

A Vision for the Future of Henning, Tennessee

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Regional Economic Development Center
Department of Architecture

September 2009

Prepared for:
Town of Henning
Michael Bursey, Mayor

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Prepared for:
The Town of Henning, Tennessee
Michael Bursey, Mayor

September 2009

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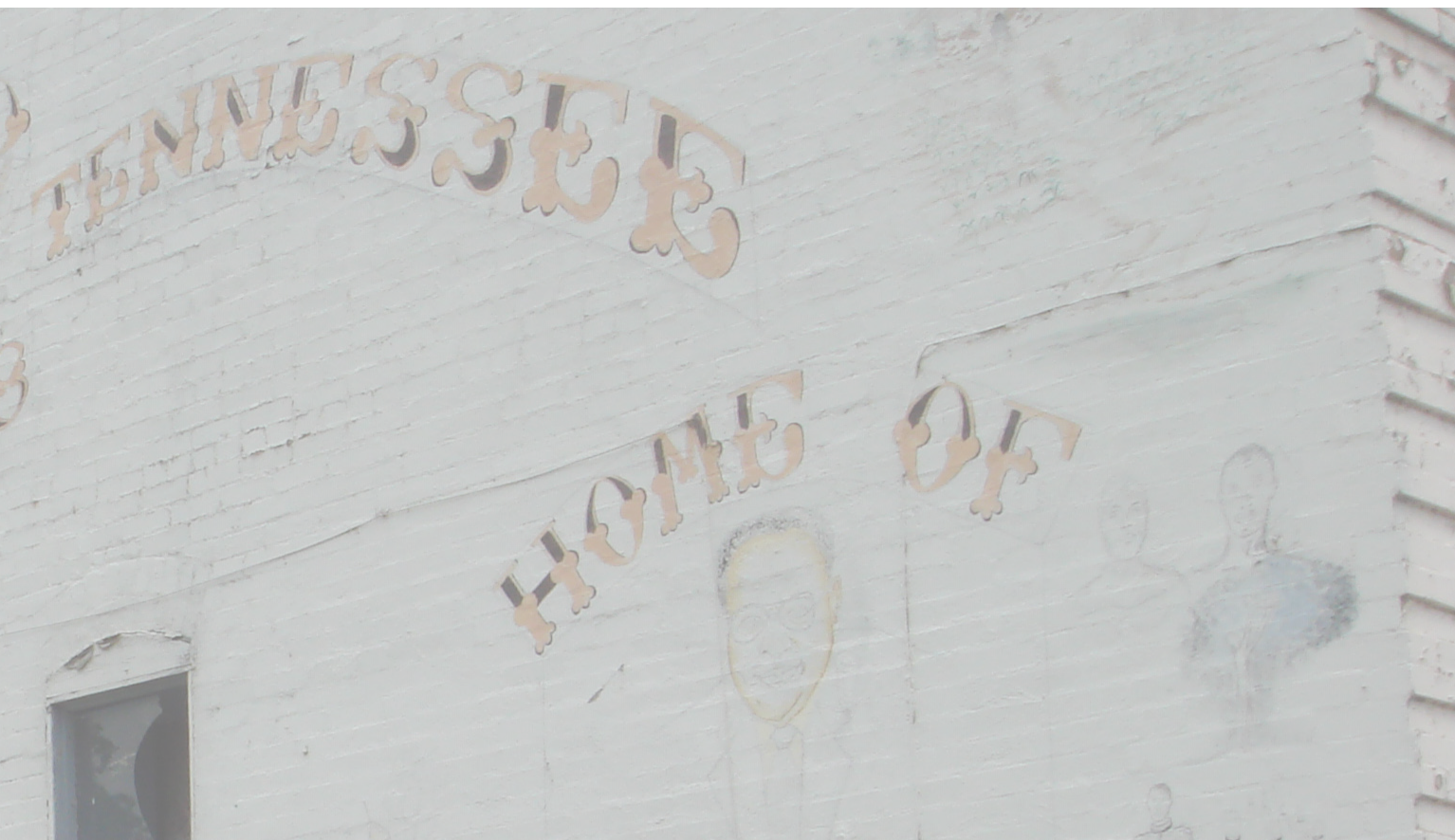




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Acknowledgements and Introduction



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Introduction and Background

Henning is a small and quaint town located in Lauderdale County, Tennessee some twenty miles east of the Mississippi River, and is perhaps best known as the boyhood home of Pulitzer Prize winning author Alex Haley. Established in 1873, Henning developed as an agricultural community and railroad stop. Today its major businesses include apparel manufacturer VF Enterprises, Reelfoot Lumber Company, BankCorp South, and several retail and service businesses. Nearby large employers with Henning addresses include the West Tennessee State Prison and Fort Pillow State Park.

Henning is a diverse community with a rich history and strong sense of pride and community spirit. It is one of the most diverse towns in the state with a 63% minority population, which includes the highest percentage of Native Americans of any town in Tennessee (3.8%). Additional demographic information is included in the appendix.

In addition to Alex Haley, Henning has produced several notable citizens. These include Blues guitarist John Henry Barbee and jug band performer Noah Lewis who were both pioneers in the development of Blues music, and more recently Jim Hickman, star outfielder on the original New York Mets team, and later with the Chicago Cubs. Also, Erle Palmer Halliburton, inventor and founder of the Halliburton Corporation, was born on a farm near Henning in 1892.

Once a town with a bustling Main Street and numerous stores, Henning, like many small towns, has seen businesses relocate to highway bypasses and bigger markets. Consequently, there are numerous vacant buildings and less pedestrian activity along Main Street. Many of these buildings are historic, dating to the turn of the Twentieth Century, yet are in need of repair or demolition in a few cases.

Senator Lamar Alexander recognized the particular needs of Henning, as well as its potential for revitalization, and initiated the effort to recast Henning as a town with recognized acclaim and sustained economic growth. The Regional Economic Development Center (REDC) at The University of Memphis was contacted by the Memphis Area Association of Governments to conduct an economic development study and revitalization plan for Henning. USDA Rural Development provided funding for this study through a matching grant to the Town of Henning.

REDC assembled a team with expertise in city planning, architecture, economic development, community participation, and fine arts. Our approach to assisting the Town of Henning is solidly based on community input from Henning citizens as to their needs, visions, and dreams for Henning. We took the community's ideas for redeveloping Henning, along with some ideas of our own, and explored the feasibility of several avenues for redevelopment. Some of the ideas and recommendations of this study reflect more common small town redevelopment practices, while others may be quite bold for the typical town the size of Henning.

Throughout our work with the citizens of Henning we found numerous community and economic development opportunities, many of which are unique to Henning. Most importantly, however, we found a community that is proud of its rich heritage and with a deep interest in working together to improve Henning and discovering new and exciting vehicles for change.





Part I

Public Input Findings



Public Input Findings

Introduction

Public input for the Economic Development Plan for Henning included two phases. Phase one occurred in winter 2008, at the beginning of the project, prior to the development of The University of Memphis recommendations. The purpose of phase one was to develop the community vision for Henning, Tennessee and to uncover pertinent information. Phase one of the public input included:

Focus Groups -

- The Advisory Committee (developed by the then Mayor Douglas) plus interested community members (20 attendees)
- Members of St. Mark Baptist Church (approximately 30 attendees)
- Residents of the Choctaw community in Henning, TN plus interested other community members (18 Choctaw residents, 2 representatives from the Choctaw MS Band, 2 African American residents)

Individual Interviews -

- Cubert Bell, unofficial Choctaw community leader and assistant director of Chucalissa Archeological Museum
- Nancy Allen, local banker with BankCorp South
- John Hendrix and Gilbert Thompson, Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians economic development officials

Phase two took place in late summer 2009. The purpose of this phase was to gather community feedback on the draft Economic Development Plan. Rather than a focus group format, input was gathered via public meetings open to all. The meetings began with a presentation by the University of Memphis about public input to date, research findings, and major recommended plan components. Participants then gave their feedback on the plan components. Meetings included:

- Town of Henning Board of Alderman meeting, with Mayor Bursey plus other interested community members (approximately 12 attendees)
- Town Hall meeting at the Alex Haley Museum Interpretive Center, general public and members of "The Henning Project", a story telling initiative (approximately 30 attendees)

Overall Findings

This section combines all of the public input into an overall vision and agreed upon opportunities.

- It appears that all participants agree on the following vision statements:
 - Henning is a full-service community with schools, a library, local shopping, activities for all ages, and more productive jobs.
 - Main Street is revitalized and has become a place to shop, eat, and gather.
 - Local heritage (African American and Choctaw) is utilized to attract and educate tourists.
 - Henning captures more tourist dollars through opportunities that keep tourists longer like restaurants, shops, and bed and breakfasts.
 - The Alex Haley Museum is a great asset that is fully capitalized on with things like a genealogy center and a family reunion site.
 - The community center is used to its fullest potential with productive and entertaining activities for all residents of Henning.

- There was general agreement on and enthusiasm for plan components and strategies developed by the University of Memphis using public input, which included:
 - Improvements to Main Street
 - Development of a central gathering places (i.e. an outdoor amphitheatre) and small pocket parks and greenways that would tie community sites together
 - Developing a storytelling initiative as a community engagement and community development strategy (dubbed by the community as “The Henning Project”)
 - Leveraging Henning’s Blues heritage as community development strategy
 - Developing a genealogy and reunion center as a community development strategy (leveraging the Museum)
 - Leveraging I-69 access to improve tourism
 - Tying into other cultural heritage sites for joint marketing
 - Creating a partnership between the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians to partially develop 90 acres of land for industry
 - Selling Choctaw goods and marketing that cultural heritage
 - Marketing Chicken George’s burial site (leveraging the Museum)
 - Holding community cultural events/festivals to attract tourists and unite the community
 - Organizing a Farmers’ Market with area farmers

Summaries of the three individual focus groups are included in the appendix.





Part II

Economic Development Opportunities



Economic Development Opportunities

This section presents means by which Henning can grow and diversify its economy, creating jobs and tax revenue, enhancing quality of life, and a greater sense of community. Based on existing strengths in the local economy and community input on the desired future for Henning we selected several potential economic generators for Henning to consider. These are grouped under four topics including retail development, development centered on the future I-69, increasing tourism, and the potential for involvement with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

Our recommendations are grounded in case studies of successful communities and in accepted economic development practice. Likewise, we have emphasized place based economic development programs that focus on the unique attributes that Henning has to offer. Importantly, these economic development objectives can be achieved by Henning, especially in collaboration with other Lauderdale County leaders and state agencies.

Retail Development

Henning residents have expressed the desire for a revitalized Main Street with places to shop, eat, and gather. While Ripley and Covington offer a more complete range of retail goods and services, many Henning residents prefer shopping closer to home with opportunities to stimulate local activity and a greater sense of community while also attracting tourist spending.

The following sections explore opportunities for expanding existing businesses or adding new businesses in Henning. Our analyses are based on capturing spending for consumer goods from both local residents and those living in surrounding communities. We will also present opportunities to gain additional trade from tourists and future interstate highway travelers.

Lauderdale County Retail Trade Analysis

This analysis compares the sales of existing Lauderdale County retail stores with expected household spending of Lauderdale County residents in order to determine the amount of local retail spending that is being spent elsewhere (“leakage” or retail sales gap). Significant spending outside the county by local residents may indicate opportunities to grow local businesses to capture part of the retail sales gap. A county level analysis, as opposed to Henning alone, was used due to the availability of public data and to better depict a more comprehensive retail trade market. Therefore, new businesses designed to capture this gap could logically be located in Henning or elsewhere in Lauderdale County.

Table 1, which follows, provides the comparison of household spending and retail sales for Lauderdale County based on county sales tax revenue and estimated consumer spending patterns.

Table 1
Retail Sales Gap Analysis - Lauderdale County

Estimated Total Households - 2008	10,402
Estimated Average Household Income	\$42,777
Estimated Aggregate Income - 2008	<u>\$444,966,354</u>
Percentage of Income Spent on Retail	38.4%
Estimated Total Retail Spending - 2008	<u>\$170,956,073</u>

Retail Spending/Household:		
Henning		\$16,262
Lauderdale County		\$16,435
Tennessee		\$20,221

Spending Allocation by Category	Store Category Allocation (Tennessee)	Estimated Spending by Lauderdale Residents	2008 Lauderdale County Retail Sales	Capture Rate	Resident Spending over/(under) Retail Sales	Retail Sales Gap
Motor Vehicles & Parts	15.2%	\$26,019,514	\$6,285,574	24.2%	19,733,940	19,733,940
Furniture & Home Furnishings	3.8%	6,427,948	3,048,451	47.4%	3,379,497	3,379,497
Building Materials & Garden Supply	6.6%	11,197,623	9,211,438	82.3%	1,986,185	1,986,185
Food & Beverage Stores	18.3%	31,284,961	37,613,301	120.2%	(6,328,340)	0
Gasoline Stations	6.1%	10,411,225	25,167,072	241.7%	(14,755,847)	0
Clothing & Accessories	3.2%	5,453,499	1,810,844	33.2%	3,642,655	3,642,655
Eating & Drinking Establishments	9.8%	16,770,791	13,361,752	79.7%	3,409,039	3,409,039
General Merchandise Stores	15.5%	26,515,287	49,274,748	185.8%	(22,759,461)	0
All Other Retail Categories	21.6%	36,875,225	39,065,278	105.9%	(2,190,053)	0
Total Retail Establishments	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>\$170,956,073</u>	<u>\$184,838,458</u>	<u>108.1%</u>		

Data Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Census of Retail Trade, & Tennessee Department of Revenue.

For 2008 we estimated that Lauderdale County households spent almost \$171 million for retail goods and retail businesses had sales of over \$184 million, indicating at least some businesses are attracting customers from outside the county.¹ The 108.1% capture rate indicates that about 8% of overall retail sales come from outside the county.²

This relatively high capture is mainly due to strength in two retail categories, General Merchandise Stores represented by the Super Wal-Mart in Ripley, and Gasoline Stations. Food Stores also have a high capture rate (120.2%) and food sales at Wal-Mart would actually increase Lauderdale County's capture of total grocery spending in the region. Consequently, it appears Lauderdale County is attracting customers from surrounding counties for general merchandise and grocery shopping. Higher than expected sales by gasoline stations may reflect high sales of convenience items as opposed to fuel sales.

However, businesses in several remaining retail categories have relatively low capture rates, indicated possible opportunities for growth. It should be noted that most counties without larger cities typically have lower capture rates in several retail categories, reflecting the attraction of larger markets with wider selection for some goods. Motor Vehicles has the largest retail sales gap (\$19.7 million), reflecting the absence of new car dealerships in Lauderdale County. Previously, Ripley had Chevrolet and Chrysler dealerships. Opportunities for new car dealerships would depend on assessment of the regional automobile market including Dyer, Haywood, and Tipton Counties.

Furniture & Home Furnishings stores also have low capture and almost \$3.4 million in sales gap, representing fairly significant retail potential. Building Materials (including hardware stores), while having a relatively high capture rate, has a sales gap of almost \$2 million.

Clothing & Accessories stores in Lauderdale County are only capturing one-third of the clothing expenditures of Lauderdale County households, suggesting that many residents are shopping elsewhere in the region. Consequently, reasonable opportunities may exist for additional stores to capture a portion of this \$3.6 million sales gap. Gaps in furniture, home furnishings, hardware, and apparel may be somewhat overstated in our analysis as these items are also sold by Wal-Mart, Dollar General, and other multi-line stores classified as a general merchandisers. Nevertheless, retail potential can exist for brands and price ranges not sold by these stores.

Eating & Drinking Establishments have a reasonably high capture rate of almost 80%, yet a significant gap of \$3.4 million was found. This retail potential could possibly support several smaller restaurants, and ideas are discussed in the following section.

1 Interestingly, retail spending per household in Henning is virtually the same as for Lauderdale County even though average incomes are lower (\$37,001 versus \$42,777). This results from lower percentages of income being spent on retail items as household incomes increase and spending is shifted to housing, savings, and other non-retail expenditures.

2 A capture rate of 100% indicates that retail sales are evenly matched with expected household spending. Capture rates below 100% reflect leakage to other retail markets, while capture rates above 100% indicate the category is attracting shoppers from outside the county.

Retail Potential in Henning

The above analysis is of Lauderdale County without respect to the specific location of either households or retailers. Certainly, as Ripley is the largest town in the county it has the greater number of businesses. Henning, like almost all small towns, does not have the population and household spending levels necessary to support the full range of retail businesses. However, new businesses can draw upon the much of Lauderdale County and surrounding markets if properly formatted and marketed for a broader audience. Henning does have an advantage of being strategically located midway between two larger towns, Ripley and Covington.

Specialty retail, perhaps drawing on existing strengths in Henning, and independently owned restaurants are examples of businesses that can create a niche market capable of reaching customers from greater distances. Small home furnishings or clothing stores offering unique or locally produced items could respond to the sales gaps identified above and afford selections not found in existing stores in the area. Likewise, such stores might well appeal to visitors to the Haley Museum and other tourists, particularly if a small collection of stores offered an interesting variety of shopping experiences. Storefronts along Main Street might afford the character and proximity to visitors important for these businesses.

At least initially, it would be important for specialty stores in Henning to be able to maintain low overhead until sales volumes increased to a sustainable level. This could be accomplished through a combination of relatively low rents (or rents based on a percentage of sales); reduced hours or days of operation to keep labor costs in line with sales, and possible financial incentives or low interest loans. An organized and comprehensive approach to retail recruitment and development, spearheaded by the Town, Chamber of Commerce, or other organization could help achieve success.

There are several good examples in this region where small towns similar to Henning in size and income levels have businesses, particularly restaurants, which draw customers from significant distances, including Memphis. Notable examples include Mason, Tennessee and three towns in northwest Mississippi: Como, Red Banks, and Taylor.

Como, Mississippi is similar to Henning in several important ways. Yet this town has become quite popular in the north Mississippi region as a destination for dining and entertainment. Over the past several years entrepreneurs have opened three popular restaurants and an art gallery. The Como Steak House was the first to open in 1988, and is said to serve 300 to 400 steaks on a weekend night. Two additional restaurants opened in 2002 and 2004.¹ Weekends in Como are often filled with live music either in the restaurants or outside in a nearby public park. Como regularly draws patrons from a forty mile range.

Como is in Panola County, about 40 miles south of Memphis, and between U.S. Highway 51 and I-55. Both Henning and Como downtowns are similar with a row of historic store fronts facing the railroad track. Importantly, demographics of the surrounding market are very similar, with each town having approximately the same population and household income levels within both a twenty and thirty minute drive time of their downtowns. Consequently, one can reason that Henning would have the same possibility of attracting out of town patrons with the right mix of local businesses.

¹ Mayer, Karen Ott (August 15, 2007) The Downtown Crowd: North Mississippi town offers fun dining experiences – with fewer crowds and smaller prices. [The Commercial Appeal](#).

Successful destination restaurants do not necessarily need to be elaborate or offer higher priced menus. Simple fare in a modest building is often as successful. Taylor, Mississippi, a hamlet outside Oxford, offers a good example of such a successful restaurant venture. The Taylor Grocery and Restaurant features catfish and is located in a rustic, almost dilapidated store front dating to 1899. Yet this popular restaurant draws large crowds from surrounding areas.¹ Coupling arts and crafts stores or entertainment with restaurants adds significantly to the enjoyment and attraction of “excursion dining.” One restaurant consultant says “one of the next big trends in cuisine will be a celebration of the small towns scattered across America.”²

Henning, like these other MidSouth towns, must attract customers from a wider region in order to have a strong and vibrant retail presence. And with assets including a tourism base in the Alex Haley Museum, a unique small town character, the Blues heritage, and a significant regional population, Henning has several key ingredients that can be coupled with creative retail businesses to attract more visitors to its downtown.

Henning’s Regional Market

While Henning’s population is small, there are many more households within a relatively short drive. Table 2 below shows market characteristics for areas that are within 10, 20, 30, and 45 minute drives from Main Street in downtown Henning.

Table 2
Henning Regional Market Characteristics
Based on Drive Time Radii From Downtown Henning

	10 Minutes	20 Minutes	30 Minutes	45 Minutes
Population	7,800	32,797	64,840	156,279
Households	3,307	12,680	25,166	59,900
Median Household Income	\$37,413	\$37,384	\$42,956	\$44,128
Total Retail Spending	\$66,146,893	\$257,159,625	\$479,406,980	\$1,181,517,197
Households over \$50,000	1,290	4,869	10,872	26,536
Households over \$75,000	556	2,181	5,335	14,017
Area Included in Drive Time Radius:	Henning, Ripley, & Tipton County north of Covington	10 Minutes + Covington & Hwy. 51 near Gates	20 Minutes + almost all Lauderdale, most of Tipton, & eastern Haywood (part of Brownsville)	30 Minutes + all Lauderdale, Dyersburg, most of Tipton, most of Haywood (incl. Brownsville), east Crockett, north Shelby, & NW Fayette Counties

Source: REDC calculations based on data from DemographicsNow and Bureau of Labor Statistics

Henning has an estimated 2008 population of 981, but the population within only a 10 minute drive increases almost eightfold to 7,800 with \$66 million in retail spending as parts of Ripley and the northern tip of Tipton County are included. A 20 minute drive incorporates a population of

¹ Edge, John T. (September 9, 1999) An Oxford tradition and damn good catfish, Taylor Grocery reopens. The Memphis Flyer. <http://www.memphisflyer.com/backissues/issue551/din551.htm>. Also see: www.taylorgrocery.com.

² Palmer, Sharon (April, 2007) Small-Town Dining: Revitalizing Main Street USA. Today’s Dietitian. Vol. 9, No.4.

almost 33,000. Ten and perhaps 20 minute drives are reasonable for many typical shopping trips, however, shopping destinations longer than 10 to 20 minutes would require that Henning offer goods or services not found closer to home.

While a 30 minute drive time may be too long for more typical convenience shopping in Lauderdale County, leisure shopping and eating out are frequently less time sensitive activities. Henning's 30 minute drive time radius includes much of Lauderdale and Tipton Counties and extends eastward to Brownsville, reaching a population of close to 65,000. The 45 minute drive from Henning extends from Dyersburg to Millington, Brownsville, and part of Crockett County, covering an area with over 150,000 people.

The above drive times are based on existing roads, with U.S. Hwy. 51 as the principal route for north/south travel. Eventually, I-69 will expand the range of these drive times, placing a significantly larger population within a 30 or 45 minute drive of Henning. I-69 will bring much of Shelby and Obion Counties to within a 45 minute drive of Henning.

