FIVE IMPORTANT FACTORS IN DECIDING WHETHER A INCREASE IN LIQUOR TAX IS CALLED FOR AND SHOULD BE PUT TO THE COUNSEL

1) A 67% increase in City Alcohol Tax is completely unwarranted. Has there been a 67% increase in DWI's or Public Intoxication? No, in fact Donna Jackson in the City clerk's office has the statistics which would argue that there has been NO statistical increase in either DWI's or Public Intox arrests over last 18 months. Has the JPD made 67% more dispatch calls to places which serve alcohol? I would say absolutely not, and dispatch numbers will confirm. In addition, in speaking with my private club colleagues there have been fewer incident's which required police attention.

2) Existing tax situation: Last year in 2008 Brickhouse paid $31,053.40 to the City. The Electric Cowboy paid about the same- give or talk a couple thousand, and the other existing private club permits together paid about $30,000 plus in city alcohol tax. In the year 2008, the private clubs of Jonesboro essentially paid for three full time police officers (police salary of 29,190 a year depending on certification). That's 6,240 hours of police protection, enforcement, and community work financed completely on the backs of private clubs from the 3% liquor tax. Did the additional burden created by private clubs take up 6,240 hours of JPD time? There is no audit/accounting system even in place to ensure that existing private clubs are paying properly. There is no accounting of where and how the money is being used.

3) Raising the City Liquor Tax will force private clubs to raise prices – forcing "members and guests" in the community to enjoy adult beverages at home – forcing tax dollars away from City of Jonesboro and more towards Poinsett and Green counties. Research shows that the number of DWI's in Dry Counties are higher because people are forced to drive. See attachment for research citation. In addition, when people drink at home they get more violent. (See Attached research article).

4) Rogers Arkansas, which has severed as the template for our City's Alcohol and Tax situation, it the "wettest dry county in the country" with 90 -110 private clubs. In the KAIT 8 segment of May 4, 2006 demonstrated that more permits do not mean more DWI's or public intox's. In fact, just the opposite in many cases. (See Attached). Both Green County and Benton counties have more private clubs and both have less crime.

5) Economy is in the worst shape since 1930's (CNBC March 2009) See attached research article Unemployment is at a worst it's been since 1970's (see attached research) Poverty is the number one predictor of crime and police involvement NOT alcohol.Consumer behavior unprecedented lack of spending – "the change in consumer behavior in the U.S. over the last six months is like nothing that has happened before" (Warren Buffet March 2009)

6) People eating out less – Chief Executive of General Mills Ken Powell says that his financial data demonstrates that "the economic downturn has sent consumers out of restaurants and back to the grocery store." See attached research article.

7) ASU's study demonstrated no more "alcohol" related crime status in wet vs. dry counties, much less an increase with number of permits.

Dry Counties Have Higher DWI Fatality Rates

Another study has found that alcohol prohibition (dry) counties have higher rates of alcohol-related traffic fatalities than do wet counties.

A study of all counties in Arkansas has reported dry counties to have higher alcohol-related fatalities than dry counties throughout the state. Wet and dry counties are often adjacent, which means that alcohol beverage sales outlets are often located immediately across county or even state lines.

One newspaper reported that in the state's northwest corner bordering Missouri "on a recent Friday evening, more than nine out of very 10 cars rolling into liquor megastore Macadoodles had Arkansas license plates. In one hour, 182 Arkansas plates were counted. There were 16 Missouri plates during that time period." Another newspaper reported that in central Arkansas "when an area is dry, it means a drive across the county line, and sometimes several county lines, to reach an oasis...."

The finding that Arkansas' dry counties have a higher proportion of alcohol-related traffic crashes is consistent with research elsewhere. For example, a study of about 39,000 alcohol-related traffic accidents in Kentucky found that residents of dry counties are more likely to be involved in such crashes, possibly because they have to drive farther from their homes to consume alcohol, thus increasing impaired driving exposure (Schulte *et al.*, 2003).

