability Initiative in February 2009 has provided a shared staff member, the Arts Sustainability Coordinator. This position focuses on establishing an endowment for arts sustainability through the creation of a collaborative festival, assisting with growth of each organization's existing endowment, enhancing and coordinating educational efforts related to the arts, and increasing the public's

awareness of the arts as being vital to the quality of life in this community. Additionally, the Springfield Regional Arts Council (SRAC) shares its finance director with over 6 groups, the Arts Council's front desk receptionist serves as shared staff for all organizations represented at The Creamery Arts Center, and the Springfield Little Theatre has shared its Costume Coordinator and Technical Directors with The Creamery. The benefits to organizations sharing human resources has provided savings for all and represents a level of cooperation growing between groups, which did not previously exist.

Regional Outreach

In 2007, the *Community Focus* report advocated the need to increase the frequency of regional performances, workshops and shows in order to increase cultural tourism for Springfield. To date, educational outreach in rural communities has seen tremendous growth. Organizations such as the Springfield Symphony and Springfield Little Theatre have increased performances in regional centers and schools. In addition, programs from the Springfield Regional Arts Council such as the GOAT (Greater Ozarks Art Tour), Vincent Van GOAT, Artist in Residence and the Claymobile (in partnership with Springfield Pottery) have reached over 40,000 in regional communities. The first traveling regional show for visual artists took place in Spring 2009 around the 27-county southwest region, culminating in a collaborative show at The Creamery Arts Center.

Three years ago, Community Foundation of the Ozarks began a program called the Ozarks Plateau Initiative, with private donor support and in collaboration with Mid-America Arts Alliance, to bring both visual and performance arts programming to rural communities. That program was also partially supported last year through the addition of Missouri Arts Council funding. Additional partnerships like this are needed in arts programming in order to meet the goals for regional outreach.

The Springfield Regional Arts Council is the only Arts Council in Missouri with an extensive regional focus, covering over 27 counties in southwest Missouri. As all arts organizations

Springfield Art Museum



Walnut Street Artsfest

(including the SRAC) continue to increase their focus on regional cultural efforts, challenges include keeping a current and comprehensive database of regional contacts as well as finding sustainable funding for regional tours and educational performances.

EMERGING ISSUES

Audience Development

Due to the growing number of new performance venues, galleries, studios and organizations, attention to building new audience members is essential. Efforts towards audience development need to include increased cross-promotion amongst organizations and continued educational outreach efforts to local and rural communities and schools.

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2007-08
Arts and Cultural Organizations	43	49	50	56
Museums	3	4	7	9
Local Arts Festivals and Events	12	14	19	56

Sustainable Funding

With the current economic climate and ever-changing cultural trends, concentration on sustainable funding for arts and cultural institutions is a must. Collaborative development campaigns to maintain historic facilities and planned giving strategies are currently being put in place to address this emerging issue. However, the development of new non-traditional and in-kind revenue sources will need to be identified and sought.

Business and Economic Conditions

“The measure of a community is its willingness to address its challenges head on. I have every confidence that Springfieldians will take this report to heart and engage in a collaborative spirit to continue to improve and enhance our community.”

— Andy Lear, 2009 Chairman of the Board,
Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce and Partner, BKD, LLP

While the Springfield-Greene County community's economic strength has been evidenced in recent years by consistent job growth and a pro-business environment due to a low cost of doing business, the economic downturn that began in 2008 and continued in 2009 has adversely impacted the area economy. Communities around the country have been affected by historic unemployment, long-lasting recession and limited access to capital. Springfield and the surrounding region must work collaboratively to restore job growth to the levels of the late 1990s, and in particular, focus on advanced, high-tech and high-wage jobs to be well positioned for the future.

BLUE RIBBONS (2004 – 2007)

- Economic Diversity
- Job Growth and Low Unemployment
- Cost of Living
- Downtown Revitalization
- Atmosphere of Collaboration
- Development of Tomorrow's Workforce

CURRENT STATUS OF 2004 – 2007 RED FLAGS

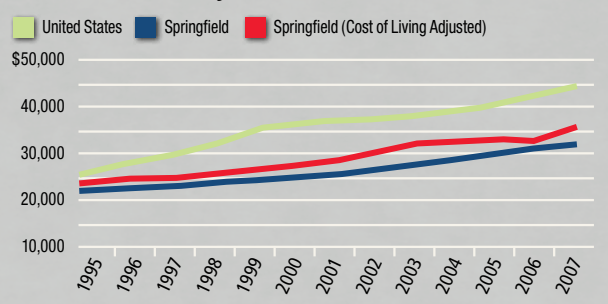
Unfortunately, the red flags identified in earlier reports continue to be challenges our community must collaboratively work to address. While innovative programs have been implemented in various areas to address red flags, average income levels and a high incidence of poverty in the region continue to have a profound impact.

Income and Wages

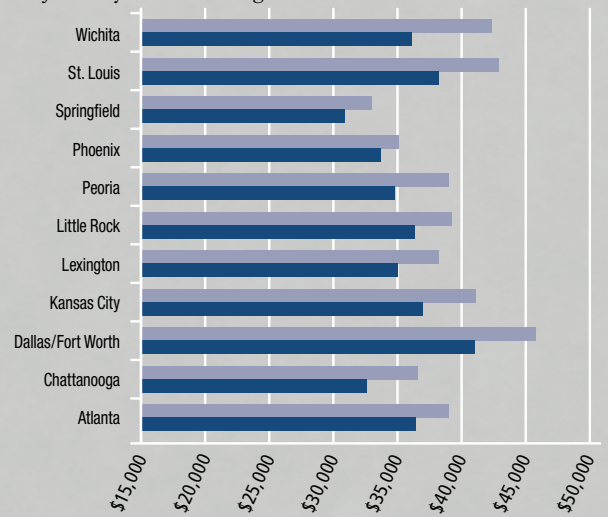
Both the 2005 and 2007 *Community Focus* reports described concerns regarding Springfield's falling average wage rate and per capita income level. Unfortunately, the region's average wage rate and per capita income level continue to fall below comparison cities. While this category has shown continued

growth, Springfield still lags behind on per capita income, even after adjusting for cost of living differences. Additionally, the wage gap between Springfield and the national average has continued to widen in recent years.

AVERAGE WAGE PER JOB

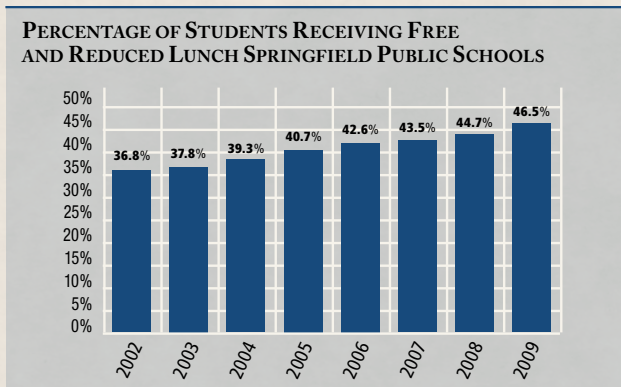
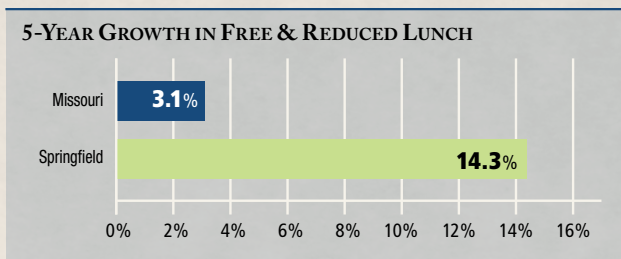


AVERAGE PER CAPITA INCOME, Adjusted by Cost of Living Index



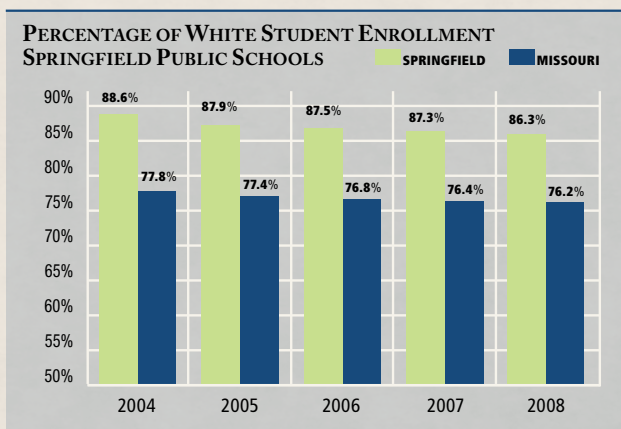
Families in Poverty

Since 2005, *Community Focus* reports have discussed the increasing rates of area families living in poverty, including children, based on the growing number enrolled in free and reduced lunch programs. Children attending Springfield Public Schools are far more likely to be living in poverty today than they were two years ago. In 2007, 43.5% of students attending Springfield schools were eligible for the free and reduced lunch program, a key indicator of poverty. Today, 46.7% of students are eligible for the program. The rising number of children in poverty is problematic on many levels and a symptom of the economic challenges facing many Springfield families. Even more troubling is the significant growth rate of children who qualify for the free and reduced lunch program within Springfield Public Schools (14.3%) during the last 5 years as compared to the statewide average (3.1%).



Minimal Ethnic Diversity

The 2007 *Community Focus* report first identified the lack of diversity in the Springfield area. Although the Hispanic, Asian and African American populations have grown in recent years, the metro area's minority population is still minimal. The enrollment of minority students in Springfield Public Schools has grown by just 2.3% since 2003, with a Caucasian student population still at 86.3% (see Education report). As discussed in 2007, the lack of diversity can delay growth in the region's potential by limiting the recruitment of talented professionals. Additionally, as the new global economy evolves, it will be increasingly important for Springfield to embrace cultural and ethnic diversity.



EMERGING ISSUES

Waning Public Support for Economic Development

Recent issues such as declining sales tax revenue and Springfield's failure to address the police/fire pension fund shortfall have exacerbated public concern for local government's role as a partner in economic development. Consequently, those concerns have limited local government's ability and willingness to participate in economic development projects including

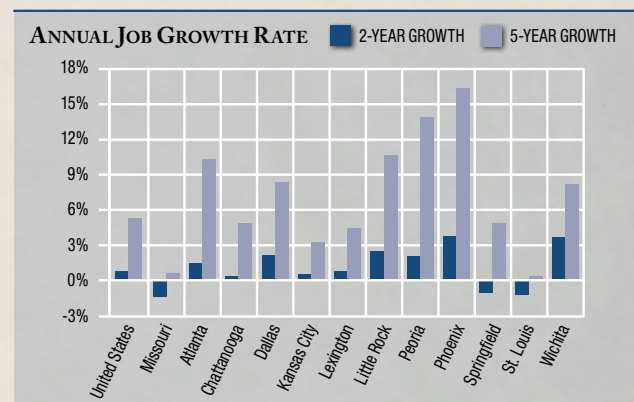
industrial, retail and downtown development. Waning public support may be problematic since the public sector's involvement and foresight in economic development have been critical to the community's success over the last two decades.