Tennessee Main Street Program

Many communities benefit from on-going development programs that provide expertise throughout the revitalization effort. The Tennessee Main Street Program, administered by the Tennessee Department of Community and Economic Development, assists communities in revitalizing their downtown business districts through technical assistance in developing long term strategies that promote economic development. Main Street specialists provide information and training and help establish partnerships in support of comprehensive and incremental strategies, with an emphasis on maintaining the historic character of our downtowns. Innovation grants (\$15,000 in 2009) can be awarded to implement specific projects. Nearby towns participating in the program include Dyersburg, Union City, and Tiptonville. The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) also works with communities in developing retail strategies.

The Impact of Future I-69

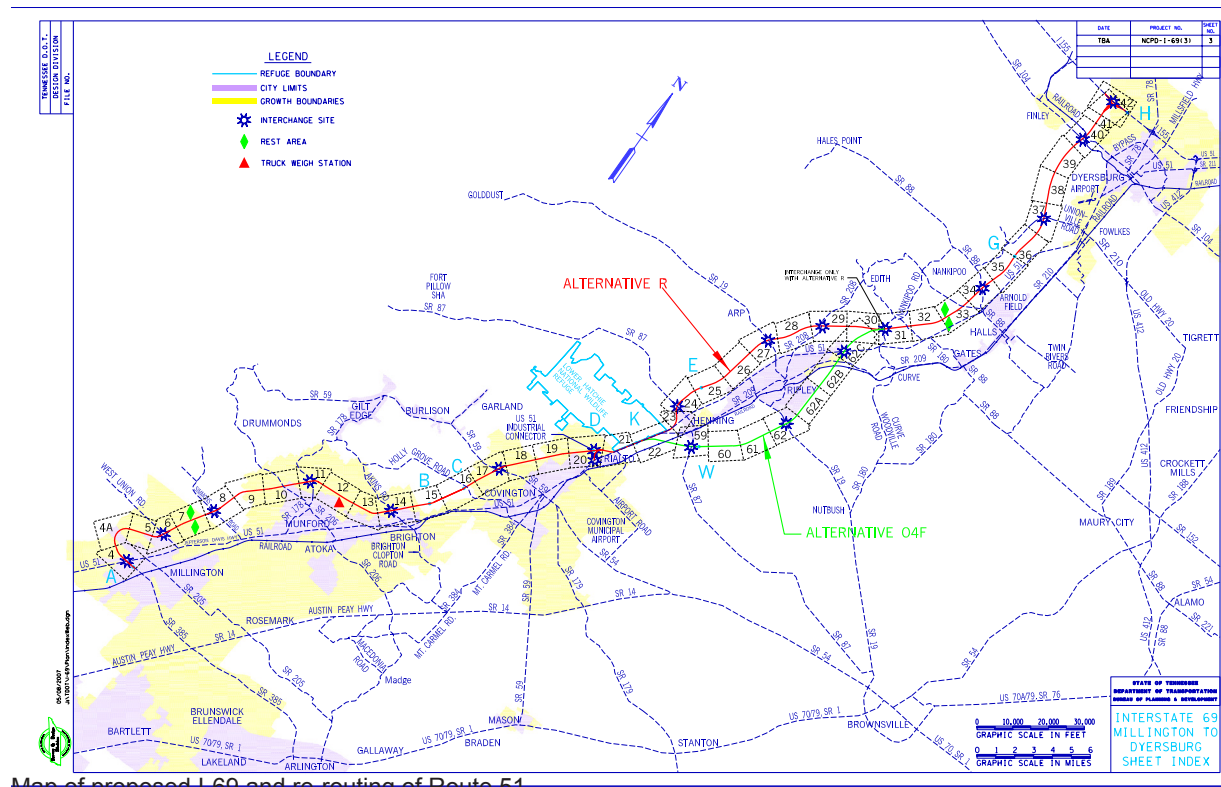
Within the next several years I-69, linking Port Huron, Michigan with the Mexican border, will better connect Henning with other communities in west Tennessee. In addition to transportation enhancements, goals for I-69 through west Tennessee include economic development opportunities for communities suffering from historically high unemployment and low wages.

Currently, the I-69 section between Millington and Dyersburg (SIU-8) is in the planning stages. The Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS)¹ is undergoing final review and should be submitted to the Federal Highway Administration in the first quarter of 2010. Once approved, the design phase will begin with preliminary plans and public hearings next summer. When final design is completed the project will be divided into smaller segments for prioritization and funding. Right-of-way acquisition will not begin until funding has been secured (80% federal, 20% state). Consequently, the overall time to completion for I-69 through Lauderdale County is not yet known^{2, 3}

1 Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement: Interstate 69 From SR 385 in Millington to I-155 in Dyersburg. Tennessee Department of Transportation May 2, 2008.

2 Telephone conversation with Steve Chipman, Project Manager, Tennessee Department of Transportation, Jackson, Tennessee, August 31, 2009.

3 According to TDOT, segments of SIU-8 in Tipton County may receive higher priority than Lauderdale County due to higher projected traffic volumes.



Map of proposed I-69 and re-routing of Route 51.

The Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement recommends Alternative O4F through Lauderdale County. This route places I-69 west of Highway 51 from Millington to Covington where it crosses over 51 above the Hatchie River and goes east of Highway 51 and Henning to north of Ripley where it follows Highway 51 to Dyersburg.

Table 3 shows projected traffic volumes for I-69 and Highway 51 for the base year 2010 and for 2030. Interstate traffic near Henning will grow to over 32,000 vehicles over the next 20 years, while traffic on Highway 51 will decline from its current level of 25,470 vehicles per day to 16,560 by 2030 as it will primarily carry local traffic once I-69 opens.

Table 3
Projected I-69 & Highway 51 Average Daily Traffic Counts (ADT)
I-69 Segment Near Henning

	Highway 51		I - 69	
	2010	2030	2010	2030
Existing Hwy. 51 without I-69	25,470	40,750	0	0
Existing Hwy. 51 with I-69 Traffic ⁽¹⁾	25,470	49,550	0	0
I-69 with Alternate O4F ⁽²⁾	8,910	17,340	16,560	32,210

(1) Assumes no interstate segment in Tennessee but traffic from remainder of I-69

(2) Alignment east of Hwy. 51 and Henning from Hatchie River to north of Ripley

Note: Traffic counts are between S.R. 59/54 (Covington) and S.R. 87 (Henning).

Source: Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT).

We have identified four impacts the new interstate can have on Henning: 1) commercial development at interchanges, 2) decreased traffic along Highway 51, 3) the need to attract I-69 traffic to downtown Henning, and 4) the potential for new residential development. Following are comments on how Henning may consider capitalizing on the interstate, using it as a vehicle for positive change.

Interchange Development

Henning will likely be served by two I-69 interchanges according to TDOT, one immediately south of town where I-69 crosses Highway 51 and a second at Highway 87 east of Henning. The I-69/Highway 51 interchange will be located immediately east of Alex Haley Park, with Highway 51 being realigned to the east of the rest area park to accommodate the interchange (see map following). This interchange will be approximately 1.8 miles south of downtown Henning. As a state highway, Highway 87 is also slated for an interchange, and this interchange will be only 0.7 mile from downtown. Highway 87 narrows to one lane under the CN Railroad overpass, and would typically require widening according to TDOT.

These interchanges will provide commercial development potential for businesses serving the traveling public as well as local residents. Typical interchange businesses include gas stations, restaurants (fast food and sit down), motels, convenience stores and campgrounds. Depending on nearby residential buying power, discount stores, auto dealers, supermarkets and other.

Establishments are also common at interchanges. Several factors have been identified that influence the extent of development at or near freeway interchanges.¹ These include local population within one mile, distance to town, cross street traffic volumes, prior development near the exit, and competition from nearby exits and between the interchange and town. Most interchange retail businesses must rely on both expressway and local customers, with cross street traffic volumes being especially important for motels and sit down restaurants. Consequently, the interchange with Highway 51 will likely have greater business potential.

Interchange development will present the opportunity for Henning and neighboring communities to attract chain restaurants, other retailers, and entertainment attractions that may not be supportable by the local population alone. These amenities can help strengthen tourism development in Henning, complementing other components of Henning's revitalization. Additionally, decreased drive times will make it easier for residents in north Lauderdale and Tipton County to reach Henning businesses.

Currently, neither interchange site is located within the Henning city limits, however they are within Henning's annexation reserve area. Eventual annexation would allow Henning to collect property and sales tax revenues from any businesses locating near the interchanges, and could also afford the opportunity to exercise development control and design guidelines.

¹ Hartgen, D.T. & Kim, J.Y. (1998) Commercial development at rural and small-town interstate exits. Transportation Research Record, (1649) 95-104.

Highway 51 Traffic Volumes

I-69 will ease traffic congestion in many spots along Highway 51 but will remove many through travelers from the highway. Table 3 reveals that close to two-thirds of Highway 51 traffic will shift to I-69. Consequently, Highway 51 will have much less importance as a commercial corridor in the future. Henning does not have the level of extensive commercial development along Highway 51 as some communities in west Tennessee and therefore should not experience significant business disruption when the interstate opens.

Attracting I-69 Traffic to Downtown Henning

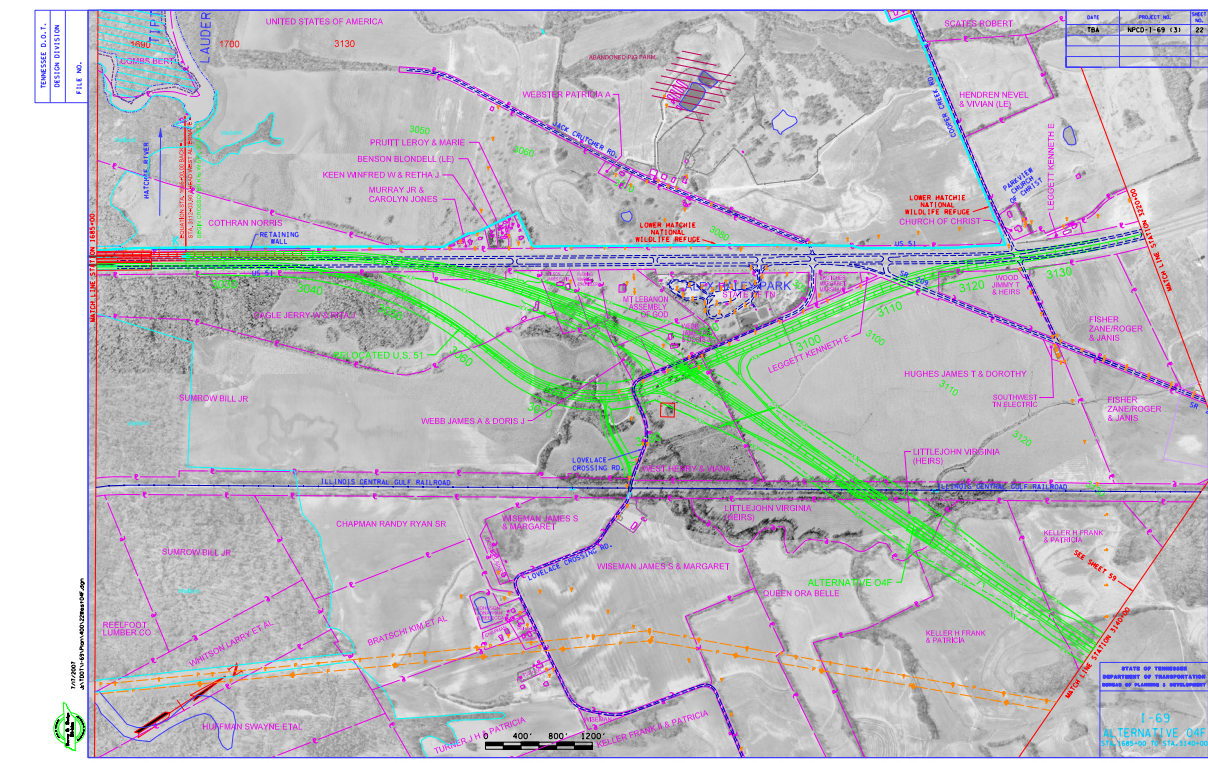
Henning's two interchanges will present an excellent opportunity to attract the I-69 traveler to downtown Henning. The short distances between the interchanges and town are especially important as most through travelers prefer not to venture great distances from an interstate highway. Well executed signage and inviting gateways will be important in motivating and leading tourists and other travelers to make the choice to stop and visit Henning. The goal should be to get the traveler beyond just the service businesses near the interchange.

Recommendations presented in the design section of this report, along with highway promotion of Henning's visitor amenities, will be central to establishing Henning as an exciting place to visit. The Town of Henning should work closely with the Tennessee Department of Transportation in achieving these results.

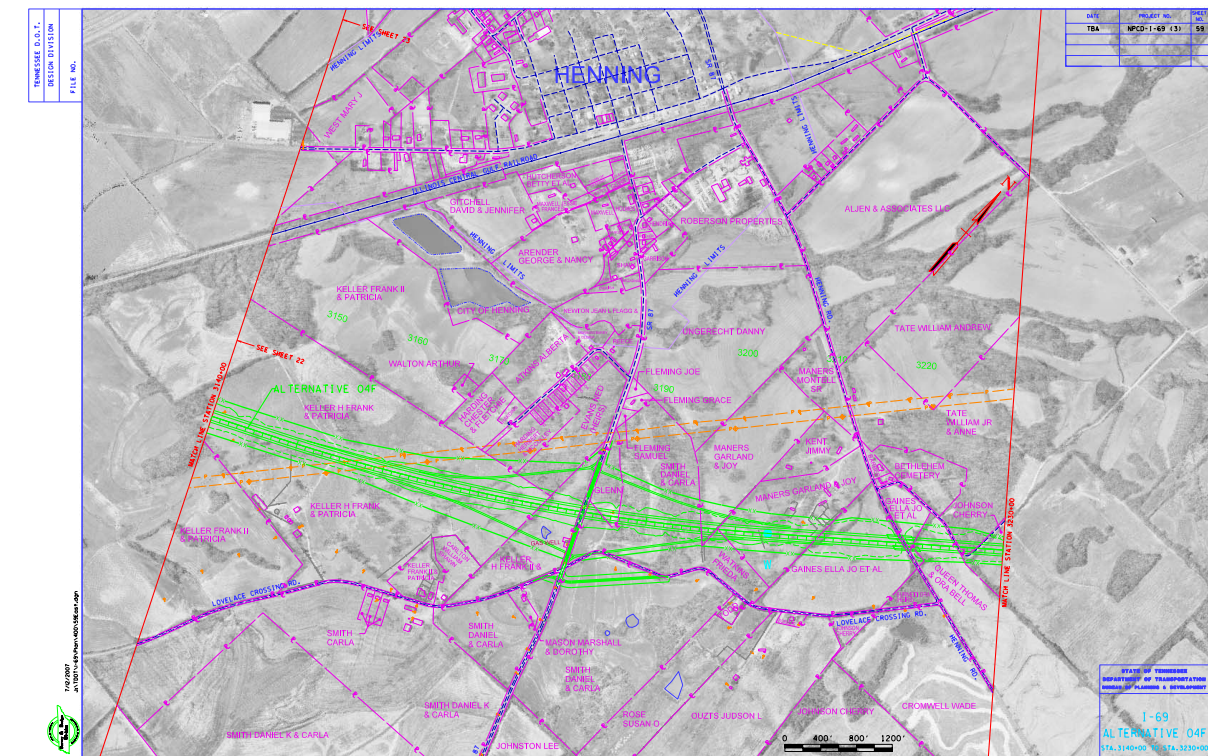


Current approach heading North onto Main Street from Highway 51.

I-69/Highway 51 Interchange South of Henning



I-69/Highway 87 Interchange East of Henning



Residential Development

The I-69 corridor will bring additional existing employment centers to within a relatively short commute from Henning as drive times between towns shorten. This can possibly afford Henning an opportunity to gain residents that work in larger towns. When I-69 is completed, employment centers in north Shelby County and Dyer County will be within commuting distance of Henning. The demand for significant additional housing along the I-69 corridor will also depend on how successful the interstate becomes in attracting new industry to the region. As Henning's revitalization occurs, the town will have the opportunity to define itself as a community with the amenities desired by small town residents.

While unrelated to I-69, the TVA "megasite" in southwest Haywood County near Stanton could potentially create housing demand in Henning. This major industrial park is to be built to attract large industries including auto assembly plants and can eventually employ several thousand workers. The megasite will be between a 30 to 45 minute commute of Henning.

Tourism Development

Both Henning residents and the University of Memphis team see opportunities to further develop Henning's tourism base. The Alex Haley Home and Museum has been a strong magnet for attracting visitors to Henning for many years, and the opening of its new interpretive center will afford greater opportunities for programming and community outreach. Our focus groups with Henning residents revealed a strong interest in expanding the use of local heritage (particularly African American and Choctaw) to attract and educate tourists. Tourism and its economic impact fit well with the community's desires to revitalize Main Street, enhance the Haley Museum, and create a more vibrant community full of activity and a growing economy.

Henning, Lauderdale County, and surrounding areas offer many opportunities for expanding tourism.¹ In addition to the Alex Haley Museum with over 3,000 visitors each year, Fort Pillow State Park is located near Henning. Fort Pillow has 220,000 visitors per year and Highway 87 at Henning provides the only direct route for most to reach the park. Lauderdale County has numerous other tourist related assets including the first Chickasaw Bluff, the Hatchie River, two national wildlife refuges, Ripley's renovated town square, among others. Henning's tourism possibilities are further bolstered by its connection to Blues musicians, both historically and in the present.

An initiative to stimulate tourism in Henning and Lauderdale County would be coming at an excellent time to join with neighboring communities to foster tourism in a concerted effort. Mississippi River Corridor - Tennessee, Inc. (MRCT), a Memphis based non profit organization focusing on stimulating interest and appreciation of the Mississippi River, is currently in the planning stages for a significant effort to develop tourism and tourism based enhancements in the six counties bordering the Mississippi River – Shelby, Tipton, Lauderdale, Dyer, Lake, and Obion.

A recently completed study prepared for MRCT outlines scores of assets in this six county region that contribute to west Tennessee's attractiveness as a tourist destination.² Additionally, the plan

1 The University of Tennessee Tourism Institute estimates that Lauderdale County currently (2006) generates over \$13 billion in direct tourist spending for lodging, retail, transportation, and entertainment.

2 Environmental Systems Enhancement Plan for the Mississippi River Corridor in Tennessee. Regional Economic Development Center, The University of Memphis (June, 2009).

proposes three tourist routes through the corridor, including the Great River Road which becomes a National Scenic Byway on October 16, 2009. The Great River Road will come through Henning via Highway 87 from the west to southbound Highway 51.

Significant regional and national growth is expected in tourist activities that specifically relate to Henning attractions and the recommendations discussed below. Visiting historic places, sightseeing, and family gathering are all projected to grow at rates well above population growth in the south over the next few decades. For instance, participation in visiting historic places and sightseeing will increase over 60% between 2010 and 2050.¹

Ethnic tourism (African American and Hispanic in particular) is gaining a much greater importance in American travel and Henning should position its tourism resources to capitalize on this trend. This growth is driven by increasing incomes and projections that indicate minorities will comprise 47% of the U.S. population by 2050. Noteworthy findings from national surveys show that African American tourists outrank others in visiting historic places and museums, shopping, and attending cultural events and festivals. Also, the method of travel can differ for African American tourists; compared with travelers overall, group tours are three times more popular with African American tourists.^{2, 3}

In addition to the Alex Haley Museum and Fort Pillow, Henning residents and the University of Memphis consultants identified several other promising opportunities to help establish Henning as a tourist destination. These include: developing Henning into a popular location for family reunions, establishing a genealogy center, using storytelling events to strengthen the sense of community and draw tourists, cultural events and festivals, a farmers' market, opening a bed and breakfast, building on the Blues tradition, and publicizing Chicken George's burial site.

Henning is fortunate to have multiple opportunities for tourism development. Linkages tying these different attractions together can create a more comprehensive visitor experience and appeal to different interests and experiences. "By packaging diverse attractions together, a rural region can create visitor appeal with a critical mass of things to see and do" and "pooling human and financial resources shares the burden of responsibility."⁴

Following are comments on how Henning can capitalize on several of the above opportunities for increasing tourism. Further explanation can be found in the other sections of this report.

Alex Haley Home and Museum

Given that the Alex Haley Home and Museum is already an important asset in Henning with a history of drawing visitors from around the country this study includes a component focusing on enhancing the museum's future potential as a tourism magnet. Shannon Dixon, a specialist in non-profit development and member of our team, worked with the museum's Board of Directors primarily on conducting grant research, the topic they felt was most important to the museum's growth.

1 Compiled from: Bowker, J. et al. (1995) Projections of Outdoor Recreation Participation to 2050. USDA Forest Service, Athens, GA.

2 Whigham-Desir, M. (December, 1996). Ethnic travel is vital to American tourism. Black Enterprise.

3 Travel Industry of America. 2007 Factsheet.

4 Stories across America: Opportunities for rural tourism. National Trust for Historic Preservation (2001).

A detailed review of grant opportunities appropriate for the Haley Museum was undertaken and a grant monitoring system was established for the museum's use in tracking grant applications. Assistance was also provided in applying for a grant through Humanities Tennessee. If funded, this grant will provide a museum consultant for an organizational assessment and partnership in Humanities Tennessee's Community History Development Fund. This grant can provide an excellent springboard for the Haley Museum to further their planning efforts and pursue additional grant programs.

Other opportunities might include developing a strong working relationship with the National Civil Rights Museum. Joint marketing and programming efforts would benefit each museum, and the Haley Museum could potentially draw on the specialized expertise of the Civil Rights Museum's professional staff.

It has been suggested that the Haley Museum pursue a high profile African American personality (perhaps with a MidSouth connection) for membership on the museum's Board of Directors. This could be considered as an opportunity for the museum to gain greater national attention, and the possibility this individual could assist in garnering resources for the museum.

Furthermore, the Haley Museum can have a significant role in advancing our other tourism based recommendations including a genealogy center and family reunion site discussed below.

Family Reunions

Recognizing that Henning is already the site for at least some family reunions, residents suggested that the town could focus on becoming a mecca for family reunions. The community center, Alex Haley Museum, and surrounding open spaces could be sites capable of handling large numbers of family members.