Other researchers have pointed to the same phenomenon. Winn and Giacopassi (1993) observed that residents of wet counties most likely have "shorter distances [to travel] between home and drinking establishments." From their study, Schulte and colleagues concluded that in dry counties "individuals are driving farther under the influence of alcohol, thus increasing their exposure to crashes."

It would appear that however well-intentioned, county alcohol prohibition does not prevent residents from consuming alcoholic beverages, contributes to alcohol-related traffic deaths, and deprives residents of tax revenues lost to wet counties.

Reference:

Combs, H. Jason. The wet-dry issue in Arkansas. *The Pennsylvania Geographer*, 2005, *43(2)*, 66-94; Schulte, G., *et al.* Consideration of driver home county prohibition and alcohol-related vehicle crashes. *Accident Analysis & Prevention*, 1993, *35(5)*, 641-648; Winn, Russell and Giacopassi, David. Effects of county-level alcohol prohibition on motor vehicle accidents. *Social Science Quarterly*, 1993, *74*, 783-792.

Additional Information

- "Dry" County Traffic Crashes
- Alcohol-Related Traffic Crashes: A Cause
- Wet or Dry? Legalize Alcohol Beverage Sales?
- Alcohol Consumption and Taxes: Wet vs. Dry Areas
- More: Drinking And Driving

This site is maintained by Prof. David J. Hanson, Ph.D.
Questions? Comments? E-mail him: hansondj@potsdam.edu
Sociology Department, State University of New York, Potsdam, NY 13676.

<<Back

KAIT 8 Jonesboro AR kait8.com

Benton County, Craig Rickert Reports

The Differences In Being a "Dry" County

May 4, 2006 - Posted at 4:00 p.m. CST

ROGERS, AR - It holds the title of home of the world's largest retailer, but it has a second, unofficial title.

"I believe it's the wettest dry county in the USA."

Although it's hard to prove, private club owner Kevin Johnson can't be far off when talking about Benton County. Legally, it's a dry county, but in the two boom towns that make up the majority of the population, Bentonville and Rogers, there are 90 private clubs selling alcohol. Rogers has 40 of them.

"You're almost a minority if you don't." says Bill Adams.

Bill Adams is on the Benton County quorum court. He's also running for county judge. His platform, the wet/dry issue should be on the ballot.

"Bent County buys more alcohol per capita than any other county in the state."

To get the wet/dry issue on the ballot 38% of the registered voters in the county have to sign a petition. It's the same in Craighead County. Adams, and his organization, "Time To Decide Benton County" is leading the charge to make that happen.

As you may expect there is opposition but not like we're used to seeing in Craighead County. Whenever another club or restaurant asks for a permit to pour it's rarely front page news. And you never see those against private club permits stating their case to the state ABC board. \

"Probably not as much as people would think." says Jennifer Turner.

Benton County is Jennifer Turner's beat. She's covered the wet/dry issue through town hall meetings and private club openings. She believes those against the county going wet, primarily the churches, will fight, but not yet. She says if the item gets on the ballot, that's when you'll see the churches fight.

"Why would you want an enemy like that at home in your community?" The enemy, according to Pastor Tom Hatley of Rogers' Immanuel Baptist Church, is alcohol. He blames a good share of his community's problems on it, and believes that if Benton County were to go wet things would only get worse.

"There's no need to have another vote."

Do more clubs equal more crime? Not necessarily. When you compare the 2005 records from the Jonesbore and Rogers police departments, you see some interesting things. Remember, Rogers has over three times as many permits as Jonesboro.

In 2005 Rogers, with 40 permits, had 276 drunk driving arrests last year. Jonesboro with 13 permits, had 254. Public intox arrests in Rogers in 2005? 99 Jonesboro one third the permits, 2.5 times the arrests 249. Minor in possession? Rogers 10. Jonesboro 17.

Based on these statistics, it's hard to make an argument that the amount of private club permits in a community has any effect on crime.

But let's talk about the real issue that comes with the wet/dry debate.

"It's all about the money." says pastor Hatley.

