

COMMUNITY FOCUS 2013

A REPORT FOR SPRINGFIELD & GREENE COUNTY



AN INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNITY FOCUS 2013

Nine years ago, a Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce community leadership visit to Lexington, Ky., served as the catalyst for the first Springfield-Greene County Community Focus report. At that time, leaders from the 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 pledged to support this community report card, which identifies both the strengths (blue ribbons) and weaknesses (red flags) within various sectors of our community. The 2013 Community Focus report maintains this tradition and is now recognized as a primary resource for guiding initiatives and decision-making within our community.

We have several blue ribbons to be proud of in our community. This year's report identifies the positive impact that collaboration, community engagement, innovation, and leadership initiatives are having in Springfield and Greene County. Our citizens have found creative ways to confront red flags acknowledged in past Community Focus reports and have repeatedly come together for the common good. We continue to face challenges, however, such as poverty, insufficient funding, concern for our children and youth, and the lack of investment in prevention efforts. Although these red flags exist, they can be addressed if we proactively commit our time and resources to initiatives focused on these issues.

Once again, thank you to the five organizations committed to supporting the Community Focus report every two years. Additionally, we would like to express our gratitude to the many individuals who contributed hundreds of hours towards the development of this year's report. They work on the frontlines of their respective sectors and, thus, live and breathe these blue ribbons and red flags every day. Therefore, they know the importance of both celebrating our successes and confronting the difficulties facing our community. It is our hope this report continues to help Springfield-Greene County organizations allocate and focus their scarce resources toward the greatest community needs.



Jill Reynolds



Cristina Gilstrap

Sincerely,



Jill Reynolds, CFP
Chair, Community Focus Steering Committee



Cristina M. Gilstrap, Ph.D.
Facilitator, Community Focus Report

COMMUNITY FOCUS 2013

A REPORT FOR SPRINGFIELD & GREENE COUNTY

Community at a Glance	2
Blue Ribbon & Red Flag Themes	3
Arts & Culture	4
Business & Economic Conditions	6
Citizen Participation	8
Community Health	10
Early Childhood	12
Education	14
Housing	16
Natural Environment	18
Public Order & Safety	20
Recreation, Sports & Leisure	22
Transportation	24
Focus History	26
Steering Committee	29

Cristina Gilstrap, facilitator
Drury University

Jill Reynolds, chair
The Commerce Trust Company
Community Foundation of the Ozarks,
board member

Louise Knauer and Matt Lemmon
Staff support
Community Foundation of the Ozarks

Aaron J. Scott
Design and production

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
The 2013 Community Focus report, released September 2013, is a summary of information compiled by many individuals and sub-committees. Additional information, data, and resources are available on a website dedicated to this report.

PLEASE VISIT:
www.SpringfieldCommunityFocus.org

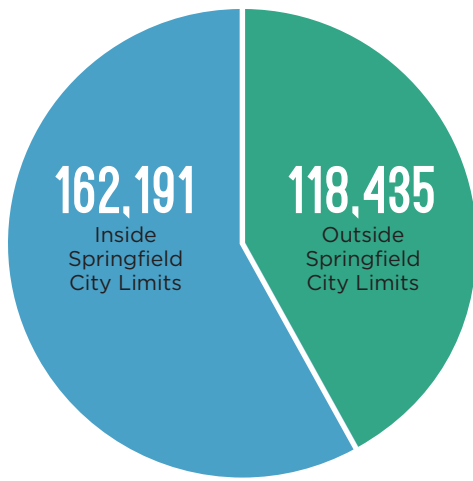
This project was completed with support from the following organizations, whose leaders pledge to use the information in the report to guide their future decision making.

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF THE OZARKS
JUNIOR LEAGUE OF SPRINGFIELD
SPRINGFIELD AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT
UNITED WAY OF THE OZARKS

Community at a Glance

GREENE COUNTY POPULATION

(2012 estimate)



TOTAL POPULATION:

280,626

Source: USDC, Bureau of the Census, 2012

MEDIAN AGE

Greene County

35.8

Source: USDC, Bureau of the Census, 2010

SEX

Greene County

48.7%

Male

51.3%

Female

Source: USDC, Bureau of the Census, 2010

UNIVERSITIES & COLLEGES, TOTAL ENROLLMENT

INSTITUTION	FALL 2012
Missouri State University	20,629
Ozarks Technical Community College	15,123
Drury University	5,228
Southwest Baptist University - Bolivar	3,864
Evangel University	2,079
Cox College	849
Mercy College of Nursing and Health Sciences	647
Central Bible College	473
Assemblies of God Theological Seminary	434
Vatterott College	261
Everest College - Springfield	230

Sources: Enrollment/Admissions Offices at Institutions, 2013

GREENE COUNTY EDUCATION LEVELS

89.3%

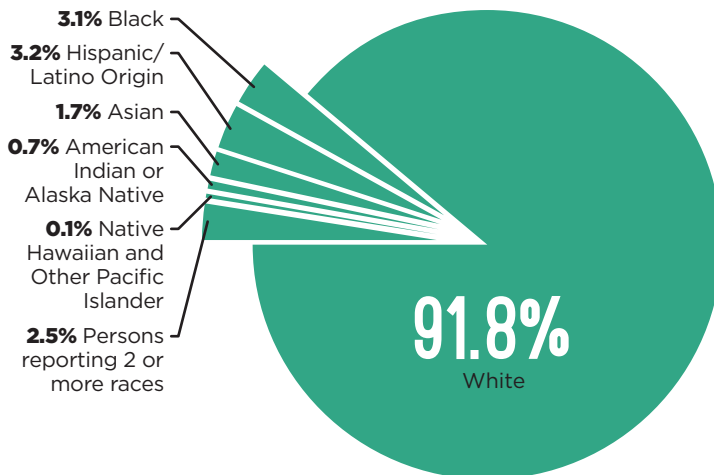
High school or higher

27.8%

Bachelor's degree or higher

Source: USDC, Bureau of the Census, 2012

GREENE COUNTY RACE



Source: USDC, Bureau of the Census, 2012

TOP 10 EMPLOYERS IN SPRINGFIELD MSA*, 2013

RANK	COMPANY/ ORGANIZATION	SPRINGFIELD MSA EMPLOYEES	TOTAL EMPLOYEES
1	Mercy Health System	8,797	45,100
2	CoxHealth	8,070	10,166
3	Walmart	3,336	2,200,000
4	Springfield Public Schools	3,137	3,137
5	Missouri State University	2,689	2,808
6	United States Government	2,500	21,843,000
7	Bass Pro Shops/Tracker Marine	2,342	18,187
8	State of Missouri	2,315	53,820
9	Citizens Memorial Healthcare	1,900	1,900
10	City of Springfield	1,579	1,579

Source: Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce, 2013

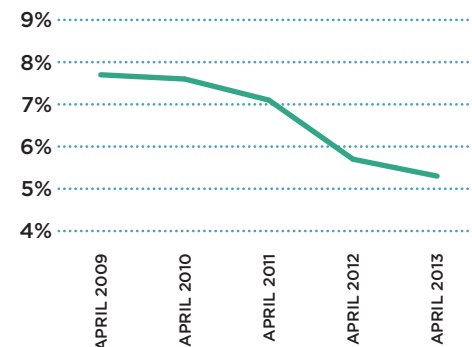
* Springfield MSA (metropolitan statistical area) includes Greene, Christian, Dallas, Polk, and Webster counties.

HOUSEHOLD STATISTICS

	PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD	HOUSEHOLD MEDIAN INCOME	MEDIAN VALUE OF OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING
Springfield City Limits	2.10	\$33,771	\$105,900
Greene County	2.29	\$41,622	\$128,100

Source: USDC, Bureau of the Census, 2012

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN GREENE COUNTY



5.3%

Unemployment, April 2013, compared to 6.6% in Missouri and 7.5% in the U.S.

Source: Federal Reserve Economic Data, 2013

Blue Ribbon & Red Flag Themes



BLUE RIBBON THEMES

Collaboration

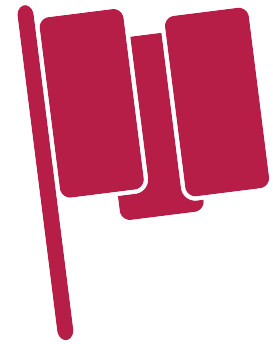
- Entities and facilities worked together to maximize shared resources and reduce duplication efforts
- New partnerships built and existing partnerships strengthened to improve the common good
- Individuals and groups organized to address emerging challenges together
- Spirit of collaboration used to address long-range issues strategically

Community Engagement

- Efforts made to try to diversify community opinions
- Local willingness to address issues through increased public funding
- Community Focus report continued to track community issues
- Cross-sector support provided to address issues

Innovation and Leadership

- Higher education resources committed to improve public issues through innovative endeavors
- Resources committed to leadership development
- Community leaders willing to initiate new programs to improve quality of life
- State and national recognition for successful programs



RED FLAG THEMES

Poverty

- All facets of community impacted by poverty
- Growing concern of poverty levels in Springfield and Greene County
- Continued concern for acute impact of poverty on children
- Less citizen participation as poverty levels increased
- Effect of poverty on economic development

Insufficient Funding

- Uncertainty due to policy, regulation, and aging infrastructure
- Needs remained high while funding did not rebound accordingly
- Concern for potential threshold in tax ballot initiatives
- Resources required to combat substance abuse and related problems competed for funding demands
- Collaboration efforts impacted by federal, state, and local budget reductions

Concerns for Children and Youth

- Despite attention in the past, child abuse and neglect rates continued to increase
- Continued concerns for childhood obesity
- Notable increase in youth living in poverty and homelessness
- Greene County had unacceptably high rate of child abuse and neglect in the state
- Significant impact of child abuse and neglect on personal and community well-being such as education, unemployment, homelessness, and health

Lack of Investment in Prevention Efforts

- Despite ominous early trends in community health, early childhood, education, natural environment, and public order and safety, funding for prevention efforts remained scarce

As discussed in the first Community Focus report, the goal of this project is to assess the overall conditions that deserve recognition and attention in Springfield and Greene County. During the construction of this report, several areas repeatedly emerged representing consistent strengths (blue ribbons) as well as challenges (red flags) facing our community.

As you read this year's report, you will notice recurring themes within the 11 sections. Overall, the following topics emerged as the blue ribbon and red flag themes in the 2013 Community Focus report.

Arts & Culture

The concern and focus on creating jobs, the economy, and attracting and retaining a quality workforce has put the cultural scene to the test. ***Our arts and cultural organizations have made a significant impact during the Great Recession*** by employing people locally, purchasing goods and services within the community, and marketing and promoting diverse, quality programming to the region. These services have ***created awareness for arts and culture in addressing community issues*** in sectors such as education, economic development, quality of life, civic engagement, and poverty. The sustained programming of the downtown arts district, including First Friday Art Walk, live theater shows and concerts, and community festivals, has leveraged additional event-related spending by audiences that pumps revenue into the local and state economy. In the past two years, the ***cultural scene has worked hard to keep locals and their discretionary spending close to home*** while also attracting visitors who help local businesses thrive.

BLUE RIBBONS

Continued Collaboration

Collaboration has been a consistent blue ribbon for Springfield-Greene County arts and cultural organizations since the 2005 Community Focus report. The recession, however, has allowed more non-traditional arts and cultural collaborations to emerge.

- Funding opportunities have improved through the Community Foundation of the Ozarks' new crowdfunding site, Cause Momentum. For example, the Moxie Cinema raised nearly \$20,000 towards a \$120,000 goal to convert to digital projection.
- The Springfield Arts Collaborative Endowment Campaign raised more than \$2 million towards arts endowments for organizations in The Creamery Arts Center.
- The Springfield Regional Arts Council (SRAC) combined its annual Ozzie Awards, presented to individuals, corporations, and organizations that have made significant contributions to the arts in the area, with the annual Flights of Fancy event at the Springfield-Branson National Airport.

Non-traditional theater venues have

emerged, including:

- Theater productions at Canvas Gallery downtown;
- The Skinny Improv's move to a larger shared space on South Avenue;
- The Creamery Arts Center for the Springfield Regional Opera (SRO) Lyric Theatre's monthly Operazzi series; and
- Theatre productions by Springfield Little Theatre, Vandivort Theatre, and Drury University at the Springfield Art Museum.

Audience Development Efforts

Recent increases in artists, new organizations, and initiatives interested in fostering local creative culture and offering diverse cultural programming have helped address the Audience Development red flag in the 2011 Community Focus report. With the downtown Square renovation complete and a new ordinance led by young professionals allowing alcohol at certain events on the Square, the number of street festivals and events has increased. New and enhanced festivals from 2011–2012 include:

- ArtsFiesta**
- Craft Beer Bash*
- Birthplace of Route 66 Car Show**
- James River Basin Partnership's Dam Jam**

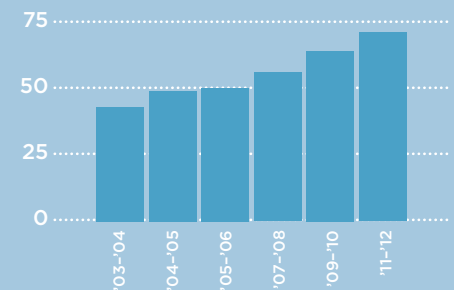
Springfield Little Theatre's YES Troupe at the 4th Annual Flights of Fancy featuring the 2012 Ozzie Awards at Springfield-Branson National Airport. PHOTO

CREDIT: FAMILY TREE STUDIOS

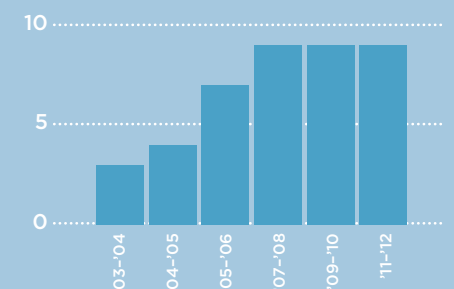


ARTS & CULTURE IN SPRINGFIELD, 2003–2012

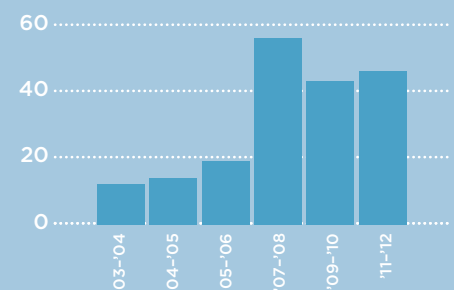
Arts and Cultural Organizations



Museums



Local Arts Festivals and Events



Source: Springfield Regional Arts Council Arts/Culture Survey

- Moxie Cinema and Mother's Brewery Fourth Friday Flick*
- Oktoberfest**
- Pridefest**
- Springfield Jazz Festival**
- TAG Magazine's Do Good Festival*

*Designates a new event/festival; **Designates an event/festival that has relocated to the Square

Arts and Culture Snapshot

Boasting hundreds of performances in both 2011 and 2012, The Springfield Theatre Alliance announced a 4.2 percent increase in audiences with 207,933 patrons attending live theater in 2012. In addition, area cultural organizations reported 293 free community events, performances, lectures, and workshops offered throughout 2012.

There is renewed cultural energy also on the Square with the History Museum now relocated to the northeast corner. The Museum has extensive plans for a multi-million dollar renovation in hopes of becoming one of the area's top cultural attractions.

Creative Outlet for Community Awareness

Many organizations are using cultural programming to address community issues. The Discovery Center's RACE exhibit encouraged civil discussion about diversity issues in the area. Springfield Little Theatre's regional premiere of "Rent" and the emerging Men's Chorus of the Ozarks have taken steps to address important issues in the LGBT community. Springfield Sister Cities Association continues to bring artists and performers from our region's sister cities in Isesaki, Japan, and Tlaquepaque, Mexico.

Despite continued efforts to develop audiences, there is still work to be done to overcome a perceived lack of inclusiveness and create more participatory, meaningful experiences for diverse audiences.

Interest and Focus on Public Art

There has been a renewed interest in creating consistent policies for public art in the Springfield area as found in Springfield's Cultural Plan and the Springfield Regional Arts Council's strategic plan. Various community leadership visits to other cities demonstrate the power of public art on community pride, land value, and creating an authentic sense of place.

Random acts of public art have popped up on Springfield streets including the James River Basin's artwork competition for city water drains as well as Drury University's Art of Space "The Nest" parade in downtown Springfield in fall 2011. The ideaXfactory, a city-owned building leased by the Springfield Regional Arts Council for temporary art installations, has gained national attention as a \$200,000 award recipient in the esteemed Art-Place grant competition.