There is considerable evidence documenting the rapid growth of family reunions, especially among African American extended families, and the positive economic impacts these events can bring to communities. Forty-five percent of African American travel is reported to be associated with a family reunion,¹ and this growth in family reunions has been traced to Alex Haley and *Roots*.^{2,3}

Around the country chambers of commerce, tourism bureaus, and service providers are hiring consultants and courting family reunion planners. Major cities, including Philadelphia, Atlanta, and Memphis, and much smaller cities are heavily involved in pursuing family reunions.⁴ Family reunions can have significant benefits for local businesses by creating demand for lodging, catering, facility rental, entertainment, logo apparel, and other goods and services. The Greenville, North Carolina Convention and Visitors Bureau offers a complete array of reunion planning services, and African American family reunions provide the bulk of the town's visitors.⁵

1 How to plan the best family reunion – Statistical data included. (April, 2002) Ebony.

2 Ibid.

3 Vargus, Ione (2002). More than a picnic: African American family reunions. The Emory Center for Myth and Ritual in American Life, and the Family Reunion Institute, Temple University.

4 Davis, Kimberly (September, 2004) Black America's multimillion dollar reunion season. Ebony.

5 Stories across America: Opportunities for rural tourism. National Trust for Historic Preservation (2001).

Henning has the basics ingredients to serve as a reunion center. The Palmer Community Center has kitchen facilities and meeting rooms and the Haley Museum and Interpretive Center afford an excellent venue for a focus on African American heritage. Ample open space for picnic tables, parking, and outdoor activities can be found close to either facility. An amphitheater, downtown improvements, and other elements included in this report would add to Henning's attractiveness as a popular reunion site. Henning's proximity to Memphis would be positive for two reasons, 1) a large population that could select Henning as a family reunion site, and 2) a popular traveler destination for families from outside the region.

Entering the family reunion business should not be an overly expensive undertaking and could be started on a gradual or more limited basis. It would require some expenditure for basic visitor amenities and on-going promotional efforts including a web presence. At least part-time staffing would be required for marketing, handling arrangements, and coordinating vendors. These activities could be accomplished by the Haley Museum or other non-profit or as a private business venture. The family reunion business is highly seasonal, with most reunions occurring in the summer months.

Genealogical Research Center

Another focus on family life and heritage, African American genealogical research, also came from our community input. The idea of the Alex Haley Home and Museum, or another organization, developing a center for African American genealogical research fits very well with the life work of Mr. Haley. National organizations focusing on African American genealogical research include the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society, Inc. (AAHGS) headquartered in Washington, DC¹ and The Center for African American Genealogical Research, Inc. (CAAGRI) in Fredericksburg, Virginia.² AAHGS has local chapters around the country, with the closest being in Nashville. Its mission is to support genealogical research and create networks of members with similar interests. AAHGS does not provide research services to the public.

While there are numerous places for genealogical research around the country as well as many online resources, The Center for African American Genealogical Research indicates it is the only organization in the world that offers a physical location specifically for African American genealogical research. CAAGRI also plans and hosts family reunions.

Establishing a center for genealogical research in Henning would require expenditures for computer equipment, databases, and the employment of staff with expertise in genealogical research methods. However, interest in African American genealogical research is growing and a research center focused on assisting the public with family histories could provide revenue and recognition for the Haley Museum and Henning. The combination of genealogical research or seminars, and learning about Alex Haley would be excellent components of a family reunion program.

Henning's central location relative to the U.S. African American population, along with relative proximity to a major commercial airport and AMTRAK, adds significantly to its marketability for family reunions. And it would be difficult to find a more suitable place for either a genealogy center or a site for family reunions than Henning, with its legacy of Alex Haley and *Roots*.

1 AAHGS website at: www.aahgs.org.

2 CAAGRI website at: www.caagri.org.

Arts Based Tourism

Arts based community development projects can be key elements of revitalization efforts in two major ways: 1) helping build focus, communication, and a stronger sense of community, and 2) as integral components of tourism attraction and economic development. Furthermore, both formal and informal arts activities have been shown to have positive relationships with community improvement through growth in population and housing values and the reduction of crime.¹ Details are provided later in this report on ideas for developing the visual and performing arts in Henning. These include storytelling and oral history, murals, the Blues music tradition, and creation of an artist village.

Each of the above arts based programs has proved successful in other small towns. In Jonesborough, Tennessee and Colquitt, Georgia storytelling has developed into large festivals and plays that bring thousands of visitors to town. A storytelling initiative (“The Henning Project”) has already begun in Henning, with its first story circle held at the Haley Interpretive Center in September.

The Trail of the Hellhound in Louisiana and Mississippi, along with events in Mississippi, and Beale Street, form a Blues corridor that Henning could capitalize on. Henning is halfway between the Chicago Blues to the north and the Delta Blues in the south. Henning has a history in the Blues tradition, and has several more authentic Blues clubs currently in operation. Blues festivals and open air concerts could attract visitors and create exciting Main Street events.

Henning’s Choctaw community can add to the richness and diversity of artistic expression and tourism growth through festivals and selling Choctaw heritage items. A small store or other venue could offer products and educational programming relative to the Choctaw culture and history. We are not aware of other locations in the immediate region that offer Native American items.

Concepts for an artist village are presented in the design element of this report. Attracting artists or musicians to Henning would add to the tourist appeal, bring businesses such as galleries to town, and the benefits of highly creative citizens. This endeavor would most likely require some form of financial incentive and a marketing program to attract artists to move to Henning. However, Paducah, Kentucky has a very successful artist attraction program based on offering low interest home loans to relocate in their historic district.

Pedestrian-Friendly Downtowns

At one of our community forums long time city leader Mr. Fred Montgomery commented that Henning is a walkable town, with many important assets – Main Street, the Alex Haley Home and Museum, and community center – within an easy walk of each other. Due to its rather compact layout, Henning is one of the few towns where residents and visitors can easily walk from shopping to museums or entertainment. This walkability concept is being re-designed into communities around the country by architects and city planners, and we believe this can be an important vision statement and design element for Henning. Pedestrian-friendly places encourage multiple activities while in town and can help in marketing different attractions and events to visitors.

¹ Taylor, G. (2008). Magnetizing neighborhoods through amateur arts performance. Metro Chicago Information Center.

Choctaw Nation Economic Development Opportunities

There has been a significant Choctaw presence in Henning and Lauderdale County since the 1950s. In addition to land used for housing and recreation, the Choctaw Nation owns 90 acres of undeveloped land southwest of the intersection of Highways 51 and 87. Our focus group with Choctaw residents and subsequent conversations reveal a strong interest in industrial development of this land in conjunction with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, of which the Henning Choctaws are enrolled members.

Headquartered in Philadelphia, Mississippi, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MBCI) has extensive business holdings throughout Mississippi, in addition to a full complement of government services, schools, and healthcare. With over 8,000 employees the MBCI is considered one of the top tribes in economic development and one of the largest employers in Mississippi, having a \$1.23 billion annual economic impact. MBCI owns and operates a diverse portfolio of manufacturing, service, retail, and tourism enterprises. Businesses include automotive, aerospace, and defense manufacturing, forestry management, industrial parks, shopping centers, golf resorts, and casinos.¹

Several economic advantages and financial incentives provided by the federal government can apply to tribal commercial ventures and non-tribal businesses located on trust status land. These may include New Market Tax Credits, Employment Tax Credits, accelerated depreciation for non-tribal manufacturers, tax-exempt bond financing, exemption from state taxes on leases, federal contracting preferences through the HubZone program, and establishment as a foreign trade zone.²

Our conversations with economic development officials with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians indicate they have no current plans for the Henning property as it is not in trust land status. However, if trust land status were obtained MBCI would be interested in exploring business development opportunities on the Henning property. Under trust status tribal land is held by the federal government in a trust for the benefit of the tribe. The land is held under tribal government authority and is generally not subject to state laws nor subject to state taxation. Land use under trust status is, however, subject to approval by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Trust status can be granted by the U.S. Department of the Interior through an application to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and requires consideration of local input and impacts on the surrounding community. It should be noted that trust status alone does not allow for gaming activities, which are regulated by the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988 (IGRA). An opinion by the Tennessee Attorney General finds that to establish gaming enterprises on trust land requires the Department of Interior to determine that gambling would be in the best interest of the surrounding community, *and* for the governor of the state to concur.³ Significant investigation and study would be required before gaming would be allowed in Lauderdale County.

In addition to federal incentives, the MBCI offers workforce development programs providing custom job training for employers they contract with. For small businesses they offer low interest

1 Additional information on MBCI industries can be found at www.choctaw.org.

2 Juarez, D. & Galanda, G. Leveraging tribal sovereign economic advantages to attract private investment in Indian country. Williams-Kastner Law Firm, Seattle. Accessed from <http://www.williamskastner.com> on 9/15/09.

3 Ability of federally recognized Indian tribes to conduct gambling activities in Tennessee. Opinion No. 08-90 (April 8, 2008). Office of the Attorney General, State of Tennessee.

loans to tribal members to start businesses. Convenience stores are often of interest for this loan program.

An interest in sharing Choctaw heritage through a shop selling art, crafts and food was expressed in our focus group with the Choctaw community. Cultural heritage items can be sold in conjunction with convenience stores or other businesses, but generally do not provide sufficient revenue for stand-alone stores according to economic development officials with MBCI. Nevertheless, there may be profitable opportunities to sell Choctaw heritage or food products in conjunction with another venture in Henning, or on a more limited basis with a suitable location and affordable rent payments.

Economic development officials with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians expressed a strong interest in meeting with leaders of Henning and Lauderdale County to explore possible business development opportunities in Henning. They will need to become familiar with the Lauderdale County economy to see how their business interests might fit with the local economy. MBCI would like for Henning and Lauderdale County officials to visit their operations in Mississippi and to speak with local government officials regarding their economic impact on surrounding communities.





Physical and Environmental Conditions

General Procedures and Findings

The predominant zoning classifications and land uses within the overall study area are residential and commercial with some public and other classifications.

Overall, the environmental conditions within the study area are mixed, with some areas well-maintained and others in need of improvements. Negative conditions such as concentrations of weeds and vegetation, trash and garbage, as well as areas with ponding water are present in several places within the town although efforts to remedy these problems have been made. Most of these may be remedied through active code enforcement and implementation of the improvements proposed herein.

Based on visual analysis without entering any structure, conditions range from standard condition to structures that are dilapidated and in need of demolition. However, the majority of buildings appear to be sound with only rehabilitation or “paint-up fix-up” improvements needed, if any. But, without some form of improvements, some of these structures are at risk for continued deterioration, ultimately resulting in serious problems possibly requiring demolition. This is especially significant for the vacant buildings, some of which appear abandoned.



The first approach into downtown is met with an opportunity of renovation on the corner of Main Street and Haley Avenue. This building is one of the first sites visitors would pass on their way to The Haley Museum when parking by the Town Hall and walking. The back door is also missing, giving a clear view into an area of disrepair. This is an ideal location for retail and/or mixed-use of housing and retail space for capturing the tourism market. (see recommendation)



The building on the corner of McFarlin Avenue and Main Street is owned by the Town of Henning and has great promise if renovated and/or reconfigured. (see recommendations).



Historic landmarks that have great stories attached to them (as above and below) are in need of minor or major repair and could be renovated reopened and included on historic walking tours.

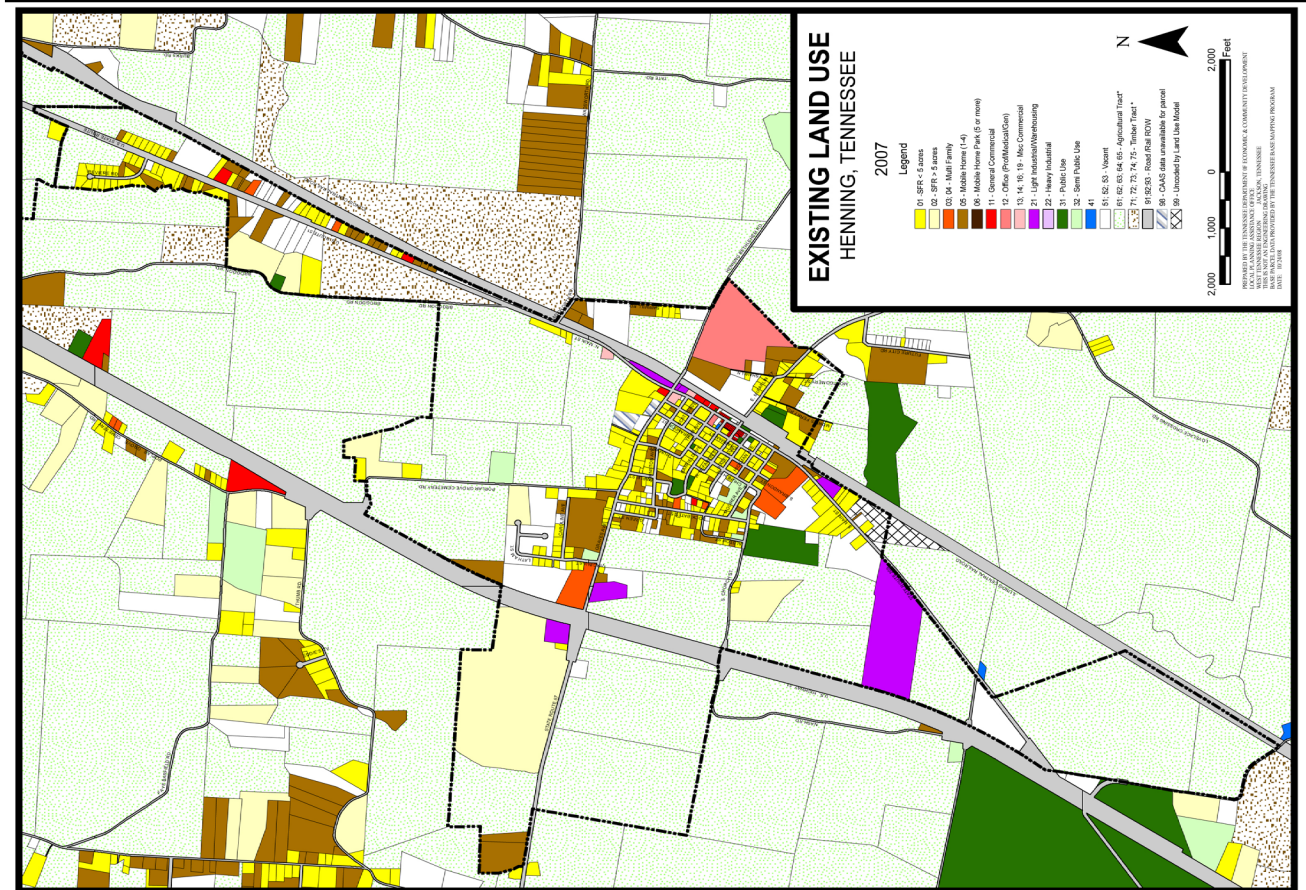
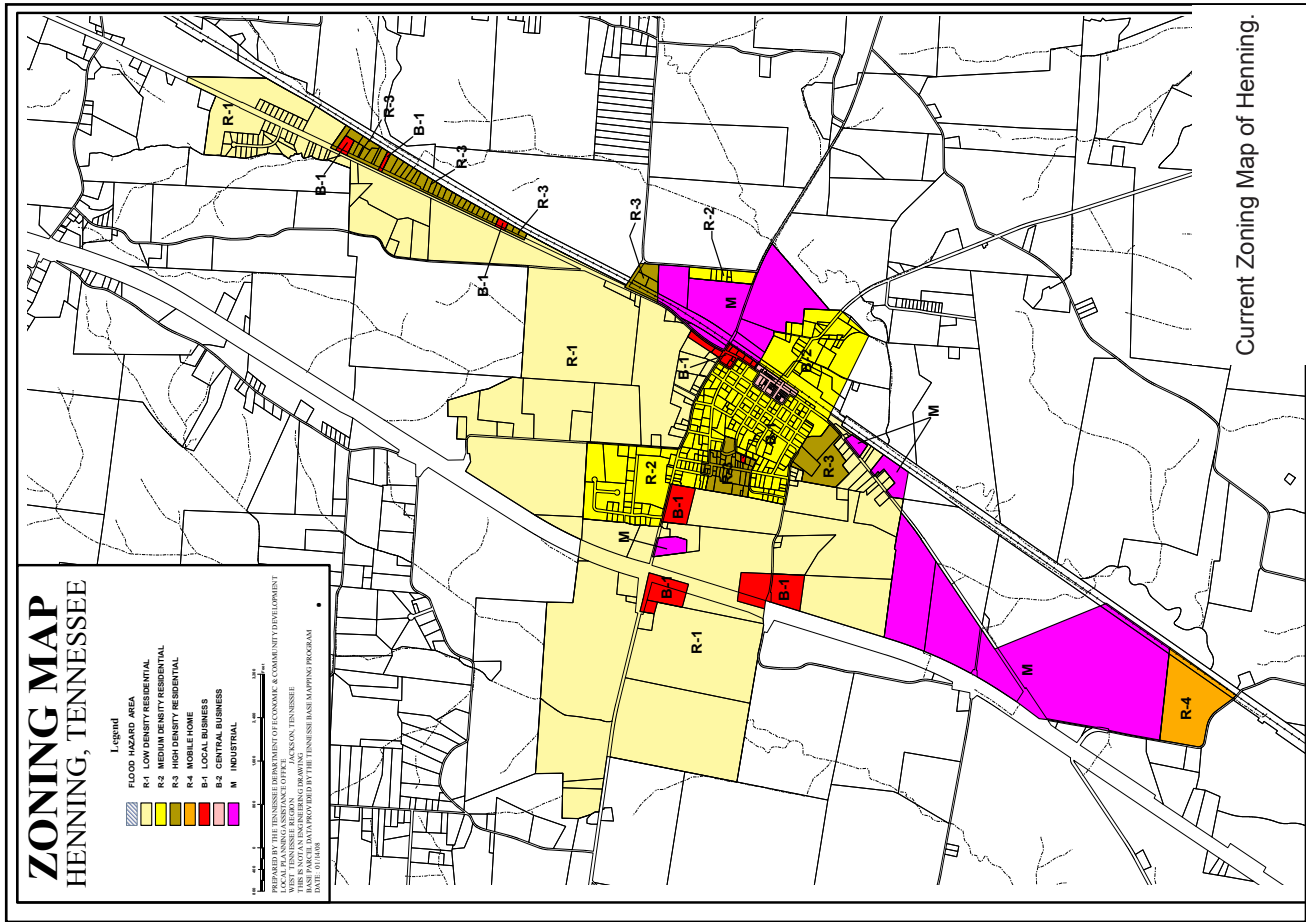


Several conditions were identified relative to public infrastructure needs. Foremost, the traffic on U.S. Highway 51, especially heavy commercial trucks, creates potentially dangerous situations. Studies indicate the construction of the proposed Interstate 69 will likely reduce the volume of traffic on Highway 51 but improvements are needed to the streets connecting I-69 with the Town of Henning. This may also include improvements to the railroad grade separations.

Signage is difficult to read and may result in missed opportunities. More visible signage at the entrances into Henning may increase opportunities for merchants on Main Street. This includes signage for the Alex Haley Museum and Visitor's Center.

Based on general observations, the storm drainage system appears to be adequate within most of the area but problems exist within the Flood Hazard Zone. Ponding water was observed in several locations within the area. This could be remedied by public improvements. Street and sidewalk conditions were found to need repairs in several areas.





Physical and Environmental Analysis: Urban Design and Development

Overview

Urban design is the means by which to provide a cohesive plan for the physical form of an area. It incorporates both the existing and the proposed built and natural elements of the environment. Adding physical and economic development opportunities within the context of urban design allows for the creation of a cohesive vision plan.

Successful revitalization builds upon the character and opportunities of an area. The character of Henning comes from a combination of diverse elements including its history, its existing buildings, many of which have special architectural features, its variety of businesses, and from its physical location. This opportunity includes the commercial district fronting Main Street, the community center, the Haley complex, its proximity to Memphis, the future Interstate Highway 69 and the various recommendations contained herein.

Goals

In order to establish a framework to guide the planning process, a set of goals were developed. These are based upon environmental assessment findings by the study team as well as from information gathered as a result of meetings with public and private sector officials and from the public meetings.

1. Viable commercial area centered on Main Street
2. Aesthetically pleasing and safe community
3. Gateways and linkages to surrounding areas
4. Enhanced sense of place based on cultural and heritage tourism
5. Planning for the future with Interstate 69

To accomplish the aforementioned goals, a set of recommendations was developed. These recommendations, listed below, and the goals listed above, are described in detail in the following section Part III.

Recommendations

1. Develop a comprehensive revitalization program for Main Street
2. Promote mixed-use development within the Main Street area
3. Implement a streetscape and public infrastructure improvements program
4. Develop a program to enhance signage aesthetically and functionally
5. Develop a series of gateways into the Town of Henning
6. Establish an aesthetic link throughout the area to create continuity
7. Establish the Haley Museum complex as a cultural tourism hub
8. Promote the development of “affordable” housing
9. Develop a creative village community
10. Identify special opportunities and prepare for changes brought on by Interstate 69

Conclusion

The Town of Henning and private property owners and tenants within the area have made significant efforts to enhance the quality of life. However, additional actions are required in order to achieve the overall goals as set forth herein.

Building upon plans already in place, this document provides a framework for future planning for the physical as well as economic revitalization of Henning. The civic structure is in place to permit these actions. Planning should be considered an ongoing process with incremental as well as large-scale projects and activities.







Part III

Recommendations



Recommendations - Economic Development

The following recommendations for Henning's revitalization efforts recap ideas and suggestions presented in the preceding sections of this report. This is not an exhaustive list of the potential actions that the Town of Henning and its citizens and partners can undertake to enhance community and economic development, and other ideas and action steps may develop along the way.

These recommendations should be reviewed and discussed to determine which objectives are desired for Henning, which recommendations warrant action at this time, and who should assume responsibility. Many of our recommendation can be pursued incrementally, and revitalization efforts should be expected to take place over several years time.

Henning should reach out to surrounding communities, Lauderdale County government, the Lauderdale County Chamber of Commerce, various state and federal agencies, non-profit organizations, the private sector, and elected officials in its revitalization efforts. Henning's revitalization and growth should be viewed as a regional effort with regional benefits.

Initial Recommendations:

1. The Mayor and/or Board of Aldermen should appoint an advisory committee to review the report findings and make suggestions regarding the desired future of Henning.
2. This report should be made available for Henning citizens and other interested parties to review and offer comments.
3. The Mayor should convene a meeting of area officials, informing them of Henning's desired outcomes and solicit their interest and support. This meeting could include county officials, the Chamber of Commerce, Memphis Area Association of Governments, USDA Rural Development, Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development, elected representatives, and others.
4. Henning residents and others with the desire to help move this plan forward should be solicited for leadership roles in Henning's revitalization.