Emerging Doughnut Effect

With defined city boundaries, new residential subdivisions are often located outside Springfield city limits. Residents living in these newly-developed neighborhoods often work in city limits and have a vested interest in Springfield, yet are not able to vote on important ballot initiatives. This will make it increasingly difficult to find support for key election issues linked with economic prosperity and limits the pool of eligible candidates to fill city leadership roles. Springfield should continue to review its annexation policies to ensure it keeps pace with the region's growth and maintains a healthy city hub.

Stalled Job Growth and Increasing Unemployment

Although previous *Community Focus* reports described job growth and unemployment as a blue ribbon, it has become an issue of concern in today's economic environment. Unemployment numbers have increased from around 4% in 2007 to just over 8% in early 2009, edging closer to the national unemployment average. In addition, job growth has stalled with 1.3% decline in job growth over the last two year period.



Future Downtown Development

The transformation of downtown Springfield over the last decade has continued with projects such as JQH Arena, BKD corporate headquarters and College Station. However, tightening credit markets are threatening future development projects such as the redevelopment of the Heer's Building and a new Hammons hotel.

Funding Challenges for Developing Tomorrow's Workforce

Springfield's higher education institutions continue to establish programs to assist in the development of tomorrow's workforce such as Missouri State University's Jordan Valley Innovation Center and Drury University's Edward Jones Center for Entrepreneurship. Although Ozarks Technical Community College (OTC) plays a critical role in training and retraining regional employees to meet employers' needs, it continues to face major funding challenges. OTC has the third largest enrollment of any community college in the state, yet ranks last in state funding. Stakeholders must continue to work towards equity of state funding to ensure affordable access to all students.

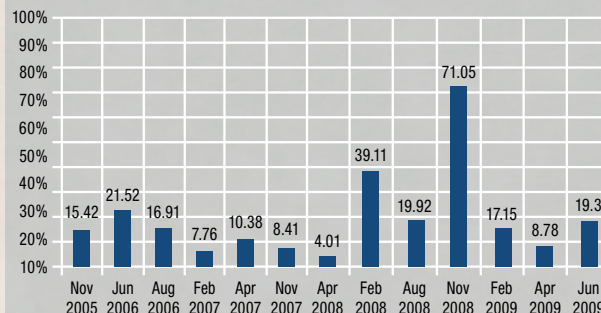
Citizen Participation

“Greene County is a growing urban area with a small town’s heart. When we see the face of need, we respond with our time, talents and resources.”

— Annie Busch,

former Director, Springfield-Greene County Library District and Springfield Chamber of Commerce’s 2008 Springfieldian of the Year

GREENE COUNTY VOTER TURNOUT BY PERCENT



BLUE RIBBONS (2004 – 2007)

- Citizen Involvement
- Volunteerism
- Charitable Giving

Citizens of Springfield and Greene County have demonstrated, time and again, how freely they open their hearts to help fellow citizens in need and how readily they invest in their community. In previous *Community Focus* reports, citizen participation has garnered blue ribbons for citizen involvement, volunteerism and charitable giving, with community members freely giving their resources, time and talents to address needs in the community, as indicated in the chart below.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION VOLUNTEER CHART

ORGANIZATION	VOLUNTEERS			VOLUNTEER HOURS		
	2004	2006	2008	2004	2006	2008
St. John's Hospital	654	682	675	138,477	147,695	141,580
CoxHealth	1,263	1,981	1,319	129,029	141,250	116,345
United Way of the Ozarks	3,572	5,482	1,921	28,840	35,395	24,754
Community Partnership of the Ozarks		7,064	10,447		26,590	40,428
Junior League of Springfield	160	190	235	11,000	19,000	29,164
Springfield/Greene County Library				4,632	5,115	13,000
Springfield Conservation Nature Center				15,441	16,385	14,183
League of Women Voters of SW MO				1,500	1,645	2,534
Retired Senior Volunteer Program of the Council of Churches of the Ozarks			1,499	262,820	247,740	190,596
Higher Education Institutions in Springfield					126,973	188,244

Children in Poverty

Members of the community have been particularly generous in helping address the overall red flag issue of children in poverty (see Early Childhood report). The Community Foundation of the Ozarks (CFO), for instance, has worked to improve the lives of children in poverty through the Grantmakers' Challenge for Children which has, as of January 2008, reached over \$16.7 million in pledges and contributions. The Grantmakers' Challenge cornerstone project is the Enhancing Children's Healthy Opportunities (ECHO) Project, which implements integrated prevention-oriented services in two high-risk Springfield schools.

CFO GRANT AND DISTRIBUTION TOTALS (FISCAL YEAR)

2003	\$3,685,655.60
2004	\$4,701,039.78
2005	\$4,903,121.76
2006	\$7,880,318.62
2007	\$8,371,512.00
2008	\$13,263,562.00
Since Inception (1973)	\$64,090,268.13

CURRENT STATUS OF 2004 – 2007 RED FLAGS

Voter Turnout

The 2004 *Community Focus* report identified voter turnout as a red flag. Specifically, although voter registration was high for Greene County, voter turnout fluctuated based on ballot issues. Unfortunately, this continues to be a concern for the Greene County community. Besides record voter turnout for the November 2008 presidential election (71%), turnout rates continue to fluctuate on a regular basis.

EMERGING ISSUES

Although citizens continue to contribute and care about their neighbors, participation levels are highly dependent on residents' income and education. A 2008 survey by sociologists from Missouri State University of the community's social capital revealed some bright spots as well as several tears in the fabric of community engagement. Social capital refers to the formal and informal networks of trust and reciprocity that connect people. Communities with high levels of social capital generally have residents who are happier and more willing to work for the benefit of the community; they also generally have lower rates of crime and violence. Social networks represent important resources that can be mobilized to address community issues and problems. Compared with a national sample, residents of

Springfield City Hall



Springfield-Greene County had larger social networks than the national average and were more likely to believe that people in general and their neighbors and coworkers are trustworthy. Participation in voluntary organizations, another indicator of social capital, was similar to the national sample, and local residents were more likely to consider religion an important part of their lives and exhibited less trust in national and local government. However, this survey revealed several concerns and emerging issues that bear watching including trust in area institutions, sense of alienation, voter turnout and mobilizing community action.

◆ **Trust in Institutions and Government**

Trust in institutions and government depended on one's level of income and education. According to the 2008 social capital survey, local citizens with lower income and education levels exhibited substantially less trust.

◆ **Sense of Alienation**

Distressingly, the social capital survey found that 35% of local residents believe that the people who run the Springfield-Greene County community do not care about them and only about 25% (compared to 37% nationally) believe they can make their community better. Those who felt alienated generally were lower on the income and education scales. The report concludes that "efforts are needed to draw more lower-income and less-educated individuals into civic participation and community work" (p. 24). This split between the community's haves and have-nots reduces community residents' ability to work together, particularly with local government, to address the community's problems.

◆ **Voter Turnout**

There was an alarmingly low 9% voter turnout for the April 2009 local election, which compared unfavorably with the 17% turnout for the February 2009 primary election and the record 71% turnout for the 2008 presidential election. This is, perhaps, another indicator of the alienation many feel with respect to local government. Fluctuation in voter turnout has been a consistent issue of concern.

◆ **Means to Mobilize Community Action**

The local media environment appears to be shifting, consistent with national trends. A survey by the Springfield Public Schools (SPS) of frequent voters in school elections (typically 60 years old, college educated, living in south Springfield) indicates that reliance on newspapers for information about SPS has gone down (44% in 2005, 49% in 2008) but Internet use has risen (3% in 2005, 5% in 2008) as has reliance on specialized school newsletters and publications (10% in 2005, 14% in 2008). This shift in how people use media suggests that traditional ways for mobilizing people toward community action may not work and new ways will have to be found to encourage all citizens to participate in shaping their community for the better.



Community Health

“Any attempt at health reform, be it at the local, state or federal level, must be built using prevention as its cornerstone. Without a strong prevention component it is doomed to fail.”

— Kevin Gipson,
Chairman of the Board, Springfield-Greene County
Regional Health Commission and Director of Health,
Springfield-Greene County Health Department

BLUE RIBBONS (2004 – 2007)

- Public Health Focus
- Allied Health Education and Research
- Health Care Resources
- Resources for Children and Adolescents
- Economic Impact of Health Care
- WIC Nutrition Program
- Springfield-Greene County Health Department

CURRENT STATUS OF 2004 – 2007 RED FLAGS

Access to Health Care

Availability and access to health care has been a consistent red flag since the 2004 *Community Focus* report. According to previous reports, although Springfield-Greene County had been recognized for its robust medical arts, low-income citizens often lacked access to necessary dental and health resources. Currently, more middle-income citizens of Springfield-Greene County are experiencing health care access difficulties more commonly associated with their lower-income and uninsured counterparts. The number of uninsured individuals and families living at or below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) has risen over the past five years, while the number of MO HealthNet participants has remained virtually the same. Despite the many resources provided by the locally and nationally recognized health systems, public health services and safety net services, many gaps remain in accessing health care.

An additional contributor to limited access to health care is the low physician/citizen ratio in the Springfield community. According to the American Academy of Family Physicians, the national average is 220 primary care physicians per 100,000 individuals with 125 primary care physicians per 100,000 individuals in the Springfield community. In addition, the number of Emergency Department visits has risen for Greene County, with approximately 1 in 5 visits being a non-emergency condition that could have been treated in a

primary care physician's office. However, with limited capacity and long waiting lists, at times it is difficult to obtain access to a primary care provider.

GREENE COUNTY EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT VISITS

2005	93,890
2007	141,252

Sources: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services and Missouri Hospital Association

In response to concerns about health care for the medically underserved, the Springfield-Greene County Regional Health Commission, a Missouri nonprofit corporation, was developed in December 2008. The Commission brings together health care leaders and providers, government agencies and community organizations to identify resources as a means to increase access to quality health care, reduce health care disparities, promote preventive health, improve the cost effectiveness of care, ensure affordable health insurance coverage and create a healthier future for the community.