Currently, a "percent for public art" is in the planning stages that would dedicate at least 1 percent of the total budget for all above-ground Springfield construction projects towards commissioning artwork. This initiative would make Springfield one of more than 300 cities in the United States that have a municipal percent for public art policy. In addition, a sculpture walk forum was held to get community feedback on where citizens would like to see public art in Springfield.

RED FLAGS

Sustainable Funding for Organizations and Artists

A consistent red flag since the 2004 Community Focus report, sustainable funding continues to be a barrier in overcoming a "good enough" attitude for our arts and culture scene. In a 2011 assessment by the Springfield Arts Collaborative, private funding from corporations and individuals showed there is high capacity, but low propensity, to give to the arts. Both public and private funding support need to increase in order for



The ideaXfactory, Harmonic Wall by Russ RuBert; City Manager Greg Burris at guitar.

Springfield's urban setting to allow for more progressive, yet accessible, programming. For organizations and artists to think bigger and patrons to give more, a sustainable source of operating and capital funding must be secured; typically this is a local tax mechanism in support of arts and culture in conjunction with a healthy endowment for arts organizations.

Based on a study by the National Endowment for the Arts, 25 percent of a cultural organization's revenue should come from interest earnings off its endowment to allow for sustainability without the risk of stagnation. Currently, endowment earnings comprise only 2 percent of Springfield arts organizations' annual operating revenue, significantly lower than the ideal.

In 2012, state public funding for the arts through the Missouri Arts Council reached a critical low with the Missouri Cultural Trust near depletion. With no new funding in 2010 and 2011, and only \$600,000 in 2012 from the state legislature, the Missouri Arts Council has cut its grant awards to arts organizations in our region by 50-75 percent over the past three years. For many organizations, these grant funds cover crucial operating and programming costs that are then leveraged by local private funds.

Locally, Springfield City Council approved reallocating 60 percent of the returned Hotel/Motel tax funds from the Wonders of Wildlife Museum towards cultural capital projects. While a good step forward in creating or enhancing facilities, grants from public funds primarily assist with programmatic costs. Like Columbia and St. Louis, Springfield needs to support the operating costs of running arts facilities and programming. A future public funding source for supporting arts and cultural organizations is included in the Field Guide 2030 community strategic plan.

In addition to organizational sustainability, funding for emerging and established professional artists also is a concern. There have been numerous requests for funding individual artist residencies in schools and neighborhoods, but there is a lack of support because individual artists are not tax-deductible entities. There is a national trend emerging to support individual artists' work in communities. For example, based on the results of Artists Count, a recent survey of regional artists and their working and living environments, the St. Louis Regional Arts Commission will begin funding individual artists in 2013.

Although university/college teaching opportunities allow professional artists to support themselves while pursuing their art form, more efforts need to be made to find paying jobs for creatives such as artists, writers, and musicians. This need is addressed in the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce's strategic action plan.

Organizational Capacity Building

Quality and consistent leadership among area arts and cultural organizations is still a concern since identified as a red flag in 2011. It is difficult for small or developing arts organizations to find quality members for their Boards of Directors. Based on the Springfield Regional Arts Council's arts/culture survey for cultural organizations, staff turnover and volunteer burnout

"In the past, companies considering moving jobs to Springfield always asked about schools first and then the Parks system. Now they include questions about the arts and cultural activities within the community. Artsfest, ArtsFiesta, Oktoberfest, and the Japanese Fall Festival are drawing more and more people into cultural activities. In addition, the Springfield Art Museum, as well as our First Friday Art Walk, are leading the way in getting people more involved in the art world. The arts and culture segment is truly driving economic activity in Springfield."

—Robert Stephens, Mayor,
City of Springfield

also have increased. In addition, there has been inconsistent tracking of organizations' institutional histories due to a lack of resources or fluctuating leadership. Establishing and sustaining accurate databases will help with donor and board retention as well as cultivation.

New efforts are underway to begin addressing this red flag, including SRAC's launch of the free "Speaking of the Arts" professional development series. The Community Foundation of the Ozarks also added a new grant category strictly to support arts organizations with budgets under \$100,000.

Business & Economic Conditions

A strong and growing economy is *critical to so many areas of community life*. Healthy businesses put people to work, and these workers can buy houses, cars, and provide themselves and their families with a high quality of life. *All levels of government depend on business to generate tax revenue to fund vital public services* like transportation systems, infrastructure, schools, and other community programs. Often, the business community is a leader on important local issues, such as strong governance, diversity, sustainability, poverty, and civic engagement. *When businesses are strong, the community is strong.*

The Great Recession is over, and Springfield's economy has recovered well. By 2011, our Metro GDP exceeded \$15 billion, up more than a billion dollars from 2009. Yet, today's economy is not the same as it was just a few years ago. Businesses have become more innovative, nimble, and efficient with many becoming more profitable and productive. Springfield's economy and economic development efforts, now more than ever, are dependent on a highly skilled workforce and the ability to keep and attract talented professionals. In other ways, the post-recession economy presents new challenges for businesses, and while many are state and national issues, there are items we can address locally.

BLUE RIBBONS

Growth in a New Economy

Springfield's economy is growing more quickly and broadly than in many other locations. During first quarter 2013, the Springfield MSA's unemployment rate was below 6 percent, compared to 6.6 percent for Missouri and 7.4 percent nationally. Our workforce has grown more than 6 percent over the last decade, and the size of our labor pool is now 210,496. Manufacturing grew 11.4 percent over the last two years, and Springfield-Greene County received national recognition for post-recession job creation and economic growth. Many businesses have achieved high levels of profitability and productivity with most growth due to specific strategies undertaken and lessons learned during the recession.

Healthcare Industry Impact

Springfield's healthcare institutions are major pillars of our local economy and continue to grow rapidly. Collectively, healthcare is the region's largest employment sector. For example, Mercy Health Systems and CoxHealth are the region's two largest individual employers, with nearly 20,000 employees between them. Within the last two years, more than \$300 million has

been invested to build the new orthopedic, rehabilitation, and children's hospitals at Mercy Health Systems, and a new patient tower at CoxHealth, among other expansions. Connections between healthcare and higher education, such as the new University of Missouri-Kansas City pharmaceutical doctorate program at Missouri State University, the proposed University of Missouri medical school clinical Springfield campus, and existing healthcare programs at Ozarks Technical Community College, ensure a quality healthcare

"The economy is different now than it was before the recession. Businesses have to do things differently and think about things differently. One thing hasn't changed, though. Springfield's economy is strong, and our community's assets will allow for growth into the future."

—Tom Hilmes, General Manager, CNH Reman and Vice Chairman for Economic Development, Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors

workforce (see Community Health section). Other businesses benefit from a thriving healthcare sector because it attracts talented professionals and new customers to Springfield.

Higher Education and Workforce Development

As noted in the 2005, 2007, and 2011 Community Focus reports, the region's 16 higher education institutions are large contributors to our economic vitality. With on-campus facility expansions, nearby private sector student housing developments, thousands of employees, and connections to downtown, higher education institutions in Springfield stimulate job creation and business investment. Nearly 50,000 university and college students are gaining new skills in Springfield, and businesses tap into this large, and needed, labor pool. Ozarks Technical Community

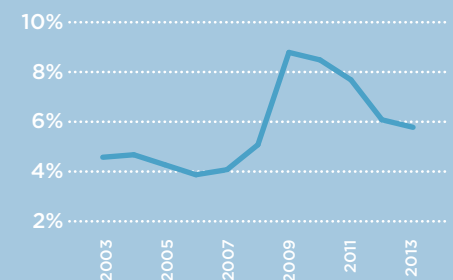
WORKFORCE GROWTH & UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE SPRINGFIELD AREA

Workforce Growth Comparison

	2-YEAR	5-YEAR
United States	▲3.0%	▼3.3%
Missouri	▲1.8%	▼2.3%
Atlanta	▲3.9%	▼0.1%
Chattanooga	▲2.6%	▼4.3%
Dallas-Fort Worth	▼0.7%	▼5.3%
Kansas City	▲1.1%	0.0%
Lexington	▲1.8%	▼1.4%
Little Rock	▲0.4%	▼4.7%
Peoria	▲0.9%	▼4.4%
Phoenix	▲4.5%	▼4.2%
Springfield	▲0.7%	▼3.8%
St. Louis	▲4.7%	▲5.9%
Wichita	▲2.4%	▼2.4%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, 2007, 2010, 2012

Unemployment in the Springfield MSA*



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, 2002–January 2013

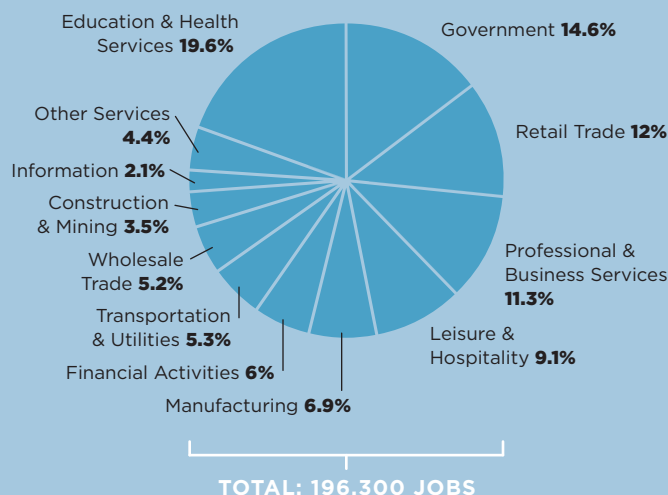
* Springfield MSA (metropolitan statistical area) includes Greene, Christian, Dallas, Polk and Webster counties.

College, the fastest-growing community college in Missouri and the fifth fastest growing in the U.S., works with local businesses to provide customized training options. Often, businesses can use grants and tax benefit programs to offset training costs.

Entrepreneurial Infrastructure

Springfield has made significant progress in developing infrastructure that allows entrepreneurs to start and grow new businesses. Missouri State University's eFactory, in the Robert W. Plaster Center for Free Enterprise and Business Development, is a new business incubator that provides physical space for start-up and early-stage companies, business counseling services, peer networking opportunities, and other benefits. Drury University's Center for Nonprofit Communication supports the entrepreneurial endeavors of nonprofits by providing resources and training to charitable organizations, especially those that address red flag issues identified in the Community Focus report. These new community amenities enhance other entrepreneur development resources, such as the Springfield Angel Network, the Entrepreneur Exchange, and Drury

JOB SECTOR DIVERSITY SPRINGFIELD MSA*



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics

* Springfield MSA (metropolitan statistical area) includes Greene, Christian, Dallas, Polk and Webster counties.

University's Edward Jones Center for Entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs and new startups benefit from the new services specifically for them, which creates a significant economic opportunity.

Low Cost of Living

A blue ribbon since the 2004 Community Focus report, Springfield's low cost of living means a person's income goes further here than in other cities, although our advantage has decreased slightly in recent years. Overall, Springfield's cost of living is 10.1 percent below the national average. The difference is especially significant in housing and utilities, at 21.9 percent and 7.4 percent below national averages respectively. Springfield's low cost of living encourages continued economic growth.

Economic Diversity

Economic diversity has been a source of stability and strength in the regional economy since the 2005 Community Focus report. Even with the major economic impact of higher education and healthcare, which are relatively recession-proof industries, no one economic sector truly dominates business activities. In fact, 95 percent of the businesses within the Springfield MSA have fewer than 50 employees. This broad base of small businesses in a variety of industries helps insulate Springfield from the extreme fluctuations of the broader economy. Manufacturing, logistics, corporate and back office, information technology, professional services, retail, and other types of businesses flourish in Springfield.

RED FLAGS

Talent Pipeline

Historically, the Springfield region has been fortunate to have a sufficient workforce for new

and existing companies. Today, national labor pools are shrinking due to the retirement of more than 20 percent of the U.S. population within 10 years, and competition for labor will only increase. Additionally, needed skill sets are changing as the global economy incorporates new technology. Management, information technology, engineering, and some healthcare positions can be difficult to fill with the local workforce, and many employers report job seekers lack work readiness, professionalism, work ethic, and communication skills. As

develop a common-sense approach to protect both the environment and the economy. Without a solution, however, the economy will likely suffer.

Fragile Support for Economic Development

As noted in the 2009 and 2011 Community Focus reports, concern continues about weak public support for economic development. Recently, the most controversial local issues have centered on economic development, redevelopment of interior sites, and Planning & Zoning. In early 2013, Springfield received a petition to overturn by referendum a recent City Council zoning decision, adding damaging uncertainty to the development process. As sprawl strains public infrastructure and resources and with fewer suburban sites available for new development, more redevelopment within city limits is likely to increase such disagreements. Springfield's redevelopment goals need greater clarity and adherence to remove uncertainty for both neighborhoods and businesses. Additionally, the need continues to educate elected officials and citizens on how supporting economic development brings long-term regional economic prosperity. Establishing and maintaining a supportive climate is imperative for business investment and job creation.

Income & Wages

Identified as a red flag since the 2005 Community Focus report, average wages remain lower in Springfield than in many peer communities. Even adjusting for a low cost of living, income and wages still lag. Lower wages do reduce overall business costs, but they also exacerbate other economic problems faced by Springfield's employers, such as attracting talented professionals and overcoming poverty. Despite some increases in average wages over the last decade, Springfield still falls behind its peers and this wage gap is growing.

Impact of Poverty

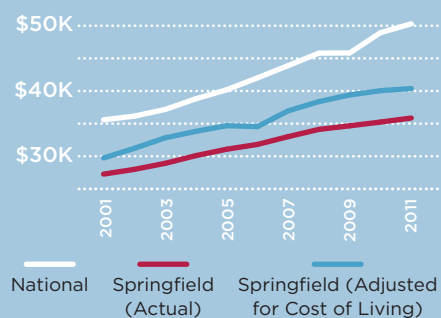
Since first recognized in the 2005 Community Focus report, poverty in Springfield continues to be a significant social and economic problem. Even with the decline in unemployment, more than half of the children in the Springfield R-12 School District receive free or reduced lunches (See Education section). The percentage of our citizens in poverty outpaces both Missouri and national trends. Poverty brings immense social problems that our community must address, including crime, domestic violence, substance abuse, and reduced educational attainment. It also intensifies and creates significant economic problems. For example, increasing crime rates affect our ability to attract professionals from outside our community, and reduced educational attainment has obvious negative consequences for workforce quality and productivity. Poverty diverts public sector resources away from areas that can help grow the local economy, such as investments in transportation, infrastructure, and schools.

Springfield's unemployment rate returns to pre-recession levels and the local workforce reaches full employment, businesses must attract outside talent. The Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce and the Springfield Business Development Corporation are launching a talent attraction marketing initiative in 2013 to help recruit professionals with a variety of critical skills to area employers, but workforce availability is likely to remain a challenge for the Springfield community and the nation.

Unfunded Federal Mandates

Despite ongoing investment in and recognition of our community's stewardship of the natural environment, unfunded federal environmental mandates create significant economic barriers for Springfield. Over the next 15 years, the City of Springfield, Greene County, and City Utilities are collectively facing nearly \$1 billion in new unfunded mandates, the costs of which will be borne by residents and businesses. As mandate compliance costs rise, it will be increasingly expensive for businesses to grow. Efforts are now underway to

COMPARISON OF AVERAGE WAGES, 2001-2011



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

Citizen Participation

In studying citizen participation, this report will consider both the charitable involvement as well as the civic engagement of the citizens of our community. Although many components play into overall engagement, **volunteerism, charitable giving, and voter turnout are incredibly important to the structure and effectiveness of a community.** While some issues continue to be red flags in our community, **many blue ribbons of progress have emerged** as attempts to involve all citizens and create a better Springfield.

BLUE RIBBONS

Youth Engagement

Many organizations in the Springfield region work to engage younger individuals in the civic process. For example, the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce's in.network and The Network engage college interns and young professionals in Springfield. The City of Springfield also recently established a Student Advisory Council in order to garner the engagement and opinions of young, emerging leaders in high school and college. Additionally, programs like Leadership Springfield, currently in its 29th cohort, work to create mentorship and leadership programs to encourage expanded involvement.

Efforts to encourage civic involvement by young citizens have increased in the Springfield area. Community programs connect young people with policymakers and promote volunteer activities. The Community Foundation of the Ozarks' (CFO) Youth Empowerment Project and numerous service-learning projects in the Springfield Public Schools continue to involve both students and parents in civic and school engagement and work toward decreasing a sense of alienation

and increasing community trust. Additionally, our universities continue to work to encourage and facilitate volunteerism.