The following more project specific recommendations are listed in no specific order of importance or timing.

Retail Development (Main Street):

1. Identify existing buildings in the Main Street District that are suitable to house restaurants or other shops. Determine if building improvements are needed and estimate costs. Explore creative means by which easily affordable rents for these properties can be offered to new businesses.
2. Identify potential entrepreneurs for new businesses. This can be local residents, or other successful restaurants or stores in the region that may be looking for expansion opportunities.
3. Visit other small towns such as Como, Mississippi and Paducah, Kentucky to see their successes and learn about their revitalization efforts.
4. Meet with representatives of the Tennessee Main Street Program to discuss how they can assist with Main Street revitalization and retail development.
5. Develop a simple system to measure and annually monitor progress in retail growth using available data such as growth in business establishments and sales tax revenue.

Tourism Development:

1. Establish a close working relationship between the Town of Henning, the Alex Haley Museum, and Fort Pillow State Park in order to address marketing opportunities, visitor amenities, etc.
2. Establish a close working relationship with the Tennessee Department of Tourism's west Tennessee representative.
3. Establish contact with the Mississippi River Corridor- Tennessee, Inc. and MRCT's Lauderdale County Task Force to address how Henning and the MRCT can work together to promote tourism in Henning and throughout the corridor.
4. Explore opportunities for establishing Henning as a major site for family reunions. Identify an organization or individual to take the lead on this project and develop a plan that can be operational by early 2011.
5. Research the feasibility of establishing an African American Genealogy Center at the Haley Museum (or elsewhere). Contact the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society, the Center for African American Genealogical Research, and other national genealogy organizations to determine what resources would be required to establish and operate such a center.
6. Continue with "The Henning Project" storytelling and oral history initiative and consider expanding this to include a town play or storytelling festival. Maintain contact with individuals and other communities with experience in this form of artistic expression and community/economic development.
7. Capitalize on Henning's tradition in Blues music with a Blues festival or "Blues in the Park" events and feature local musicians.
8. In conjunction with the Tennessee Department of Tourism explore developing formal connections between Henning and other towns located along the "Blues alley" between New Orleans and Chicago, including the Trail of the Hellhound and the various Blues events in Mississippi towns and Memphis. Consider linkages between Henning Blues events and Beale Street or Memphis in May's Music Fest.
9. Create a mural project with local artists. This could depict Henning's history, cultural heritage, or the contributions to society by its sons and daughters, for example. Paducah, Kentucky and other towns provide excellent examples.
10. Explore the feasibility of starting an artist/musician village in Henning. Research other towns that have initiated programs to attract the creative class.
11. Determine what additional structural/cosmetic improvements are needed to make the Palmer Community Center a high quality facility to host family reunions and other community events.
12. Determine if additional visitor amenities are needed to make Henning more comfortable and enjoyable for tourists. Examples might include picnic areas, signage, ATMs, tourist maps, and places to buy camera film, refreshments, sundries etc.
13. Consider improvements such as pedestrian greenways, benches, and handicapped accessibility that can make Henning a more walkable community.
14. Provide directional signage and other improvements to highlight Chicken George's burial site.
15. Enhance Henning's web site presence to feature tourist interests and links to attractions.

The Alex Haley Home and Museum:

1. Pursue grant opportunities for technical assistance and programming.
2. Establish working relationship and joint marketing efforts with the National Civil Rights Museum.
3. Consider expanding the size of the museum's Board of Directors and appointing a high profile African American to the Board.

Preparation for I-69

1. Meet with TDOT officials regarding signage and gateway improvements that can help direct travelers to downtown Henning. Proactively maintain contact with TDOT throughout the planning, design, and implementation stages for I-69.
2. Advocate for TDOT to incorporate interchange design elements as suggested in this report that can add interest to the interstate experience and let travelers know that Henning is a place to visit.
3. Focus on appropriate gateways between interstate interchanges and downtown to exploit opportunities for promotional signage and design elements that can lead tourists and other visitors into town. This can begin with the existing Highway 51 prior to I-69 construction.
4. Work with other governments and business leaders in Lauderdale County to maximize the economic potential, attractiveness, and appropriateness of interchange developments. Pursue interchange businesses that will complement existing businesses rather than draw existing customers from downtown to the interstate.
5. Determine feasibility and the appropriate time to extend Henning's city limits to include developable land near the future I-69 interchanges.

Opportunities with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians

1. In conjunction with Lauderdale County officials and the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development visit MBCI operations in Mississippi and meet with MBCI economic development officials regarding industrial development opportunities on the Choctaw land in Henning.
2. Determine legal and taxation impacts of placing Henning's Choctaw owned land into federal trust status.
3. In conjunction with the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development determine how the benefits of trust status can aid in economic development and industrial recruitment. Also, explore opportunities through Tennessee's "green" jobs growth initiative.
4. In conjunction with the local Choctaw community and MBCI explore retail and tourism opportunities based on the local Choctaw heritage.

Physical and Environmental Recommendations

Overview

The Town of Henning initially developed primarily along the railroad and Main Street. Today, the town has filled an area between Main Street and Highway 51 to the west with some development to the east of the railroad tracks as well and now includes the Choctaw development on the western side of Highway 51.

Over the years, various factors have resulted in a decline in the built environment in Henning. Commercial uses decreased as businesses moved elsewhere. The resulting condition is a number of buildings in sub-standard condition, including vacant and abandoned structures, and apparent disinvestment along Main Street as well as throughout the community.

The goals and recommendations herein are intended to provide a framework within which the Town of Henning may be enhanced thus benefiting the Main Street area and the community as a whole.



Recommendations - Physical and Environmental

Goal One – Viable commercial area centered on Main Street

Main Street will expand its place as the center of Henning through increased commercial and residential development. Special incentives, supported by public and private improvements to the infrastructure and buildings, will provide a means by which to demonstrate a commitment to Main Street and to the community.

Goal Two – An Aesthetically Pleasing and Safe Community

A community that is clean, attractive, and safe will attract new residents and businesses as well as provide a quality of life for the residents and visitors. The expanded involvement of the citizens in this will increase their sense of pride and ownership in the community. This will be achieved in part thorough code enforcement, infrastructure improvements, rehabilitation of substandard buildings, demolition and clearance of dilapidated buildings, expanded community activities, and a series of special events.

Goal Three – Gateways and Linkages to Surrounding Areas

Gateways into the city as well as to the Main Street area will enhance the community pride as well as provide a means by which to welcome both residents and visitors into the areas. Linkages among the key areas of Henning will ensure the town prospers as a whole, sharing economic growth, employment opportunities, and cultural amenities. Gateways off Highway 51 and the proposed Interstate 69 should significantly enhance the sense of arrival into the community.

Goal Four – Sense of place based on cultural and heritage tourism

Implementation of recommendations contained herein will build upon the culture and history of Henning and provide an ideal economic development support system. Rediscovering and harnessing this powerful essence of community, for both residents and visitors, will be the guiding force in the success of the overall community vision.

Goal Five – Planning for the future with I-69

Development of land adjacent to the proposed Interstate 69 should be guided by the Town of Henning. With proper planning Henning will be able to take advantage of the new businesses and draw visitors off the interstate highway into the town.

Alternatives

In order to develop a comprehensive planning approach to address the goals and recommendations, several alternatives were studied. These ranged from “do nothing” which was rejected, to the implementation of large-scale public works projects, which was deemed to be not economically feasible.

The alternative which best represents a realistic method by which to accomplish the goals of Henning, is an enhanced public-private partnership. The coupling of incentives with special public works projects could bring to fruition a number of improvements and enhancements to the quality of life, much of which could be within the normal capital improvements and private sector maintenance activities. It is important to note that any comprehensive approach requires time to implement, often being phased over a period of years.

The following recommendations are a means by which the goals for the Town of Henning may be realized. Although inter-related, these may be developed and implemented in phases as local priorities and resources permit.

Implement a revitalization program for Main Street

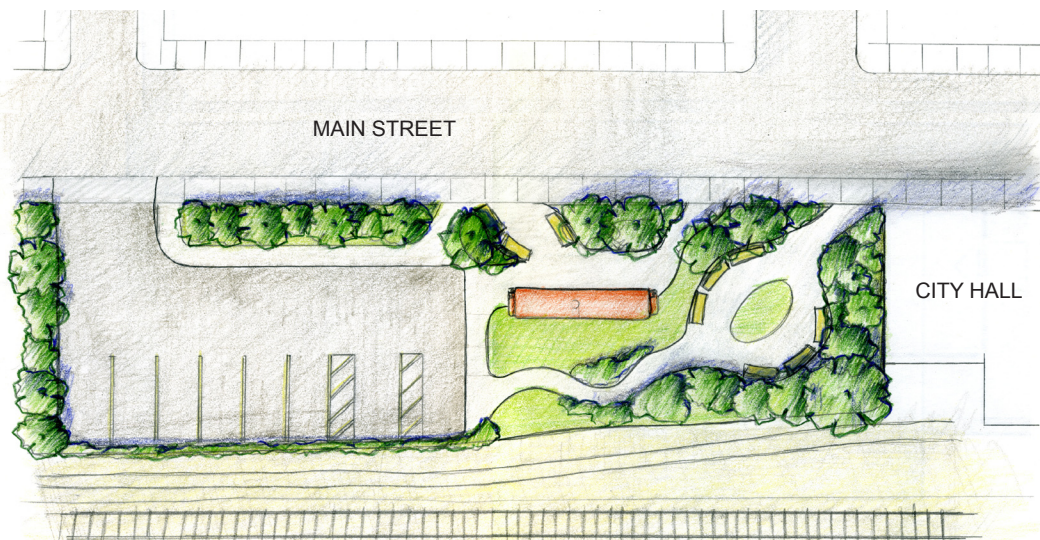
Main Street has a great feeling of history. However, the area suffers from buildings in sub-standard condition, including several abandoned, dilapidated structures which present a threat to health and safety and should be demolished. The number of vacant parcels within the area contributes to a gap in the fabric of the area, and contributes to the negative impression given to users of Main Street as an approach to the Town Hall and access to the Haley Museum complex. Several developmental concepts were studied and are described below.

The first of these is the creation of an entertainment-oriented special district. Building upon the cultural heritage of Henning, this concept offers a means to develop a special and unique attraction for both residents and visitors. A number of models exist nationally, including Beale Street in Memphis, which successfully combines public ownership and incentives with private sector management and investment.

Existing restaurants fronting Main Street should be encouraged to offer outdoor eating areas. Although in some cases space is limited, an area of small tables could offer a pleasant dining experience and offer an alternative which could be marketed to segments of the population, both residents and visitors.

Specialty shops offering goods not found elsewhere in Henning should be encouraged to locate on Main Street. This would serve to expand the number of visitors, helping existing businesses and expanding the activity level.

Heritage Park adjacent to Town Hall should be considered an asset but in its present state does not provide a positive environment. By creating a pleasant place of respite for residents as well as visitors to Henning, another opportunity to honor a famous resident, Jim Hickman, could be realized. Placing the parking first and toward the rear of the property will encourage visitors and residents to explore Henning on foot while enjoying a walk through the park to get to Main Street. The existing caboose could be incorporated into the redesigned park and serves as a visitors center.



Proposed redesign for Hickman Heritage Park on Main Street and Hickman Avenue

These concepts require a commitment not only from local government but also from the business community and the citizens of Henning. In addition to the power of eminent domain for use in property acquisition, the Town, working with Lauderdale County and State of Tennessee, has the power to provide, through its various boards and commissions, certain economic incentives. These concepts would serve as a destination point, bringing residents of Henning as well as visitors into the area. This would provide an economic benefit to the community as a whole. The citizens of Henning should recognize the importance of the revitalization of this area to the overall economic stability of the community.



Proposed redesign of buildings on corner of Main Street and Haley and proposed new design of adjacent structure. Both would provide mixed-use facilities combining retail and residential spaces. Updating the streetscape with colorful awnings, approved signage and additional landscaping on Main Street will also promote a spirit of life and vitality.

Promote mixed-use development within the Main Street area

Another concept is to introduce a residential element into Main Street reminiscent of the past in which shop owners resided above their businesses. Several buildings along Main Street offer this opportunity and new infill buildings could be designed and constructed to further this. Whether for sale or for rent units are introduced with a focus on affordable housing, this would bring vitality and animate the streetscape on a twenty-four hour basis enhancing security and vitality. In addition to residential, some small-scale commercial business could be introduced into the district, perhaps specialty shops which would bring in visitors as well as shops catering to the needs of the residents.

Implement a streetscape improvements program

This should be implemented in concert with the aforementioned recommendation. The recommended improvements will not only replace inadequate elements in place at present, but will also serve to further implement a sense of place and identity within the area.

Henning should pursue a partnership of public improvements and incentives to stimulate private sector investment in streetscape improvements. These can be assigned a priority and completed over a short-term period as regular maintenance and upkeep is scheduled.

In addition to hardscape improvements such as benches, pavers, canopies, and light standards, trees can be used to create individuality among districts. For example, by varying the species of tree planted in the different areas, unique colors can be provided as the seasons change, perhaps emphasizing reds in one area, yellows in another, and so forth.



Proposed redesign for the town owned structure on the corner of Main Street and McFarlin. Including the above mentioned landscaping improvements can create a feeling of a special district within the town.



Implement a public infrastructure improvements program

Many streets within the study area are in need of improvement including some patching and improvements to sidewalks. In addition, some drainage improvements are needed to ensure storm water is removed from the area and ponding does not occur. Public infrastructure improvements are to be completed under the jurisdiction of the Town of Henning in conjunction with state and federal transportation agencies, as appropriate.

At present, the volume of traffic on Highway 51 creates concerns about safety, especially relative to heavy trucks. This is of particular importance as the link between the town and the Choctaw community is enhanced and more traffic flows between the two centers along State Highway 87 / Graves Avenue. Additional improvements, including aesthetic elements such as special pavers at designated intersections, should be considered. This can create linkages among various areas and contribute to a special sense of place within the community. In addition, planning should be initiated relative to the impact of Interstate 69 on the traffic volumes, additional infrastructure improvements necessary, the linkages from the Interstate into Henning, and related issues such as development at the interstate exchanges.

These improvements can be linked with those in several other categories herein to create a comprehensive approach. While the development of specific design guidelines was not within the scope of this project, this may be an element the Town of Henning should explore in the future. The inclusion of a set of design guidelines into city standards will allow many of the aesthetic elements to be introduced as a regular part of the city capital improvements program.



Develop a series of gateways into the town and Main Street area

At present, the approach into Henning from any direction is lacking in terms of visual excitement. By creating a series of gateways, persons entering into the community will be presented with the concept of entering a special place. Starting with signage, and continuing with special pavers, street furniture, lighting standards, banners, and trees, a sense of place will be created, thus signifying a special pride in the area. It is important for citizens to understand the value of the historic center of Henning, and to support its well being.



Map of proposed Gateway locations.

The development of green spaces at or near the intersections with Highway 51 should be of the highest priority with entrances from the east and the proposed Interstate 69 a second priority. These entry and departure nodes are a place of “greeting” and “farewell” to persons using the streets and help to set the tone for the experiences. The Alex Haley Museum and proposed and existing parks are assets within this area.

The use of special art projects as gateway elements should be introduced. Children of all ages could compete in a thematic competition several times a year, with the winners receiving prizes donated by local businesses. For example, on Thanksgiving holiday school children could compete with a “turkey and thanksgiving” theme. For the Independence Day holiday, children could get together as part of community groups (boy scouts, girl scouts, church groups, and so forth) and develop special thematic projects. The costs of these activities should be minimal and will result in an increased sense of pride and community spirit.



Example of whimsical Gateways.

In addition to local children making the gateways, acclaimed artists could be brought to Henning in partnership with Architecture and Design students and faculty at the University of Memphis to create special signature elements. As buildings are renovated or demolished along Main Street, scrap materials could be re-purposed as sculptural gateways. For example, the dilapidated storefront on Main Street and McFarlin Avenue could be deconstructed and reassembled in key locations to attract visitors from Highway 51 and the new Interstate 69.



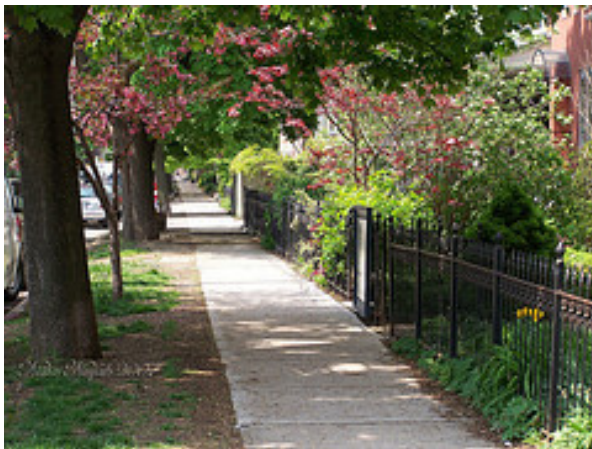
Examples of gateways by sculptor Christopher Fennel (photos used with permission).

Establish an aesthetic link throughout the area to create continuity

The introduction of special street pavers, common light standards, banners, and street furniture including benches and trash receptacles, can be used to bring continuity within the Main Street areas as well as provide a linkage among the different area of Henning.

In addition, Henning could adopt a series of unique standards, perhaps a certain bench, and use this throughout the town. Planters, pavers, and appropriate street furniture should be selected and placed for the safety and convenience of citizens. These can be used to establish thematic zones within designated areas of Henning and help define a certain character. When linked, these can be used to bring a distinct cohesiveness to a community and create a unique sense of place.

While Henning has its own identity and cultural heritage, it should study other communities to determine what has been successful. For example, the aesthetic elements used in Downtown Memphis could be adapted for use in Henning. Smaller communities such as those participating in the Main Street USA Program may also offer ideas to town officials and citizens.

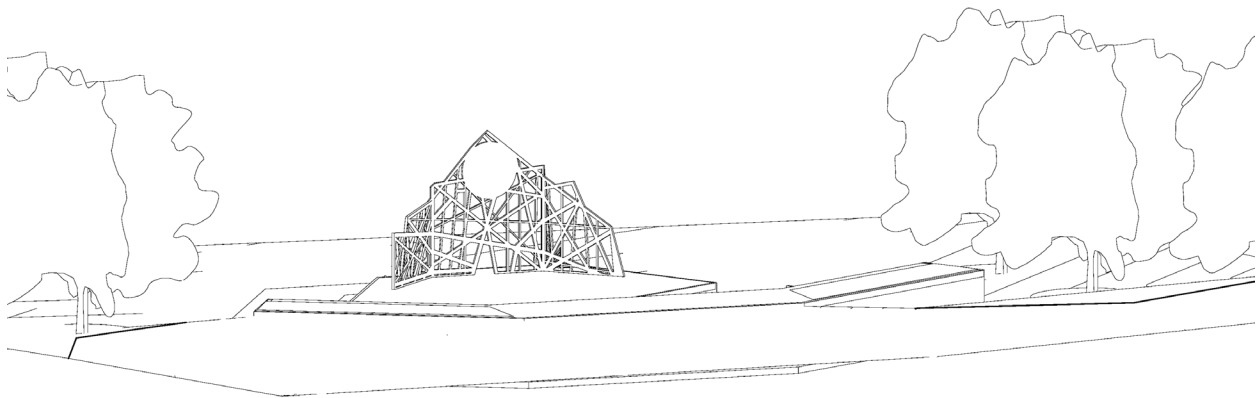


Establish the Haley Museum complex as the cultural and heritage tourism hub

The Haley property is the main destination point for most visitors to Henning. By building upon this museum and visitors center complex, several new important destinations points could be developed. Among these are an amphitheatre for performing and other arts, places to link to American music, a park for family reunions and gatherings, and a special arts-based community development project.

By adding sidewalks surrounding the property and joining those to the proposed walkway from the Community Center to the Main Street area, the Haley complex will be connected to the entire community. The addition of the Amphitheatre will provide a location for productions done by the Henning Project Storytelling Initiative and a performance space for other events. Including landscaping and sculptural signage will add to the experience of visitors.

Designed to seat approximately 100 people, the amphitheatre has the sustainable feature of grass on each level of seating. The top level of seating also houses the restrooms for the performers, dressing areas, greenroom, and storage space. The sculptural backdrop on stage connects the amphitheatre to the community as well, reflecting the spiritual history of the community and delta sun or moon depending on the time of performance.



Proposed designs for Haley Amphitheatre adjacent to the Alex Haley Home and Museum.



Henning has a strong link to the American music heritage. Blues artist Noah Lewis, born in Henning in 1895, was a Harmonica Player with Cannon's Jug Stompers. Mr. Lewis was famous for playing two harps at the same time, one with his mouth and one with his nose. He played with many Blues musicians on Beale Street in Memphis, including Robert Johnson. John Henry Barbee (born William George Tucker) sang and played slide guitar. Barbee played and recorded with numerous blues musicians including Lightin' Hopkins and Howlin' Wolf. These men cover the Blues genre: Lewis, the Delta and Memphis Blues, and Barbee, the Chicago Blues. Henning is an ideal location to serve as a link between these two Blues cities.

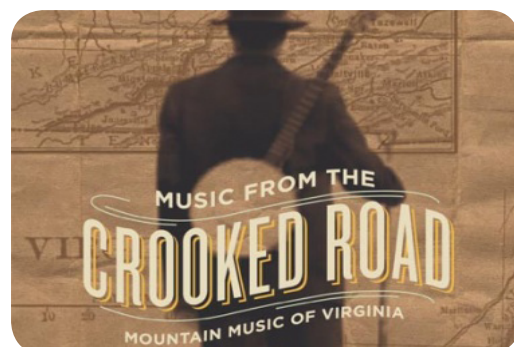
To build upon this unique opportunity, the building on the corner of McFarlin Avenue and Main Street could be converted into the Lewis-Barbee Blues Hall. The building could also house a restaurant, perhaps named the Commonground Café, that could be run by the Choctaws.

With an enclosed stage area that can be kept closed for small events or opened up for outdoor festivals, the Blues Hall provides an outstanding opportunity to capture tourism from regional Blues Festivals and perhaps lead to the creation of festivals in Henning the process. When the festivals are not in season the area can be converted into an open-air farmers market. The café could be a cultural tourism offering as well with Choctaw frybread and a gift/crafts-shop.