Mothers Smoking

The 2005 *Community Focus* report identified the increasing rate of tobacco use during pregnancy in Greene County, especially compared with national averages. Greene County continues to have higher rates for smoking during pregnancy than United States and Missouri averages. Specifically, at least 10% of pregnant women in the United States smoke during pregnancy, approximately 17.7% in Missouri and 18.3% in Greene County. In 2008, 27% of women seeking services through the Women Infants and Children program (WIC) smoked while pregnant. Although strong public health educational efforts have reduced the overall percentage of women smoking during pregnancy by 3% in the past five years, the overall rate is nearly double for Springfield. Therefore, the need to provide education and resources to women at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level is needed since smoking during pregnancy doubles a woman's risk of having a low birth weight baby, which increases the baby's risk of serious health problems and lifelong disabilities. The coordination of care among all providers and a consistent message is necessary to remedy this community health problem.

Communicable Disease

Communicable diseases have been an area of concern since the 2004 *Community Focus* report. Although past reports primarily focused on gonorrhea, Tuberculosis (TB) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) rates, chlamydia has also become a disease affecting the region, breeding serious consequences as it increases the number of women experiencing ectopic pregnancies, chronic pelvic pain and infertility. Although the overall rate of HIV is low in Springfield-Greene County, the percentage increase carries large implications given

the high cost of treatment. The Health Department is widely recognized for working collaboratively with area health care providers and the AIDS Project of the Ozarks (APO) to address, educate and manage the prevalence and treatment of HIV. Case management, free prevention screenings and public health education campaigns have effectively decreased the incidence rates of other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), Tuberculosis and Hepatitis C.

SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY HEALTH SNAPSHOT

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	MO 2007
COMMUNICABLE/INFECTIOUS DISEASE (incidence per 100,000)						
Gonorrhea	131.2	123.1	84.4	99.4	103.4	168.0
Chlamydia	267.3	272.8	294.5	317.7	304.2	396.5
Hepatitis C	148.2	121.4	147.2	151.7	122.0	76.0
Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)	4.0	7.6	10.6	10.0	9.5	10.6
Tuberculosis (TB)	5.9	3.7	2.8	2.0	2.4	2.1

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Bureau of Informatics, Data, Surveillance Systems and Statistical Reports, 2003-2007; Springfield-Greene County Health Department, Community Health and Epidemiology Division, 2007.

Health Care Policy Priorities

In early 2005, the Missouri state legislature voted to cut the number of people eligible for MO HealthNet resulting in changes to the program including reduced coverage for low-income parents, increased monthly spenddowns for the elderly and disabled, increased premiums for children, removal of the obligation for MO HealthNet to pay for several medically necessary services, copayments for adults, and decreased allotments for those qualifying for nursing home care. Since the 2005 cuts, MO HealthNet coverage for children ages 18 and younger has also dropped with the percentage of children at or below the FPL and the percentage of families at or below the FPL increasing. In the past four years, the Missouri legislature has neither restored the cuts to MO HealthNet nor expanded access to the program. Therefore, in the past four years, no significant measures have been taken to expand our public coverage crisis and the associated service barriers. Another loss associated with the state's public coverage system includes the disapproved expansion for the state's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which would extend an increased amount of public coverage to children. Since 2003, state funding for core public health services has remained stable, providing the Health Department and safety net providers with minimal, yet sufficient funds to continue their basic programs and services.

EMERGING ISSUES

Childhood Obesity

Obesity is defined by the Centers for Disease Control as having a body mass index (BMI) over 30; overweight is defined as a BMI over 25. In 2007, 26% of all Springfield-Greene County children under 18 years of age were overweight and 5% were obese. In the same year, 31% of children under the age of 18 received food stamps to supplement their diet. Although this nutritional support is necessary for children living at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level, the food is often poor in its nutritional value. One worry is that as obesity rates stabilize, financing for childhood health efforts will wane, which is of great concern since 80% of children overweight at ages 10 to 15 are obese by age 25. Behavior and environment are important

indicators predicting whether a child is at risk for being overweight or obese and serve as the greatest areas for prevention and treatment.

Senior Population

The growing number of adults age 65 and older continues to place high demands on public and private health care services and resources. Missouri's senior population is anticipated to increase from 13.4% in 2007 to 15% by 2015 and more than 19.1% by 2025. Older adults are affected disproportionately by chronic diseases/illnesses, injuries and disabilities. This combined with the expectation that life expectancy will continue to increase is cause for caregiving and health care cost concerns.

Workforce Development

According to the Missouri Hospital Association, there will be an ongoing shortage of health care professionals through 2020. Statewide indicators show that physical therapists, registered nurses and pharmacists are among the professions experiencing high vacancy rates among health care professionals. In general, vacancy rates are lower in northern Missouri and increase in southern Missouri. In addition, due to a number of factors (such as population growth and aging) demand for physicians will outpace the supply of physicians which may create an additional challenge for the Springfield community which is already experiencing a low primary care physician/individual ratio.

SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY HEALTH SNAPSHOT

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	MO 2007
MATERNAL HEALTH (percent of total live births)						
Low Birth Weight	7.7	7.4	7.2	6.9	6.2	7.9
Mothers as Medicaid Participants	50.7	52.8	52.7	52.3	52.2	47.5
First Trimester Prenatal Care	89.5	89.3	87.4	89.2	89.8	86.4
Births to Mothers Under Age 18	3.1	3.6	3.5	3.3	3.1	2.2
Mothers Smoking During Pregnancy	21.0	20.4	19.2	19.4	18.3	17.7

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Bureau of Informatics, Missouri Information for Community Assessment (MICA), 2003-2007.

DEATHS (rate per 100,000)

Cardiovascular Disease	227.5	230.7	221.4	205.1	203.6	212.8
Lung Cancer	61.5	60.6	62.6	64.4	51.3	60.1
Breast Cancer	17.9	12.3	12.4	17.4	9.0	13.5
Motor Vehicle Crash	19.3	13.8	17.6	16.2	8.4	17.0
Suicide	13.3	15.5	11.6	14.6	16.3	13.5

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Bureau of Informatics, Missouri Information for Community Assessment (MICA), 2003-2007.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH & WELLNESS (incidence per 100,000)

Immunization Rate (% of children, public clinics)	87.2	88.6	88.6	83.5	93.0	76.1
Infant Deaths (per 1,000 live births)	7.1	8.3	4.4	9.1	5.5	5.0
WIC Nutrition Program (annual number of participants)	67,320	69,780	71,868	69,960	71,018	N/A
Children Receiving Medicaid (% of children ages 0-18; average monthly unduplicated account)	38.8	41.2	40.5	35.1	34.2	33.2
Children Below FPL (% of total children)	17.6	18.8	17.5	17.7	19.3	18.4

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Bureau of Informatics, Missouri Information for Community Assessment (MICA), 2003-2007; Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Bureau of WIC and Nutrition Services, 2003-2007; Springfield-Greene County Health Department, Maternal and Child Health Division, 2003-2007; Kids Count Missouri, University of Missouri Outreach and Extension, Office of Social and Economic Analysis, 2003-2007; U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE), 2003-2007; Springfield Public Schools, Health and Wellness Division, 2007; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2003-2007.

Early Childhood

“Springfield-Greene County was chosen as one of America’s 100 Best Communities for Youth because we are doing great things for kids. Every community has its problems, but we are not afraid to acknowledge ours and work towards effective solutions.”

— Melissa Haddow,
Executive Director, Community Partnership of the Ozarks

BLUE RIBBONS (2004 – 2007)

- Isabel’s House Crisis Nursery
- Increased Community Awareness and Attention on Early Childhood Needs
- Participation on State Early Childhood Coordinating Board
- Early Childhood Centers (Logan-Rogersville, Shady Dell, OTC)
- Mayor’s Commission for Children
- Early Learning Opportunities Act Grant

CURRENT STATUS OF 2004 – 2007 RED FLAGS

Effect of Poverty on Children

The 2005 *Community Focus* report articulated the interconnected role poverty plays for all early childhood indicators (i.e., homelessness, outcomes of methamphetamine use, lack of health care, dropout rates, child abuse and neglect, single-parent families). The Springfield-Greene County community has continued to help children affected by poverty through many new initiatives and programs such as the Light House Child Development Center, Care to Learn Fund, Backpack Program (Ozarks Food Harvest, United Way, Care to Learn), OACAC Head Start, Kids Closet, We Brush, Too!, Child Care Subsidy Increases, Ready 2 Learn Project, Events for Children in Poverty, and area food drives. To date, more than 4,100 children have been served, 1.6 million tons of food collected, 22,400 backpacks distributed, and over \$2.55 million dollars invested to address poverty issues for children.

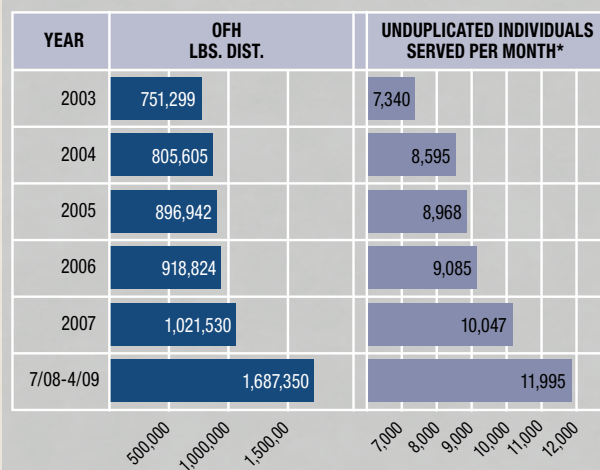
Official data regarding the number of children younger than 6 years of age in poverty will not be presented until the 2010 census. However, based on estimates from the Office of Social and Economic Analysis (OSEDA) and skyrocketing demand at food banks, this number is most certainly increasing (see Community Health report). Now, more than ever, Greene County must leverage efforts to help those in need.

INDICATOR	2003	2005	2008
Number of Children (0-6 years) on Medicaid	10,513	9,464	9,253*

* Note: Eligibility requirements changed.

Source: Office of Social and Economic Analysis (OSEDA)

OZARKS FOOD HARVEST DISTRIBUTION AND INDIVIDUALS SERVED PER MONTH



*NOTE: Monthly average individuals served in Greene County at OFH Member food pantries and congregate feeding sites

Child Abuse and Neglect

All previous *Community Focus* reports have identified higher substantiated child abuse and neglect rates in Greene County versus state averages. To date, substantiated rates continue to decrease slightly, yet the number of hotline calls/reports remains high. The rate of child deaths due to child abuse/neglect has continued to decrease from 5 deaths in 2005 to 1 death in 2007.