Community Opportunities

Opportunities for volunteerism have been blue ribbons multiple times since the 2004 Community Focus report and continue to be strong assets to our community.

The 2012 Social Capital and Civic Participation in the Ozarks study notes civic participation in our region has increased over time. Local residents feel a greater sense of social capital when compared to the nation. Civic engagement is strongly tied to education, income, and age; individuals with higher education and income levels, as well as more advanced age, feel the most engaged. This social capital study also found individuals who believe community leaders care, and who share a higher level of trust, are individuals with a greater degree of civic engagement. More trusting individuals also were more likely to have voted in a recent election, attended a club or public meeting, served on a committee, or taken action for reform.

While this data is not surprising, it provides Springfield with the challenge of increasing opportunities for voluntary association in an effort to increase community trust and involvement by those who currently do not engage in civic efforts. This goal is especially difficult because Springfield struggles with its ability to bridge social capital. Specifically, while many individuals in the community feel trust for their neighbors or own networks like church communities (bonding capital), they often do not feel trustful nor do they participate in more heterogeneous social



A Springfield Public Schools reading buddy volunteer reads with a student.

groups (bridging capital). Therefore, a struggle exists with the involvement of new and emerging leaders.

Community Grantmaking Increasing

As noted in previous Community Focus reports, the giving nature of our community remains strong. Giving USA recently conducted a study on the charitable giving landscape in America, which compared charitable giving geographically. Missouri, when comparing charitable giving as percentage of income statewide, ranked 24th out of 50 states with an average of 4.4 percent of family income spent charitably. Springfield, however, has a higher-than-average percentage of charitable giving, making it among the most charitable communities in the state of Missouri.

Charitable involvement also continues to increase each year. The CFO received an organizational record number of gifts and made a record number of grants in 2012 with \$40 million and \$20.2 million, respectively. Additionally, the most recent Columbus Survey places the CFO as the 9th busiest community foundation in the nation with more than 14,000 charitable gifts in the 2012 fiscal year. This is a strong reflection of our citizens' prioritization of giving despite low wealth overall.

"Philanthropic participation allows our sorority to give back to a community that has given so much to us. We learn about others and ourselves through our volunteer and fundraising efforts. It prepares us, in many ways, for life after graduation and gives us a realistic view of issues that we will face in other communities that we will call home."

—Michala Boehm, Vice President of Philanthropic Services, Sigma Kappa – Delta Upsilon Chapter, Missouri State University



Springfield Youth Empowerment Project students grant funds to the Rare Breed Youth Services.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION BY VOLUNTEER HOURS

ORGANIZATION	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012
Mercy Health	138,477	147,695	141,580	170,000	174,000
CoxHealth	129,029	141,250	116,345	135,893	152,716
United Way of the Ozarks	28,840	35,395	18,024	19,890	24,017
Community Partnership of the Ozarks	N/A	26,590	40,428	37,818	29,056
Junior League of Springfield	11,000	19,000	29,164	30,000	36,464
Springfield-Greene County Library	4,632	5,115	13,000	17,390	14,670
Friends of the Springfield-Greene County Library	N/A	4,727	8,222	12,451	13,572
Springfield Conservation Nature Center	15,441	16,385	15,814	13,783	13,269
League of Women Voters of Southwest Missouri	1,500	1,645	2,534	2,500	2,500
Retired Senior Volunteer Program of the Council of Churches	262,820	247,740	190,596	181,833	166,815
Springfield Public Schools (students and community)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	34,174
Springfield Public Schools (reading and lunch buddies)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	6,626
Drury University	N/A	1,725	7,563	9,000	20,886
Evangel University	N/A	10,780	9,663	7,905	N/A
Missouri State University	N/A	114,468	171,018	106,321	420,325*

Source: Data provided by listed organizations

*Includes the addition of fraternity and sorority volunteerism



Volunteers participate in the 2012 United Way Day of Caring.

Similarly, increased community support was evident at the United Way of the Ozarks (UWO) in 2012. At its annual campaign celebration, the UWO reported raising \$3,883,928 in 2012, representing a 14.7 percent increase over 2011. This exemplifies our community's desire to step up and begin to make positive changes when made aware of organizational needs.

RED FLAGS

Voter Turnout Remains Issue Based

A consistent red flag in previous Community Focus reports, voter turnout in Springfield continues to follow the national trend. Voters in the Springfield-Greene County area appear

to be engaged in voting on a national or state-wide level, but local issues lack significant citizen voter participation. During the November 2012 presidential general election, voter turnout was the highest since the previous presidential election while local elections received little citizen involvement.

When comparing costs of holding an election with voter turnout numbers, the cost per voter can be staggering. For example, the April 2012 municipal election, which involved Springfield and public school issues, cost nearly \$9 per voter. The most costly election, based on per voter costs, was the June 2012 smoking ban re-vote, which cost \$54.95 per voter to operate. These elections also exemplify how voter turnout is not reflective of community discussion, given how extensively the smoking ban re-vote was discussed in various media.

Citizen Involvement Remains Low

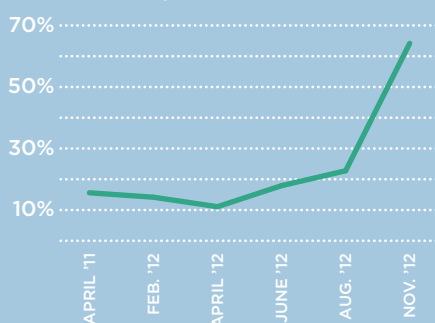
Though strong community opportunities exist, many times involvement remains low. The Neighbor for Neighbor program, conducted in the Robberson neighborhood, is an example of the tension between available opportunities and low participation. As discussed in the 2011 Community Focus report, Neighbor for Neighbor was established to assist the Robberson community in identifying and overcoming economic hardships. Although participation was initially strong, it dwindled significantly as the program continued. The project is in its second iteration and is working to increase involvement. As an ongoing

look into the value of civic engagement's impact on participant civic trust, the program continues to try to develop bridging capital in the community.

Education also can play a significant role in overcoming this red flag. The City of Springfield recently managed a Sanitary Sewer Overflow Control Program in its central and west neighborhoods, an area of the community known for struggling to bridge social capital and low citizen involvement. The program had a 95 percent participation rate, however, in voluntary plumbing evaluations (1,522 of 1,656 individuals, respectively). This success was due in part to the City's admirable efforts to educate and assist community members with understanding the value and importance of the program before beginning the project. This project affirms the important role education and community awareness will play in future attempts to create quality bridging social capital.

Additionally, our community must continue to try to create greater diversity in leadership. In the Social Capital Survey, Springfield adults under the age of 50 were asked about the importance of diversity in Springfield. Many noted living in a diverse community is very important to them. Diversity in community leadership is low, however, and could be a significant deterrent to adding new faces and ideas that could positively impact our community. Efforts to increase diversity could significantly improve citizen involvement as well as increase the number of new faces serving our community on public boards, councils, and committees.

GREENE COUNTY VOTER TURNOUT, 2011-2012



Source: Greene County Clerk

Community Health

To make Springfield healthier, *our community's individuals must be adaptable.*

One simple idea will not maintain our successes and solve our problems. A *compilation of ideas affecting multiple groups of people*, through various daily activities, will collectively improve Springfield's health. While initiatives and partnerships have directed our attention to provider, wellness, and infrastructure issues, *health and prevention concerns continue to impact Springfield-Greene County.*

BLUE RIBBONS

Addressing Provider Shortage

The shortage of healthcare providers has been a growing issue for many years. New retirees will seek more healthcare as they age and a previously uninsured population will gain coverage under the Affordable Care Act. As the number in need of care continues to grow, the number providing it struggles to keep pace. While this is a great challenge, Springfield is doing many things to act on this issue.

Mercy and CoxHealth are working with the University of Missouri School of Medicine to expand its campus to Springfield to increase enrollment and grow education opportunities (see Business and Economic Conditions section). Already the number one provider of physicians for Missouri, MU will grow its class size from 96 to 128 medical students annually, with 32 students from each class completing their last two years of medical education at a Springfield healthcare organization. Ozarks Technical Community College is using funding from MOHealthWins to train 500 unemployed workers for healthcare careers. Missouri State University has partnered with the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Pharmacy to expand its program to Springfield as early as fall 2014.

Through growing educational programs and partnerships with institutions offering programs not available in the community, Springfield is committed to ensuring that its citizens have the proper level of care available to them.

Health and Wellness

Springfield has been addressing chronic diseases by creating a vibrant community promoting



The University of Missouri-Columbia and CoxHealth and Mercy Health System are working together to improve health, education and the economy in Springfield by increasing the number of physicians.

healthier lifestyles. Many high-profile employers are developing employee wellness programs to improve employees' lifestyles while reducing the burden of rising healthcare premiums. For example, Paul Mueller Company and City Utilities have onsite clinics that provide health services to employees while at work. These organizations have found that a healthier environment for employees can directly affect their healthcare costs.

Healthy Living Alliance (HLA), a local public health partnership, continues to improve the health of the community while strengthening the local economy through four focus areas: increasing physical activity; improving nutritional

"The gratefulness of the patients speaks volumes about what the effort is able to accomplish to help them with their dental pain; the visible transformation of many of the volunteers speaks to just how moved we all can be when we make the effort to help our neighbors in need."

—Dr. Darren Mahaffey, DDS

access; developing built environments encouraging physical activity; and reducing tobacco use. In 2012, HLA received a \$1.3 million grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) geared towards improving many of these focus areas.

Springfield's geography provides natural opportunities for public fitness events such as the Bass Pro Fitness Festival, races, hiking/biking, and a strong network of greenways and trails (see Recreation, Sports and Leisure section). The Springfield Urban Agriculture Coalition has worked on increasing access to healthier foods through the Dig in R-12 (DIRT) Project. DIRT, a school-based program, creates gardens on school grounds to emphasize the importance of eating healthy foods using environmentally sustainable practices. Additionally, farmers markets continue to sprout throughout the community, improving healthy choices while benefitting the local economy.

Expanding healthy programs requires community-wide efforts in the classroom, on the trail, at the market, and at other outreach points.



Runners in the Mercy Sunshine Run.



Shoppers at a Springfield farmers market.

Springfield Healthcare Infrastructure

As mentioned in the 2011 Community Focus report, Springfield's healthcare infrastructure continues to be a strong asset to the community. Springfield's healthcare industry has a local economic impact of more than \$3 billion and annually employs 15 percent of Springfield's workforce while promoting a healthy lifestyle. The availability of services from these healthcare organizations improves the lives of the patients they serve through the following efforts:

- Mercy and CoxHealth are expanding services in the community, offering care through a provider-based, patient-focused model. Although competing entities, the two organizations collaborate on initiatives benefiting the greater community.
- Jordan Valley Community Health Center, a federally qualified health center, continues to grow its local outreach.
- Ozarks Community Hospital serves underinsured and uninsured patients and The Kitchen Clinic provides care for low-income patients.
- Burrell Behavioral Health provides a strong mental health presence while the Forest Institute prepares workers for careers in behavioral and human sciences.

Local healthcare organizations maintain a strong relationship with Springfield colleges and universities by offering opportunities for students to further their knowledge. This improves the educational systems while strengthening

Springfield's future through the training of upcoming local health professionals.

RED FLAGS

Mental Health

According to the Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH), one in five Missourians had some degree of mental illness last year, but only 6 percent received treatment at a DMH facility.

A significant factor contributing to the lack of access to mental healthcare is the lack of reimbursement and the disproportionate number of patients in need of mental care who are uninsured.

If Medicaid were to expand to include those up to 138 percent of the Federal Poverty Line (\$15,415 for an individual or \$26,344 for a family of three), nearly 300,000 additional residents would be covered, of which nearly 50,000 would receive behavioral health services through DMH-funded programs. Furthermore, Missouri has lost nearly 1,400 psychiatric inpatient beds since 1990. Hospital emergency departments retain mental health patients because they lack sufficient psychiatric beds for their placement.

Mental health services need to be improved for people of all ages. Improvements in mental health in school systems will provide treatment for children while increased funding will help provide proper care to assist our community and those in need of these services.

Disease Prevention

The leading causes of death related to chronic disease in Greene County are heart disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes. Preventable chronic

diseases negatively impact an individual's health and overall quality of life and they are costly to the individual, community, and healthcare system.

Rather than eliminating chronic diseases, we are learning how to live longer with these diseases. Healthcare is used as reactive, rather than preventive, medicine and this must change. A Springfield Public Schools assessment of fifth graders found 40 percent of that group is already overweight or obese. Youth obesity is a precursor for adult obesity, which is often associated with numerous deadly chronic diseases. To improve the lives of our community, we must start with our youth.

Several studies have shown a correlation between income and health. Low-income individuals tend to have poorer health outcomes than individuals with higher income. A significant reason for this correlation is that low-income individuals and families are often unable to afford access to proper care.

Income, Education Levels Predict Health Problems

Access to care evaluates one's ability to obtain necessary health services for improving or maintaining health while overcoming challenges, both economic and health related. Addressing poverty and expanding access to care will improve the health of Springfield. The Affordable Care Act aims to increase access to healthcare for citizens through initiatives such as preventing insurance companies from denying coverage due to pre-existing conditions and strengthening community and rural health centers.

Oral Health

Oral health greatly impacts overall health. Poor oral health can result in deprived nutrition, loss of self-esteem, missed school days for youth, and increased cost of care. Families of lower socioeconomic status are less likely to receive healthcare, with dental care often the last priority. According to the 2010 Greene County Health Commission report, the majority of emergency room visits among uninsured 20-49 year olds were for dental problems. According to a report from the Missouri Department of Health and

RELATIONSHIP OF EDUCATION AND INCOME LEVELS TO HEALTH PROBLEMS

Americans who responded "yes" to the question: *Do you have health problems that prevent you from doing any of the things people your age can normally do?*

EDUCATION LEVEL	<\$24K	\$24K- <\$36K	\$36K- <\$90K	\$90K+
Less than high school	48%	27%	25%	26%
High school graduate	38%	23%	16%	15%
Some college/ vocational school	42%	23%	17%	14%
College graduate/ Postgrad	32%	18%	13%	10%

Source: Gallup Report April 28, 2010

VISITS TO SPRINGFIELD'S SAFETY-NET DENTAL CLINICS IN 2009

CLINIC	0-18 YEARS OLD	19+ YEARS OLD
Jordan Valley Community Health Center Dental Clinic	22,600	6,922
Kitchen Clinic Dental	0	326
Ronald McDonald Care Mobile	3,323	0

Source: The Health Commission, Serving the Springfield-Greene County Region, July 2010

Senior Services, tooth decay results in an estimated 51 million school hours being missed each year. Missouri residents are not seeking oral healthcare and it is negatively affecting our community, especially our children.

In 2011, the Missouri Dental Association's charitable foundation, Missouri Mission of Mercy, hosted a two-day event at the Ozark Empire Fairgrounds. During the event, 1,856 people received basic dental services provided by 1,046 volunteers and 170 dentists who dedicated their time to serve those in need of oral healthcare. Nearly 2,000 local citizens received care, indicating the tremendous need within our community.

According to the American Academy of Periodontology, the number one cause of tooth loss in adults is gum disease caused by the buildup of plaque on teeth. An Oral and Systemic Health Review article indicated scientists have found a possible correlation between gum disease and diabetes and heart disease, further illustrating the relationship between oral and overall health. Dental care is a necessity for a healthy life, and Springfield needs to improve the availability and access to oral care for people of all ages within our community.

Jordan Valley Community Health Center and the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile are operating at capacity due to challenges of physical space and recruitment of dentists. In addition, The Kitchen Clinic is limited due to the availability of dentists. The Springfield Health Commission estimates these safety net facilities could see nearly 3,000 more patients annually for each additional dental care provider.



A Springfield patient gets her blood pressure checked.

Early Childhood

Early childhood encompasses the *first eight years of life*, when a child learns to communicate, love, trust, think, and make friends. Specifically, *90 percent of brain development occurs before a child's fifth birthday* with a child's moral development beginning to form at age two. Referred to as plasticity by neuroscientists, *children's brains are far more impressionable in early life* than in maturity, which has both positive and negative implications. On the positive side, young children's brains are more open to learning and enriching influences. On the negative side, young children's brains are more vulnerable to developmental problems should their environment prove especially impoverished or unnurturing.

Unfortunately, every year budgets to care for the young citizens of our community continue to see cuts in a dwindling pool of funding. In addition to addressing these funding challenges, early childhood initiatives must become a community priority in order to support the most vulnerable in our society.