Proposed design for the Choctaw Commonground Café and Lewis - Barbee Blues Hall. The Blues Hall would be a multi-purpose space, for outdoor dining, music venue, other performances, and farmers market.

The National Parks Service has mapped the "Trail of the Hellhound" which is named after the tune, "There's a Hellhound on my Trail", by Robert Johnson. This trail includes mapping, history, and tourism details and was created by NPS contractor Sean Styles. An entire tourism industry can be created off of this concept, much like *The Crooked Road - Virginia's Heritage Music Trail*, with Henning at "The Head" of the trail.

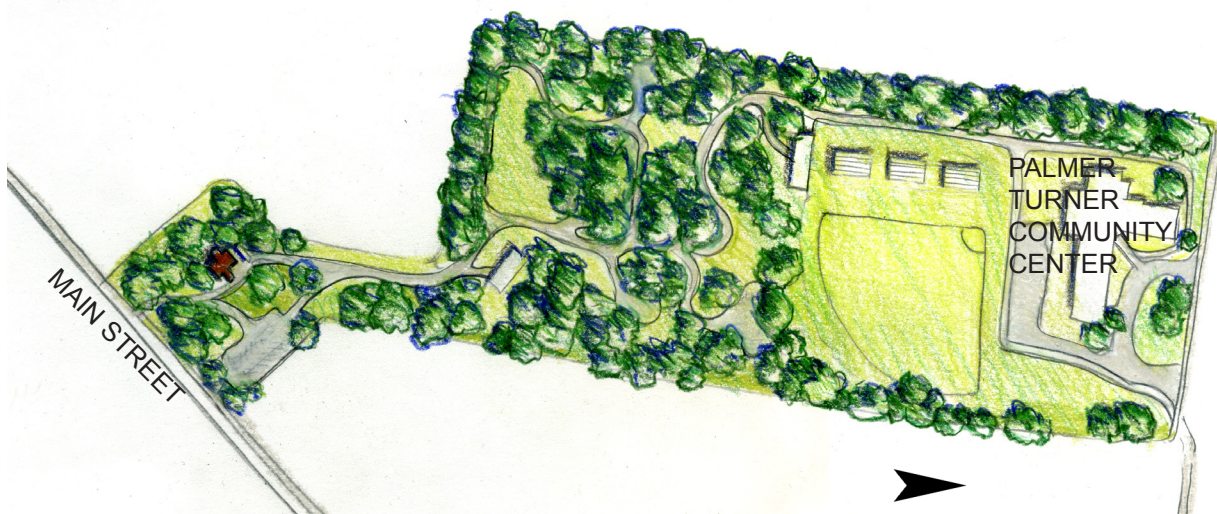


The National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices emphasizes the value of creative communities in a report entitled *Strengthening Rural Economies Through the Arts*. "An arts-based economy can enhance state efforts to diversify rural economies, generate revenue, improve the quality of life, and attract visitors and investment. Rural areas often feature various arts and cultural industries, which, with some assistance, can become productive economic sectors. In addition to stimulating substantial employment and tax revenues, arts enterprises are highly entrepreneurial, readily available in many communities, and attractive to tourists. The arts also create a highly desirable quality of life that draws businesses and knowledge workers to further stimulate the economy."

Henning has an opportunity to reconnect families as the community is revitalized. The family reunion business has become a major aspect of tourism throughout the south. Numerous Convention and Visitor's Bureaus have created reunion websites that offer help in planning the entire event. Currently, many Henning families have had to go to Ripley for reunions due to a lack of facilities locally. A new park that will connect the entrance into town on Highway 209 to the Community Center will offer a venue for reunions. Creating this connector park will provide picnic locations and open fields for play and relaxation in addition to the community center and baseball field.

Ebony Magazine emphasizes the point in an article by Kimberly Davis entitled *Black America's Multi-million Dollar Reunion Center*. "Roughly 34 percent of U.S. adults traveled to a family reunion from 2000 to 2002 according to the Travel Industry Association of America. This translates into nearly 72 million people. During the same time period, African-American travel volume increased 4 percent, from 72.2 million to 75.2 million person-trips. A majority of those trips were for leisure and most often were to visit friends or relatives. On those trips, African-American households spent an average of \$428 per trip, which excludes transportation costs to their destination."

'It's [family reunions are] a very hot market right now,' says lone Vargus, professor emeritus at Temple University and founder of the Family Reunion Institute. 'T-shirts, bus lines, airlines, catering services--all of these kinds of businesses have really jumped on the market... There's a lot of money to be made off family reunions. That's what I see as the major growth area.'



Proposed design of Family Reunion Park that would connect Main Street to the Palmer Turner Community Center.

Arts-based community development programs have been successful across the United States and are designed to bring together a diverse group of people, thus contributing to economic development. The Henning Project is based upon gathering oral histories from the community with the goal of creating an annual production.

After the initial gathering process the production work will begin and culminate in either one or more of the following: 1) a full community production created and performed by members of the community, 2) a walking history tour that ties the stories of Henning to the architecture (this can be supported by the National Trust for Historic Preservation), 3) storytelling weekend sessions and/or 4) seasonal events that tie storytelling to a place. These productions will ideally become an annual event with additional performance opportunities throughout the year. The goal is to combine these storytelling events with other events that will take place at the Haley Museum and the Lewis-Barbee Blues Hall. These productions can take place at the proposed Haley Amphitheatre, and can be site-specific and happen as small gatherings around town in places like Hickman Heritage Park or Bethlehem Cemetery. There is significant potential for this project to become a strong thriving base for cultural and heritage tourism.

The Henning Project is modeled after numerous other successful arts-based community development projects like “Swamp Gravy” in Colquitt, Georgia, and the National Storytelling Center in Jonesborough, Tennessee. Unique to Henning, this project is designed for the entire community and will bring generations together as well as neighbors and friends.

The Old Cotton Gin located on Main Street to the north of town could be converted to hold office, meeting, and informal gathering spaces for The Henning Project, and the remainder of the old industrial buildings at northern end of Main Street could be converted to working studio spaces and galleries. This plan will link the entire downtown town area of Henning together from the southern entrance of the family reunion park to the northern entrance of the Story Telling Center. This will provide destinations for tourists to explore the entire community and not simply visit The Haley Museum and leave Henning. Visitors will be able to spend the day, exploring the galleries and watching the artists work, stop in at the Henning Storytelling Center for a story or to do their own genealogy research, then take a walk back through town for lunch at the Commonground Café and relax as they listen to local blues musicians at the Lewis-Barbee Blues Hall. The creative village will provide housing for the artists and the gallery/studio spaces will provide revenue for the community.



Proposal to offer reuse of historical Cotton Gin as home for The Henning Project and Storytelling Center, other buildings could be turned into artist studios and gallery spaces for retail, this would connect the entire length of Main Street.

Promote the development of “affordable” housing

In order to realize the goals of bringing people into Henning to live as well as to work and play, adequate housing must be available in a range of prices. Quality housing at an “affordable” price can be accomplished by employing various design standards to both site planning and building construction.

Quality multi-family housing at an affordable price range also contributes to the overall quality of life by providing a pleasant alternative to persons not ready to purchase their residence. By incorporating desired amenities and by offering a well-designed living environment, persons considering moving to Henning will have more attractive alternatives.

Develop a creative village community

As mentioned previously, cultural and heritage tourism is an important part of the overall revitalization plan. One way in which this element could be introduced is through the establishment of a creative village in which artists would reside and work. These artists may already reside in the community, may be returning residents, or may be new up and coming artists looking for a great community that offers support for their craft.

Using land owned by the Town of Henning or through the acquisition of vacant parcels or cleared parcels, the community of small houses with a studio contained within could be constructed in an affordable, sustainable manner, perhaps in partnership with the Department of Architecture at the University of Memphis. Some residences could be in mixed-use facilities along Main Street.

The residents, which could include painters, sculptors, architects, designers, story-tellers, and performance artists, would enhance the social and cultural aspect of Henning. Each artist would be expected to participate in local events, to offer seminars and workshops to residents, and contribute to the cultural tourism base of Henning. Through incentives such as tax breaks and low-interest loans, artists will be encouraged to practice their craft locally.



Proposed artist residences designed by Design Graphics Studio (Sherry Bryan, Professor), rendered by Pam Hurley University of Memphis Department of Architecture.

Develop a program to enhance signage aesthetically and functionally

Signage should be clear and easy to see and read from U.S. Highway 51 and ultimately from Interstate 69. As the various recommendations contained herein are implemented, signage should be expanded in an elegant rather than haphazard manner. A common design element for the signage would further serve to unify the various places throughout the community.

In addition, commercial signage appears to be minimally controlled in terms of size, placement, and so forth. Private signage should be controlled through enforcement of a “sign ordinance. District-specific sign recommendations could also be developed to encourage property owners to enhance their buildings with unique signage. For example, a special theme along Main Street, another for the Family Reunion Park, and so forth could provide identity while being based in a common design theme.

Murals painted on the walls of buildings bring a sense of vitality to the community. Reminiscent of historic “billboard” signage, these murals could present advertisements as well as scenes of local importance. When coupled with other improvements, this approach could serve as a significant enhancement to the aesthetics of the area. Local artists as well as visiting artists could be employed to paint these murals. Competitions involving children residing in Henning could also be conducted, thus increasing the local participation and community buy-in to the murals.



Examples of proposed new murals for the corner of Main Street and McFarlin Avenue and are adjacent to existing murals.

Identify special opportunities and prepare for changes brought on by Interstate 69

With the future development of Interstate 69, Henning will experience significant changes and should develop a pro-active plan to address these issues. For example, public infrastructure improvements will be necessary to link Henning to the highway and allow for the safe connections to Highway 51.

Furthermore, Henning has an opportunity to guide growth and development at the proposed interchanges, gaining sales tax and property tax revenues from the development. Annexation and zoning issues should be addressed within the near future.

By working with the Tennessee Department of Transportation, a signature overpass could be developed which would further enhance the identity of Henning and pique the interest of persons travelling on the interstate highway. Columbus, Indiana, was successful in securing approval of such an overpass which has become an integral part of the “Architectural Heritage Tours” which bring thousands of visitors to the city each year.



Examples of iconic bridges that were designed for Columbus Indiana (photos used with permission).



Conclusion

Henning is fortunate to have a strong cultural and heritage history upon which to build. By adopting the holistic approach recommended herein, Henning has the opportunity to create a unique community connecting the diverse elements and creating a special place.

The observations and recommendations within this section are intended to build upon this and what is now being implemented. It must be understood, however, that these recommendations should be phased over a period of years to meet local resources. While some are virtually cost-free or could be accomplished with minimal investment, others will require major capital expenditures on the part of the Town of Henning and the private sector. And, with any planning document, these recommendations must be reviewed periodically and revised to meet changing community priorities and needs.



Town of Jonesborough, Tennessee mentioned earlier in report. This photo is taken during the National Storytelling Festival - over 100,000 visitors flood the streets of Jonesborough during this event. (photo used with permission).



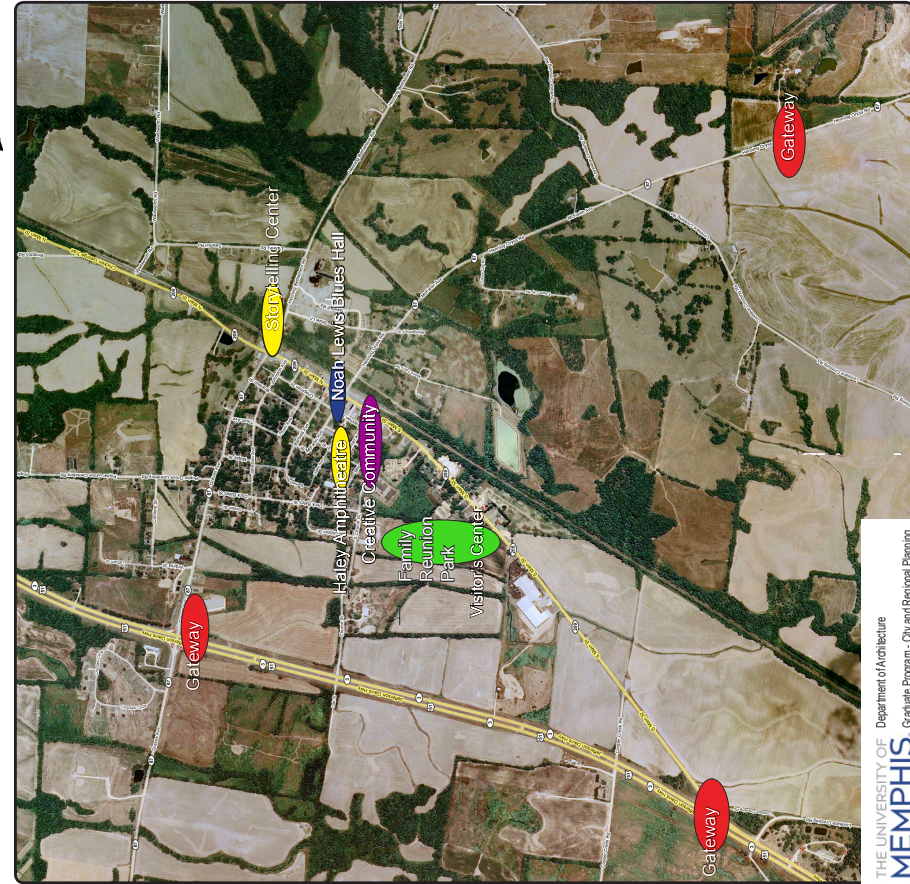


Appendices





The history and strength of Henning is rooted in Community.
Rediscovering and harnessing this powerful essence of community, for both the residents of Henning and its visitors, is the key for success and survival. Cultural and Heritage Tourism will be the guiding force.



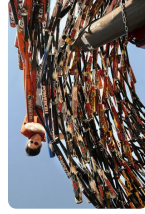
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The Plan / Proposal by

A Holistic Approach to the "Experience of Henning" is the most important aspect of this project. Each of these elements are designed to be completed in phases and added to as the tourism base and economic strength increases. Each element is designed to create a need for next element and to ultimately provide an ideal economic support system for the creation of the next phase of the process. When all of the pieces are in place, the design will create a strong inter-dependent community that will thrive on Cultural and Heritage Tourism.

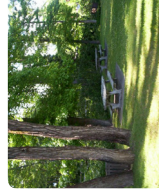
Gateways

Gateways are Cultural Sign Posts to direct visitors to Henning and are anchored in the idea of community. The design and construction of the Gateways will be a collaborative event with Henning, the Department of Architecture at the University of Memphis, and may include site-specific sculptor Christopher Fennell. The Gateways will be constructed from reclaimed materials from the community thus offering a sustainable tourism draw as well.



Family Reunion Park

In an article in Ebony Magazine, K. Davis wrote, "AUGUST marks the climax of the multimillion-dollar family reunion season. From late July to early September, tens of thousands of Black families close their doors to family members, friends, and colleagues. In the course of family and community reunions, millions of dollars to the travel and service industries." The Family Reunion Park will connect a newly proposed Visitor's Center to the community center and Haley property with a linear park and picnic area.



Creative Community

A strong revitalization trend is arts-based community development, which offers artists incentives to relocate or return to the community, increasing the opportunity for new cultural tourism. A Creative Community in Henning could be established on vacant parcels or in mixed use facilities and studio and galleries on Main Street. The artists then give back to the community by increasing visitors and tourism-based revenue and offer classes for the community.



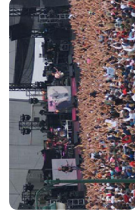
The Henning Project

The "Henning Project" oral history story telling initiative is already established in the community. Alex Haley proved that Henning is an ideal place for stories to be shared and passed on to make a difference in the world. This project would be supported by the Haley Amphitheatre and the conversion of the Old Cotton Gin into the Henning Story Telling Center.



Lewis-Barbee Blues Hall

Henning is home to another legendary individuals - Noah Lewis and John Henry Barbee. In celebration of this Heritage through the Lewis-Barbee Blues Hall, Henning can claim a part in the birth of the blues. The proposal would be to convert existing property into a flexible performance space and cafe bringing the festival goers and tourists from Memphis and surrounding Blues Festivals.



Gateways - creative iconography

The Gateways will become Cultural Sign Posts to direct visitors to Henning. Artist Christopher Fennell works with communities and universities in creating skeletal architectural pieces that are eye-catching and interactive. Mr. Fennell's work is on exhibit throughout the country in cities that include Chattanooga, Tennessee and Little Rock, Arkansas.

To bring this exciting opportunity to Henning, the dilapidated storefront on Main Street and McFarlin Avenue could be de-constructed and reassembled in key locations as gateways to attract visitors from Highway 51 and the new I-69. The design and construction of these gateways could be a collaboration among the artist, the citizens of Henning, and students and faculty in the Department of Architecture at the University of Memphis.



Reading View, a Christopher Fennell sculpture in Redding, California, superimposed onto one proposed gateway location on Route 51.



Fennell at work on Rail Wave in Chattanooga, TN.

The collaborative Gateways shown above can become major landmarks directing visitors to Henning. Gateways can also be created with other structures. For example, the town of Columbus, Indiana, chose to paint their signature bridges a brilliant red. Henning can seek similar options, especially with the precedents set in Columbus. The overpass of the new I-69 at Route 67 could become a visual highlight of the journey on the new interstate.

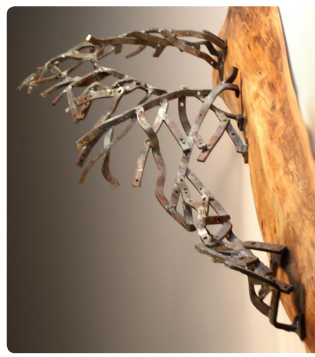
The Front Door Bridge on I-45 (see photo below) was designed by J. Mueller Engineers. And the color red was chosen to catch the eye and direct traffic into Columbus.



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Material from this condemned building could be reused as part of the Gateways. The materials I use have been cast out by society, for example, demolished barns, broken bicycles and downed trees. I transform these objects into dynamic pieces and connect them into sculptures that are eye-catching and interactive. The work is site specific, taking advantage of the surrounding landscape and architecture. I place the sculpture for the maximum effect of discovery and scale." - Christopher Fennell



A 60 Foot long guitar sculpture is going into Overton Park in Memphis October 2009.



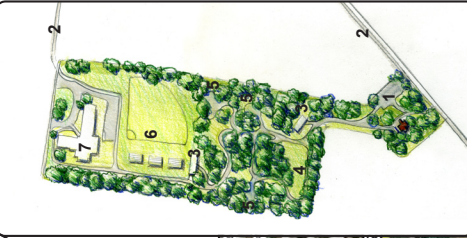
The Quadropod, also designed by Mueller, frames City Hall and leads into downtown.



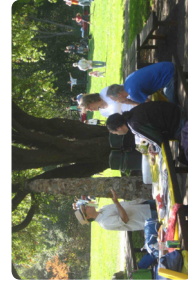
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- 1 - visitor's center / check in / parking
- 2 - sidewalks connecting downtown
- 3 - picnic bbq pavilions
- 4 - family games field
- 5 - picnic bbq areas
- 6 - multi-purpose field
- 7 - community center

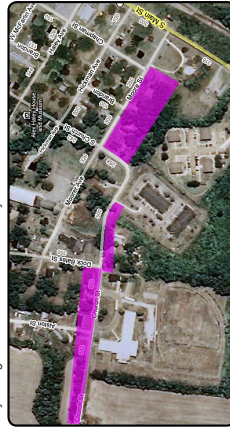


Creative Village



Cultural Tourism is an important part of downtown revitalization. One way this can happen is through initiatives that bring artists to the community. The creative village is a proposal to use land that is owned by the town or other agencies and to encourage artists to move into the area. The village would offer tax breaks and low-interest loans. Artists will be encouraged to practice their craft locally. These artists may already reside in the community, may be returning residents or may be new up and coming artists looking for a great community that offers support for their craft.

In addition to offering housing incentives, the plan would include studio/gallery space downtown. The artists will become active participants in the economy through retail sales and community classes.

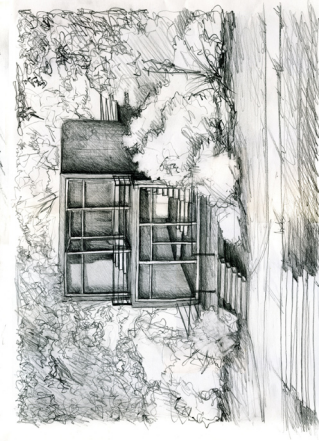
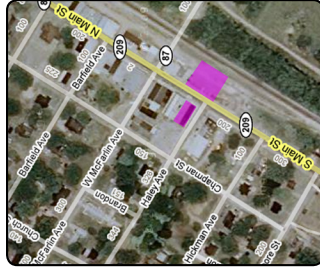


The Creative Village would serve as a connector of the Community Center to Main Street.

The National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices emphasizes the value of creative communities in a report entitled **Strengthening Rural Economies Through the Arts**:

"An arts-based economy can enhance state efforts to diversify rural economies, generate revenue, improve the quality of life, and attract visitors to rural areas. Rural communities offer the opportunity to develop cultural industries, which, with some assistance, can become productive economic sectors. In addition to stimulating substantial employment and tax revenues, arts enterprises are highly entrepreneurial, readily available in many communities, and attractive to tourists. The arts also create a highly desirable quality of life that draws businesses and

Main Street & Hickman Park

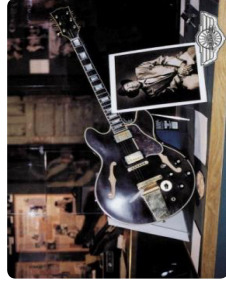


Designed by University of Memphis Department of Architecture, rendered by Pam Hurley.



Main Street, Henning, has a great feeling of history. The proposal is to redesign the Heritage Park area by City Hall, honoring another famous resident of Henning, Jim Hickman. The new Hickman Heritage Park will be the first thing visitors see as they arrive in down town. Parking will be gently hidden from view. Placing the parking first and toward the rear of the property will encourage visitors and residents to explore Henning on foot while enjoying a walk through the park to get to Main Street and City Hall. The Caboose will be the check in for all the blues visitors and can house guitars, posters and other memorabilia.

The park is designed with two seating areas to encourage folks to come downtown and stay a while and visit with their neighbors. The circular area will serve as a location for small gatherings and presentations and the center of the circle will hold a sculpture/plaque dedicated to Jim Hickman



The Caboose refurbished and used to display Blues Memorabilia.