INDICATOR		2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Child abuse/neglect (Substantiated cases 0-18 years/1000 children)	Greene Co	10.9	9.07	8.5	7.9	6.3
	Missouri	6.8	6.49	5.7	5.0	4.6
Hotline Reports/Calls	Greene Co		5660	5801	3335	3338
	Missouri		56,111	54,108	51,383	52,979
Children removed from home	Greene Co		819	766	353	327
Child fatalities due to abuse/neglect	Greene Co	2	4	5	2	1

Various educational programs and initiatives have been developed to address child abuse and neglect concerns in Springfield-Greene County. Specifically, over 8,600 individuals have been trained or educated by these programs/initiatives and more than 3,670 children served. Child abuse and neglect continues to be an area of concern that warrants the community’s full attention and resources to ensure that the indicators move in the right direction.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT RECENT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

PROGRAM/INITIATIVE

Child Witness Protection Act
Children's Division Certification
Ambassadors for Children (Adopt-a-Caseworker)
Mandated Reporter Training
Isabel's House Crisis Nursery
Operation US
Good Touch, Bad Touch
MSU CA/N Curriculum
Strengthening Families Initiative

Strengthening Families



Childcare

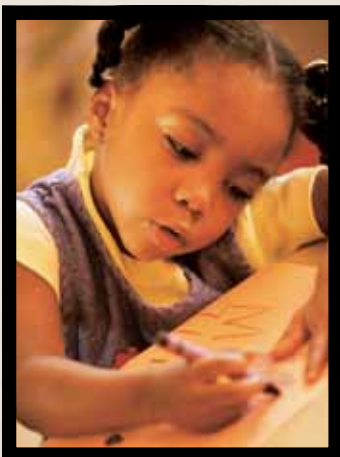
The 2007 *Community Focus* report described concerns regarding the major expense of childcare in Springfield and Greene County. Currently, total childcare capacity in Greene County has decreased by 5%, but accredited programs have increased by 10%. Head Start accounts for 41% of accredited programs in Greene County and provides high quality care for at-risk children. The Missouri Legislature continues to debate the need for a quality rating system for daycare centers. Hopefully by 2010, a system will be in place so Greene County parents have the necessary information to make good choices for their daycare needs. Nonetheless, childcare costs continue to be a major expense for families with a general increase of 7-10% occurring from 2007 to 2009, especially since the Springfield median income is approximately \$30,000.

HOUSING AND CHILDCARE EXPENSES FOR \$30,000 SALARY

Take Home Pay	\$25,500
Housing Costs (28%)	- 8,400
Childcare Costs	-14,092
Remaining money for year	\$3,008

Support for childcare subsidies has increased since 2007, yet Missouri still ranks 46th among all states in income eligibility. A new transitional childcare eligibility policy lets current subsidy recipients receive reduced benefits if they receive a

small increase in pay and helps protect them until they reach 140% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). In 2008, the FPL was \$17,640 for a single parent with two children. This new stair stepping system for benefits resulted from initiatives to educate lawmakers about the negative impacts of reducing subsidies for low income wage earners after getting a raise which was evident in previous policies.



Community Awareness of the Early Years

Since the last *Community Focus* report, over 1,030 partners in the Springfield-Greene County community have responded to increase community awareness of early childhood issues. Recent initiatives and grants, such as America's Promise Award, Red Wagon Kids Community Plan, Burrell's Autism Center, Character Ed, Building Blocks, MO-PIRC Grant and Grantmakers' Challenge for Children, have served more than 1,223 children and collected approximately \$17 million. Payoff for community education and dialogue support successful projects like Isabel's House and the Child Witness Protection Act. Additional initiatives are needed until every citizen understands the critical role of the early years.

School Readiness/Early Literacy

According to the 2007 *Community Focus* report, a 2-year study by the School Readiness Work Group found social, emotional and cognitive skill development play a vital role in preparing children for kindergarten. Kindergarten readiness scores for Springfield Public Schools have increased from 59% to 63% over the past two years. In addition, early literacy development, which is a predictor of success in school, continues to receive strong support with several community groups providing over 30,000 books to children free of charge from 2007 to 2008. It is hoped that in 2013, the reading test scores of children who received these books will show significant gains.

EMERGING ISSUES

Safe Housing

The importance of a healthy start is jeopardized when it is unsafe for a young child to crawl on the floor or practice writing his/her name. Specifically, children who lack safe housing conditions may struggle with appropriate growth and development. Unfortunately, the Springfield community is currently experiencing a shortage in its capacity to help the increasing population of homeless women and children. (see Housing report).

Kindergarten Readiness and DECA Training

The Kindergarten Readiness study indicates that social and emotional competency is at least as important as cognitive skills when determining if a child is ready for kindergarten. Recent DECA (Devereux Early Childhood Assessment) scores show that local pre-school children do, in fact, improve their readiness level when daily activities are used to reinforce developing social and emotional skills. Additional access and availability of this training is needed in addition to more early childhood teachers using the DECA tool.

Community Focus Education

“As Missouri’s largest accredited school district, Springfield Public Schools are doing exceptionally well, as are the other Greene County districts. As a region, we must continue to work on decreasing the dropout rate. Also, the research is clear that increased funding for Early Childhood Education is invaluable in positive long term results.”

— Roseann Bentley, Greene County Commissioner

BLUE RIBBONS (2004 – 2007)

- Community Collaboration
- Student Academic Performance Compared to State Averages

CURRENT STATUS OF 2004 – 2007 RED FLAGS

Students Living in Poverty

The 2007 *Community Focus* report recognized the increasing number of economically disadvantaged students in the Springfield Public Schools and surrounding districts. A simple measure of poverty is the number of school-age children eligible for free and reduced price school lunches. Currently, this number continues to move upward in Springfield. Almost 45%, or 10,439 children, were eligible for free or reduced lunches in 2008. In other Greene County public schools, the number is also rising but to a lesser degree. More than 4,500 of these students can be determined to be living in poverty in areas outside the Springfield school district representing 33.9% of the student population. Missouri’s rate of free and reduced lunches continues to inch up and as much as 15% of the state’s increase can be attributed to Greene County.

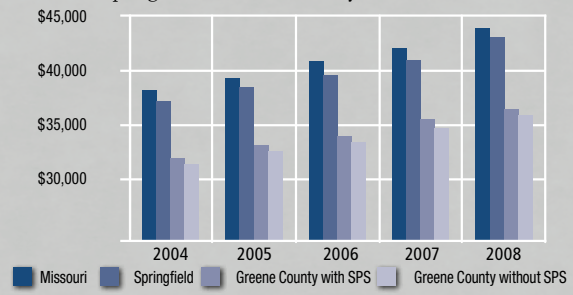
PERCENT OF STUDENTS RECEIVING A FREE/REDUCED PRICED LUNCH, 2004-2008

	PERCENTS			NUMBER		
	2004	2008	DIFFERENCE	2004	2008	DIFFERENCE
Springfield	39.3	44.7	5.4	9,345	10,438	1,093
Fair Grove	34.1	32.8	-1.3	362	360	-2
Stratford	34.3	39.4	5.1	367	473	106
Logan-Rogersville	20.5	28	7.5	379	592	213
Republic	33	35.4	2.4	1,075	1,355	279
Ash Grove	29.1	30.7	1.6	250	260	10
Walnut Grove	40.1	39.4	-0.7	122	104	-18
Greene County w/o SPS	30.4	33.9	3.5	3,606	4,549	943
Greene County w/SPS	36.3	40.8	4.5	12,952	14,988	2,036
Missouri	40.5	42.1	1.6	354,534	367,724	13,190

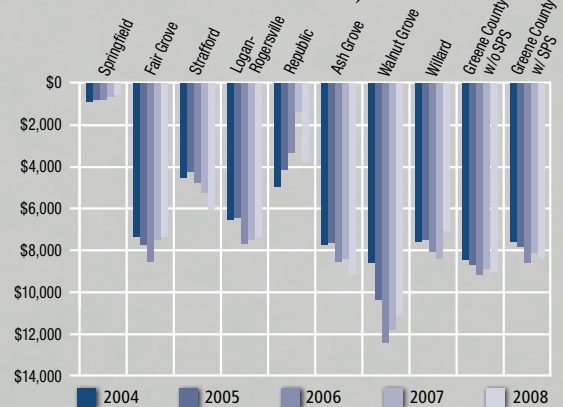
Teacher Salaries

The 2004 *Community Focus* report identified long-standing concerns regarding the growing discrepancy between local teacher salaries and state averages. To date, wages for Springfield and Greene County teachers continue to fall short of the Missouri average, though the gap has narrowed for some. Springfield School District salaries have risen to \$42,572, just \$664 behind the state average in 2008. However, the gap continues to widen for schools in Greene County. For example, the salary gap widened by nearly \$7,000 in 2008 for some Greene County districts. To attract and retain the best teachers, salaries must be proportionate with those in other professions. Keeping the best teachers in the profession will have a direct impact on levels of student achievement.

TEACHER SALARY COMPARISON
Missouri, Springfield & Greene County, 2004 – 2008



DIFFERENCE FROM MISSOURI AVERAGE FOR
GREENE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS, 2004 – 2008



AVERAGE TEACHER SALARY

	2004	2008	DIFFERENCE
Springfield	\$37,262	\$42,572	\$5,310
Fair Grove	\$30,945	\$36,037	\$5,092
Stratford	\$33,810	\$37,201	\$3,391
Logan-Rogersville	\$31,649	\$35,906	\$4,257
Republic	\$33,343	\$39,489	\$6,146
Ash Grove	\$30,407	\$34,111	\$3,704
Walnut Grove	\$29,716	\$32,170	\$2,454
Willard	\$32,533	\$38,106	\$5,573
Greene County w/o SPS	\$31,772	\$36,146	\$4,374
Greene County w/ SPS	\$32,458	\$36,949	\$4,491
Missouri	\$38,214	\$43,236	\$5,022

Budgetary Issues

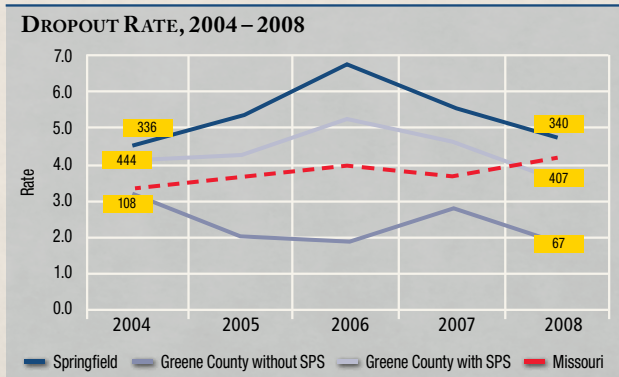
Funding hurdles and shortfalls have been issues of concern since the first *Community Focus* report in 2004. Currently, school funding remains complex and multi-faceted. All Greene County school districts receive funding from local, state and federal sources although the percentage from each of these sources varies drastically between districts. One consistent concern, however, is that all Greene county districts have seen a decrease in the percentage of total revenue contributed from the State of Missouri over a five year span. This corresponds to significant increases in the percentage of total revenue coming from local taxes while federal percentages have remained relatively stable. It appears that local patrons will continue to be asked to shoulder more of the responsibility of funding their local schools, including any desired increases to teacher salaries and benefits. Because salary and benefits traditionally represent close to 80% of a district's annual budget, a desire to address the red flag of lower teacher salaries will be very locally dependent. Districts that have the capacity to develop or maintain a strong tax base will be better positioned to adequately fund their schools and pay their staff than traditionally rural or non-commercial areas.