BLUE RIBBONS

SPS-OACAC Co-Qualifying Classroom

In response to the increasing trend of homeless children in an environment of shrinking resources, Ozarks Area Community Action Corporation's (OACAC) Head Start program and Springfield Public Schools' Wonder Years Title I program collaborated to create a co-qualifying classroom to serve 15 preschool children living at the Missouri Hotel, local domestic violence shelters, and other programs serving homeless families. The collaboration represents an ideal opportunity to share resources, minimize costs to each program individually, and maximize participation of children who otherwise might not have access to a high-quality preschool experience prior to kindergarten.

Springfield-Greene County Library Outreach Programs

The Springfield-Greene County Library's signature early literacy program, Racing to Read, uses education-based standards to teach children the early skills needed to be ready to learn to read. The program is available at the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) clinic, day cares, Head Starts, and after-school programs. Racing to Read has a play component, with activity stations in library branches. Additionally, periodic workshops for parents and caregivers provide fun ways to build early literacy skills their children need to learn to read.

Throughout the year, children's librarians take stories and activities outside the library setting to children at Head Starts, day care centers, after-school programs, and the Missouri Hotel.

Of the 97,451 children the library saw during the 2011-2012 fiscal year, 63,277 children were seen in outreach programs. This outreach and the Summer Reading To-Go program have attracted thousands of dollars in state grants to continue their work.

'Every Child' Series

In late 2011, the Springfield News-Leader launched the "Every Child" public-service journalism project. The purpose of this series is to focus public attention on the critical challenges facing children, foster discussion, and build on existing initiatives. Working from the theme "every child grows up safe, happy, healthy, and successful," and using input from a community advisory committee, it has raised local public awareness and education to an unprecedented level by highlighting hard issues including abuse and neglect, safety, healthcare, homelessness, poverty, and education.

The value of this continued media exposure is immeasurable in dollars and goodwill. While there have been short-term fixes for some issues, the community must also develop an appropriate response and implement action. The News-Leader staff has been recognized by its parent



The News-Leader brings attention to the plight of children in poverty. PHOTO CREDIT: VALERIE MOSLEY, SPRINGFIELD NEWS-LEADER

organization, Gannett, and other national journalism entities with several Awards of Excellence including First Place-1st Quarter Public Service, Finalist-1st Quarter Outstanding Writing with coverage of child abuse/neglect, Best in Show for 3rd Quarter coverage of poverty in the Ozarks, as well as the Greater Good award for contribution to the communities it serves.

RED FLAGS

Child Abuse and Neglect

Greene County child abuse and neglect rates have been identified as a red flag since the 2004 Community Focus report. In spite of several years of improvement, the economic downturn eliminated all gains and pushed us back to 2006 levels. Changes in public policy and laws and adequate funding of enforcement of both are critical to protect our children from this devastating ill.

Poverty and Children

The 2007 and 2009 Community Focus reports identified the impact poverty has on the Springfield-Greene County community, paying particular attention to poverty's impact on our youngest citizens. Unfortunately, the community continues to see negative changes in child poverty, in

"If the number of additional poor people in Greene County, going back to 2001, were gathered for a symposium on how they might work their way out of poverty, no venue in southwest Missouri could hold them. Not even the Missouri State University football stadium, which seats 16,600."

—Steve Pokin, Reporter, Springfield News-Leader

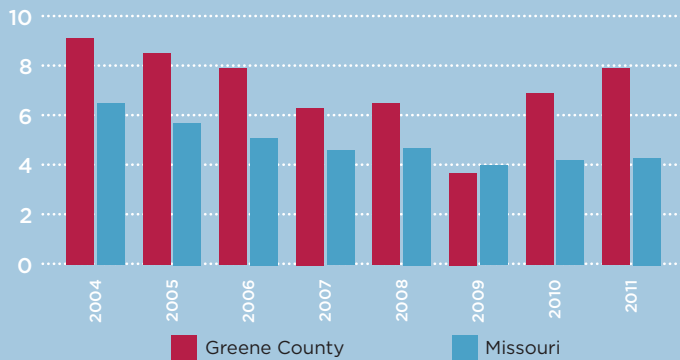
spite of increased awareness. Attributable in part to the recession and very slow recovery, statistics for children in poverty in our community have grown worse. According to MO Kids Count 2012, Springfield-Greene County has 6,016 (30.9 percent) of its children under age six living in poverty, a 12.8 percent increase from 2010. The number of young children in poverty has more than doubled since 2000. Poverty is disproportionately impacting children. Although the number of children as a percent of our community's population has actually decreased slightly since 2006, the rate of child poverty significantly increased. Also alarming, the number of children in poverty under the age of six continues to climb in spite of decreases in the number of births to teens and births to mothers without high school diplomas, indicators typically correlated with increased likelihood of child poverty.

Pre-K Investment

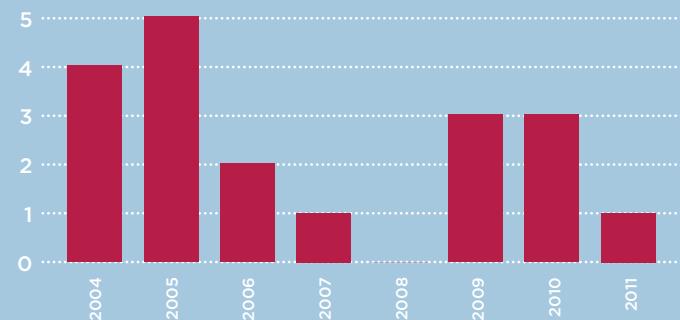
As indicated in the 2009 Community Focus

CHILD ABUSE IN GREENE COUNTY

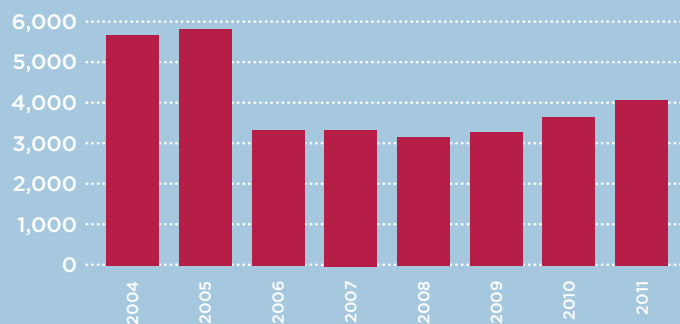
Substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect, per 1,000 children



Child fatalities from abuse and neglect in Greene County



Hotline reports in Greene County



Source: Missouri DSS Children's Division Child Abuse and Neglect Annual Reports

report, kindergarten readiness is an area where many Springfield and Greene County children struggle. Based upon the latest Readiness for Kindergarten study, released in March 2011, teachers continue to report 20.2 percent of local students enter kindergarten not socially or emotionally ready based on the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA). Children who experience high-quality early childhood education are more prepared for kindergarten and, therefore, typically more successful. Many families, however, cannot afford to provide this needed preschool experience for their children. Relying on state or federal government seems futile, particularly in light of recent cuts to early childhood programming, such as Head Start, Title I, accreditation facilitation, and the Missouri Preschool Project. In response to this red flag, an active group of Springfield and Greene County early care and

preschool accessible to all children is critical to address kindergarten readiness in Greene County and will require broad-based public and private support.

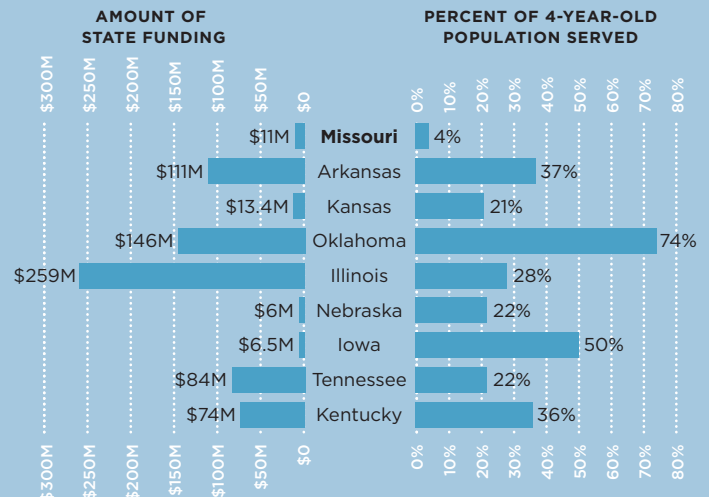
State of Early Care and Education

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 63.9 percent of mothers with children under the age of six were in the paid labor force in 2011. The average child in a working family spends 36 hours per week in childcare. These families depend on childcare to earn a living or to further their education. The recent study reported by Child Care Aware® of America identifies quality of childcare and childcare cost as major concerns for families nationwide. The reality is today's families, at all income levels, are struggling to find and afford quality care.



Monica Meredith and son, Cooper, reading during Parent/Child Interaction Time.

PRE-K EDUCATION INVESTMENT BY MISSOURI AND SURROUNDING STATES



Source: National Institute for Early Education Research, The State of Preschool, 2012

education professionals are collaborating to ensure more children are able to access high-quality preschool. Making high-quality

A Greene County family with an infant and preschooler will pay an average of \$1,239 per month in center-based childcare, which equates to \$14,872 per year. Therefore, childcare can often cost a family more than mortgage or rent. In Greene County, 1,190 families receive the state childcare subsidy. However, Missouri's subsidy system ranks among the lowest in the country. As a result, families are often forced to make childcare choices based on affordability rather than quality.

Families need to feel secure that the early childhood setting they are choosing is safe, nurturing, and educational. Many families assume childcare is regulated and must meet quality standards, like other businesses in town. Unfortunately, from 2007 to 2010, at least 45 children died in Missouri childcare facilities due to reasons other than existing illnesses. Thirty five of these cases occurred while infants napped and all but four cases occurred in unlicensed childcare programs. Minimum safe sleep practices and CPR first-aid training for all providers receiving state childcare subsidy funds should be required to ensure the safety of children in care.

Education

With an enrollment of just under 25,000 students, **Springfield Public Schools (SPS) is the largest accredited school district in Missouri.** While other urban districts in the state and nation have lost students, SPS's enrollment has increased over the past five years, due in part to **its reputation for academically rigorous and innovative curriculum and comprehensive extracurricular programming.** With a staff of more than 3,500, students are educated at more than 50 sites, including five comprehensive high schools, nine middle schools, 37 elementary schools, and several sites for alternative and choice programming.

The demographics of the district mirror the changing demographics of the community. Growth in ethnic diversity among the student body is an asset, as the district prepares students to live and work in a global society. While this demographic diversity is something the community and school district have actively pursued, those changes also create real opportunities to focus on the individual learner in providing academic excellence for all. In 2013, an SPS student is more likely to come from a family eligible to receive free or reduced lunch, to be an ethnicity other than white, and to speak a native language other than English. Traditionally, traits like these suggested students could face more academic obstacles than their peers. While this shift is reflected in public school enrollment trends of Greene County, the state, and the nation, it also points to the importance of focused attention on the individual learner and collaboration necessary to meet the needs of all students. This strong thread of community support and collaboration remains a cornerstone to the commitment of academic excellence for all.

Today, through strategic development, implementation and evaluation practices, Choice and Innovation initiatives focus on personalized learning opportunities for students that promote student engagement and academic rigor. For example, the Wonders of the Ozarks Learning Facility, a partnership with Wonders of Wildlife and Bass Pro, offers approximately 60 fifth-grade students the opportunity to experience their entire curriculum

“Individualized learning is essential to ensure students are prepared to succeed in a global society. Focusing on the individual student embeds the student’s needs in every decision. Collaboration between the learner and the teacher leads to quality instruction and innovative choices; creating opportunities for active engagement of the learner, not passive listening.”

—Dr. Norm Ridder, Superintendent,
Springfield Public Schools

through the lens of science. Additionally, the Roberson Community School enhances individualized learning by emphasizing social and emotional support for students and families in the school setting. Over the next few years, other partnerships and new academic programs are expected to be announced as the community and school district seek innovative ways to meet the needs of all students.

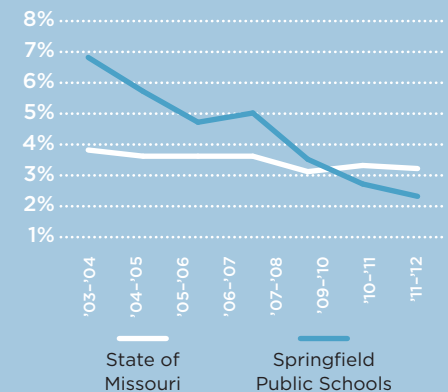
Increased Graduation/ Decreased Dropout Rates

A high school diploma opens doors for young adults and prepares them for competitive employment, so school districts must focus on both dropout and graduation rates. SPS has made significant strides in helping students reach the goal of a diploma. Seven years ago, Springfield's graduation rate (78.9 percent) was well below the state average (85.9 percent). In 2011–2012, the gap closed to just a half percent between Springfield's rate (87.5 percent) and Missouri's rate (88 percent). In fact, since 2010 the graduation rate has grown more than five percentage points to this all-time high.



Proud graduates of Springfield Public Schools.

DECREASED DROPOUT RATE IN SPRINGFIELD



Source: Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

SPS teachers and administrators also are focused on slowing the dropout rate. In seven years, the dropout rate fell to 2.3 percent, well below the Missouri average of 3.2 percent. One reason for this decrease is the district's focus on individual needs in areas such as counseling, classroom engagement, health services, and alternative education programs.

RED FLAGS

Funding Volatility

The volatility in educational funding remains a red flag since identified in the 2009 and 2011

BLUE RIBBONS

Choice and Innovative Academic Programming

Choice and Innovation describes a variety of programs that provide additional learning options for students in Springfield Public Schools. Choice and Innovation was developed based upon key findings from stakeholder input indicating the need for additional, unique learning opportunities. The term Choice was originally developed to communicate stakeholder input from the strategic planning process during the 2006–2007 school year. The process of meeting a variety of learning styles can be traced to past non-mandated program implementations such as the International Baccalaureate programs at Boyd, Field and Roundtree elementary schools, Pipkin Middle School, and Central High School as well as the establishment of the Phelps Center for the Gifted to address the needs of our gifted student population. SPS is the only district in the State of Missouri to offer International Baccalaureate programs for students K-12.

Community Focus reports. The economic turbulence of the past five years has only added to the annual unpredictability for local districts. In Missouri, funding comes from three sources: local property taxes, state funds, and federal allocations. The reduction of the percentage of state funding is an alarming trend, forcing SPS and surrounding districts to place funding initiatives on ballots in an attempt to maintain adequate funding for quality public education throughout Greene County. April 2013 SPS ballot initiatives for a 20-cent increase to the operating levy and the \$70 million bond to renovate existing facilities, build a new elementary school, and improve the bandwidth in all SPS facilities passed with strong community support; this move should stabilize funding and allow for more local control of district finances.

Achievement Gap

Mentioned in the 2011 Community Focus report as a red flag, the achievement gap between certain groups of students remains a concern. Educators have long known the strongest bridge across the achievement gap is built when students are treated as individuals and their needs are addressed in unique ways. But this bridge is facing new challenges as the demographics of Missouri's student population shift and sway.

For the first time, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education reports major changes in the makeup of the student population. In particular, the majority of the state's student population now falls into a "super sub-group" of learners who have historically performed below the state average. Missouri data shows significant gaps in the academic achievements of five sub-groups: low-income students, students with disabilities, English language learners, African-Americans, and Hispanics. Students in these groups now outnumber those outside the group, a statewide shift in the majority, mirrored in Springfield Public Schools. This change is forcing schools in Springfield, Greene County, and across Missouri to rethink ways of addressing individual needs with minority groups collectively now a majority.

Researchers know poverty is growing and this growth directly affects learning. A simple measure of poverty is the number of school-age children eligible for free and reduced price school lunches (FRL). Across the board, in Springfield, Greene County, and Missouri, the number of students receiving FRL is growing. Since 2001, the gap between those receiving FRL and those not receiving FRL has narrowed. In Missouri, the number is now roughly the same; in Springfield, the number receiving FRL has now exceeded those who do not.