The "O Country Sto" could be converted into mixed-use, with retail in the front and residences in the rear. The proposal for the retail space is a shop that offers blues music and memorabilia as well as books and other items related to history of Henning.

The facade of the building next door could be taken down and a new apartment building could be put up in its place. With a design that respects the history and style of downtown and reflects a more modern aspect, encouraging more people to inhabit the Main Street area.



Mixed Use on the left and new apartments on the right. Apartment design by Kate Bolwell.

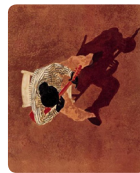
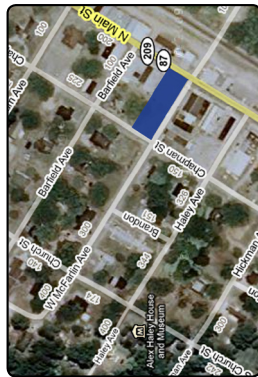


Lewis - Barbee Blues Hall / Commonground Cafe



Henning has the Blues covered! Noah Lewis, born in Henning in 1895 was a Harmonica Player with Charley Crockett. Mr. Lewis was famous for playing two pieces at the same time. One with his mouth and one with his nose. He played with many blues musicians on Beale Street, including Robert Johnson, John Henry Barbee (born William George Tucker) sang and played slide guitar. Barbee played and recorded with numerous blues musicians including Lightnin' Hopkins and Howlin' Wolf. These men cover the Blues - Lewis, the Delta and Memphis Blues and Barbee, the Chicago Blues. So now, Henning is a "meetin' place in the middle . . . kinda".

The proposal for this segment is to convert the historic building on the corner of McFarlin Avenue and Main Street into the Lewis - Barbee Blues Hall and Commonground Cafe that will be run by the Crocots. The Blues Hall will have an enclosed stage area that can be kept closed for small events or opened up for outdoor festivals. This will be an outstanding opportunity to bring the blues back to the region and to the people who love the festivals in Henning the project. When the festivals are not in progress (but they always are) the area can be converted into an open-air farmers market. The cafe will be a cultural tourism offering as well with Chocotaw frybread and a gift/crafts-shop.



Trail of the Hellhound

The National Parks Service has mapped the "Trail of the Hellhound" which is named after the tune, "There's a Hellhound on my Trail" - by Robert Johnson. This trail includes mapping, history, and tourism details and was created by NPS contractor Sean Styles. An entire tourism industry can be created off of this concept, much like The Crooked Road - Virginia's Heritage Music Trail. With Henning at "The Head of the trail."

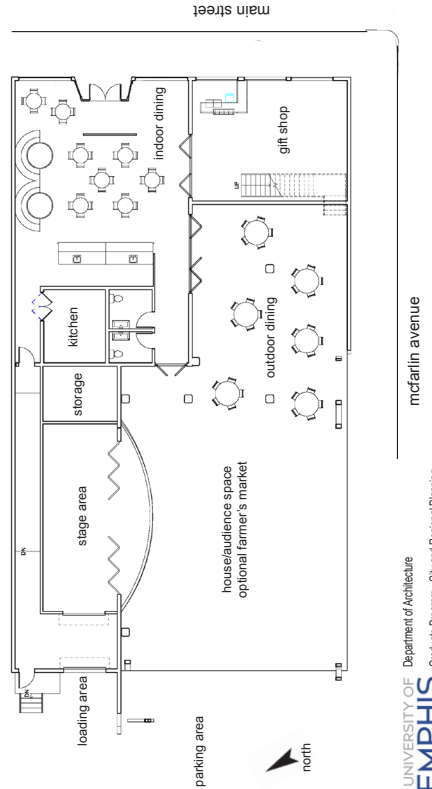


A partial listing of Blues Festivals in the Region (within a half-day drive of Henning)

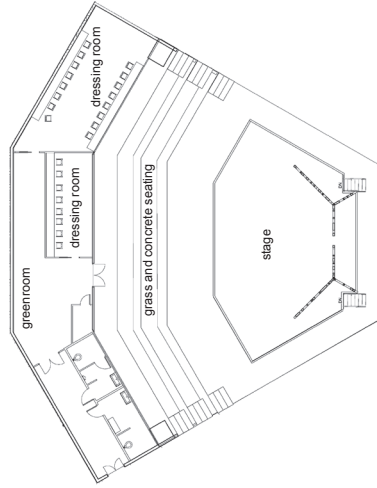
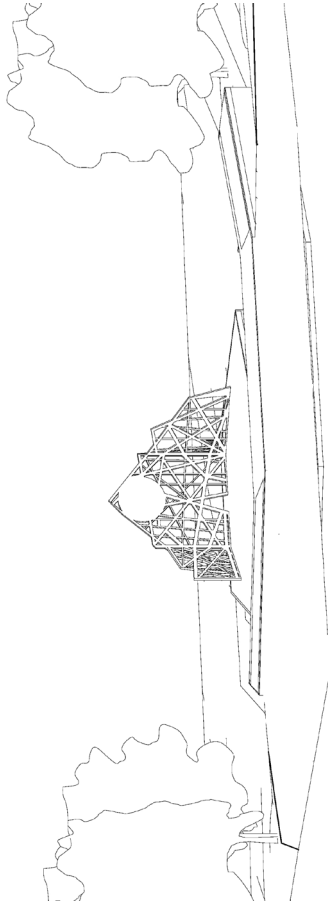
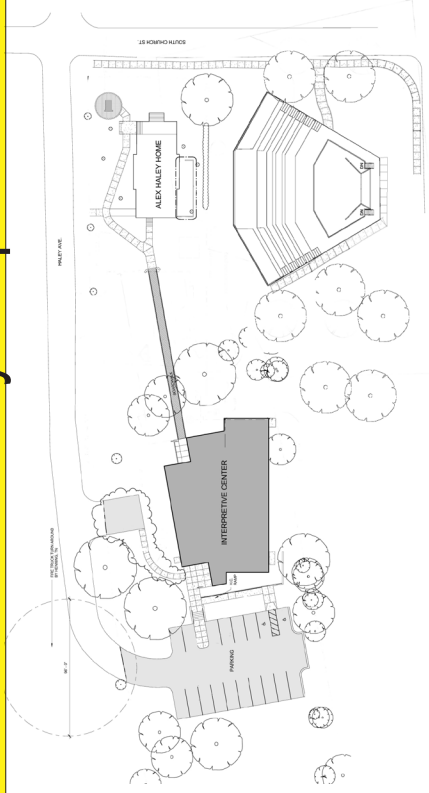
Clarksdale Mississippi Sunflower Blues Festival (Clarksdale, MS) August 5 - 9 + Blues Challenge (Memphis) February 4 - 7 + Mississippi Blues Festival March 7 + Delta Music Experience (Clarksdale) April 15 - 18 + Juke Joint Festival (Clarksdale) April 17 - 19 + Beale Street Music Festival (Memphis) May 1 - 3 + Delta Blues Festival (Memphis) May 4 - 6 + Clarksdale Caravan Music Festival (Clarksdale) May 9 + Robert Johnson Blues Jam (Crystal Springs, MS) May 9 + B. B. King Homecoming Festival (Indianapolis, IN) June 5 + Crossroads Blues Festival (Rosedale, MS) May 6 + Shannon Blues and Heritage Festival (Jackson, TN) + Hwy 61 Blues Festival + Holy Ridge Jam (Lealand, MS) + Bentonina Blues Festival (Benton, MS) + Blues on the Bluff (Memphis) July 25 + Howlin' Wolf Memorial Blues Festival (Westpoint, MS) September 4 + Hot Springs Blues Festival (Hot Springs, AR) September 4 + Mississippi Delta Blues & Heritage Festival (Greenwood, MS) September 19 + Mississippi Blues Festival (Rezon, MS) October 3 + Denise LaSalle Soul Blues Festival (Rezon, MS) October 4 + Delta Blues Festival (Rezon, MS) November 7 + Mississippi Delta Regional Blues Challenge (Indiana, MS) November 7



Rendering below - view from Main Street. Rendering below - view from McFarlin Avenue. The open area is multi-purpose for audiences or farmer's markets and crafts.



The Haley Amphitheatre



The Haley property is the main destination point for most visitors. The proposal is to increase its draw to visitors and the community. By adding sidewalks surrounding the property and joining those to the walkway from the Community Center to Downtown, the Haley property becomes connected to the entire community. The addition of the Amphitheatre will provide a location for productions done by The Henning Project Storytelling Initiative and a performance space for other events. Including landscaping and sculptural signage will add to the experience of visitors.

The amphitheatre will seat 100 - 150 people and has the sustainable feature of grass on each level of seating. The top level of seating also houses the performers' restrooms, dressing areas, greenroom and storage space. The sculptural backdrop on stage connects the amphitheatre to the community as well, reflecting the spiritual history of the community and delta sun or moon depending on the time of performance.

Strengthening Communities Through the Arts

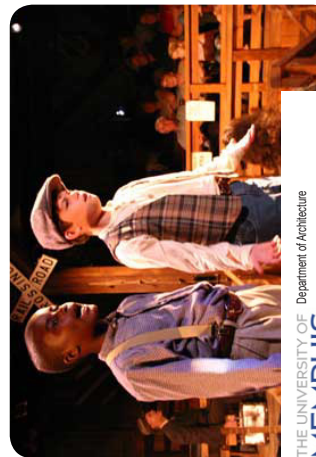
The Henning Project is one action plan that is already underway. The group is led by Ms. Barbara Manns and Mr. Cubert Bell. This project is based on gathering Oral Histories from the community with the goal of creating an annual production. These history/stories will be turned into a script, written by award winning playwright Jo Carson. The group will be collaborating with Ms. Carson for the next year as they gather the stories of Henning. After the initial gathering process the production work will begin and all of this work will culminate in either one or more of the following: 1) a full community production created and performed by members of the community, 2) a walking history tour that ties the stories of Henning to the Architecture (this can be supported by the National Trust for Historic Preservation), 3) storytelling weekend sessions and/or 4) seasonal events that tie storytelling to a place - like a ghostwalk during Halloween. These productions will ideally become an annual event with additional performance opportunities throughout the year. The ideal goal is to combine these storytelling events with other events that will take place at the new Haley Amphitheatre, and can be site-specific and happen as small gatherings around town in places like Hickman Heritage Park or Bethlehem Cemetery. The potential for this project to become a strong thriving base for Cultural and Heritage tourism is great.

The Henning Project is modeled after numerous other successful Arts-Based Community Development projects like "Swamp Gravy" in Colquitt, Georgia and the National Storytelling Center in Jonesborough, Tennessee. Of these these stories and productions will be unique only to Henning. This is a project that is designed for the entire community and will bring generations together as well as neighbors and new friends.



These are part of the people who are a part of making The Henning Project come to life.

Case Studies



Swamp Gravy - Colquitt, Georgia

"Swamp Gravy is the original Community Performance founded by Richard Geer and Joy Jinks along with the Miller County Arts Council in 1992. Since the initial production, Sketches, written by playwright Jo Carson, and performed in the Elementary School Auditorium, this project has created enormous, wide spread change in the community."

The birth of Swamp Gravy also gave rise to a tremendous number of businesses, as well as community and social programs:

- The Tarrer Inn Bed and Breakfast
- After School Program: Project Bounce
- New Life Learning Center
- Story Telling Festival
- Market on the Square
- Swamp Gravy Institute
- Gift Shop
- Museum
- Children's Museum



The Old Cotton Gin could be converted to hold office, meeting, and informal gathering spaces for The Henning Project, and the remainder of the old industrial buildings at northern end of the street could be converted to working studio spaces and galleries. This plan will tie the entire downtown town area of Henning together - from the southern entrance of the family reunion part to the northern entrance of The Story Telling Center. This will provide destinations for tourists to explore the entire community and not simply visit The Haley Museum and go home. Visitors will spend the day, exploring the galleries and watching the artists work, stop in at The Henning Storytelling Center for a story or to do their own genealogy research, then take a walk back through town for lunch at the CommonGround Cafe and relax as they listen to local blues musicians at the Lewis-Barbee Blues Hall. The Creative Village will provide housing for the artists and the gallery/studio spaces will provide revenue for the community as well as food for the soul.

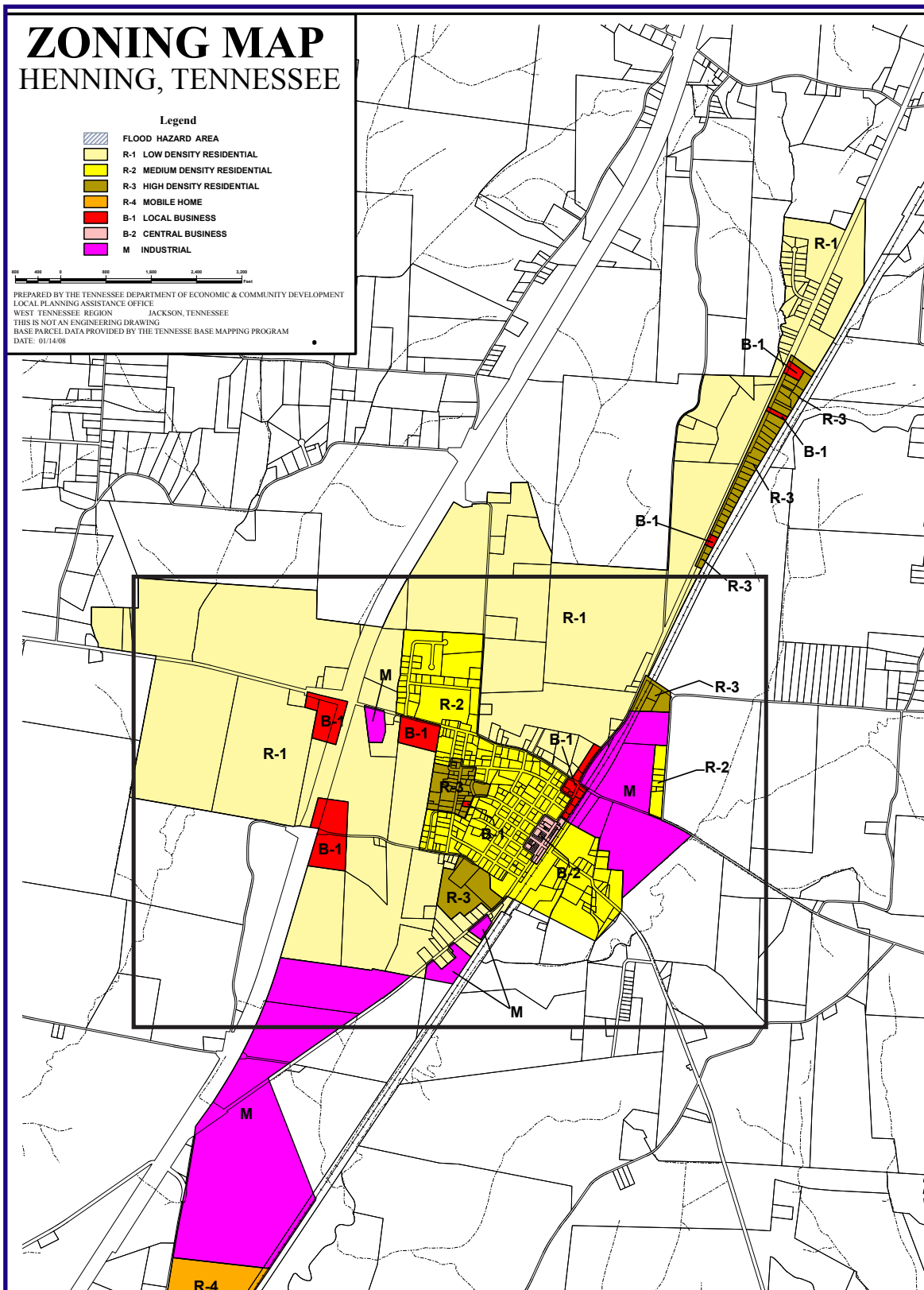


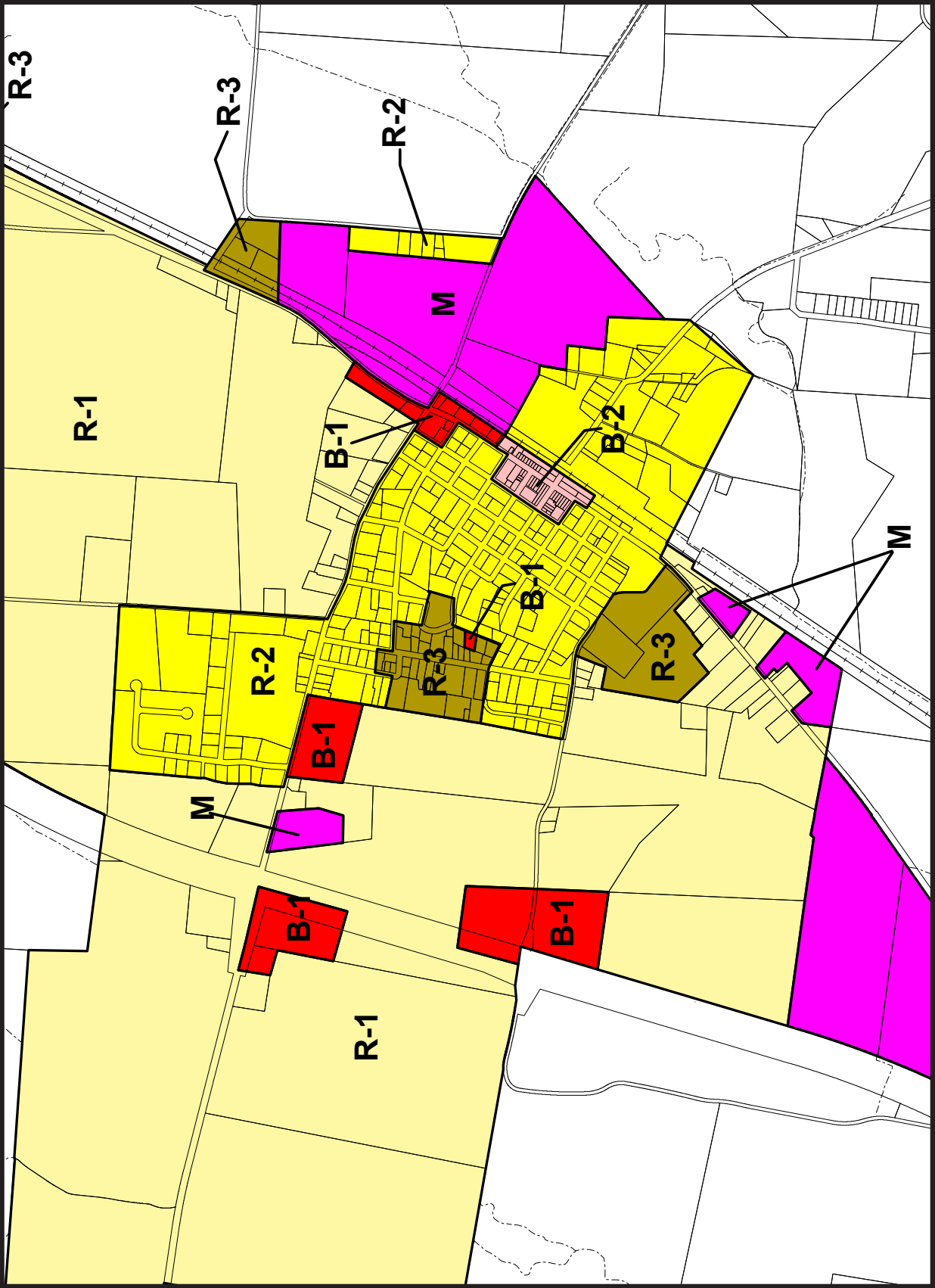
National Storytelling Festival - Jonesborough, Tennessee

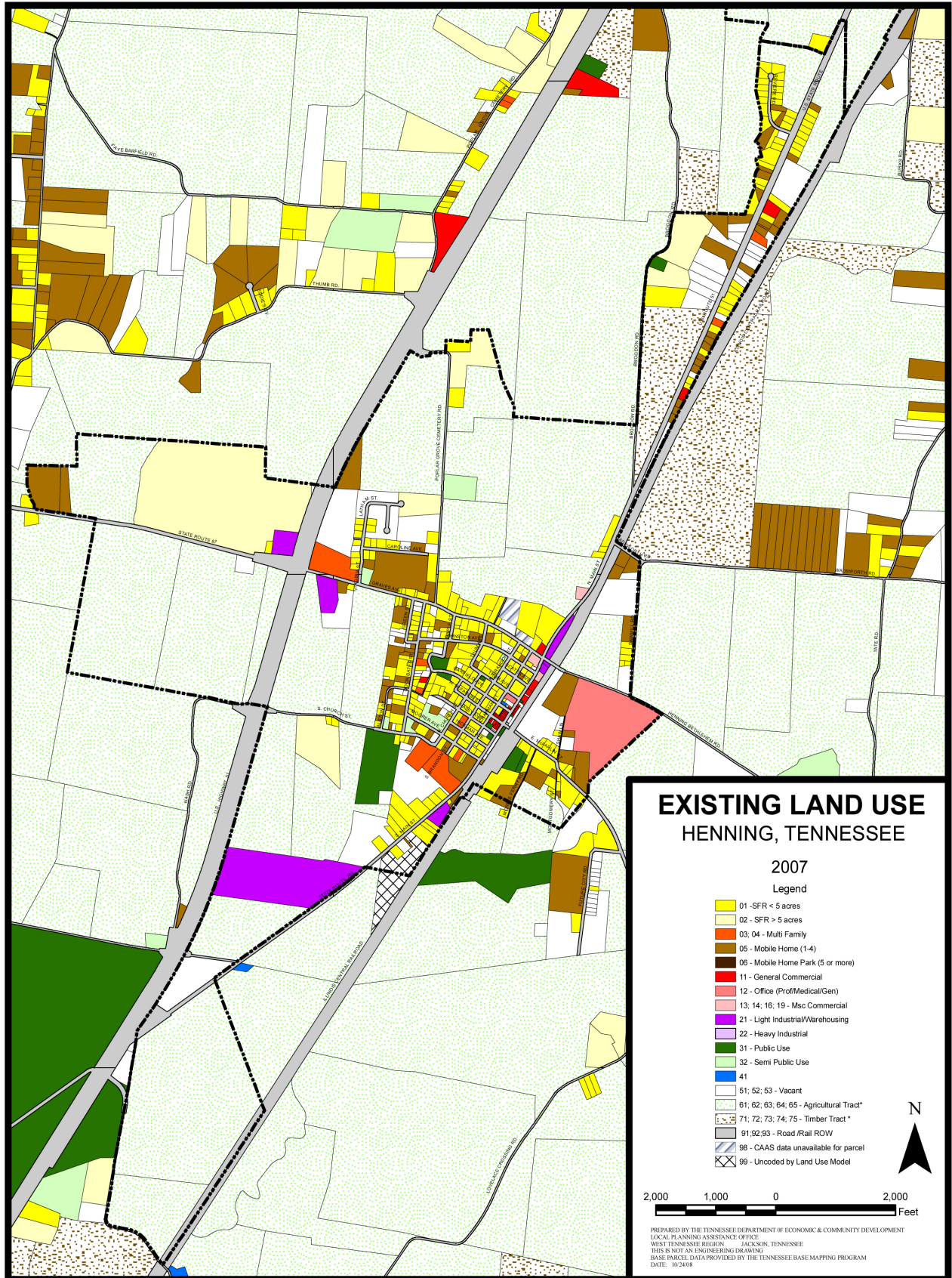
"On a warm October weekend in 1973 in historic Jonesborough, the first National Storytelling Festival was held. Hundreds of people from all over the world came to the stage to tell their stories. It was a success, but it was not the end of the story. The festival has since become a major event, and it has helped to preserve our culture, this traditional art form, and the little Tennessee town."