**GREENE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS
PERCENT OF REVENUE FROM LOCAL, STATE
AND FEDERAL FUNDS, 2004–2008**

	LOCAL			STATE			FEDERAL		
	2004	2008	Difference	2004	2008	Difference	2004	2008	Difference
Springfield	63.9	68.4	4.5	26.1	21.3	-4.8	10	10.3	0.3
Fair Grove	35.2	46.8	11.6	51.4	46.2	-5.2	13.4	7	-6.4
Strafford	61.5	64.5	3	32	28.6	-3.4	6.5	6.9	0.4
Logan-Rogersville	58.2	63.9	5.7	33.5	31	-2.5	8.2	5.1	-3.1
Republic	47.6	52.9	5.3	46.9	41.2	-5.7	5.4	5.9	0.5
Ash Grove	43.9	44.1	0.2	48.8	47.7	-1.1	7.3	8.2	0.9
Walnut Grove	37.6	41	3.4	55.6	52.4	-3.2	6.8	6.6	-0.2
Willard	51	56	5	41.9	37.9	-4	7.1	6.1	-1
Missouri	55.2	58.8	3.6	35.5	33	-2.5	9.2	8.2	-1

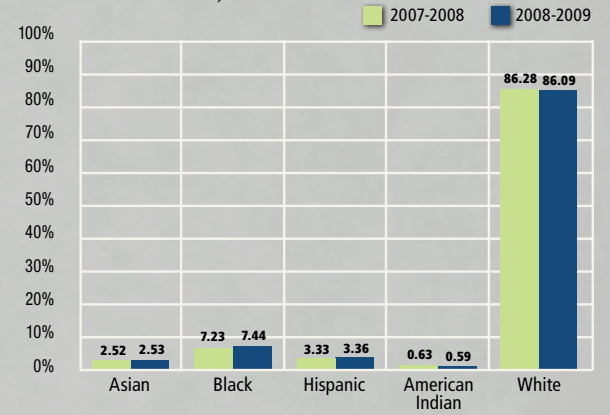
Springfield Public Schools' Dropout Rate

After increasing sharply through 2004 and 2005 and peaking in 2006, the dropout rate for Springfield Public Schools is trending sharply downward. From 2006 to 2008, actual numbers of dropouts reduced a total of 161 students. While Springfield's dropout rate of 4.7% is still slightly over the state average of 4.2%, indicators predict a continued downward trend. The district's strategic plan, SP5, targets increasing the district's graduation and decreasing the dropout rate. A variety of coordinated community



and school based initiatives have positively impacted the dropout rate in SPS including Missouri State's Upward Bound Program, Alert Now, Caring Communities Grants-Leadership Clubs, 21st Century Grant and efforts led by reading teachers, high school personnel, school based clinicians, and attendance advisors.

**SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS
BY RACE/ETHNICITY, 2008 - 2009**



EMERGING ISSUES

Early Childhood Education

Strong early childhood education is vital for any community. Therefore, collaborative regional focus needs to be made on improving access to quality early childhood education for all children, especially for those living in poverty.

College Attendance After High School Graduation

More Greene County high school graduates make the choice to attend a 2-year or 4-year college than the state average. Initiatives should be created to monitor and measure how the presence of higher education institutions in the Springfield region impacts students' decisions – both in awareness of the benefits of higher education but also in easier access to quality higher education options.

Shifting of Funding Responsibilities to Local Communities

Attention needs to be focused on monitoring the shift of fiduciary responsibilities away from state funding sources to the local school districts. There will be a need to educate local school patrons and taxpayers about how this shift may impact their local tax rate requiring local school districts to request an increase to local tax levies to offset the loss of state funding.



Community Focus Housing

“Safe, decent and affordable housing is the foundation to the success of a community –it connects to so many other aspects. It has been proven that people succeed, neighborhoods thrive and local economies prosper with the prevalence of a stable housing market.”

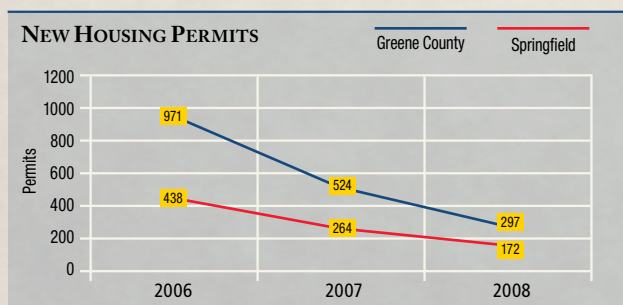
—Tonya Collister, Housing Director
Consumer Credit Counseling Services

At no time in the past have housing challenges impacted Springfield-Greene County more. Hundreds of people in the community lay homeless at night. At the same time, foreclosures are at an all-time high in this area, leaving individuals uncertain about their future. New construction housing permits issued have been reduced by over 45% in the last year.

Springfield should be proud that a strong collaboration of citizens and agencies is addressing the housing needs of its residents, despite shrinking resources and higher demand for assistance and services. Putting things into perspective before addressing blue ribbons, red flags and challenges, the following statistics on housing availability and housing affordability are in place for Springfield and Greene County.

Housing Availability

Permits for the construction of new homes in Springfield and Greene County have dramatically decreased in the last four years. In 2005, 1268 permits were issued for new construction compared to 297 in 2008. In Springfield, that number decreased from 473 in 2005 to 172 in 2008. In downtown Springfield, 350 units of housing were completed in 2008. While new housing units are coming online, the Springfield area Continuum of Care found 713 (of which 316 were children under 18) individuals who were homeless during their most recent Point In Time (PIT) Count. While this number is relatively consistent with other PIT Counts, The Kitchen, Inc. reports having a waiting list of 60-90 individuals and families that it does not have the capacity to serve.



Housing Affordability

Whereas the median salary for Springfield is \$29,416, the income threshold to afford to purchase a 2-bedroom home is \$38,046. The wage needed to afford a 2-bedroom unit at fair market rent is \$11.58 per hour. The fair market rent for a 2-bedroom unit is \$602. One in five families in Springfield earns less than \$15,000 per year. In 2005, 26% of homeowners were paying more than 30% of their adjusted gross income on their mortgage. That number has decreased to 24% for 2008 but goes up to 51% for renters who are paying more than 30% of their income on housing costs.

GREENE COUNTY MEDIAN HOME SALES PRICE



BLUE RIBBONS (2004 – 2007)

- Homeless Services
- Collaborative Efforts
- New Affordable Housing

CURRENT STATUS OF 2004 – 2007 RED FLAGS

Lack of Funding for Affordable Housing Needs

In the 2005 *Community Focus* report, lack of funding to meet growing needs for affordable housing was named as a red flag. However, affordable housing was recognized as a blue ribbon in the 2007 *Community Focus* report due to historic tax credits, the Missouri Housing Trust Fund and HUD. In 2008, additional progress was made through several projects addressing affordable housing needs including:

- Habitat for Humanity - Built 11 homes in their Legacy Trails subdivision
- Burrell Mental Health - Received funding for 14 units to address special needs housing
- The Kitchen, Inc. - Began 3 units for housing 6 seniors funded through a CFO grant
- Greene County Senior Services - Distributed over \$250,000 for housing needs



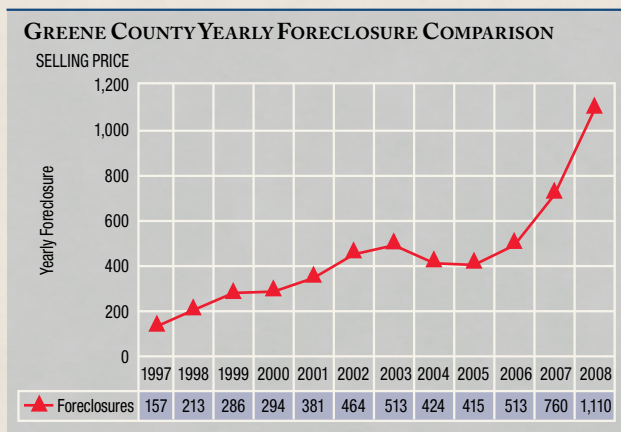


Local Housing Office & Trust Fund

The 2007 *Community Focus* report first identified funding concerns for initiatives related to the Affordable Housing element of the *Vision 20/20* plan. Specifically, the plan called for Springfield and Greene County to develop housing resources including a local Housing Trust Fund. To date, the funding concern still exists. The creation of a local Housing Office & Trust Fund, as outlined as a priority in the Affordable Housing Element of *Vision 20/20*, has been unaddressed due to lack of funding and challenges associated with addressing those funding needs.

Foreclosures

The negative outcomes of rising foreclosure rates in the Springfield area were addressed in the 2007 *Community Focus* report. In 1997, there were 157 foreclosures in Greene County. Steadily, that number has risen throughout this decade, rising from 513 in 2006 to 760 in 2007. Unfortunately, foreclosure numbers peaked to 1,110 in 2008, with no signs of decreasing in 2009.