A 2004 study by the University of Arkansas looked into the economic impact of legalizing liquor sales in Benton County. It was paid for by Bill Adams' group, and it found that the county is losing over 28 million dollars in sales each year to surrounding wet counties.

Bill Adams says, "I will do what I can to keep that money from leaving."

Pastor Hatley's response, "This is about a few people getting rich at the expense of others being hurt."

BEST PLACES TO LIVE *Money's list of America's best small cities* 2008

Full List | Near You | Housing | Financial | Quality of Life

Fayetteville, AR

Full List

CONTENDER

Top 100 rank: N.A

Population: 68,700

Compare Fayetteville to Top 10 Best Places

Financial		
Median family income (per year)	$57,399	$93,313
Family purchasing power (annual cost of living adjusted)	$66,357	$84,802
Sales tax	9.25%	6.60%
State income tax rate (highest tax bracket)	7.00%	5.22%
State income tax rate (lowest tax bracket)	1.00%	2.42%
Auto insurance premiums (average price quotes for the state)	$1,849	$1,854
Job growth % (2000-2007)	27.65%	18.60%

Housing		
Median home price	$164,000	$293,712
Average property taxes (2006)	$1,114	$4,072

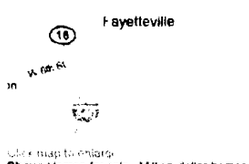
See Fayetteville homes for sale

See million-dollar homes

Education		
Colleges, universities and professional schools (within 30 miles)	2	40
Junior colleges and technical institutes (within 30 miles)	1	20
Test scores reading (% above/below state average)	18.2%	17.3%
Test scores math (% above/below average)	17.9%	16.6%
% students attending public/private schools (located within town limits)	88.3/11.7	89.5/10.5

Quality of life		
Air quality index* (% of days EPA ranked as good)	97.8%	76.0%
Personal crime incidents (per 1,000)	5	2
Property crime incidents (per 1,000)	47	25
Median commute time (in minutes)	14.2	23.0
% population with commute 45 mins. or longer	3.7%	15.8%
% population walk or bike to work	5.5%	3.0%

Leisure and culture



click map to enlarge
Show: Homes for sale | Million-dollar homes | Top companies | Colleges | Hospitals | Museums | Wineries | Gardens | Ski resorts

See Fayetteville in...

...What Readers Say

They speak out on Fayetteville and other places

We have lived in Fishers for 8 years. It is an excellent place to liv...

Fishers Walkable Downtown was canceled; that probably hurts the stand...

I moved here from CA last December to Fishers to give my children a b...

Have your say

Nearby...

PLACES	Compare
Springdale, AR	
Rogers, AR	
Bentonville, AR	
Bella Vista, AR	
Van Buren, AR	
Fort Smith, AR	
Russellville, AR	

Compare

Find Your Best Places

Region: Northeast | South | Midwest | West

Ranking: Top 100 winners only

Population

Home Prices
2007 median sales prices

Add options: schools, weather, more

Submit

Search by city or state

City State Select

Video

Movie theaters (within 15 miles)	6	51
Restaurants (within 15 miles)	597	4,141
Bars (within 15 miles)	28	338
Public golf courses (within 30 miles)	48	242
Libraries (within 15 miles)	14	90
Museums (accredited by AAM, within 40 miles)	1	11
Ski resorts (within 100 miles)	N A.	13
Arts funding (Dollars per person of state funds spent on arts)	0.8	1.5
Weather	City state	Best places avg
Annual rainfall (inches)	47.43	36.31
% clear days in the area	34	30
High temp in July ° F	89.7°	87.8°
Low temp in Jan ° F	24.8°	22 9°
Health*	City state	Best places avg
Has health plan (% of residents)	83.3%	88.2%
Body mass index (avg. for residents)	26	27
Diabetes rates (% of residents diagnosed)	8 7%	9.6%
Hypertension rates (% of residents diagnosed)	27.4%	27.3%
Meet the neighbors	City state	Best places avg
Median age	28 4	36 0
Completed at least some college (% of residents)	71 3%	73.6%
Married	40.3%	57.5%
Divorced	9.9%	8.3%
Racial diversity index (100 = national average, higher numbers indicate greater diversity)	76.5	104.0
Amount spent on vacations (domestic and foreign household avg. per year)	$6,746	$8,012