The International Storytelling Center (ISC) is an educational and cultural institution dedicated to building a better world through the power of storytelling. To accomplish that vision, the center serves as a learning laboratory where the power of storytelling is examined and studied. Also, through a program of learning, the Center teaches people around the world to use storytelling to produce positive change in their lives, their workplaces, and their communities.









I. Introduction - Public Input

Public input for the Economic Development Plan for Henning, TN included two phases.

Phase one occurred in winter 2008, at the beginning of the project, prior to the development of University of Memphis recommendations. The purpose of phase one was to develop the community vision for Henning, TN and to uncover pertinent information. Phase one public input included:

Focus Groups -

- The Advisory Committee (developed by the then Mayor Douglas) plus interested community members (20 attendees)
- Members of St. Mark Baptist Church (approximately 30 attendees)
- Residents of the Choctaw community in Henning, TN plus interested other community members (18 Choctaw residents, 2 representatives from the Choctaw MS Band, 2 African American residents)

Individual Interviews -

- Cubert Bell, Unofficial Choctaw community leader and assistant director of Chucalissa Archeological Museum
- Nancy Allen, local banker with BankCorp South
- John Hendrix and Gilbert Thompson, MS Band of Choctaw Indians officials

Phase two took place in late summer 2009. The purpose of this phase was to gather community feedback on the draft Economic Development Plan. Rather than a focus group format, input was gathered via public meetings open to all. The meetings began with a presentation by the University of Memphis about public input to date, research findings, and major recommended plan components. Participants then gave their feedback on the plan components. Meetings included:

- Town of Henning Board of Alderman meeting, with Mayor Bursey plus other interested community members (approximately 12 attendees)
- Town Hall meeting at the Alex Haley Museum Interpretive Center, general public and members of “The Henning Project”, a story telling initiative (approximately 30 attendees)

II. Overall Findings

This section combines all of the public input into an overall vision and agreed upon opportunities.

- It appears that all participants agree on the following vision statements:
 - Henning is a full-service community with schools, a library, local shopping, activities for all ages, and more productive jobs.
 - Main Street is revitalized and has become a place to shop, eat, and gather.
 - Local heritage (African American and Choctaw) is utilized to attract and educate tourists.
 - Henning captures more tourist dollars through opportunities that keep tourists longer like restaurants, shops, and bed and breakfasts.
 - The Alex Haley Museum is a great asset that is fully capitalized on with things like a genealogy center and a family reunion site.
 - The community center is used to its fullest potential with productive and entertaining activities for all residents of Henning.
- There was general agreement on and enthusiasm for plan components and strategies developed by the University of Memphis using public input, which included:
 - Improvements to Main Street
 - Development of a central gathering places (i.e. an outdoor amphitheatre) and small pocket parks and greenways that would tie community sites together
 - Developing a storytelling initiative as a community engagement and community development strategy (dubbed by the community as “The Henning Project”)
 - Leveraging Henning’s Blues heritage as community development strategy
 - Developing a genealogy and reunion center as a community development strategy (leveraging the Museum)
 - Leveraging I-69 access to improve tourism
 - Tying into other cultural heritage sites for joint marketing
 - Creating a partnership between the MS Band of Choctaw Indians to partially develop 90 acres of land for industry
 - Selling Choctaw goods and marketing that cultural heritage
 - Marketing Chicken George’s burial site (leveraging the Museum)
 - Holding community cultural events/festivals to attract tourists and unite the community
 - Organizing a Farmers’ Market with area farmers

III. Individual Focus Group/Meeting Findings

A. Advisory Committee (plus interested community members) focus group findings:

Vision for Henning

- For neighbors to gather frequently in places such as Main Street and the Museum.
- For Main Street to transform back to the character of Main Streets at their heyday (a beautiful street where the community comes to shop, eat, and talk).
- To create new and utilize existing amenities to capture tourists for longer periods of time - such as a family reunion/retreat site, restaurants, a bed and breakfast, and a farmers' market.
- To use the tradition of storytelling to create community gatherings and draw tourism.

Strengths/Essence of Henning:

- Henning is a small town with friendly neighbors.
- The community is still multi-generational.
 - However, there appears to be a lack of understanding between the younger and older generations.
 - The elderly still retain many important stories about the community and appear willing to share them.

Weaknesses of Henning:

- Lack of motivation among community members to change their environment; small group working toward change.
- High utilities, but this problem is reportedly being addressed.
- There is not much retail remaining, although a Dollar General has recently located there. Residents get their groceries from Ripley.

Assets to build on:

- Sometime ago Henning renovated an old school into a community center. However, it is not open because there are a few code violations to correct (hand rails and fire walls). Reportedly, the center has a new kitchen, gymnasium, and stage and is surrounded by approximately 16 acres of open land.
 - This center housed an after-school program run by VISTA members at one time and the children are anxious for this program to get underway again.
 - There appears to be a desire for a community center in which people can gather for events, use for recreation, possible rent out for things such as family reunions and retreats, and use as a disaster response center.

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- The Alex Haley Museum's new Interpretive Center is nearly complete. Henning residents are interesting in leveraging this tourism resource to increase its economic impact.
 - For example, museum visitors could be captured for longer stays through restaurants and park space.
 - Henning could utilize Mr. Haley's tie to genealogy by positioning itself as a family reunion site (perhaps using land around the museum or the community center for facilities) and/or genealogy research center.
 - The Interpretive Center has been designed to use as a conference center. This should be used to draw in more tourism dollars.
 - Tourists often ask to see where Chicken George is buried. This could become a more official venue.
- There are some nice older homes, some in disuse. Perhaps one could be converted to a bed and breakfast to capture tourist revenue.
- Farm land surrounds Henning and its neighboring communities. Perhaps Henning could begin a Farmers' Market to attract residents of surrounding communities to Henning.
- I-69 will provide access to Henning. This opportunity should be leveraged by developing things such as a hotel.
- Events are currently being held on Main Street. These can be leveraged by building a better environment through enhanced gathering spaces, such as an improved gazebo and/or a new outdoor amphitheatre.
- There are several accomplished Blues musicians from Henning. That information could be leveraged to attract tourism.



B. St. Mark Baptist Church Committee focus group findings:

Vision for Henning:

- There are activities for by the young and the old to enjoy.
 - Parks and playgrounds are one component.
 - The young have productive activities that help them imagine and accomplish goals for a bright future.
- Main Street is revitalized and bustling with people; it is a daily gathering place; there are places to eat a nice meal and shop.
 - This could include an amphitheater. There was positive response to the story telling idea and the amphitheater as a mechanism.
- Tourists come to Henning and stay for a while eating in restaurants, holding reunions, watching plays, staying in a bed and breakfast or a hotel.
- Henning is more of a full-service community that has a library, schools, a doctor's office, and a lawyer's office.
- The African American citizens of Henning and the Choctaw citizens of Henning have more meaningful connections through joint activities and cultural exchanges (baseball games and community gatherings).
- The community center is used to its fullest extent.

Strengths/Essence of Henning:

- It is Intergenerational – families live here and seniors live here.
- Many residents have lived here a long time.
- There is a good church community.
- Alex Haley Museum is an important asset.
- People are good workers and know how to work with their hands.

Weaknesses of Henning:

- No productive jobs - low wages force people to leave Henning to find career track jobs.
- There are no grocery stores or restaurants; people must go to Ripley or Covington.
- There are not enough family-oriented activities.
 - They would like to be able to bowl, skate, and have a place to see movies.

Assets to build on:

- The community center could be used for all types of activities and community gatherings
 - Activities for young and old
 - Disaster response center
- The Memorial Day celebration is good but should be expanded.
- Henning needs to capture the tourists coming for the Alex Haley Museum.
 - Henning could become a “reunion mecca”, using genealogy as a hook.
 - Land around the community center could be used for this purpose.
 - What business would be appropriate to have near the Museum to give visitors more things to do nearby?
- I-69 access should be able to capture travelers. Henning should capture them through:
 - Having a hotel or bed and breakfast and a restaurant.
 - Promoting the Museum and Chicken George’s burial site.
 - Being part of an African American Heritage tour; participants were very interested in the idea of tying into/marketing with other Heritage sites.
 - Promoting the proximity to Ft. Pillow and an understanding of its history regarding African American soldiers.



C. Choctaw Community focus group findings (20 self identified Choctaws and 2 other participants):

Vision for Henning:

- There are new opportunities to shop, eat, and work in Henning.
- Main Street is revitalized physically and acts as a gathering place for all Henning residents and for tourists.
 - This could include an outdoor gathering space, such as the amphitheatre concept.
- There is a playground for the children and youth-oriented activities.
- There are ample opportunities/facilities to share Choctaw culture within the Choctaw community and with other Henning residents and tourists.
- The climate for business development has improved through lower gas rates, location incentives, increased access from I-69, and job training through a technology center.
- The MS Band of Choctaw Indians and the Henning government have a partnership to bring industry to Henning and locate on the 90-acres of Choctaw owned land.

Strengths/Essence of Henning:

- Alex Haley Museum is a good asset
- Churches abound.
- New Dollar General store is a good addition and brings shopping nearby.
- Hair salons abound.
- It is good to have the gas station.
- Vanity Fair provides jobs.
- Housing is affordable for the Choctaws due to provided housing and Henning provides government services to the Choctaw community.

Weaknesses of Henning:

- There are not enough places to shop.
- There is a lack of activities for children and children must go to neighborhood communities to go to school.
- There is a lack of good day care for pre-school aged children.
- High gas rates; seem to be higher than surrounding communities.
- Historically negative relationship between Choctaws and Henning government.

Phase two meetings included with a presentation by the University of Memphis about public input to date, research findings, and major recommended plan components. Participants then gave their feedback on the plan components.

D. Board of Alderman

Since the project's inception, municipal elections took place resulting in position changes on the Board of Alderman and a new Mayor. Therefore this meeting included a briefing on the entire project, as well as a presentation of major recommended plan components.

There was wholesale enthusiasm from the members of the Board of Alderman. The only comments were declarations of support. Comments did not focus on revisions to any plan elements.

E. Town Hall Meeting

Likewise, there was a great deal of enthusiasm about all plan components presented in the Town Hall meeting. Individual comments included the following:

- It is important to include a connection with Ft. Pillow State Park; most visitors to the park enter the park after driving through Henning
- All buildings on Main Street have historic value
- An arched gateway would be preferable to a less traditional sculptural gateway
- A favorite plan element is the greenways which would allow people to experience the entire community as pedestrians
- A favorite plan element is the revitalization of downtown (Main Street) Henning
- There are great possibilities for the implementation of this plan, particularly if it is implemented in strategic phases (implementation of one element building to make implementation of another possible)
- Take care to emphasize the revitalization of the Palmer (community) Center as critical to the plan



IV. Individual Interviews

Individual interviews were used to gather additional information, seek specialized knowledge or perspective on the community, and develop potential plan strategies. General findings are listed below:

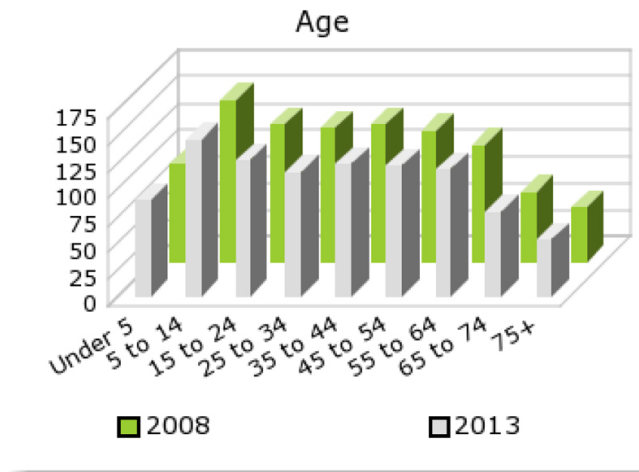
General Findings:

- Henning has not had a bustling business environment for approximately 30 years.
- Potential entrepreneurs seem to lack up front funds and/or collateral.
- Residents are used to shopping in neighboring communities.
- The local bank is capable of full service business loans and is interested in seeing local business development.
- The Lauderdale Economic Development Board is the primary local actor for business development/job creation.
- Although this was a negative past relationship, there appears to be a chance for collaboration between Henning and the MS Band for Choctaw Indians for greater economic development.
- There appears to be great desire to hold cultural events and sell authentic cultural goods in Henning.
- The Choctaw Tribe is a powerful economic development engine that has developed products/holds contracts for a wide variety of industries including aerospace and defense and employs thousands of members.
- Tribal land status brings business development incentives, so much so that the MS Branch alone fields numerous business development proposals every month.
- In order for Tribal related incentives to come into play, land must be held in trust (which Henning is not).
- Trust status is more challenging to get if you are obtaining it for gaming. Otherwise, the process mainly hinges on local and state public approval.
- The MS Band is interested in helping Henning, but it seems that tribal (land trust) status is a ticket to play.



Demographic Overview

Total Population, by Age - 2008 Census and 2013 Projections



In 1990, the median age of the total population in the study area was **30.5**, and in 2000, it was **33.0**. The median age in 2008 is **34.2** and it is predicted to change in five years to **35.8** years. In 2008, females represented **51.4%** of the population with a median age of **35.9** and males represented **48.6%** of the population with a median age of **32.6** years. In 2008, the most prominent age group in this geography is **Age 5 to 14** years. The age group least represented in this geography is **75 +** years.



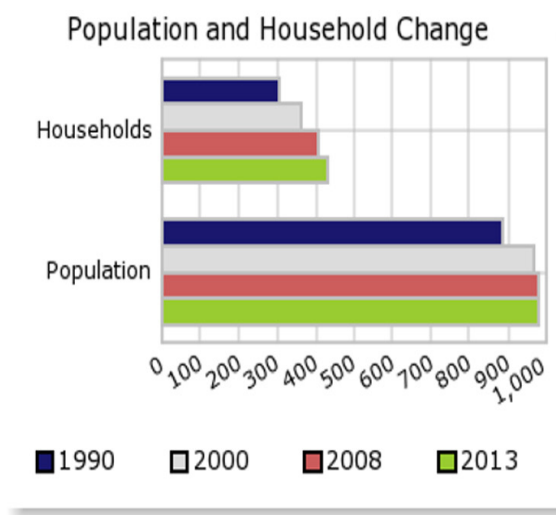
Population Age - 1990, 2000, 2008, and Projection in 2013.

	1990 Census	%	2000 Census	%	2008 Estimate	%	2013 Projection	%	1990 to 2000	2008 to 2013
0 to 4	70	7.9%	92	9.5%	92	9.4%	90	9.1%	31.2%	-2.8%
5 to 14	152	17.1%	156	16.1%	152	15.5%	148	15.1%	3.0%	-2.8%
15 to 19	64	7.2%	71	7.3%	67	6.8%	67	6.8%	11.6%	0.0%
20 to 24	74	8.3%	69	7.2%	62	6.3%	61	6.2%	-6.3%	-2.2%
25 to 34	151	17.1%	122	12.6%	126	12.8%	117	11.9%	-19.6%	-6.9%
35 to 44	101	11.4%	144	14.9%	130	13.3%	124	12.6%	42.4%	-4.7%
45 to 54	78	8.8%	112	11.6%	123	12.6%	124	12.6%	43.8%	0.3%
55 to 64	71	8.0%	90	9.3%	111	11.3%	121	12.3%	26.4%	9.0%
65 to 74	66	7.4%	59	6.1%	67	6.8%	79	8.0%	-9.6%	18.4%
75 +	60	6.8%	53	5.5%	51	5.2%	53	5.4%	-12.4%	3.1%

Population by Household, Race and Ethnicity - 1990, 2000, 2008, and Projection in 2013.

The number of households in the study area in 1990 was **306** and changed to **361** in 2000, representing a change of **18.1%**. The household count in 2008 was **407** and the household projection for 2013 is **433**, a change of **6.5%**.

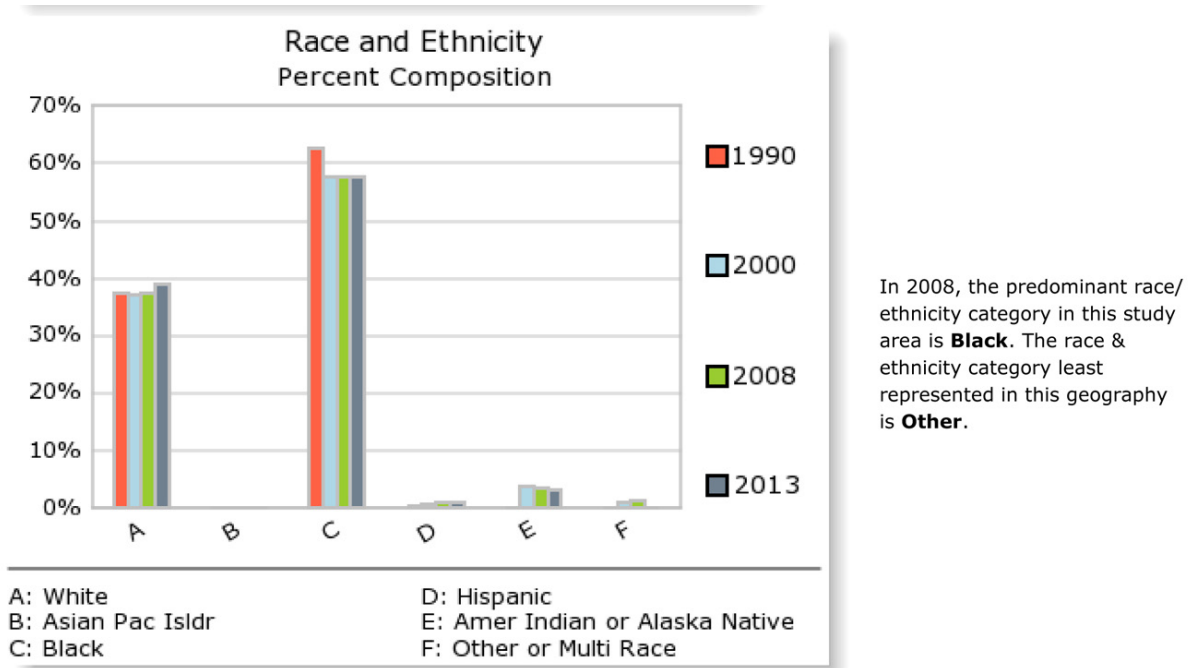
The population in the study area in 1990 was **888** and in 2000 it was **969**, roughly a **9.2%** change. The population in 2008 was **981** and the projection for 2013 is **982** representing a change of **0.1%**.



	1990 Census	2000 Census	2008 Estimate	2013 Projection	Percent Change	
					1990 to 2000	2008 to 2013
Total Population	888	969	981	982	9.2%	0.1%
Total Households	306	361	407	433	18.1%	6.5%

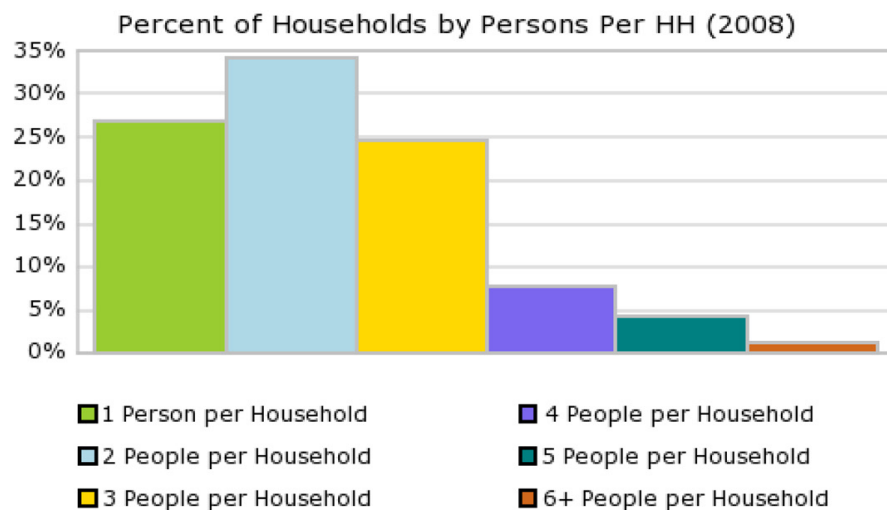
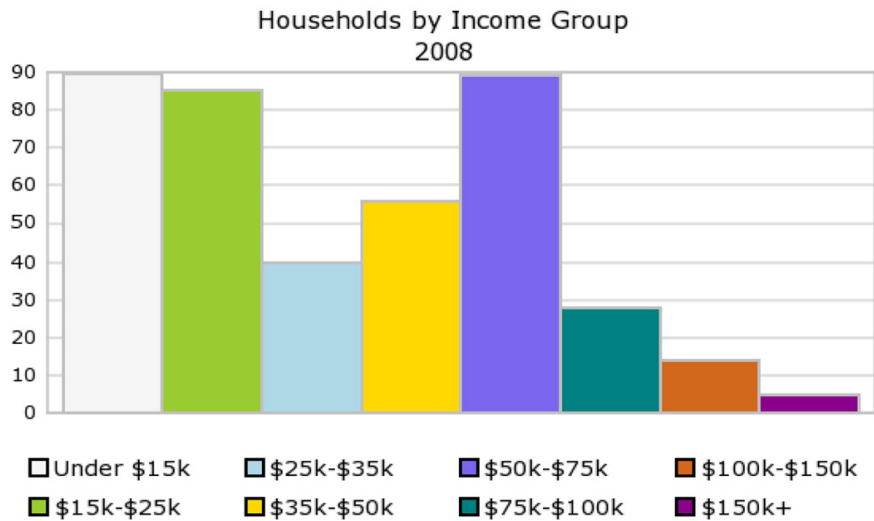
Source: http://www.demographicsnow.com/OnX_WriteReport.srct

Population by Household, Race and Ethnicity - 1990, 2000, 2008, and Projection in 2013.