Concerns regarding foreclosures have been recognized in the Springfield-Greene County community. Therefore, initiatives have been developed to help address rising foreclosure rates and their negative impacts including:

- Neighborhood Stabilization Program - Springfield received a \$1.5 million grant from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development for the development and implantation of a community land trust that will purchase 20-25 foreclosed

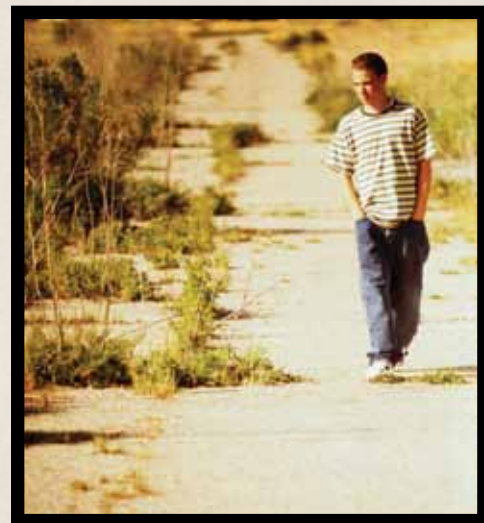
homes, rehabilitate them and sell the house itself to a qualified buyer. The land the house sits on will remain in the land trust, thus creating permanent affordability and helping to stabilize the neighborhood.

- Housing Counseling for Springfield and Greene County - Two local housing counseling agencies have received additional dollars for the training and hiring of more counselors to help families in need facing foreclosure.

EMERGING ISSUES

◆ Vacancy Rates Due to Foreclosures

There is a ripple effect of foreclosures for property owners within the same neighborhood. In *The Municipal Cost of Foreclosure: A Chicago Case Study* (February, 2005), it was shown that, in the most conservative estimates, property values decrease by 1% for every conventional foreclosure within a 1/8 mile radius. In addition, crime rates increase and code enforcement goes up, putting a strain on a community already devastated by budget cuts. Because of the ongoing foreclosure and credit crisis, there are more vacant homes in Springfield and Greene County than ever.



◆ Homeless Children and Adolescents

Springfield Public Schools reports a 25% increase in the number of homeless youth served during the 2007-08 school year. In a 2007 report by Community Partnership's Homeless Youth Committee, 45% of 264 high-risk youth surveyed reported previous homelessness. Successfully identifying and serving these vulnerable populations are keys to sustaining a healthy community into the future.

◆ Shrinking Financial Resources to Address Homelessness & Housing

Because of economic developments within the past year, funding for homeless and housing-related programs has become more difficult. From foundations that have suspended grant programs to fewer dollars in the Missouri Housing Trust Fund, agencies are facing increasing competition for diminishing resources. This shrinking pool of available resources comes at a time when demand for services is increasing, and many who never needed assistance before are turning to providers for help.

Natural Environment

“As I near graduation and consider where I want to live and work, I know I want a community that strives towards sustainability. To me this means a city with respect for the natural environment, protected and accessible green space, businesses that value sustainable practices, easy options for alternative transportation and planning to encourage vibrant urban centers rather than sprawl.”

— Brett Marler, Drury University, Class of 2010

The economic downturn has reminded citizens that the ways of sustainability – protecting and preserving our environmental, economic and human resources for future generations – are the common sense ways of the Ozarkian culture. Local citizens pride themselves on being thrifty, resourceful and respectful of their environment and raise their children with these values.

BLUE RIBBONS (2004 – 2007)

- Water Quality
- Air Quality
- Solid Waste Management

CURRENT STATUS OF 2004 – 2007 RED FLAGS

Water Quantity

The 2005 *Community Focus* report identified water quantity as a red flag due to rapid and steady population growth within the Springfield-Greene County community. Unfortunately, groundwater demand has continued in this region. According to the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, demand for public water supply wells in southwest Missouri increased by 37% between 2000 and 2006. In addition, groundwater depletion continues in some areas of southern Missouri with no groundwater use laws.

Progress has been made to address water quantity issues. On November 24, 2008 the governors of Arkansas and Missouri signed a bi-state agreement to work cooperatively on water quantity and quality issues. In 2009, Greene County was awarded Ground Water Guardian status for the 14th year with the help of the Water Guardian Community. The city of Willard recently completed a Wellhead Protection plan, which identified potential threats to the drinking water well and provided an action plan

to deal with contaminants. Finally, the Watershed Committee of the Ozarks is developing a Source Water Protection plan in conjunction with City Utilities.

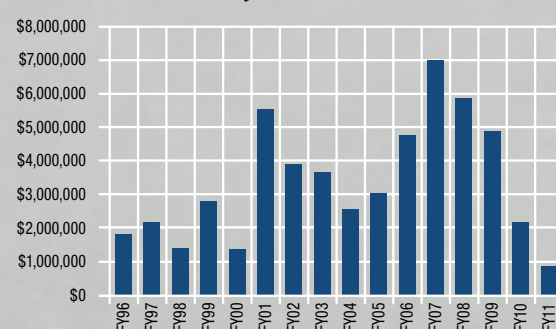
Although water conservation initiatives are becoming more prevalent, water quantity remains an issue of interest in this region. More vigorous programs that promote conservation are needed. In addition, maintaining the current supply of high quality, abundant and inexpensive drinking water is a future concern as the Springfield-Greene County area continues to experience population growth.



Stormwater Management Funding

Stormwater management involves issues related to flood control and water quality protection. Both the 2005 and 2007 *Community Focus* reports classified storm water management funding as a red flag for two main reasons: funding shortages to comply with increasing mandates from the federal government and the aging and deterioration of Springfield's stormwater infrastructure. A five-year Parks/Waterways ¼ cent sales tax was approved by the voters in 2006; half of the funding is dedicated to Springfield and Greene County for projects and programs that enhance runoff water quality. However, funding sources have only been approved through 2012 although ongoing maintenance and federally mandated water quality requirements will need to be funded on a long-term basis. In addition, steady growth in the urban service area makes ongoing maintenance and system upgrades essential. Therefore, stormwater management funding continues to be an area of concern for Springfield-Greene County.

STORMWATER BOND PROJECT EXPENDITURES





■ Solid Waste Management Funding

In both the 2005 and 2007 *Community Focus* reports, solid waste management funding was a red flag due to the lack of a stable funding source to sustain Springfield's Integrated Solid Waste Management System (ISWMS). Reduced revenue for ISWMS was attributed to its reliance on landfill tipping fees and the lack of general or tax revenue for support and competition from out-of-town landfills owned by national solid waste corporations. Recently, the City of Springfield has reached a voluntary agreement with the two major solid waste haulers that will stabilize the funding level available for the city-provided recycling/waste reduction services of the voter-approved ISWMS. The remaining component of the ISWMS is curbside recycling which is provided by independent private trash haulers.

City Recycling/Waste Reduction Services

- Education and Information Program
- Household Chemical Collection Center
- Market Development Program
- Recycling (Drop-off) Centers
- Springfield Sanitary Landfill
- Yardwaste Recycling Center

EMERGING ISSUES

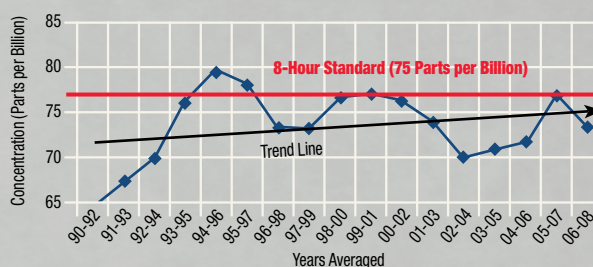
◆ A Community Sustainability Plan

Proactive preventive planning would avoid costly reactive responses to increasingly rigorous standards and regulations while protecting our environment and investing for the future. A plan is needed as a roadmap to sustainability. However, buy-in of all stakeholders will be key to the success of such a plan.

◆ Air Quality

The trend of ground-level pollution in Springfield and Greene County continues to be an area of concern. Exceeding standards places a community at risk of being declared "non-attainment" with the federal standards. In addition, the health effects of ground-level ozone can be significant for children, individuals active outdoors and those with respiratory illnesses.

SPRINGFIELD 8-HOUR OZONE DESIGN VALUES



TYPICAL ADVERSE HEALTH EFFECTS OF OZONE EXPOSURE

- Aggravated asthma or other respiratory illnesses
- Inflamed and damaged cells that line the lungs
- Reduced lung capacity making it difficult to take deep breaths
- Increased susceptibility to respiratory illnesses
- Increased hospitalizations by aggravating respiratory illnesses

As a proactive effort to safeguard the region's air quality, the Ozarks Clean Air Alliance (OCAA) was formed as a subcommittee of the Community Partnership of the Ozarks' Environmental Collaborative. The OCAA now includes 15 counties in southwest Missouri, committed to working together to protect and improve air quality. The OCAA has completed the Clean Air Action Plan – an outline guiding those efforts.

◆ The Built Environment

Built environment refers to manmade surroundings including buildings and supporting infrastructure. In addition to promoting sustainable practices in the private sector, funding to address needs of maintaining and improving publicly owned structures and infrastructure must be secured. Accelerated increases in fuel costs, air quality issues and economic forces highlight a growing need for increased availability of alternative modes of transportation, particularly public transportation.

◆ Increase Participation in Recycling

Recycling is the most accessible green activity and often stimulates further engagement in sustainable behaviors. With most haulers offering single stream recycling and extended availability of city recycling centers, encouraging a higher participation rate in recycling is a priority. With the increase in availability, a concerted effort to educate and encourage community participation can produce significant gains.



Public Order and Safety

“The standard operating practices of public safety services in Greene County are to continually raise the bar, increasing value when emergency response needs are greatest.”

— Harold Bengsch,
Greene County Commissioner and Member,
Missouri State Homeland Security Advisory Council

Public order and safety are the foundations of community life and civilized society. Springfield and surrounding Greene County have built a strong foundation that supports efforts to maintain public order and enhance the safety of the community. Public and private agencies have worked the past several years to develop an integrated system of police, fire and emergency services designed to assist the community in times of need.