From the August 2008 issue

Notes:
* County data
** State data

(I) Income tax notes:
17 states have statutory provision for automatic adjustment of tax brackets, personal exemption or standard deductions to the rate of inflation. Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska and Ohio indexes the personal exemption amounts only.
(A special tax table is available for low income taxpayers reducing their tax payments.
Tax credits.

Feedback on the Best Places to Live list?
E-mail the editors

Information powered by Onboard Informatics. Some data may be provided courtesy of its partners.

Sperling's BestPlaces

Additional data and consulting services provided by Bert Sperling's bestplaces net

trulia real estate search

Homes for sale provided by Trulia Real Estate Search.

Why Plymouth is No. 1
A sense of home, parks and award-winning schools help put this Minnesota city at the top of Money's Best Places to Live list. **Watch**

Is your town a great place to live?

Do you live in a great place? Does your city have great cafes and culture? Lovely affordable homes? Low crime and a thriving downtown? A thriving local economy? Amazing neighbors? Show us why your town is remarkable. Send your photos and videos, and they could be profiled in an upcoming story.

Top 3

TOP EARNING CITIES

City	Median income
New Canaan, CT	$231,138
Darien, CT	$218,130
Lake Forest, IL	$212,122

See the rest

How we picked the Best Places

Using statistics from data provider Onboard Informatics and consultant Bert Sperling of BestPlaces net we crunched the numbers in order to zero in on America's best small cities for families. (Last year, we looked at small towns, with populations between 7,500 and 50,000.) More

BEST PLACES TO LIVE

Money's list of America's best small cities 2008

Full List Near You Housing Financial Quality of Life

Paragould, AR

Full List

CITY STATS

Top 100 rank: N.A.[C]

Population: 24,200

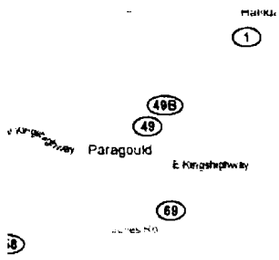
Compare Paragould to Top 10 Best Places

Financial	City stats	Best places avg.
Median family income (per year)	$46,852	$93,313
Family purchasing power (annual cost-of-living adjusted)	$66,836	$84,802
Sales tax	8.50%	6.60%
State income tax rate (highest bracket)	7.00%[I]	5.22%
State income tax rate (lowest bracket)	1.00%[I]	2.42%
Auto insurance premiums (average price quotes for the state)	$1,849	$1,854
Job growth % (2000-2007)	6.99%	18.60%

Housing	City stats	Best places avg.
Median home price	$79,000	$293,712
Average property taxes (2006)	N.A.	$4,072
See Paragould homes for sale		
See million-dollar homes		

Education	City stats	Best places avg.
Colleges, universities and professional schools (within 50 miles)	2	40
Junior colleges and technical institutes (within 30 miles)	2	20
Test scores reading (% above/below state average)	8.2%	17.3%
Test scores math (% above/below average)	14.5%	16.6%
% students attending public/private schools (locate within town limits)	93.6/6.4	89.5/10.5

Quality of life	City stats	Best places avg.
Air quality index* (% of days AQI ranked as good)	N.A.	76.0%
Personal crime incidents (per 1,000)	5	2
Property crime incidents (per 1,000)	57	25



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Have your say

Nearby...