The largest school in Greene County is Kickapoo High School with 1,734 students. In the 2001–2002 school year, the number of FRL students across Greene County would fill the equivalent of seven Kickapoo High Schools. In the 2011–12 school year, the number of students receiving FRL

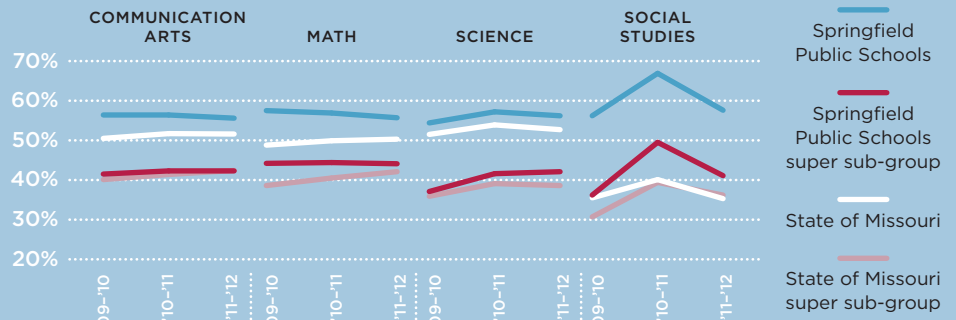
FUNDING VOLATILITY FOR LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

	LOCAL			STATE			FEDERAL		
	2004	2011	DIFF.	2004	2011	DIFF.	2004	2011	DIFF.
Springfield	63.9	65.1	▲1.2	26.1	20.3	▼5.8	10.0	14.7	▲4.7
Willard	51.0	51.0	0.0	41.9	35.8	▼6.1	7.1	13.3	▲6.2
Republic	47.6	46.7	▼0.9	46.9	39.8	▼7.1	5.4	13.5	▲8.1
Logan-Rogersville	58.2	58.4	▲0.2	33.5	30.9	▼2.6	8.2	10.6	▲2.4
Strafford	61.5	62.9	▲1.4	32.0	25.1	▼6.9	6.5	12.0	▲5.5
Fair Grove	35.2	42.8	▲7.6	51.4	43.0	▼8.4	13.4	14.2	▲0.8
Ash Grove	43.9	42.1	▼1.8	48.8	43.0	▼5.8	7.3	16.2	▲8.9
Walnut Grove	37.6	40.1	▲2.5	55.6	44.2	▼11.4	6.8	15.7	▲8.9
State average	55.2	N/A	—	35.5	N/A	—	9.2	N/A	—

Source: Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

LOWER RATE OF PROFICIENCY BY "SUPER SUBGROUP" ON STANDARDIZED TESTING

Five sub-groups—low-income students, students with disabilities, English language learners, African-Americans, and Hispanics—comprise the "super sub-group," which now outnumber those outside the group at both the state and local level.



Source: Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

was 18,711, the size of 11 Kickapoo High Schools.

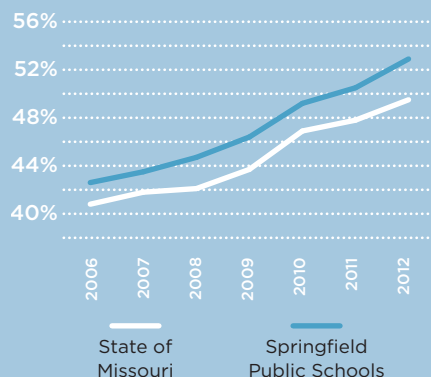
Our community is finding ways to bridge the achievement gap through collaboration. High poverty schools need a specialized corps of educators. The Teacher Education Alliance (TEA) aims to better prepare student teachers for the

demands of Title 1 schools. The TEA, a partnership among Springfield Public Schools, Drury, Evangel, and Missouri State universities, works to increase student achievement while supporting education majors who have a passion for the demands of high poverty schools. These young educators-to-be are learning new ways of teaching in low-income schools.

Missouri State University has established a new Division for Diversity and Inclusion to attract underrepresented students headed by Dr. Ken Coopwood, Sr., the university's first African-American vice president.

Drury University's Scholars Program (DUSP), now in its sixth year, identifies potential leaders and scholars among Springfield's African-American middle and high school youth. Through an integrated program of year-round mentoring, tutoring, career and personal development, and intensive summer academic enrichment, DUSP encourages and equips these students to successfully pursue higher education. The program already is showing success. Seven of 12 seniors active in the program were accepted at colleges of their choice with four eligible for academic scholarships. Of those who took the ACT exam, almost half increased their scores by three points.

INCREASING RATE OF FREE & REDUCED LUNCH PARTICIPANTS



Source: Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Housing

Housing fulfills the basic human need of shelter from the elements, provides stability to occupants, and **contributes to the economic vitality of the community**. In addition, it is crucial to maintaining an adequate labor force. However, the mere presence of housing is not enough. **Housing must be readily available as well as safe and affordable.**

Providing an ample supply of safe and affordable housing can create challenges for the community. The Greene County housing market, however, is showing signs of improvement. The collaborative spirit and innovative work of community members have brought new opportunities for all demographics in Springfield and Greene County. Since the 2011 Community Focus report, the lack of a centralized resource center/data collection point to address housing issues has turned from a red flag to a blue ribbon. Additionally, significant progress has been made regarding the lack of emergency shelters, a previous red flag issue. As we review these successes and work to improve other concerns, it is important to stay focused on providing quality, affordable housing for every citizen in our community.

BLUE RIBBONS

Collaborative Partnerships

To address this red flag from previous Community Focus reports, innovation and collaboration resulted in the establishment of the Springfield Area Affordable Housing Center. This community housing office will accommodate multiple housing and homeless prevention service provider representatives and provide a central access point for available affordable housing unit information, homeless service eligibility, screening, and referrals. The establishment of the Housing Center in 2012 was the culmination of many hours spent by community members visioning, researching, and planning to fulfill goals set forth in previous Community Focus reports.

The Affordable Housing Center offers residents needing housing or homeless assistance direct access to services through the One Door centralized shelter assessment center and the new affordable housing locator (www.TheAffordableHousingCenter.org). A toll-free call center offers assistance, in both English and Spanish, for landlords and people seeking affordable housing. In addition to searchable real-time listings of available housing, the site also provides helpful tools such as a rent checklist, affordability calculator, and links to other helpful



The Rare Breed Youth Drop-in Center.

resources. Residents and area professionals, such as real estate agents, nonprofit employees, case workers, and social workers, will have free access to information about available affordable housing units in Springfield, as well as Greene, Christian, and Webster counties.

Homeless Services

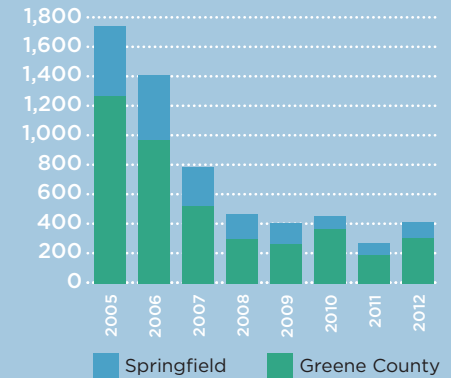
The community continues to invest in programs to address the needs of the homeless with some of these programs addressing red flags from past reports.

- Rare Breed Youth Services opened its new center at 301 N. Main Ave. in 2012. Its services provide young people, typically 10–18 years old, access to safety, help, and supportive resources.
- The Safe to Sleep program, operated by the Council of Churches, has grown from an extreme cold weather shelter for women to a year-round crisis shelter at Pathways United Methodist Church. Its unique program is operated by volunteers who donate their time to stay the night with women who seek a safe place to sleep.
- The One Door Service, established in 2010, continues to provide assistance and referrals to anyone who is homeless, at risk of becoming homeless, or in need of any assistance.
- The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Emergency Solutions Grant was increased for the coming year from \$75,000 to \$371,000 for our area, which should assist The Salvation Army, The Kitchen, Harmony House, and Ozarks Area Community Action Corporation (OACAC) in maintaining programs for the homeless.
- City Council adopted an Economic and Housing Access Calamity program, which allows qualifying individuals, agencies, and churches to provide food and lodging to the working poor and unemployed who are without a permanent residence.

Innovative Housing Programs

During the past year, development has started on three innovative affordable housing projects. Two of these projects set aside units to meet the needs of the disabled

NEW HOUSING PERMITS BEGINNING TO REBOUND



Source: Building & Development Offices of the City of Springfield and Greene County

community through a partnership with the Southwest Center for Independent Living (SCIL). The third brings a new affordable homeownership model to Springfield.

Westport Park, developed by Affordable Homes Development, is currently under construction. Located adjacent to Westport Park and Westport School, it consists of 46 two- and three-bedroom units, six of which will be fully accessible, including roll-in showers. The complex also includes a large community room with a fully accessible kitchen as well as an intake room that can be utilized by social workers from SCIL and other agencies. The Frisco, developed by The Vecino Group, will renovate the blighted Landmark Building into a modern Universally Designed community. A mix of 16 studio apartments, 25 one-bedroom apartments, 26 two-bedroom apartments, and one three-bedroom unit will create almost 70 affordable residences downtown. Like Westport Park, The Frisco has been designed with accessibility in mind, an asset in a city with a shortage of housing for individuals living with disabilities.

Springfield Community Land Trust

The Springfield Community Land Trust (SCLT) is a new program available to citizens who would not otherwise be able to afford a home in the private market. Formerly foreclosed homes receive substantial rehabilitation and meet a high



Springfield Community Land Trust home.

energy efficiency standard. SCLT homes are sold to families with limited incomes. These homes cost less than market rate homes because the SCLT homebuyers purchase only the house and enter into a 99-year ground lease with the SCLT for use of the land.



"You gave us the opportunity to have a real home, not just a place that we call home. We now have a home for family events such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, and even birthday parties."

—Mary and Tom Cunningham,
New Springfield Community
Land Trust Homeowners

RED FLAGS

Foreclosures

Even with numbers trending down, foreclosures are still well above 2007 levels and, thus, continue to be a red flag. Although some foreclosure prevention programs are available, a shortage of funding does have an impact on the number of borrowers receiving assistance. As the economy continues to improve, foreclosures will more than likely continue on a downward trend.

Rising Housing Costs

Housing affordability greatly depends on the ability of a household to bear the cost burden of mortgage/rent, taxes, utilities, and insurance. Affordability remains a large concern for residents, especially for households earning less than \$15,000 annually. Since the 2000 census, 20 percent of Greene County households have consistently earned less than \$15,000 annually.

As energy costs rise, so does the burden of these costs on low-income households. According to the National Energy Assistance Association (NEAA), the average cost to heat homes in the winter has risen about 27.3 percent and the price of residential electrical service has jumped 22 percent since 2005. The impact of rising energy costs during an economic downturn can be financially devastating for low-income households. The NEAA reports the average low-income household spends 16 percent of its annual income on home energy costs—more than four times the level all households, on average, devote to home energy bills. Locally, many households turn to energy assistance programs for help. Although federal funding support has increased since 2010 for programs like the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, so, too, has the need for services. In 2012, 31,531 households sought assistance from OACAC's Energy Assistance programs, compared to 35,000 in 2011 and 24,000 in 2010.

Lack of Emergency Shelter Beds

Over the last five years, local shelter providers have experienced a growing demand for shelter

and transitional housing services. As a result, the lack of emergency shelter beds continues to be an ongoing Community Focus red flag. Populations seeing the greatest need are families with children, single adults, and unaccompanied youth (age 17–24). During 2012, the waiting list for shelter services hovered at an average of 180 per month for these populations. Further, crisis shelters created through the City of Springfield's Economic Calamity Ordinance report record numbers of unsheltered homeless through mainstream shelter and

housing programs.

Single men are served throughout the winter months when temperatures reach the freezing mark. Over the last three years, Springfield's winter shelters report a steady increase of unduplicated individuals served, rising from 117 in 2009 to 209 during the 2013 service period. For single, unaccompanied women, this number hit its peak in 2012 with 417 individuals served throughout the year at Safe-to-Sleep, a year-round crisis shelter.

The local crisis shelters, coupled with the long waiting list for mainstream shelter services, are a barometer for the critical need to increase program-based emergency shelter beds in our community.

Homeless Youth

The 2012 Springfield High Risk and Homeless Youth survey found 151 of 511 participants (30 percent) had experienced homelessness with their families earlier in life. In addition, 222 youth (40 percent) reported being homeless on their own without their families. Using the three-dimension definition of homelessness from the 2002 McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 315 young people (63.4 percent) had experienced some form of homelessness.

A two-pronged strategy is needed to reduce youth homelessness. First, primary prevention programs must focus on strengthening families, intervening in troubled households to improve family dynamics, and facilitating state programs to better prepare youth for independent living upon release. Additionally, secondary prevention programs must provide homeless youth with an array of services to prevent them from becoming chronically homeless. While many such programs are already in place in Springfield, funding to increase program capacities can be enlarged to meet the needs of the area's growing population of homeless young people. According to the 2012 Homeless and At-Risk Youth Survey, collaborative investments should be made within the Springfield community to build the capacity and long-term sustainability of these services, so no youth in need is ever turned away.

Shrinking Financial Resources

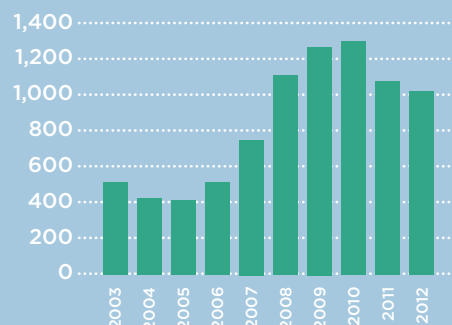
Dwindling federal funding continues to be a red flag. The impact of sequestration, as well as past federal budget cuts, has reduced the amount of funding for housing and homeless programs. HUD funding to the City of Springfield has been cut by up to 50 percent for the HOME affordable housing program. Further, the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program will see cuts under sequestration. Currently, 820 families are receiving housing assistance through this program with an approximate wait time of 20 to 24 months.



Jacobs Landing, MHDC Affordable Housing Tax Credit Development.

FORECLOSURES REMAIN HIGH ...

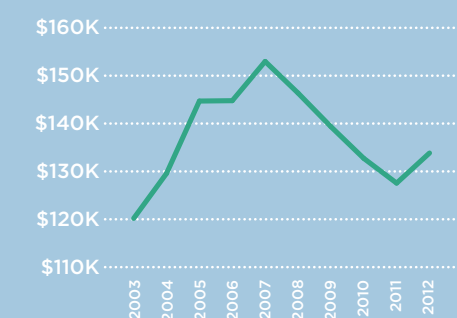
Yearly foreclosures in Greene County



Source: Greene County Recorder of Deeds, 2013

... WHILE HOUSING VALUES HAVE DECLINED

Average home sales price in Greene County



Source: Economic & Market Watch Reports from the Greater Springfield Board of Realtors (four-quarter average)

Natural Environment

Citizens and visitors to Springfield-Greene County recognize the **economic, human health, and recreational benefits of a healthy natural environment.**

Community support for efforts to protect air, water, and land resources continues to be positive. **Environmental and financial stresses**, however, have emerged due to increased population, maintaining aging infrastructure, and meeting strict environmental regulations. **These factors pose challenges to community leaders** as Springfield-Greene County works to maintain its leadership role in protecting the livability of the Ozarks region.

BLUE RIBBONS

Government Leadership/ Community Support

City and county leaders continue to rely heavily on citizen input to aid their decision-making processes. Citizen Task Forces studied and provided recommendations on topics such as green building, stormwater management, wastewater management, and the overall affordability of current and future needs related to infrastructure maintenance, environmental quality, and environmental compliance.

Innovative Thinking and Collaboration

Springfield-Greene County has earned a reputation for having very successful collaboration among government, private, and not-for-profit organizations, as well as innovative thinking that balances efficient and effective practices with a commitment to environmental protection. Recognizing the value and necessity of strong local regulatory authority, we continue to work closely with and support the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). Discussions are underway among Springfield, Greene County, City Utilities (CU), MDNR, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) leaders regarding a

trail-blazing, integrated approach to our community's environmental compliance responsibilities.

Water Quality

As noted in the 2009 Community Focus report, water quality and collaborative regional efforts to protect it continue to be recognized as a blue ribbon in our community. As a result of long-standing and successful partnerships and cooperation, Springfield-Greene County continues to receive significant grant support. One example is the \$1 million, plus a local match of \$650,000, Springfield-Greene County Urban Watershed Stewardship Project (Big Urbie) grant awarded in May 2011, an MDNR Section 319 Non-point Source Implementation Grant.

Air Quality Awareness and Response

Led by the Ozarks Clean Air Alliance (OCAA), local community leaders, media, and City staff worked to raise awareness of air quality concerns, identify area pollution sources, and promote activities and practices that reduce ground-level ozone and particulate matter. This ongoing regional effort was first recognized in the 2009 Community Focus report with Springfield becoming one of the first communities to participate in the EPA Ozone Advance Program.