BLUE RIBBONS (2004 – 2007)

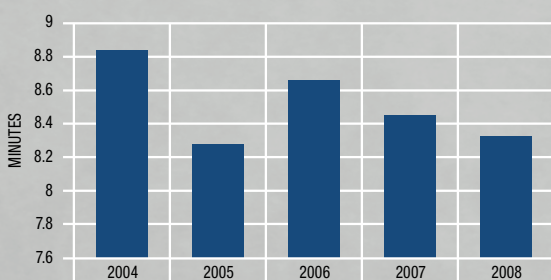
- Community Mobilization
- Law Requiring Cold and Allergy Medicines Moved to Pharmacy Counters
- 9-1-1 Sales Tax
- Crime Lab Grant
- Juvenile Offenses Decline
- Ice Storm Response
- Police Outreach
- Methamphetamine Lab Reduction

CURRENT STATUS OF 2004 – 2007 RED FLAGS

Police Response Time

Although the Springfield Police Department has a goal of arriving on the scene of the most serious calls in less than six minutes, the 2007 *Community Focus* report argued police often took longer to respond to these calls. Priority 1 response time continues to remain above six minutes for the last several years

POLICE RESPONSE TIMES—PRIORITY 1 CALLS



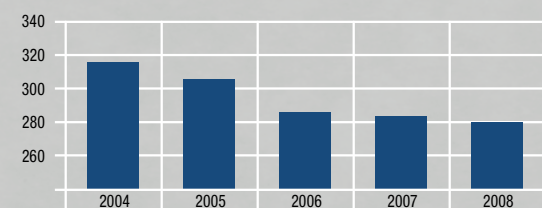
(8.92 in 2004 to 8.41 in 2008), although it has shown a downward trend in spite of a staffing shortage. This change is largely due to a focus of keeping patrol officers on the street to answer these calls at the expense of fewer officers providing service to neighborhoods. However, as more officers leave and fewer are hired, response time can be expected to increase.

Police and Fire Staffing

Due to economic difficulties and shortfalls in funding for government services, the level of police and fire service staffing has been affected. As revealed in the 2007 *Community Focus* report, area law enforcement agencies are still significantly understaffed and face ever-increasing difficulties in their attempts to fill vacancies with qualified applicants. This circumstance is especially challenging at the local level as agencies are unable to compete with the pay and benefits offered by larger departments. In addition, firehouses that serve geographical areas are being closed on a rotating basis as resources are being reduced. Inadequate staffing has a negative impact on public safety and service issues such as response time, crime prevention and the ability to assign cases for follow-up criminal investigation.

Officer attrition continues to plague staffing and the ability to continue programs. Due to a number of conditions, such as the underfunded police/fire pension and lack of competitive salary, as of June 2009, Springfield is short 36 officers from the authorized 326. The anticipation of receiving federal stimulus dollars for up to 25 officers may help in the short term and Springfield has authorized the hiring of 10 replacement officers to help with the current shortages. However, the need still exists for support personnel.

POLICE STAFFING—ANNUAL AVERAGE



Continued Methamphetamine Use

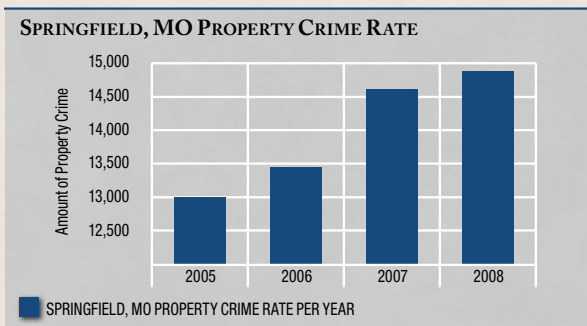
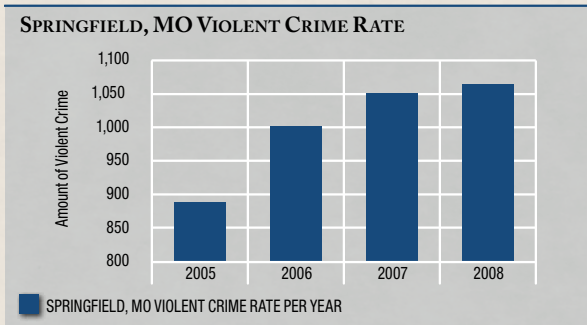
As discussed in previous *Community Focus* reports, methamphetamine continues to be a major drug problem in Springfield and the surrounding area despite the best efforts of law enforcement, treatment and education agencies. Limiting the sale of pseudoephedrine products has reduced the number of homegrown clandestine drug labs; although they have been replaced by drug trafficking from Mexico and southwestern states. More recently, local operators of clandestine labs have discovered ways to bypass the precursor legislation resulting in an increase in lab discoveries by law enforcement.

Law enforcement operations and hospital emergency room reports strongly suggest that methamphetamine use is still a very

serious regional problem. This is a community concern since methamphetamine use increases the risk of child abuse and neglect and escalates the number of property crimes in the region.

■ Rising Crime Rates

Statistics indicate a rise in violent and property crime has continued in Springfield and Greene County during the last five years. Property crime, most often associated with the narcotics and drug trade, continues to be the highest volume crime category reported to the Springfield police. Aggressive steps are being taken by the criminal justice system and community agencies to address this problem.



■ Drug Arrests for Those Under 18 Years of Age

The 2004 *Community Focus* report introduced the concern of rising drug arrests for people under 18 years of age. Partnerships among agency and community groups and a large Reclaiming the Futures grant to the Greene County Juvenile System are addressing many of the issues young people face. The declining number of drug arrests for those under 18 years of age – from 98 in 2004 to 25 in 2008 – indicates that these efforts are providing effective solutions.

■ Inadequate Jail Space

A new Greene County Justice Center (jail facility) opened in 2001 but within a few years the facility was significantly overcrowded. A criminal justice coordinating committee and citizen justice and safety commission has looked at the problem and various solutions. One solution identified as appropriate for some offenders is drug court. In fact, the Greene County Drug Courts have been instrumental in assisting defendants in obtaining treatment and employment while staying out of jail. However, the jail continues to run at maximum capacity almost daily with many offenders released prematurely to free up space.

■ Alcohol-Related Accidents

In spite of continued work by many community agencies, the number of alcohol-related accidents continues to rise with 259 in 2004 and 352 in 2008. During this period, the Springfield Police

Department DWI Unit was disbanded (due to a shortage of officers) and reassigned to other police needs.

■ High Rate of Domestic Violence

Greene County's domestic violence rate has been nearly double the state average since the 2004 *Community Focus* report. Unfortunately, the number of domestic violence assaults continues to rise (2,189 in 2004 to 2,318 in 2008) as does the number of domestic violence calls to the Springfield Police Department (2,078 in 2004 to 3,335 in 2008). Drug activity, including methamphetamine use, contributes to the high rates, although other factors are most certainly at play as well.

EMERGING ISSUES

◆ Shortage of Human and Financial Resources

Severe recession and shortfalls in Springfield's contribution to the Police and Fire Pension Fund have lead to a significant reduction in the amount of resources available to support a wide range of safety-related resources and activities. If corrective actions are not taken to address these issues and support both law enforcement and the Greene County Justice Center, the infrastructure of the community risks damage and may take years to rebuild.

◆ Inadequate Individual Disaster Preparedness

The challenge exists of adequately preparing individuals, homes and businesses in the Springfield community to respond to and recover from the increasing likelihood of a local disaster. Since 1990, Greene County has received 11 presidential disaster declarations, the third highest in the state. The widening chasm between preparedness and exposure to natural and technological hazards must be bridged with awareness and education, supported by a cohesive effort from all community agencies.

◆ Increase in Property Crimes

The continued increase in property crimes threatens the community. While the Springfield Police Department has no empirical evidence of a positive correlation between property crimes and the drug trade, there is ample anecdotal evidence to suggest this may be the case in the Springfield-Greene County area.



Recreation, Sports and Leisure

"Parks and recreational opportunities connect you with what is important."

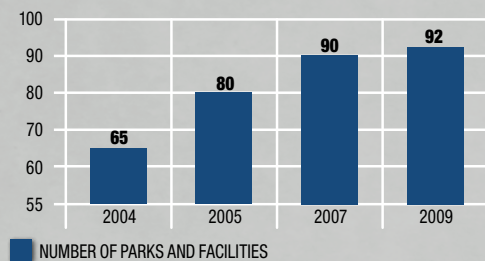
— Robert Horton

Executive Director, Urban Neighborhoods Alliance

BLUE RIBBONS (2004 – 2007)

- Partnerships
- Parks, Open Space and Greenways

SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY PARK BOARD
NUMBER OF PARKS/FACILITIES 2004-2009



- SPARC
- Ozarks Regional YMCA
- Boys & Girls Club
- Professional/Collegiate Teams
- Sports Museums
- Waterways
- Caves
- Discovery Center
- Dickerson Park Zoo
- Springfield-Greene County Library District

SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY LIBRARY ACTIVITY

Library Usage	Circulation	Attendance	Programs/Attendance
2004	2,990,000	1,583,213	2,390 / 68,350
2005	3,156,458	1,626,184	2,261 / 47,572
2006	3,232,679	1,632,927	1,979 / 47,043
2007	3,373,550	1,635,204	2,013 / 46,190
2008	3,626,792	1,678,868	4,640 / 52,473

CURRENT STATUS OF 2004 – 2007 RED FLAGS

Securing Green Space

The 2005 *Community Focus* report identified the race to secure green space and set aside parks for wildlife habitat and recreation. With continued urban sprawl, a comprehensive plan to secure natural areas and to preserve the environment for future parks, open space and greenways of Greene County is essential.



A strategic and evolving plan has been implemented to obtain new park land and property acquisitions through private donations, grants and a county-wide parks sales tax.

Success has resulted from the master plan which was implemented for the following park sites: Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park, Rex P. Kreider Park, Lake Springfield Park, Valley Water Mill, Dan Kinney Park and Lost Hill Park. However, identifying and acquiring available land and property throughout Greene County will be an ongoing test for the Springfield community.

The collaborative initiatives supported by the master plan also have contributed to executing the redevelopment of neighborhood parks such as Weaver, Silver Springs, Doling, and Lafayette. These parks are decades old and landlocked. By working with the neighborhoods, additional space needed to expand the boundaries of those parks has been obtained.



EMERGING ISSUES

◆ Economic Impact

Current economic conditions are forcing many agencies to operate their facilities and/or programs at or above capacity while the number of financial requests made to these agencies has increased. While there is a significant increase in use and request for financial aid, agencies are unfortunately faced with limited resources to match increased demand.



◆ Obesity

The alarming rate of obesity in children continues to rise and is evident in the fact that this generation is the first where life expectancy is less than the generation before. It is expected that this issue will continue to worsen without continued efforts to get more children out for exercise and play.



◆ Conservation

In conserving the environment and thus preserving quality of life in the Springfield-Greene County community, waterways are a continued focus. In collaboration with Springfield Public Works and the Greene County Commission, the Springfield-Greene County Park Board is working to establish and implement the best practices to upgrade park lakes, waterways and streams which impact the storm water areas throughout our region.



Transportation

“Quality transportation equates to business success. There is a direct, cause to effect relationship between business success and quality transportation. Successful communities invest in transportation.”