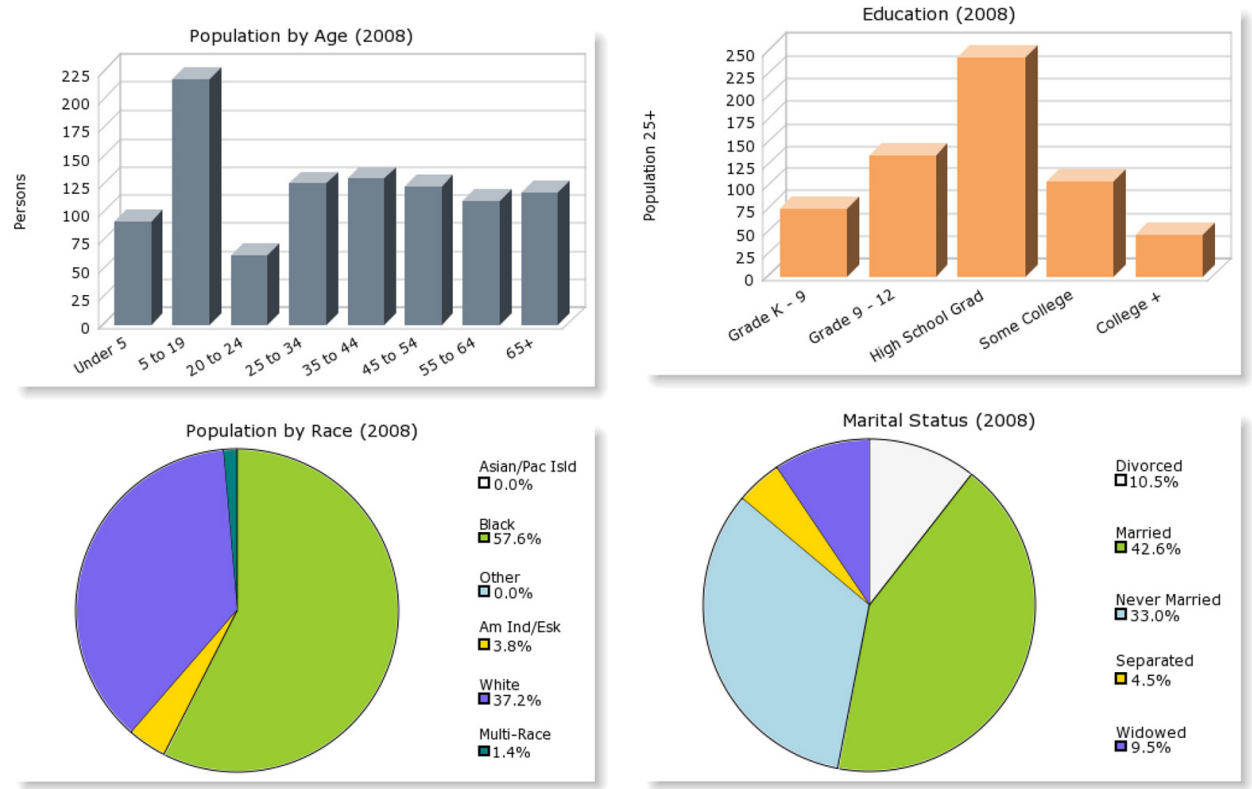


Race & Ethnicity	Percent Change									
	1990 Census	%	2000 Census	%	2008 Estimate	%	2013 Projection	%	1990 to 2000	2008 to 2013
White	331	37.3%	358	37.0%	365	37.2%	383	39.0%	8.2%	4.9%
Black	555	62.5%	560	57.8%	565	57.6%	565	57.5%	0.9%	0.0%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	0.1%	38	3.9%	37	3.8%	34	3.4%	7,000.0%	-8.7%
Asian or Pacific Islander	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	-50.0%	0.0%
Other Race	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	-100.0%	N/A%
Two or More Races			13	1.3%	14	1.5%	1	0.1%		-96.3%
Hispanic Ethnicity	2	0.2%	7	0.7%	9	0.9%	10	1.1%	226.4%	13.1%
Not Hispanic or Latino	885	99.8%	962	99.3%	972	99.1%	972	98.9%	8.7%	-0.0%

In 2008 the predominant household income category in this study area is **\$0 - \$15K**, and the income group that is least represented in this geography is **\$150K +**.

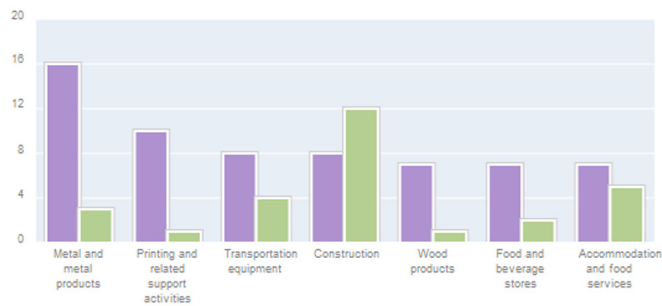


Population by Age, Race, Education, and Marital Status.

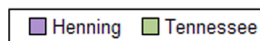


Industry and Occupation.

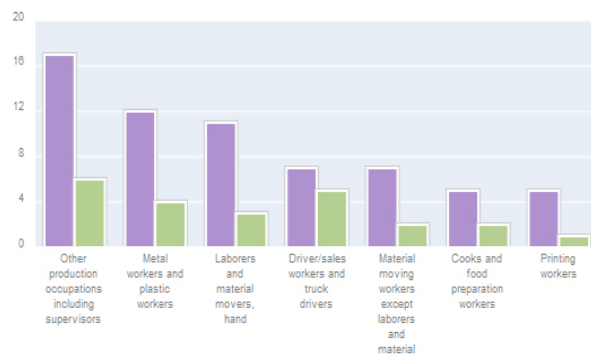
Most common industries for males (%):



- Metal and metal products (16%)
- Printing and related support activities (10%)
- Transportation equipment (8%)
- Construction (8%)
- Wood products (7%)
- Food and beverage stores (7%)
- Accommodation and food services (7%)

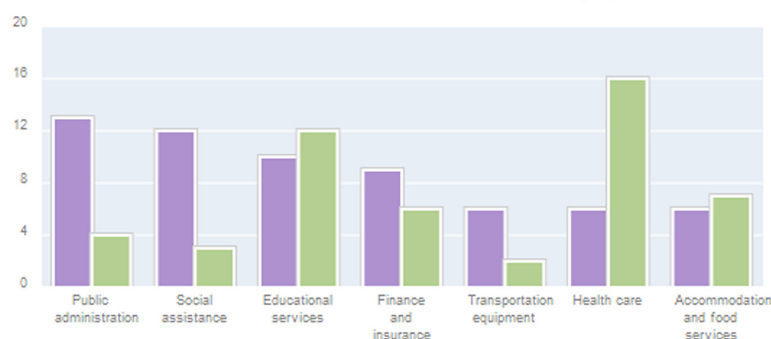


Most common occupations for males (%):



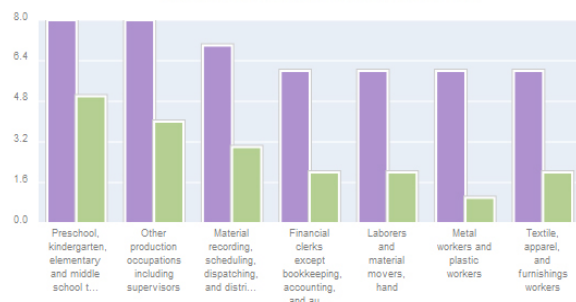
- Other production occupations including supervisors (17%)
- Metal workers and plastic workers (12%)
- Laborers and material movers, hand (11%)
- Driver/sales workers and truck drivers (7%)
- Material moving workers except laborers and material (7%)
- Cooks and food preparation workers (5%)
- Printing workers (5%)

Most common industries for females (%):



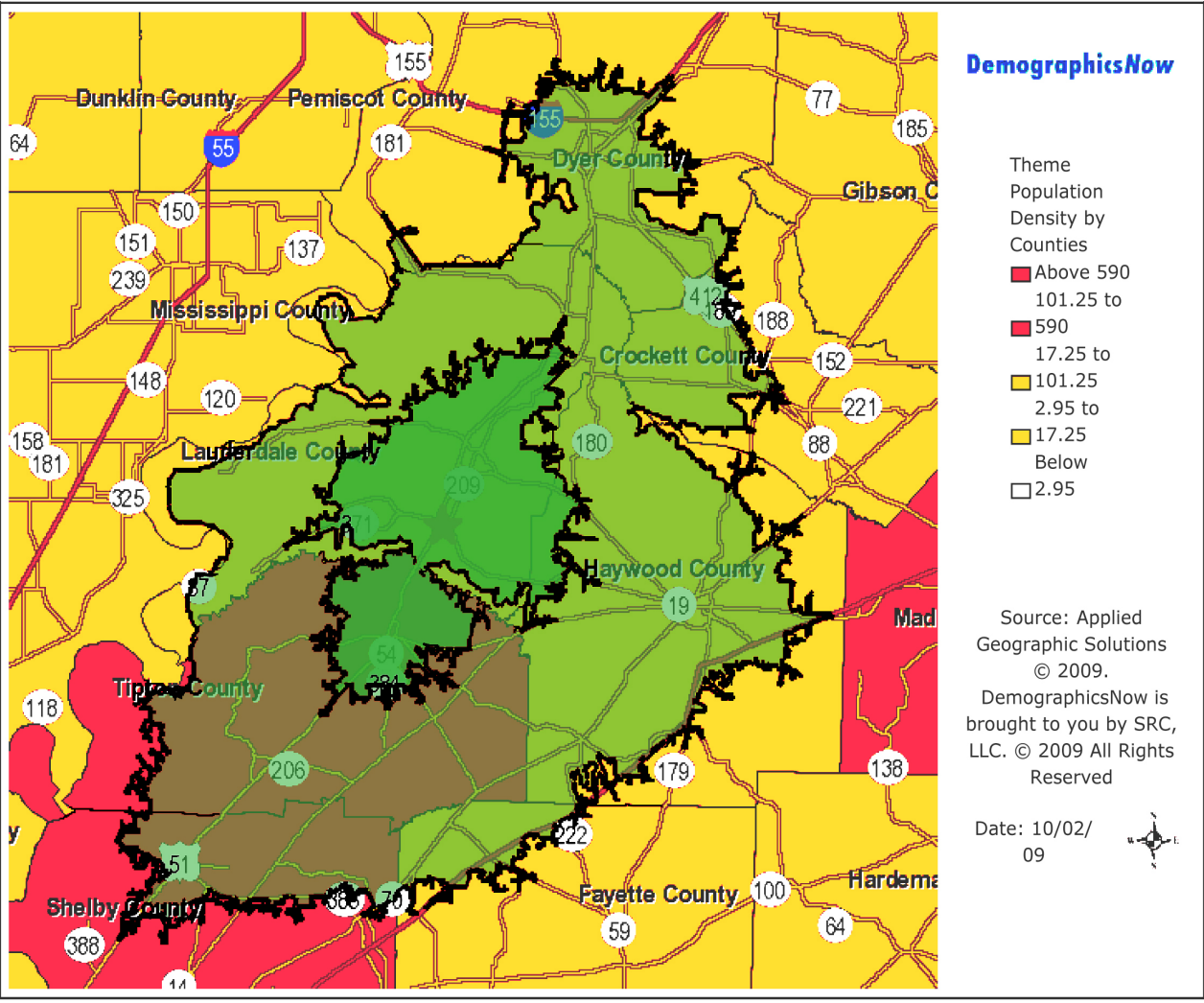
- Public administration (13%)
- Social assistance (12%)
- Educational services (10%)
- Finance and insurance (9%)
- Transportation equipment (6%)
- Health care (6%)
- Accommodation and food services (6%)

Most common occupations for females (%):



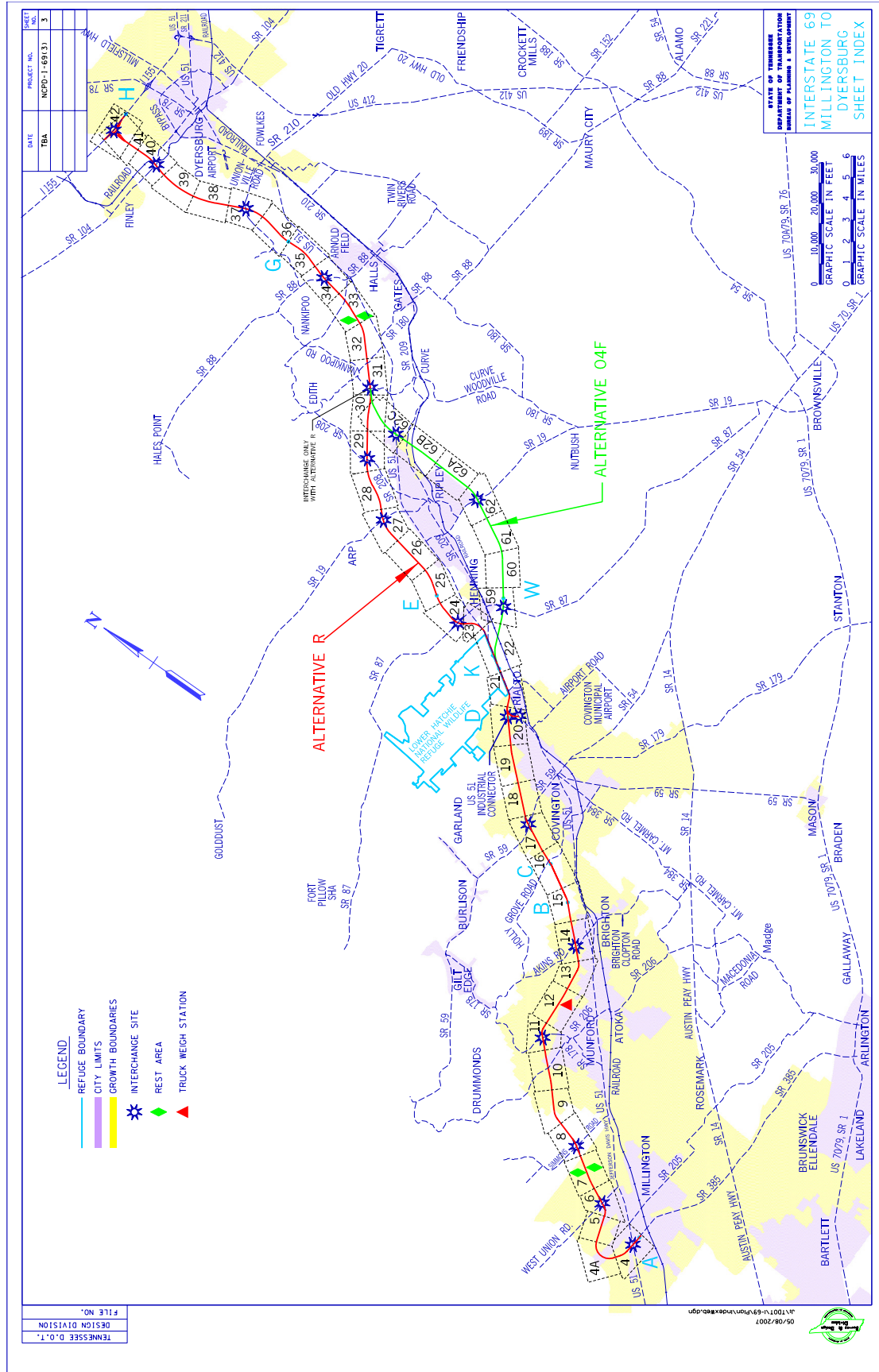
- Preschool, kindergarten, elementary and middle school teachers (8%)
- Other production occupations including supervisors (8%)
- Material recording, scheduling, dispatching, and distributing workers (7%)
- Financial clerks except bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks (6%)
- Laborers and material movers, hand (6%)
- Metal workers and plastic workers (6%)
- Textile, apparel, and furnishings workers (6%)

Henning Drive Time Radius Map

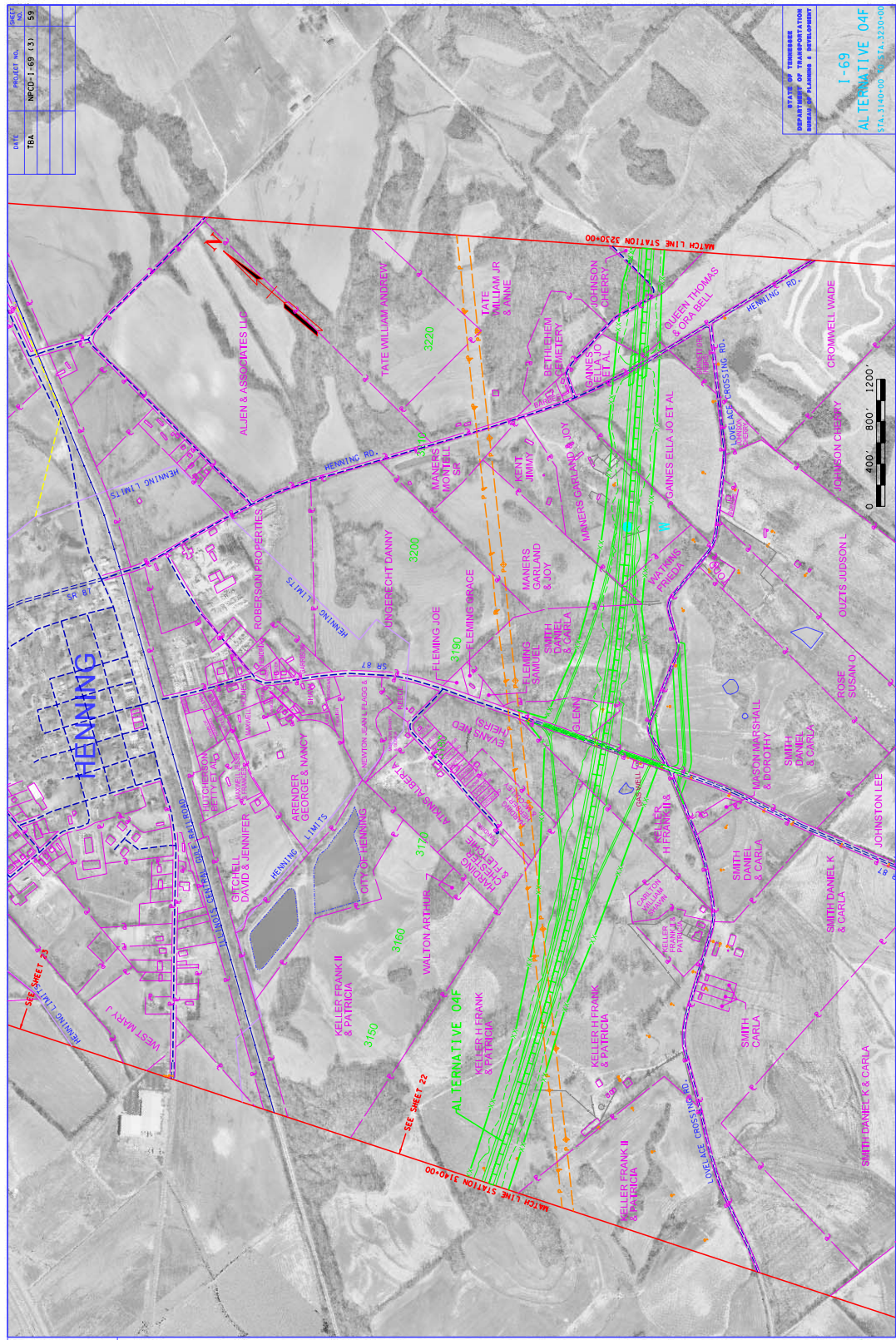


Current year data is for the year **2009**, 5 year projected data is for the year **2014**. More About Our Data.
Demographic data © 2009 by Experian/Applied Geographic Solutions.

Proposed route for new I-69 and re-routing of existing Highway 51.



I-69/Highway 87 Interchange East of Henning



Consulting Summary for the Alex Haley Home & Museum

As mentioned in the Tourism Development section of this report, team member Shannon Dixon was assigned to work with the Haley Museum on a project of their choosing – one resulting in increased capacity of the organization. Ms. Dixon held a meeting with board chair and the secretary to discuss the scope of the project and the menu of capacity-building activities available. The Haley Museum chose to focus on grant research.

In addition to conducting the requested grant research, several other things were accomplished:

- The Haley Museum was introduced to the executive director of the National Civil Rights Museum, Ms. Beverly Robertson, in the hopes that organizations will, at minimum, develop cross marketing.
- After conversations with the Haley Museum surfaced a need for multi-faceted organizational assessment and planning, Ms. Dixon facilitated a meeting between the Haley Museum and Humanities Tennessee. This meeting resulted in an invitation from Humanities Tennessee to apply for their Community History Development Fund. This fund is “designed to assist emerging history and cultural institutions develop long-term growth and sustainability” and “the fund provides partner organizations financial support in the various phases of its work bringing the humanities to the public.”¹ As of September 2009 Haley Museum and Ms. Dixon were in the process of drafting an application to the fund.

The grant research results were delivered within an Excel workbook designed as a comprehensive grant tracking system. With seven different components for tracking, the workbook allows cataloging of all grant research, applications submitted and the results, conversations with funders, and compliance requirements and deadlines. Results of the grant research include:

- 23 seemingly appropriate grant opportunities were identified
 - 7 of these were deemed ready for application (no cultivation necessary)
 - 6 were judged to need some sort of cultivation prior to submission of an application
 - The appropriateness of application to the remaining foundation/corporations identified will depend on the direction the Haley Museum takes in the coming months regarding the Humanities Tennessee assessment results
- 3 organizations were identified as potential resources (for example, the Association of African American Museums)

(Endnotes)

¹ Humanities Tennessee, accessed September 28, 2009, <http://www.humanitiestennessee.org/community/index.php>.



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