Air emissions from electrical power



Wilson's Creek below the City's Southwest Wastewater Treatment Plant.

generation continued a downward trend in 2011–2012. Regulated emission from two local CU power plants decreased by 32 percent, compared to 2010 levels, contributing to an overall 81 percent reduction from the 1990 rates. A large measure of the 2011–2012 reductions stemmed from deployment of the new John Twitty Energy Center Unit 2 as a primary source of CU power. Unit 2, the most fuel-efficient generator in the CU fleet, is equipped with enhanced air-cleaning equipment.

Wastewater (Sewage) Funding

Funding for Springfield's sewage treatment program was identified as a red flag in the 2011 Community Focus report. A Citizens Wastewater Improvements Task Force studied the amount needed to maintain the system, comply with increasing environmental regulations, funding opportunities, and revenue increase options. Following its recommendations, a general residential fee increase, along with revisions of industrial user fees, went into effect in 2011, allowing Springfield to restore operating reserves to recommended levels, eliminate operating shortfalls, and address an Early Action Plan to meet new environmental regulations.

Solid Waste Funding

Recognized as a blue ribbon in the 2011 Community Focus report, funding for Springfield's Integrated Solid Waste Management System (Household Chemical Collection Center, Yardwaste Recycling Center, Recycling Centers, Market Development/Business Assistance, Public Education, and the Springfield Sanitary Landfill) continues under the 2008 agreement with local haulers.

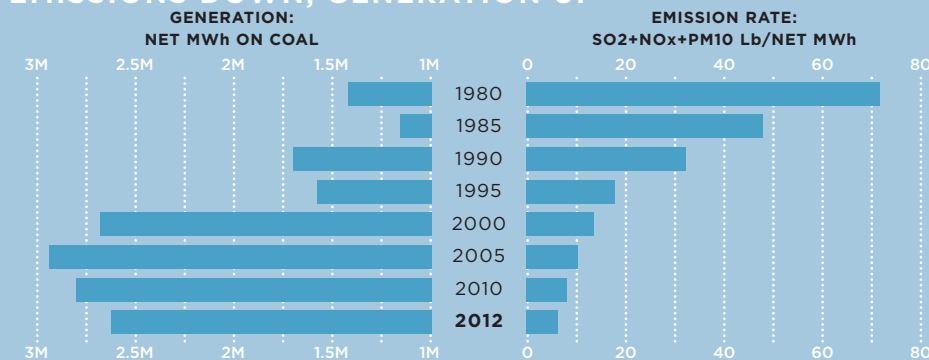
The Link/Trails

Bicycling, walking trails, and greenways continue to be a community priority providing non-fossil fuel alternative transportation, health/recreational benefits, and the preservation of open and green space while lessening the negative impact of automobiles on our air quality (see Transportation section).

Environmental Resource Center

In February 2011, the City began transforming

CITY UTILITIES' POWER PLANT AIR EMISSIONS DOWN, GENERATION UP



Source: City Utilities of Springfield

an existing 1930s-era building into the community's new Environmental Resource Center. The Center brings together staff, activities, and Springfield's new Department of Environmental Services. It also hosts Air Quality, Water Quality, Environmental Compliance, Solid Waste Management, Education, and Sustainability staff, as well as Ozark Greenways. Fully equipped meeting/conference facilities and a resource library round out the services provided in the LEED-certified Gold building.

Tree Canopy Policy

The urban forest in Springfield has had a tough few years, including ice storms, tornados, drought, floods, pests, and diseases that target individual species, in addition to ongoing threats from development and natural aging. Replacement has not kept pace with loss. Identified as a concern in the 2007 Community Focus report, a significant step was taken to address this matter when the Parks and Public Works departments implemented an internal tree canopy policy in 2010. This policy calls for the measurement of canopy on a project site before and after construction, requiring canopy lost on the project to be replaced at two times the rate, either on the project site or in a future project, with project funds being reserved to restore the canopy. In addition, CU is committed to have the same or more tree canopy in its service area in 2029 as it had in 2009. Every five years a tree canopy measurement is taken to keep the effort on track.

"Springfield has set the mark for communities in the Heartland. You are pointing the way forward to think holistically about all our resources: people, water, land, and soil."

—Dr. Karl Brooks,
Administrator, U.S. Environmental
Protection Agency Region 7

RED FLAGS

Fiscal Impact

Aided by findings of The Affordability Task Force, concerns have emerged regarding the future costs for businesses and individual homeowners to address the perfect storm of increased environmental regulations for stormwater, wastewater, drinking water, solid waste management, and air quality. In addition, fiscal challenges are likely to arise in regards to the maintenance, replacement, and expansion of existing, aging infrastructure to meet future demands. As a result, this is likely the largest fiscal issue facing our community during the next decade, estimated at nearly \$1.6 billion. Impacts to household income could be significant. As reported by the Task Force, by 2030, households in the \$10,000–\$25,000 annual



The City's new Department of Environmental Services, housed at the Environmental Resource Center, was dedicated in October 2012.

income range could be faced with 9.20–10.83 percent of their annual income going toward environmental infrastructure/regulatory compliance costs with costs to households in the \$25,000–\$40,000 range possibly from 4.29–5.50 percent. For comparison, Springfield's current median income is \$34,583 and Greene County's median income is \$41,059.

Financial Support for Volunteer Organizations

As a result of tight local government budgets, very active and long-valued not-for-profit organizations, such as the Watershed Committee of the Ozarks, Ozark Greenways, and James River Basin Partnership, have suffered from reduced financial support. Restoring this support was recognized as the number two recommendation by the planning committee that developed the Natural Environment chapter of the new Field Guide 2030 Community Strategic Plan.

Uncertainty of Future Regulation

The summer of 2012 was one of the warmest on record, resulting in several days of high ground-level ozone levels and 10 exceedances of the federal air quality standard for ozone. As a result, the Springfield ozone design value, a rating calculated using a three-year average, increased to just below the federal standard. As more information points to adverse human health as a result of high ozone levels, this standard is expected to become more strict as early as 2014. The EPA also has reviewed and tightened the national standard for particulate matter, and Springfield is very close to the limits for this pollutant as well.

Noted in the 2009 Community Focus report, significant changes to federal air-quality regulations are anticipated but unknown. If Springfield fails to comply with air-quality standards, significant effort and expense may be required to address the issues of nonattainment of the standards, including the possibility for stricter regulations on

local businesses and restrictions on the types of new businesses that can locate in Springfield.

Erosion of Local Agriculture Industry

The loss of agricultural land, typically to development, removes an important tool in water quality protection, reduces habitat to support diverse wildlife populations, and decreases the amount of open and green spaces.

Stormwater Management Funding

The lack of an adequate, long-term source of funding to address aging stormwater infrastructure, improve community flood protection, and maintain compliance with Springfield and Greene County Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permits for water quality protection, has been classified as a red flag since the 2005 Community Focus report. Recommendations from the Citizens Stormwater Management Task Force, which convened in October 2012, may include the possibility of funding through a future ballot issue. Because the Parks/Stormwater Tax was allowed to sunset in 2012, Springfield-Greene County has no funding source dedicated to meeting the community's future stormwater needs.

Water Quantity

Water quantity issues were first recognized as a concern in the 2009 Community Focus report. As a result of the deep drought and subsequent low water levels in our drinking water reservoirs, CU exercised a water restriction plan for the first time in 2012.

Regional discussion and planning continue as a 2010 report by the U.S. Geological Survey, in cooperation with the MDNR and Greene County, provided a comprehensive groundwater study of Greene County and surrounding communities. Findings of this study reveal levels of groundwater have declined from those measured in 2006.

Public Order & Safety

Public safety is **essential** for healthy communities. *Every person, family, neighborhood, and business needs to feel safe and secure* for communities to grow and thrive. Public safety and order involves keeping citizens safe and secure in their homes, neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces. In Springfield-Greene County, this involves a **community-wide effort to prevent and protect citizens** from dangerous events.

The City of Springfield is working to implement a comprehensive strategic plan that addresses public safety. Those involved in the planning recognize public safety involves a system of leaders, professionals, and citizens acting as responsible partners to facilitate a community we can live in without harm or fear. The strategic plan is built on three core pillars: prevention, intervention, and justice. During the past two years, Springfield-Greene County has seen tremendous growth in the areas of emergency management, disaster preparedness, and agency collaboration. However, the community continues to report a high rate of domestic violence, illegal drug use, and an overall increase in crime rates. Although Springfield has been focused on the intervention and justice pillars, our prevention programs are not as strong.

BLUE RIBBONS

Safe Community Designation

The 2011 Community Focus report noted Springfield-Greene County's designation as a Safe Community from the International Safe Community Network, a World Health Organization Collaborative Center. This designation is awarded to communities that have demonstrated leadership in promoting safety, reducing injuries,

and preparing their citizens for natural and man-made disasters. This international award was one of only eight given, to date, in the United States. Our community has continued to make significant efforts to reduce safety risks and this year submitted an application for re-designation as a Safe Community. This request was recently approved by the international group and the re-designation of Springfield as a Safe Community took place May 4, 2013.

Citizen Support for Public Safety

One of the hallmarks of Springfield-Greene County is the support citizens have given to public safety agencies. In recent years, citizens have supported four major renewable tax initiatives including:

- Enhancing the 911 Emergency Notification System;
- A tax to address the Police/Fire Pension shortfall;
- The Greene County Public Safety Initiative designed to provide additional public safety personnel in Greene County; and
- An increase of public safety personnel in the City of Springfield through the use of budget reallocations and grant funds to increase police and fire department personnel.

Public Safety Center

The \$20 million Springfield-Greene County Public Safety Center opened in August 2012. This center houses Springfield-Greene County 911, the Office of Emergency Management, and includes an Emergency Operations Center where more than 70 federal, state, and local response agencies have the ability to coordinate and sustain 24/7 operations during a disaster event. The Emergency Management Program received national accreditation in April 2012, based on an

assessment using national best practices. At the time, Springfield-Greene County was one of only 13 programs in the nation to have earned this accreditation. Cited as a red flag in the 2011 Community Focus report, community and individual disaster preparedness have improved through public awareness and education programs for schools, nursing home staffs, and civic groups.

Public Safety Agency Cooperation/Collaboration

A number of initiatives have taken place over the last few years that enhance the safety and security of the region.

- In 2011, Niche, a new Records Management System (RMS), was implemented with the capability of hosting multiple agencies in an effort to share crime information. As a result,

"Public safety is something most of us take for granted; we only miss it when it's gone. The new community strategic plan does, for the first time, contain a chapter devoted to public safety. During the planning process, as we discovered that every chapter is interrelated, we also recognized the importance of our new community policing philosophy. As Sir Robert Peel recognized 160 years ago when he developed his Principles of Policing: 'The police are the public and the public are the police; the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent upon every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence.'"

—Greg Burris, City Manager,
City of Springfield



The Springfield-Greene County Public Safety Center opened in 2012.

Springfield and other cities in the southwest Missouri region are able to join the RMS for more effective collaboration. The information gathered through the new RMS will allow Springfield-Greene County to more easily identify and apprehend criminals committing crimes in multiple jurisdictions.

- A new Springfield Regional Police and Fire Training Center was built and opened for use in 2012. The new 28,443-square-foot facility was a \$5.2 million project to provide a modern training center for the City of Springfield's Police and Fire Departments. This facility is a regional asset and is accessible to public safety departments around the region.

The community has a multitude of partnerships engaged in making the community a safer place to live and prosper, including:

- The Community Partnership of the Ozarks' efforts to address substance abuse and violence prevention as well as community and neighborhood development;

- The Ozarks Safety Council's efforts to promote injury prevention, and its significant efforts to reduce accidental injuries and deaths in the community;
- Southeast Rotary's anti-drug program, "Don't Meth With Us," offered to all fifth and seventh graders in Springfield schools;
- The formation of Greene County Alliance for Drug Endangered Children;
- The new Child Abuse and Neglect Collaborative;
- The continued expansion of the Springfield Police Department's effort to promote crime prevention programs, such as the Neighborhood Watch; and
- The implementation of a Community Policing Initiative.

RED FLAGS

Rising Crime Rates

Identified as a red flag in the 2007 and 2011 Community Focus reports, crimes against persons and property remain a serious issue for the Springfield-Greene County area. Springfield's Uniform Crime Report (UCR) shows an overall rise in reported crime in Springfield since 2011 with a 22.21 percent increase in crimes against persons in 2012.

Increasing Rate of Domestic Violence

According to the Uniform Crime Report, Springfield experienced a 20 percent increase in aggravated assaults in 2012 with the majority of those assaults attributed to domestic violence. Domestic violence increased from 2,207 incidents in 2011 to 2,476 in 2012. While the core pillars of intervention and justice have been aggressively sought, Springfield-Greene County is in need of prevention services and programs to address the increased rates of domestic violence and child abuse.

Upon seeing the continuing increase of cases in 2012, a community Domestic Violence Task Force was formed involving the Police Department, the Prosecutor's Office, Harmony House, and many other agencies that serve domestic violence survivors. This Task Force was created in an effort to reach out to victims, inform them of services, and encourage them to take action to create safer lives for themselves. The Springfield Police Department also has partnered with the Greene County Prosecuting Attorney's Office to aggressively investigate and prosecute repeat offenders of domestic violence, produce high quality cases, and open lines of communication between law enforcement and victims. While aggressively dealing with this issue, a related problem is the shortage of resources available to address the growing need. Harmony House, the main provider of emergency shelter, reports it was able to provide emergency shelter

22.21%

Increase in crimes against persons in 2012 compared to 2011

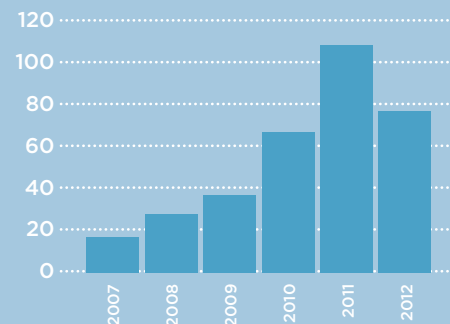
UNIFORM CRIME REPORT RATES IN SPRINGFIELD

VIOLENT CRIMES	2010		2011		2012	
	CRIMES	ARRESTS	CRIMES	ARRESTS	CRIMES	ARRESTS
Murder	11	7	5	4	16	14
Forcible Rape	120	13	106	4	137	12
Attempted Rape	0	0	4	0	4	0
Robbery	310	106	286	105	353	88
Aggravated Assault	887	385	905	237	1,086	231
TOTAL CRIMES & ARRESTS	1,328	511	1,306	350	1,596	345

PROPERTY CRIMES	2010		2011		2012	
	CRIMES	ARRESTS	CRIMES	ARRESTS	CRIMES	ARRESTS
Burglary	2,188	129	2,053	146	2,215	189
Larceny/Theft	12,025	1,915	11,391	1,421	11,239	2,301
Auto Theft	1,005	109	974	143	1,052	179
Arson	65	17	48	8	61	10
TOTAL CRIMES & ARRESTS	15,283	2,170	14,466	1,718	14,567	2,679

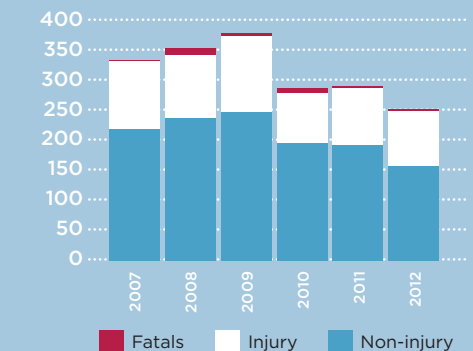
TOTAL	16,611	2,681	15,772	2,068	16,163	3,024
--------------	---------------	--------------	---------------	--------------	---------------	--------------

METH LABS DISCOVERED IN SPRINGFIELD



Source: Springfield Police Department, 2012

ALCOHOL-RELATED TRAFFIC INCIDENTS



for 560 women and children in 2012, but had to turn away more than 1,100 referrals because bed space was not available.

Illegal Drug Use

Since 2004, illegal drug use has been identified as a red flag in Community Focus reports and remains a major problem for the Springfield-Greene County area. While fewer meth labs were discovered in 2012, compared to 2011, there is still concern with the proliferation of labs in the community. To further combat the meth lab problem, the Springfield Police Department has taken a proactive stance and is supportive of the City Council proposed "prescription only" ordinance for ephedrine and pseudoephedrine products.

Another major drug issue is the use of synthetic narcotics, with multiple "head shops" opening in 2012, making thousands of dollars a day selling dangerous products known as bath salts and K2. The Springfield Police Department

aggressively investigated numerous retail businesses involved in the sale and distribution of these narcotics resulting in a 21-person indictment.