—Jim Anderson, President, Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce and Missouri Highways and Transportation Commissioner (2001-2009)

The City of Springfield and Greene County continue to place a priority on transportation. Traffic volumes and congestion persist despite the current state of the national economy. However, improvements in many different areas of transportation keep providing a more balanced multi-modal transportation network.

BLUE RIBBONS (2004 – 2007)

- Roadways
- Commute Time
- Road Safety
- Pedestrian-Friendly Changes
- Bicycles as Transportation
- Airport Improvements

SPRINGFIELD-BRANSON NATIONAL AIRPORT YEARLY TOTAL PASSENGERS

Year	Total Passengers
2000	710,961
2001	657,224
2002	652,283
2003	653,253
2004	721,958
2005	888,738
2006	864,999
2007	882,904
2008	779,995

Public Transportation

CITY UTILITIES BUS SYSTEM PASSENGER RIDERSHIP RATES

Year	CU Total Passengers
2001	1,515,611
2002	1,509,686
2003	1,539,264
2004	1,545,267
2005	1,659,279
2006	1,903,926
2007	2,047,496
2008	1,599,278*

* Note: In 2008, CU enacted a new price structure to discourage riding for recreation.

CURRENT STATUS OF 2004 – 2007 RED FLAGS

Paratransit Service

Paratransit service provides transportation to those who, due to disability, cannot access the fixed routes. Currently, City Utilities and OATS have programs that provide curb to curb and transportation assistance to the disabled both inside and outside Springfield city limits. In addition, not-for-profit agencies provide services for their clients. However, the 2007 *Community Focus* report identified the shortage of door-to-door transportation services for the disabled and elderly due to liability insurance and lack of funding. Therefore, City Utilities and other Missouri transit systems continue to seek increased funding from the state of Missouri.

During the current economic downturn many transit systems are being forced to reduce transportation services, which in turn makes it difficult for customers to meet their employment, education, medical, and shopping transportation needs. A sales tax could produce an additional local revenue source to create a regional transit system to serve Springfield and its surrounding communities.

Paratransit Coordination

Coordination among more than 20 not-for-profit transportation providers offering transportation services was identified in previous *Community Focus* reports. The Ozarks Transportation Organization (OTO) completed a Transportation Coordination Plan in August



2007 to enhance transportation access, minimize duplication of services, and facilitate the most appropriate cost-effective transportation possible with available resources. Since then, the Local Coordinating Board (LCB) for Transit, comprised of both human service agencies and human service transportation providers, has been created with the function of implementing the Transit Coordination Plan. Tasks have resulted in the award of \$530,115 in federal funding through applications, the development of a transportation provider brochure and discussion on shared insurance and training/driver standards. However, additional funding is needed to fund a 511 call system that would provide coordinated dispatching among the various providers.



Public School Bus System

The 2005 *Community Focus* report identified that the Springfield R-12 public school system no longer provided bus service to students living within 1½ miles of school. In 2007 the school system revised this policy so buses can transport students living within the restricted area if they are required to cross a barrier street. The needs of students walking to school have been addressed by serving each high school with public transit, providing greenway connections, building additional sidewalks, and providing Walking Route Maps for every Springfield elementary student indicating the safest route for pedestrians. The City of Springfield has constructed 41 miles of sidewalk within ½ mile of a public school since 1989 and has identified another 100 miles of needed school sidewalks. Additionally, Greene County continues to place a priority on school sidewalks and has constructed 4.3 miles of sidewalks near schools in the past two years with another 2.4 miles planned in the next year.

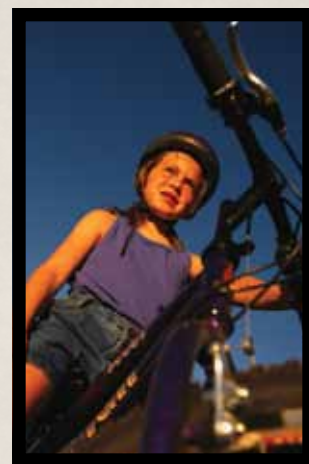
EMERGING ISSUES

Transportation Funding Shortfalls

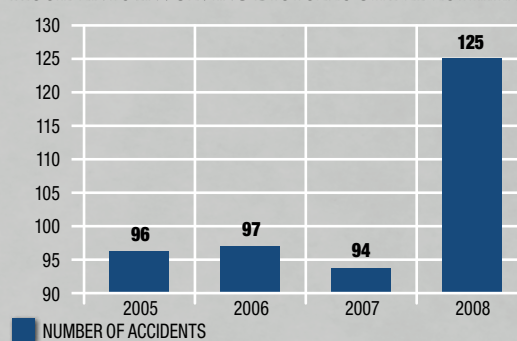
The national and state transportation funding crisis has led to an inability to sustain current ongoing investment levels affecting both the maintenance of existing roadways and ability to build additional roadway capacity. Flat 17¢ federal and state fuel taxes have not been indexed with inflation. For example, the State of Missouri has not increased the motor fuel sales tax since 1996. Within the City of Springfield, funding to maintain roadways is decreasing although there are over 1 billion dollars in identified transportation needs. In addition, Springfield funds roadways with ¼ cent and ⅓ cent sales taxes based on gross receipts within the city but sales tax receipts are decreasing.

Increasing Bicycle and Pedestrian Accidents

A need exists to raise driver awareness of the presence of pedestrians and bicycles on or crossing roads. While usage of alternative transportation modes is increasing, drivers need to be educated about the need to yield to pedestrian traffic and to share the road with bicyclists. Appropriate education may reduce the increasing number of accidents involving bicycles and pedestrians.



ACCIDENTS INVOLVING BICYCLES OR PEDESTRIANS



Lack of Transit Capacity

City Utilities Transit is experiencing ridership that exceeds capacity during peak hours. As a result, riders are often required to wait for the next bus. In addition, the bus fleet is aging and needs replacement. City Utilities is in need of funding for new larger buses that can accommodate a greater passenger load.

Need for a Regional Transit System

Currently, the public transit system operates only within the city limits of Springfield. As the region continues to grow outside of Springfield (see Business and Economic Conditions report), a need exists to provide transit service both to commuters and an aging population that is no longer able to drive safely.

Sustainable Transportation Network

The number of people who are unable to drive safely will increase as the average age of the area population increases. This coupled with the rising price of fuel is making the standard single occupancy vehicle more impractical and costly.



Therefore, additional sustainable transportation networks are needed to address these needs. Local efforts are underway to promote carpooling through regional commuter resources such as OzarksCommute.com. In addition, further development of the current City Utilities Transit system is being examined to increase service.

Supporters and Contributors

This project was completed with support from the following organizations, whose leaders pledge to use the information in the report to guide their future decision making.

Community Foundation of the Ozarks

Junior League of Springfield

Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce

Springfield-Greene County Library District

United Way of the Ozarks

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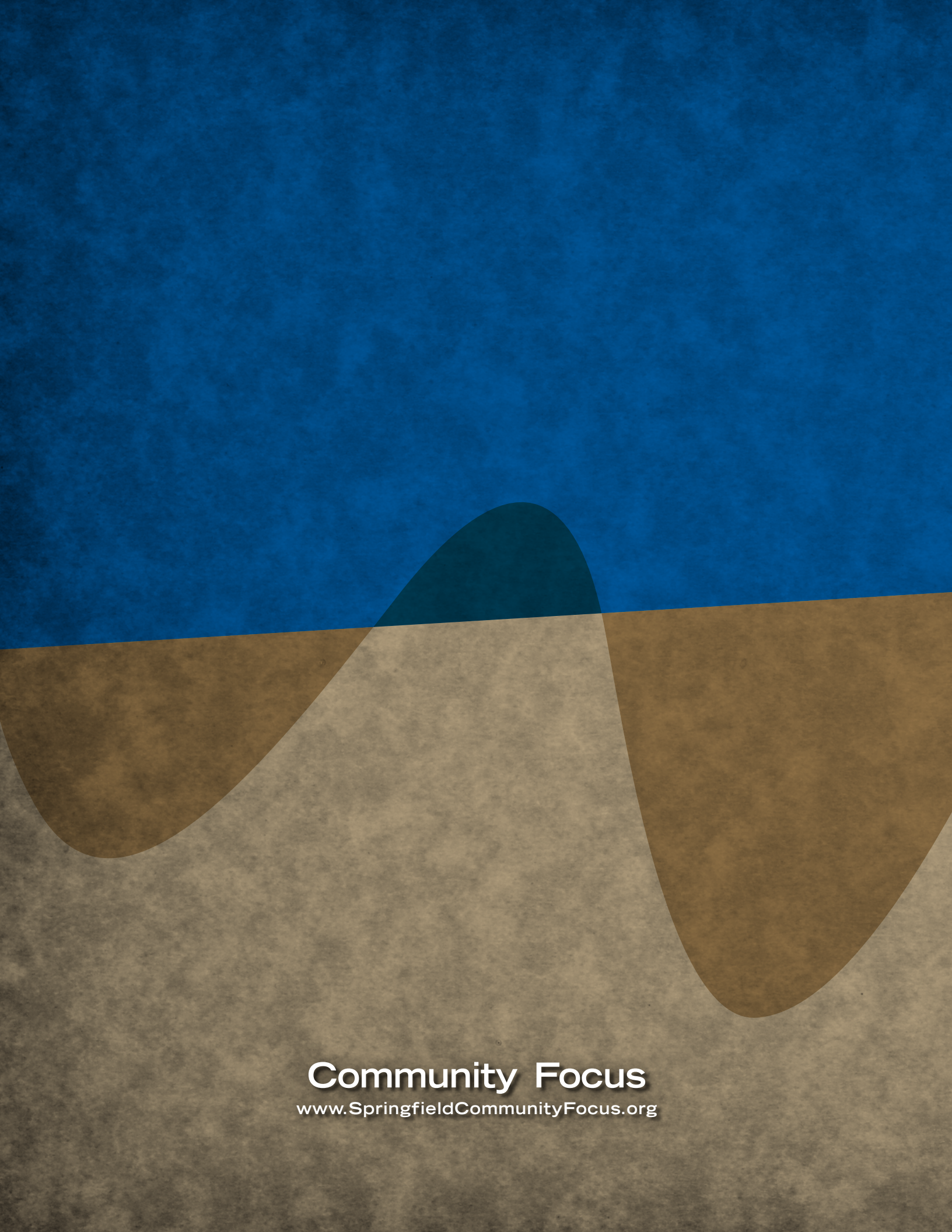
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