PLACES COMPANIES HOMES

See city stats	Compare
Jonesboro, AR	
Bartlett, TN	
Memphis, TN	
Germantown, TN	
Horn Lake, MS	
Southaven, MS	

Find Your Best Places

Region
Northeast South
Midwest West

Ranking
Top 100 winners only

Population
[illegible] 8.3M

Home Prices
2007 median sales prices
[illegible] $1.0M

Add options: schools, weather, more

Submit

Search by city or state

City State Select

Video (5 of 5)

Median commute time (in minutes)	12.2	23.0
% population with commute 45 mins. or longer	7.4%	15.8%
% population walk or bike to work	1.8%	3.0%

Leisure and culture	City stats	Best places avg.
Movie theaters (within 15 miles)	2	51
Restaurants (within 15 miles)	187	4,141
Bars (within 15 miles)	(16)	338
Public golf courses (within 30 miles)	22	242
Libraries (within 15 miles)	9	90
Museums (accredited by AAM within 30 miles)	1	11
Ski resorts (within 100 miles)	N.A.	13
Arts funding (Dollars per person of state funds spent on arts)	0.8	1.5

Weather	City stats	Best places avg.
Annual rainfall (inches)	49.29	36.31
% clear days in the area	32	30
High temp in July * F	90.4*	87.8*
Low temp in Jan * F	25.7*	22.9*

Health*	City stats	Best places avg.
Has health plan (% of residents)	87.7%	88.2%
Body mass index (avg. for residents)	28	27
Diabetes rates (% of residents diagnosed)	15.6%	9.6%
Hypertension rates (% of residents diagnosed)	34.2%	27.3%

Meet the neighbors	City stats	Best places avg.
Median age	38.9	36.0
Completed at least some college (% of residents)	37.0%	73.6%
Married	56.4%	57.5%
Divorced	12.7%	8.3%
Racial diversity index (100 is national average. Higher numbers indicate greater diversity)	7.7	104.0
Amount spent on vacations (Domestic and foreign, household avg. per year)	$6,224	$8,012

From the August 2008 issue

Notes:
* County data
** State data
(C) = Only cities with populations between 50,000 and 300,000 were eligible for this year's Best Places to Live list
(I) Income tax notes:
17 states have statutory provision for automatic adjustment of tax brackets, personal exemption or standard deductions to the rate of inflation. Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska and Ohio indexes the personal exemption amounts only.
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Collierville, TN

Compare

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Where to beat the gas crunch
In places like State College, Pa., commutes are short or many residents get to work in ways that don't use a lot of fuel. **Watch**

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Tuesday, February 17, 2009

General Mills CEO: People Eating Out Less, Grocery Shopping More

FOXBusiness

General Mills (GIS 52.55, 0.6, 1.15%) Chief Executive Officer Ken Powell said Tuesday the economic downturn has sent consumers out of restaurants and back to the grocery store and ultimately the downturn has somewhat positively impacted the cereal's company's business.

The comments were made at a Boca Raton, Fla., industry trade conference with FOX Business' Brian Sullivan.

Powell said the company has seen growth across all brands -- from its Cheerios breakfast cereals to its Yoplait yogurt -- upwards of 5% year over year. General Mills attests the purchase increases partially to the economic decline.

"We're seeing consumers leave the restaurants and going more to the grocery store," Powell said. "We have an excellent brand portfolio and our brands are doing well in this environment."

Powell said the company's gross margins will increase for the upcoming fiscal year as commodity prices have decreased significantly and the company has increased productivity. The company will not see any commodity price gains for this current fiscal year because of long-term contracts General Mills had already entered into.

For the fiscal year that ends May, the company expects earnings of $3.83 to $3.87 a share, excluding items.

General Mills' Powell said generally the Obama Administration's economic package is a net positive for the company and he said "hopefully it will work."

"A few extra bucks in the wallet in consumers will be certainly good for our business," he said. "Consumers will hopefully pick up a few more items at the grocery store and we believe they'll choose our products."

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Kraft Foods CEO Talks Private Label
The Only Number You Need to Know
Lacking Clarity, Dow Plunges 382
Recession Wipes Away Decade of Gains

ABC NEWS

Consumer Confidence 2009: Not a Happy New Year

Just 6 Percent of Americans Rate the National Economy Positively

Analysis by Peyton M. Craighill

Jan. 6, 2009 —

So much for a happy New Year: In the midst of its worst stretch on record, consumer confidence starts 2009 at its lowest calendar-year opening in 23 years of weekly polls. But there is a faint glimmer in the gloom: slightly better ratings of the buying climate.