Alcohol-Related Traffic Incidents

Alcohol-related accidents remain a red flag issue for the community, and while we have seen a decrease since 2008, we remained relatively flat over the past few years. These accidents are a serious problem in terms of loss of life, injury, and property loss. In Greene County, all patrol officers now receive training in accident investigation, DWI detection, standardized field sobriety testing, and breath analysis of blood alcohol content. Individuals arrested for DWI are required to complete a Substance Abuse Traffic Offender Program for education and treatment options. Greene County also operates a DWI Court dedicated to changing the behavior of arrested offenders. In 2011, the National Association of Drug Court Professionals identified Greene County's DWI Court as one of four "academy courts" throughout the country recognized for its exemplary practices.

Recreation, Sports & Leisure

Recreation, sports and leisure activities are *essential components of a balanced and healthy lifestyle*, leading to healthy individuals and a healthy society. A stronger overall community results from contributions towards improved physical and mental health. Involvement in recreational sports and leisure activities has *social benefits* by creating opportunities that encourage neighbors and fellow citizens to connect, instilling a personal investment in the community. Opportunities for *improved social capital* exist through these many activities and organizations that support them.

Recreation in the natural environment allows for the development of positive behaviors in regard to environmental appreciation, conservation, and stewardship. Recreation, sports and leisure activities are important social, cultural, and economic opportunities that help shape the Springfield community.

BLUE RIBBONS

Springfield-Greene County Library

The Springfield-Greene County Library District has 10 branches and the Mobile Library. Daily preschool storytimes focus on early literacy at the branches. Offsite 'tween and teen activities encourage creative expression, and electronic resources provide homework help and sophisticated research. All ages are welcome to the Summer Reading Program, live concerts, book discussions, live theater, and art exhibits. The branches are a convenient, comfortable place for study and exploration complete with free Wi-Fi and public computers.

Initiatives and Programs

The Healthy Living Alliance (HLA) and Triple Play program demonstrate the collaboration needed to confront the obesity red flag cited in this and previous Community Focus reports.

The Healthy Living Alliance was founded in



Kids participate in hip-hop dance classes at Williams Elementary School.

2011 by Jordan Valley Community Health Center, Ozarks Regional YMCA, and the Springfield-Greene County Health Department. HLA is now a partnership of more than 30 community-minded organizations working together to reduce obesity and tobacco use in our community. The first two years have focused on connecting existing partner programs and resources with specific health needs in low-income schools and worksites.

In 2012, a \$1.3 million Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Small Community Transformation Grant was awarded to the Ozarks Regional YMCA to help Springfield cultivate healthy eating, active living, and healthy and safe physical environments.

Grant activities will bolster the Healthy Living Alliance's impact through data collection and sharing, farm-to-school planning, and community-wide aid and education for evidence-based health strategies across multiple sectors.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Springfield has partnered with multiple universities and mental health professionals to provide Triple Play, a comprehensive wellness plan for the mind, body, and soul. This initiative improves overall health through programming and planned activities to educate and assist children's physical and social well-being in all areas.

Urban garden programs continue to provide local, sustainable, and nutritious choices for families. The Grant Beach Community Garden is located between Grant Beach Park and Weaver Elementary, where nearly 95 percent of the students participate in free or reduced-cost lunch programs. As a result, this Center City garden is well situated to benefit residents.

Parks, Open Space and Greenways

Residents have long understood and continue to demonstrate the value and importance of parks, open space and greenways. Celebrating its centennial in 2013, the then-named Springfield Park Board was established May 22, 1913 after Springfield voters overwhelmingly approved a mill tax for the establishment and maintenance of free public parks and playgrounds. The Park Board took over maintenance of Washington and Lafayette Parks, both established in 1869, and set about planning new parks. The next 30 years involved the development of parks, now considered Springfield's Historic Parks, with additional growth occurring since the 1950s. In 1996, voters approved the expansion of the park system and the name changed to Springfield-Greene County Park Board. In serving the residents of Springfield-Greene County, the Park Board oversees more than 100 city-county parks and facilities encompassing some 3,600 acres.

The Springfield-Greene County Park system is a National Recreation and Park Association Gold Medal award-winning department. Springfield and Greene County are privileged with a Park system that far surpasses both the quality and quantity of facilities and programs typical of municipalities this size and larger.

Park Improvements and Additions

Jenny Lincoln Park received a fully accessible playground through a partnership between the Kiwanis Club of Downtown Springfield and the Park Board. The playground incorporates both play and exercise components. The equipment helps develop upper and lower body strength, balance, and cognitive abilities.

The Dan Kinney Family Center is the Park Board's third Family Center, expanding family fitness and recreation opportunities to eastern Springfield and Greene County. The two-level, 35,279-square-foot facility is located at Dan Kinney Park, also the home to The Betty and Bobby Allison Miracle League Ball Field. The Family Center includes a full-size gymnasium, indoor 1/16-mile walking/running track, fitness center and

SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY LIBRARY ACTIVITY

	Circulation	Attendance	Programs	Attendance
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
2009	3,964,937	1,989,866	3,022	52,663
2010	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2011	3,758,274	1,999,595	2,805	64,553

Source: Springfield-Greene County Library



An accessible playground is now open at Jenny Lincoln Park.



Kids enjoy Doling Aquatics Center.

weight room, aerobics room, game room, childcare, community room, and locker rooms. The Dan Kinney Family Center offers fitness and dance classes, sports programs, access to personal trainers, childcare, health assessments, seminars, the Healthways SilverSneakers fitness program, and the new Fitness on Request interactive group fitness video module with a variety of programs. The building is designed to meet LEED Silver Certification and could accommodate future construction of an aquatics addition.

For three years in a row, public pools have set records in attendance. Unusually high temperatures in June–July 2012 contributed partially to the jump in attendance. Additionally, pool hours were extended, operating seven days a week without raising admission prices, which have remained the same since 2009. Chesterfield Family Center also was made available to the public at outdoor pool rates. The new Doling aquatics addition opened in February 2013. The indoor addition features three pools that include a 25-meter, three-lane lap pool, a zero-depth entry pool with a water slide, aqua arch sprays, pools and falls play feature, water umbrella, basketball goal, and whirlpool spa.

Trails and Waterways

The Springfield area is fortunate to have access to trails, caves, lakes, and rivers. Protection of these resources is imperative (see Natural Environment section).

Since the 2011 Community Focus report, Springfield Public Works, the Greene County Commission, and Parks have worked to complete four lake, stream, and waterway improvements in excess of \$8.8 million with two additional projects in progress.

Trails and greenways continue to connect the community and special areas of interest. In 2011–2012, construction was completed on the Trail of Tears Greenway in southwest Springfield and new trail segments in Fassnight Park and on the Wilson's Creek Greenway south of Rutledge Wilson Farm Park. The heavily used and much anticipated Galloway Creek Greenway reopened at U.S. 60/65 in October 2012, after being closed for three years for the highway interchange redesign.

Children in Nature Challenge

First Lady Georganne Nixon recognized Springfield as the first community in Missouri to achieve the Children in Nature Challenge. Created by executive order, this initiative challenges Missouri communities to take action by increasing awareness of opportunities to connect to nature, encouraging the use of nature-based curriculum in schools, and partnering with local organizations and businesses to connect children with nature.

“Children benefit physically, mentally and even spiritually by reconnecting with nature, and we need to provide them with the opportunities to do so. Springfield has done an amazing job of creating an environment that encourages children to get outdoors and enjoy nature. They are setting a good example for other communities to follow.”

—Georganne Nixon,
Missouri's First Lady

Economic Impact

The Springfield Cardinals AA minor league franchise, Springfield Lasers of World Team Tennis, Springfield Voodoo professional indoor football franchise, Community Olympic Development Program, combined with Missouri State University, Drury University, Evangel University, Central Baptist Bible College, and Baptist Bible College, lead the way in providing year-round sports entertainment while adding to the local economy. A separate economic impact study concluded the Springfield-Greene County Park Board generates an estimated \$13–\$15 million for the local economy by hosting more than 50 national, state and regional championship tournaments every year.

RED FLAGS

Obesity

Identified as a red flag since the 2007 Community Focus report, obesity remains a concern for the Springfield-Greene County community. Obesity continues in epidemic proportions for our country with Greene County's rate remaining higher than the national average (see Community Health section). While many organizations and agencies are focusing on this red flag through collaboration and extensive programs, addressing



Fassnight Park's completed Waterway/Stormwater Improvement Project.

obesity still requires additional and ongoing support.

Securing Green Space and Conservation

As stated in previous Community Focus reports, the need to secure green space and set aside parks for wildlife habitat and recreation is a long-term concern. Conservation and stewardship of the environment impact quality of community waterways and assistance with air pollution. Due to urban sprawl, this red flag will continue to increase in importance.

Economic Conditions

Recognized as a red flag in the 2009 Community Focus report, concerns regarding economic conditions remain largely unchanged. While there has been significant increase in use, agencies are faced with limited resources to match this increased demand.

The Greene County Commission elected to defer renewal of the 2006 ¼-cent county-wide parks and stormwater sales tax in light of current economic conditions. One-eighth-cent of this tax subsequently expired June 30, 2012. At the request of the Springfield-Greene County Park Board and other Greene County municipalities, the Greene County Commission may consider this important issue in the near future.

The county-wide sales tax generated \$10 million annually for Springfield-Greene County parks, stormwater projects, and for the communities of Ash Grove, Battlefield, Fair Grove, Republic, Rogersville, Strafford, Walnut Grove, and Willard. The expiring ¼-cent portion generated approximately \$5 million per year in new capital projects, development, and construction. The economic impact of not renewing the parks and stormwater sales tax includes the lack of funding for new capital projects as well as improvements to existing properties. This decision jeopardizes a commensurate level of construction and capital development for the area, which has been present for the last 10 years. Unfortunately, the current economic situation has postponed improvements to both City and County parks and stormwater projects. It also has hindered the community's ability to successfully complete the second half of the 20-year Parks Master Plan for Springfield-Greene County.

Transportation

Transportation in the Springfield area is multi-faceted. We are lucky to have a **superior roadway network** with good connectivity and relatively low congestion, a good public bus system with extensive coverage, a developing comprehensive trail system, and an emerging bicycle network. **Collaboration** among different entities and people is the reason for our successful transportation system.

Despite our advances, **shortcomings remain in the area of funding for transportation**. Reduced funding from state and federal sources has caused **difficulties in all areas of transportation** including roads, bicycle facilities, sidewalks, transit services, and school transportation.

BLUE RIBBONS

Collaboration

The Springfield area is held up throughout Missouri as an example of how collaboration in transportation gets results. The City of Springfield passed the fourth renewal of the ½-cent transportation sales tax in August 2012. This tax is used to partner with the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) and Greene County to fund needed transportation projects. The prior ½-cent sales tax advanced the construction of the diverging diamond interchanges at Kansas Expressway and I-44 and James River Freeway and National Avenue, as well as the expansion of U.S. 65 to six lanes. The 2012 renewal will fund a diverging diamond interchange at Battlefield and U.S. 65, the expansion of Republic Road, a railroad bridge over Chestnut Expressway, as well as enhancing mobility through transit, sidewalks, and biking.



U.S. 65 after six-lane expansion completed in 2011.

Reduced Congestion

The vehicle miles traveled per capita is decreasing for the urbanized area. In 2002, the average daily vehicle miles traveled per capita was 17 miles and in 2012 it was 15.8 miles per capita. While the population for the area has increased, total vehicle miles traveled for the area has remained constant. A new congestion management

report due out later this year will likely show congestion levels remaining constant or decreasing. The census is still reporting average commute times of less than 20 minutes for Greene County.

Reduced congestion levels can be attributed to two factors. The first factor is the long list of roadway improvements. Over the last five years, the Springfield area has seen many improvements including several sections of six-lane roadway and targeted interchange enhancements to improve traffic flow. The second factor is the increased use of Intelligent Transportation Systems. Significant changes have been made in traffic signal timings to improve traffic flow. In addition, multiple traffic cameras and dynamic message signs have been installed to allow for faster emergency response times and rerouting of traffic in the event of an accident. The Traffic Management Center of the Ozarks received the 2011 Institute of Transportation Engineers Transportation Achievement award for the innovations achieved through the collaboration of MoDOT and the City of Springfield in managing the transportation network in the Springfield area.

Sustainable Transportation Network

The need for a sustainable transportation network was identified as an emerging issue in the 2009 Community Focus report and a blue ribbon in the 2011 Community Focus report. Many advances have been made in providing a sustainable transportation network through transit, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes.

The Let's Go Smart Springfield campaign was introduced to encourage healthy living by walking and bicycling. There have been 60 miles of designated bicycle routes completed in the City of Springfield; 19 miles were marked with bike lanes and shared lane signs in 2011 and 2012. An additional 2.4 miles of designated bicycle lanes were added in Greene County outside of the city limits. Springfield is designated as a bronze level bicycle-friendly community. The first segment of The Link, a planned bicycle and pedestrian route through Springfield's core that will connect



The South Dry Sac Greenway Trail.



Sidewalk construction at Benton Avenue and Calhoun Street.

existing and planned greenways, opened in 2011. Two additional miles of greenway trails have been constructed in the past two years with four grade-separated roadway crossings, as well as two important neighborhood trail connections to the Trail of Tears and Wilson's Creek Greenway. These additions bring the total mileage of greenways to 68 miles.

During 2011 and 2012, five miles of sidewalks were constructed on streets with bus routes and an additional four miles were constructed on streets without bus routes, mostly near elementary schools. Almost 10 miles of existing sidewalks were rehabilitated. Outside of the city limits, an additional 2.5 miles of sidewalks were completed with 1.9 miles near elementary schools. A person-powered mobility plan, a plan for transportation that does not use a motor, but the energy of the individual, is under development. Transit improvements include route modifications to improve on-time performance, the design of the downtown transfer station, and real-time technology to notify riders of bus locations. Work is ongoing to make enhancements to the sustainable transportation network.

Airport

Springfield-Branson National Airport continues to be a booming front door to the community.

“It seems like as more markings have been put down, drivers are becoming more aware and courteous toward me as I’m traversing these streets. Hopefully, this anecdotal evidence is not just a figment of my imagination but the seeds of something better in Springfield.”

—Tracy Wilkins, avid cyclist and bicycle commuter

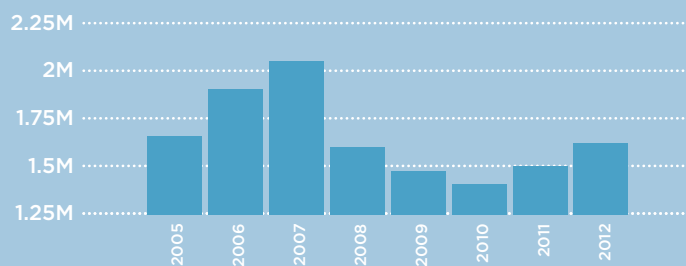
The airport has been identified as a blue ribbon in the previous four Community Focus reports. The number of passengers remains steady with non-stop service to nine cities. With a new terminal and repaved runways and taxiways, the airport is in excellent condition. In 2013, the airport passed its annual Federal Aviation Administration safety inspection without a discrepancy for the eighth consecutive year. Funding has been secured to develop existing airport property to build seven new private airplane hangars in 2014, bringing the total number of hangars up from 25 to 32, resulting in increasing business development opportunities.

RED FLAGS

Transportation Funding Shortfall

Transportation funding shortfalls for all modes have been persistently identified as red flags in previous Community Focus reports and continue to be a concern. MoDOT is currently only able to fund the maintenance of existing roadways. Prior initiatives, like Amendment 3 and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, were able to temporarily fend off the impending transportation funding shortfall to fund essential transportation projects. At a budget of half of that in previous years, the area will be largely limited only to projects that can be funded locally unless additional state funding can be secured. The Blue Ribbon Citizens Committee on Missouri’s Transportation Needs identified needs of up to \$1 billion annually for the State of Missouri. The Missouri Highway Commission is requesting a temporary one-cent sales tax to meet the identified need.

TRANSIT RIDERSHIP, 2005-2012



Source: City Utilities



A City Utilities bus stop on Glenstone Avenue.

The City Utilities (CU) transit system has experienced increased ridership with little new capital investment. The current buses range from 13 to 16 years old. A federal grant was awarded to CU to replace 10 of the 25 existing buses in 2011. The 15 remaining bus replacements, a \$4.8 million expense, have no identified funding source. Buses are currently over capacity with the limited service provided. Dwindling fuel tax revenues, coupled with sequestration and a new federal transportation bill, have left transit capital funding severely inadequate. Where CU was once able to get grants for the purchase of buses, this option is no longer available as the grants are no longer funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation. Additional service frequency and service coverage is needed to address the growing transit needs both within the City of Springfield and the region.

There is a shortage of door-to-door transportation service for the elderly and disabled who cannot use regular public transportation. The shortage of service persists due to a lack of funding and liability insurance costs. Transit providers are unable to cover the costs to provide

service through rider-ship fares alone. Medicaid and Medicare will provide a percentage of the costs, but additional funding is needed in order to provide services to all who need it. While additional coordination is occurring among the more than 20 non-profit transportation providers that offer

15.8

Average daily vehicle miles traveled per capita in 2012, down from 17 miles in 2002

60

Miles of designated bicycle routes in the City of Springfield

68

Total miles of greenways in and around Springfield

20%

Funding for public school transportation covered by the state in 2012, down from 80 percent in the early 2000s

services to the elderly and disabled, a need still exists for coordinated scheduling and dispatching. Funding is needed to provide a central calling system that would allow for clients to call a single number and have a ride scheduled with an available provider.

There continues to be a funding shortfall for public school transportation services. The Springfield Public Schools system transported approximately 7,600 school children daily in 2012, which is up from 6,700 in 2007. In the early 2000s, transportation service costs were covered at 80 percent by the state of Missouri; in 2012 that rate was 20 percent. There have been no service cuts even with the decrease in state aid; however, as the situation continues to worsen, the service might be in jeopardy.

Vehicle Emissions/ Air Quality

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established minimum standards for air quality levels. The Springfield area has

experienced a steady increase in levels for ozone and fine particulate matter since 2008. Much of this increase can be attributed to vehicular emissions. The Ozarks Clean Air Alliance has been working with the EPA to proactively address air quality issues in the Springfield area (see Natural Environment section). If trends continue, Springfield will be at non-attainment for air quality in the next few years resulting in challenges to using federal funding for expanding existing roads or building new ones. Projects would require justification and analysis to show how they affect the region’s air quality. Going non-attainment reduces the flexibility our area enjoys in selecting transportation projects, as well as hampers our ability to put a local focus on transportation planning.

Focus History

1


**BLUE
RIBBONS**

**RED
FLAGS**

**EMERGING
ISSUES***

* 2009 was a special edition of the report with no blue ribbons or red flags identified

		Arts & Culture	Business & Economic Conditions	Citizen Participation
2004		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arts Organizations Facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job Growth and Low Unemployment Recognition for Community Accomplishments Low Cost of Living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteerism Growth in Nonprofit Sector Vision 20/20 Plan
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operating Revenues 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fluctuation of Voter Turnout
2005				
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborative Efforts Creamery Arts Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steady Job Growth and Low Unemployment Low Cost of Living Diversity of Businesses/Entrepreneurship Bustling and Thriving Downtown Atmosphere of United Collaboration Conscious Effort to Develop Tomorrow's Workforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteerism Community Giving Commitment to Address Community Issues Strong Voter Turnout
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operating Revenues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income and Wages Lag Behind Comparison Cities Families in Poverty 	
2007				
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborative Efforts Facilities Quality and Attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job Growth and Low Unemployment Cost of Living Economic Diversity Downtown Revitalization Atmosphere of Collaboration Development of Tomorrow's Workforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making a Difference through Resources and Volunteerism Involved Community
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human Resources Funding Regional Outreach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income and Wages Families in Poverty Minimal Ethnic Diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncertainty of Future of Volunteerism

Focus History

2

Community Health	Early Childhood	Education	Housing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthcare Resources 	— Section not in report —	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Academic Performance Compared to State Average 	— Section not in report —	2004
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to Care Child Abuse and Neglect Communicable Diseases 	— Section not in report —	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher Salaries Budgetary Issues Students Living in Poverty Dropout Rate 	— Section not in report —	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthcare Resources Springfield-Greene County Health Department Health Education – Allied Health Program Resources for Children and Adolescents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growing Community Awareness and Attention to Early Childhood Needs Mayor's Commission on Children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved Student Achievement Through Teacher Training and Preparation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordable Housing Initiatives Homeless Services Collaborative Efforts 	2005
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to Care Child Abuse and Neglect Mother Smoking Rates Communicable Diseases State Budget Cuts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effects of Poverty on Children Childcare Availability and Cost Kindergarten Readiness Child Abuse and Neglect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher Salaries Budgetary Issues Dropout Rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of Funding for Affordable Housing Needs 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allied Health Education and Research Public Health Focus Economic Impact of Healthcare Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isabel's House Crisis Nursery Community Education Using Five Promises Early Childhood Centers State-Wide Early Childhood Coordinating Board Community Awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Academic Performance Compared to State Average Community Collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Affordable Housing 	2007
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to Care Child Abuse and Neglect Healthcare Policy Priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effects of Poverty on Children Childcare Cost School Readiness/Early Literacy Child Abuse and Neglect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher Salaries Budgetary Issues Dropout Rate Students Living in Poverty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Housing Office and Trust Fund Foreclosures 	

Focus History

3

	Natural Environment	Public Order & Safety	Recreation, Sports & Leisure	Transportation
2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Air Quality Community Efforts to Promote Environmental Stewardship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Safety Personnel Public Safety Priority by City Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional/Collegiate Teams Springfield-Greene County Park System Recreation and Leisure Facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Transportation Paratransit Services for the Disabled Respect Red Program Springfield-Branson Regional Airport Roadway Improvements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Quality Hazardous Waste Disposal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drug Arrests For Those Under 18 Years of Age High Rate of Domestic Violence Increase in Property Crime Growing Methamphetamine Production and Use 		
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactive Efforts to Address Challenges Air Quality Water Quality Solid Waste Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Safety Personnel Decrease in DWIs and Crimes Against Persons Law Requiring Cold and Allergy Medicines Moved to Pharmacy Counters Juvenile Offenses Decline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks, Open Space and Greenways Springfield-Greene County Park System Springfield Cardinals Springfield-Greene County Library District Increase in Bicycle Trails and Lanes School Parks Are Reaching Communities Program (SPARC) Recreation and Leisure Activities and Facilities Caves Waterways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Transportation Paratransit Services for the Disabled Roadways and Commute Time Road Safety Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Pedestrian-Friendly Changes Bicycles as Transportation Improvements Springfield-Branson Regional Airport
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stormwater Management Funding Solid Waste Management Funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic Violence Methamphetamine Production Alcohol-Related Accidents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Securing Green Space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Springfield Public School Bus System Paratransit Services for Elderly
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactive Efforts to Promote Clean and Healthy Environment Water Quality Green Building Initiatives to Access Environment and Health Issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Mobilization 9-1-1 Sales Tax Crime Lab Grant Juvenile Offenses Decline Ice Storm Response Police Outreach Methamphetamine Lab Reduction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks, Open Space and Greenways Partnerships School Parks Are Reaching Communities Program (SPARC) Professional/Collegiate Teams Recreation and Leisure Activities and Facilities Caves Waterways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Transportation Paratransit Services for the Disabled Roadways and Commute Time Road Safety Bicycles as Transportation Pedestrian Transportation Springfield-Branson National Airport Improvements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stormwater Management Funding Solid Waste Management Funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Methamphetamine Use Rising Crime Rates Police Response Time Police Staffing Inadequate Jail Space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No red flags reported 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paratransit Services for Elderly

Focus History

4



**BLUE
RIBBONS**



**RED
FLAGS**



**EMERGING
ISSUES***

* 2009 was a special edition of the report with no blue ribbons or red flags identified

2009

Arts & Culture

- Audience Development
- Sustainable Funding

Business & Economic Conditions

- Waning Public Support for Economic Development
- Emerging Doughnut Effect
- Stalled Job Growth and Increasing Unemployment
- Future Downtown Development
- Funding Challenges for Developing Tomorrow's Workforce

Citizen Participation

- Trust in Institutions and Government
- Sense of Alienation
- Voter Turnout
- Means to Mobilize Community Action

2011

- Collaborative Efforts
- Emerging Arts Organizations
- Tracking Economic and Educational Impact of Arts and Culture

- Audience Development
- Sustainable Funding
- Organizational Capacity Building

- Low Cost of Living
- Downtown Redevelopment
- Higher Education Creates Framework for Economic Growth
- Community Engagement on Tough Issues
- Workforce Development
- Economic Diversity

- Volunteerism
- Charitable Giving
- Strategies to Increase Citizen Involvement

- Voter Turnout
- Stratification of Participation

- Income and Wages
- Effect of Poverty on Economic Development
- Public Sector Declining Budgets
- Fragile Support for Economic Development

2013

- Continued Collaboration
- Audience Development Efforts
- Creative Outlet for Community Awareness
- Interest and Focus on Public Art

- Sustainable Funding for Organizations and Artists
- Organizational Capacity Building

- Growth in a New Economy
- Healthcare Industry Impact
- Higher Education and Workforce Development
- Entrepreneurial Infrastructure
- Low Cost of Living
- Economic Diversity

- Talent Pipeline
- Unfunded Federal Mandates
- Fragile Support for Economic Development
- Income and Wages
- Poverty Impact on Economic Development

- Youth Engagement Sought
- Community Opportunities Exist
- Community Grantmaking Increasing

- Voter Turnout Remains Issue Based
- Citizen Involvement Remains Low

Focus History

5

	Community Health	Early Childhood	Education	Housing
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childhood Obesity • Senior Population • Workforce Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe Housing • Kindergarten Readiness and Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Childhood Education • College Attendance After High School Graduation • Shifting of Funding Responsibilities to Local Communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacancy Rates Due to Foreclosures • Homeless Children and Adolescents • Shrinking Financial Resources to Address Homelessness and Housing
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthcare Infrastructure • Smokefree Air Act of 2011 • Communicable Diseases • Chronic Disease Risk Factors • Impact on Aging Population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration • Growing Support from Public Officials • Continued Response to Red Flags • Decreased Funding in Multiple Areas Affecting Early Childhood • Effect of Poverty on Children • Child Abuse and Neglect • State of Early Care and Education • School Readiness • Inability to Convert Public Support to Action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in Springfield Public Schools' Dropout Rate • Community Collaboration • College Attendance After High School Graduation • Teacher Salaries • Remediation of First-Time Freshmen • Achievement Gap • Funding Volatility and the Shifting of Funding Responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative Efforts to Address Homelessness and Housing • Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) Impact on Rehabilitation Efforts • Availability of New Homelessness One Door Service • Availability of Foreclosure Prevention Services • Shrinking Financial Resources to Address Homelessness and Housing • Homeless Children and Adolescents • Foreclosures • Lack of Adequate Emergency Shelters • Lack of a Centralized Resource Center/ Data Collection Point to Address Housing Issues
2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing Provider Shortage • Health and Wellness • Springfield Healthcare Infrastructure • Mental Health • Disease Prevention • Oral Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPS-OACAC Co-Qualifying Classroom • Springfield-Greene County Library Outreach Programs • Every Child Series • Child Abuse and Neglect • Poverty and Children • Pre-K Investment • State of Early Care and Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice and Innovative Academic Programming • Increased Graduation/Decreased Dropout Rates • Funding Volatility • Achievement Gap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative Partnerships • Homeless Services • Innovative Housing Programs • Springfield Community Land Trust • Foreclosures • Rising Housing Costs Burdens • Lack of Emergency Shelter Beds • Homeless Youth • Shrinking Financial Resources

Focus History

6

Natural Environment	Public Order & Safety	Recreation, Sports & Leisure	Transportation	2009
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Community Sustainability Plan • Air Quality • The Built Environment • Increase Participation in Recycling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortage of Human and Financial Resources • Inadequate Individual Disaster Preparedness • Increase in Property Crimes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of Economic Conditions on Agencies and Resources • Obesity • Conservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation Funding Shortfalls • Increasing Bicycle and Pedestrian Accidents • Lack of Transit Capacity • Need for a Regional Transit System • Sustainable Transportation Network 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint City/County Water Protection through the Parks/Waterways Sales Tax • Funding for Solid Waste Programs • Air Pollution Partnerships • Regional Groundwater/Drinking Water Supplies • Green Building Policy • Multiple Use of Open/Green Space • Brownfields • Sustainability Plan for the City 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing the Police/Fire Pension Plan • Collaborative Efforts to Address Public Safety • Development of Emergency Resources • Greene County DWI and Drug Courts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Springfield-Greene County Library Activity • Caves • Community Olympic Development Program • Dan Kinney Park and Miracle Field • Dickerson Park Zoo • Botanical Center at Nathaniel Greene/Close Memorial Park • Adopt-An-Urban Garden Program • Professional/Collegiate Teams • Trails and Greenways • Waterways • Parks and Open Space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Transportation • Roadway Traffic • Safety • Springfield-Branson National Airport • Sustainable Transportation Network 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stormwater Management Funding • Wastewater Infrastructure Funding • Air Quality Awareness • Loss of Local Control/Authority • Regional Water Supply • Availability of Green Space/Open Space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising Crime Rates • Inadequate Jail Space • Public Safety Staffing • Illegal Drug Use • Alcohol-Related Accidents • High Rate of Domestic Violence • Inadequate Community/Individual Disaster Preparedness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obesity • Securing Green Space and Conservation • Economic Conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation Funding Shortfall • Paratransit Service and Coordination • Need for a Regional Transit System • Funding Shortfall for All Public School Busing 	2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government Leadership/Community Support • Innovative Thinking and Collaboration • Water Quality • Air Quality Awareness and Response • Wastewater (Sewage) Funding • Solid Waste Funding • The Link/Trails • Environmental Resource Center • Tree Canopy Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Safe Community Designation • Citizen Support for Public Safety • Public Safety Center • Public Safety Agency Cooperation/Collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Springfield-Greene County Library • Initiatives and Programs • Parks, Open Space and Greenways • Parks Improvements and Additions • Trails and Waterways • Children in Nature Challenge • Economic Impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration • Reduced Congestion • Sustainable Transportation Network • Airport 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiscal Impact • Financial Support for Volunteer Organizations • Uncertainty of Future Regulation • Erosion of Local Agriculture Industry • Stormwater Management Funding • Water Quantity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising Crime Rates • Increasing Rate of Domestic Violence • Illegal Drug Use • Alcohol-Related Traffic Incidents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obesity • Securing Green Space and Conservation • Economic Conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation Funding Shortfall • Vehicle Emissions/Air Quality 	2013

Steering Committee

Nancy Berlin	Brian Fogle	Rachel Hutchinson	Shauna Perkins
Kris Callen	Sara Fields	Louise Knauer	Jill Reynolds
Dana Carroll	Cristina Gilstrap	Matt Lemmon	Robert Steele
Bridget Dierks	Brendan Griesemer	Barbara Lucks	Susie Turner
Rob Dixon	Leah Hamilton	Bernie McCarthy	Lisa Zimmerman

Thank you to the following individuals who provided information for this report:

Brian Adams	Stephanie Cramer	Ben Jones	Kim Reser
Kevin Barnes	Jordan Crist	Kirk Juranas	Peggy Riggs
Chris Beckman	Beth Domann	Joel Keller	Missy Riley
Bob Belote	Sabrina Drackert	Lance Kettering	Erick Roberts
Evan Bennett	Ann Elwell	Caitlin Kisse	Jack Robinette
Kent Boyd	Dana Elwell	Mike Kromrey	Randy Russell
Carmen Parker	Rick Emling	Allen Kunkel	Tom Russo
Bradshaw	Emily Fox	Carrie Lamb	Sheila Schmitt
Vanessa Brandon	Dave Fraley	Lisa Langley	Dan Smith
Denise Bredfeldt	Gloria Galanes	Natasha Longpine	Tim Smith
Kimberly Shinn	Diane Gallion	Norma McClellan	Brad Stulce
Brown	Michelle Garand	Steve Meyer	Lori Tack
Phil Broyles	Sara Garretson	Nick Nelson	Katie Towns-Jeter
Tim Caldwell	Scott Giffen	Anjie Nowell	Todd Wagner
Marie Carmichael	Matt Goodman	Kathleen O'Dell	Terry Whaley
Jeremy Chesman	Randy Hamm	Celka Ojakangas	Kimberly White
Vicky Claborn	Jason Haynes	Miles Park	Tracy Wilkins
Sara Cochran	Sarah Hough	Kathy Phillips	Larry Woods
Sherry Coker	Cindy Howell	Nicole Piper	Rusty Worley
Chris Coulter	David Hutchison	Joe Pitts	



ARTS & CULTURE

BUSINESS & ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

COMMUNITY HEALTH

EARLY CHILDHOOD

EDUCATION

HOUSING

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

PUBLIC ORDER & SAFETY

RECREATION, SPORTS & LEISURE

TRANSPORTATION