The ABC News Consumer Comfort Index stands at -49 on its scale of +100 to -100, unchanged from last week and within sight of its record low, -54 on Dec. 1. It's been -48 or lower since mid-October and -40 or worse since April 20, both low-streak records.

Click here for PDF with charts and data table.

Positive ratings of the national economy this week match their all-time low, 6 percent, set last week. However, ratings of the buying climate, while just 26 percent positive, are their best since March, coinciding with post-Christmas retail discounts and lower gas prices. That comports with a report Tuesday from the International Council of Shopping Centers saying sales got a little lift the last week of December □ but remained dismal overall.

The overall view is still grim. The CCI racked up its second worst annual average in 2008 and its worst ever quarter, averaging -50, in Q4. Compare that to its lifetime average, -11 in weekly polls since late 1985, much less its high, +38 in January 2000.

There are good reasons: The U.S. economy officially went into recession in December 2007, the Dow finished 2008 down 35 percent, the economy's shed nearly two million jobs, unemployment is at a 15-year high, home values declined by 12 percent last year, and, though gas prices have eased, they averaged $3.25 in 2008, the highest annual average in federal data since 1991.

INDEX □ The CCI is based on Americans' ratings of the economy, their personal finances and the buying climate. Positive ratings of the national economy suffered the most in 2008, falling by 25 points through the course of the year and averaging just 15 percent, 24 points below the long-term average.

Positive ratings of the economy have been in single digits for nine weeks, exceeded only by a 13-week run in early 1992.

Twenty-six percent rate the buying climate positively, creeping up from its low of 18 percent in mid-October. However that's still 12 points lower than the long-term average. Positive ratings of the buying climate averaged 23 percent last year, the worst on record.

Forty-five percent rate their personal finances positively, the same as last week and 12 points off the

long-term average. Half or fewer have rated their finances positively for 24 straight weeks, the worst such run since 1992-93.

TREND □ While the CCI hasn't advanced much from its low, at least it's not getting worse, as it did so often in 2008. Before last year the index's all-time low was -50 in February 1992. Last year it fell that low or lower 10 times, setting or matching record lows four times. It was -50 or below steadily from mid-November to mid-December.

As noted, the CCI averaged -50 in Q4 2008, the worst quarter on record (previously -47 in Q1 1992). For the entire year it was -42, 2 points better than its worst year on record, 1992. Its best yearlong average was +29 in 2000.

GROUPS □ The CCI has been negative across demographic groups for 28 weeks straight, surpassed only by a 33-week stretch in 1991-92. Income as usual marks the biggest gap; the index is -26 among people with the highest incomes compared with -77 among those with the lowest. It's -42 among people who've been to college vs. -68 among high-school dropouts, -56 among women vs. -40 among men, -65 among renters vs. -43 among homeowners and -46 among whites vs. -61 among blacks.

The index is -36 among Republicans this week, -44 among independents and -62 among Democrats. The 26-point difference between Republicans and Democrats compares with an average gap of 41 points for 2008 and 33 points since 1990.

Here's a closer look at the three components of the ABC News CCI:

NATIONAL ECONOMY □ Six percent of Americans rate the economy as excellent or good, tying its record low last week. The highest was 80 percent on Jan. 16, 2000.

PERSONAL FINANCES □ Forty-five percent say their own finances are excellent or good, the same as last week. The best was 70 percent, last reached in January 2000. The worst was 42 percent Dec. 1, 2008 and March 14, 1993.

BUYING CLIMATE □ Twenty-six percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things; it was 25 percent last week. The best was 57 percent on Jan. 16, 2000. The worst was 18 percent Oct. 19, Aug. 10 and Aug. 24, 2008.

METHODOLOGY □ Interviews for the ABC News Consumer Comfort Index are reported in a four-week rolling average. This week's results are based on telephone interviews among a random national sample of 1,000 adults in the four weeks ending Jan. 4, 2009. The results have a 3-point error margin. Field work by ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

The index is derived by subtracting the negative response to each index question from the positive response to that question. The three resulting numbers are added and divided by three. The index can range from +100 (everyone positive on all three measures) to -100 (all negative on all three measures). The survey began in December 1985.

Click here for PDF with charts and data table.

moQ

MINNEAPOLIS OBSERVER QUARTERLY • EXPLORING THE BUCOLIC CITY

More Cops Does Not Equal Less Crime

July 17, 2005

When Mayor R.T. Rybak last week announced his plans to hire 60 more police officers with state LGA money, he was responding quite appropriately to community concerns about a troubling spike in crime this summer. But what the mayor--and critics who call the move a political ploy in an election season--neglect to mention is that the extra cops likely will have little effect on the current level of violence.

History provides a painful lesson here. Back in 1995, when the city suffered through a record 98 homicides, the Police Department was significantly better staffed than it is today--even including the cops Rybak has proposed to add to the force. Yes, police response times should improve and the department's ability to investigate and arrest offenders will be enhanced, but those additional cops can't alleviate the conditions that breed criminal activity.

Council Member Barb Johnson, who represents part of North Minneapolis, wasn't joking at a recent City Council meeting when she said her constituents would happily welcome the Lagoon high rise project that so many Uptown activists fought to stop because its height did not match the "character of the community." Johnson pointed out that her Fourth Ward has great housing stock, but no retail business base; beautiful parks, but no jobs.

The equation is well known: When the economy is booming, crime goes down. But the economy is never booming on the North side. And those who are criticizing Rybak for coming late to the public safety debate would be more accurate in criticizing his inability to focus on building a sustainable economy north of downtown.

There has been much posturing during the mayoral campaign about bringing some vision and resources to the North side, and some improvements--new bike trails and the Bassett's Creek revitalization, for instance--show promise, but discussions about the future of the Upper Harbor Terminal are moving too slowly and other worthy job-creation projects--like the laudable Bio-tech Corridor--seem always to land on the South side.

Part of the problem, of course, is that there are few major corporate players who have invested on the North side of town. North Memorial Medical Center, just across the border in Robbinsdale, has been a strong and effective partner in some North side initiatives, as has Golden Valley-based General Mills, but the lack of major corporate investment of the kind we've seen from Wells Fargo and Allina on the South side, continues to hamper the ability of policymakers to devise a long-term vision for North side growth.

This failure--not the lack of cops on the street--is the real issue our elected officials should be addressing. And yet we've heard little in the way of fresh ideas from any of the mayoral candidates or from council members representing that area. It's time they stopped the public safety posturing and brought some real solutions to the table.

add new comment

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Economic News Release

Employment Situation Summary

Technical information:
Household data: (202) 691-6378 USDL 09-0224
http://www.bls.gov/cps/

Establishment data: (202) 691-6555 Transmission of material in this release
http://www.bls.gov/ces/ is embargoed until 8:30 A.M. (EST),
Media contact: (202) 691-5902 Friday, March 6, 2009.

THE EMPLOYMENT SITUATION: FEBRUARY 2009

Nonfarm payroll employment continued to fall sharply in February (-651,000), and the unemployment rate rose from 7.6 to 8.1 percent, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported today. Payroll employment has declined by 2.6 million in the past 4 months. In February, job losses were large and widespread across nearly all major industry sectors.

Unemployment (Household Survey Data)

The number of unemployed persons increased by 851,000 to 12.5 million in February, and the unemployment rate rose to 8.1 percent. Over the past 12 months, the number of unemployed persons has increased by about 5.0 million, and the unemployment rate has risen by 3.3 percentage points. (See table A-1.)

The unemployment rate continued to trend upward in February for adult men (8.1 percent), adult women (6.7 percent), whites (7.3 percent), blacks (13.4 percent), and Hispanics (10.9 percent). The jobless rate for teenagers was little changed at 21.6 percent. The unemployment rate for Asians was 6.9 percent in February, not seasonally adjusted. (See tables A-1, A-2, and A-3.)

Among the unemployed, the number of job losers and persons who completed temporary jobs increased by 716,000 to 7.7 million in February. This measure has grown by 3.8 million in the last 12 months. (See table A-8.)

The number of long-term unemployed (those jobless for 27 weeks or more) increased by 270,000 to 2.9 million in February. Over the past 12 months, the number of long-term unemployed was up by 1.6 million. (See table A-9.)

Table A. Major indicators of labor market activity, seasonally adjusted
(Numbers in thousands)

Category	Quarterly averages		Monthly data			Jan.-Feb. change
	III	IV	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	

	2008	2008	2008	2009	2009	
HOUSEHOLD DATA	Labor force status					
Civilian labor force	154,650	154,648	154,447	153,716	154,214	498
Employment	145,299	144,046	143,338	142,099	141,748	-351
Unemployment	9,350	10,602	11,108	11,616	12,467	851
Not in labor force	79,460	80,177	80,588	81,023	80,699	-324
	Unemployment rates					
All workers	6.0	6.9	7.2	7.6	8.1	0.5
Adult men	5.8	6.8	7.2	7.6	8.1	.5
Adult women	5.0	5.6	5.9	6.2	6.7	.5
Teenagers	19.7	20.7	20.8	20.8	21.6	.8
White	5.4	6.3	6.6	6.9	7.3	.4
Black or African American	10.7	11.5	11.9	12.6	13.4	.8
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	7.8	8.9	9.2	9.7	10.9	1.2
ESTABLISHMENT DATA	Employment					
Nonfarm employment.....	137,004	135,727	135,074	p134,419	p133,768	p-651
Goods-producing (1)....	21,343	20,803	20,532	p20,153	p19,877	p-276
Construction	7,170	6,949	6,841	p6,723	p6,619	p-104
Manufacturing	13,388	13,062	12,902	p12,645	p12,477	p-168
Service-providing (1)..	115,661	114,924	114,542	p114,266	p113,891	p-375
Retail trade (2)...	15,331	15,127	15,038	p14,999	p14,960	p-40
Professional and business services .	17,730	17,485	17,356	p17,222	p17,042	p-180
Education and health services	18,932	19,035	19,080	p19,123	p19,149	p26
Leisure and hospitality	13,452	13,348	13,304	p13,275	p13,242	p-33
Government	22,543	22,538	22,532	p22,563	p22,572	p9
	Hours of work (3)					
Total private	33.6	33.4	33.3	p33.3	p33.3	p0.0
Manufacturing	40.8	40.2	39.9	p39.8	p39.6	p-.2
Overtime	3.6	3.2	2.9	p2.8	p2.6	p-.2
	Indexes of aggregate weekly hours (2002=100)(3)					
Total private	106.1	104.1	103.2	p102.6	p101.9	p-0.7
	Earnings (3)					
Average hourly earnings, total private	$18.16	$18.34	$18.40	p$18.44	p$18.47	p$0.03

Average weekly earnings, total private	610.90	612.55	612.72	p614.05	p615.05	p1.00

1 Includes other industries, not shown separately.
2 Quarterly averages and the over-the-month change are calculated using unrounded data.
3 Data relate to private production and nonsupervisory workers.
p = preliminary.

Total Employment and the Labor Force (Household Survey Data)

The civilian labor force participation rate was about unchanged at 65.6 percent. The employment-population ratio, at 60.3 percent in February, continued to trend down. The ratio has declined by 2.4 percentage points over the year. (See table A-1.)

In February, the number of persons who worked part time for economic reasons (sometimes referred to as involuntary part-time workers) rose by 787,000, reaching 8.6 million. The number of such workers rose by 3.7 million over the past 12 months. This category includes persons who would like to work full time but were working part time because their hours had been cut back or because they were unable to find full-time jobs. (See table A-5.)

Persons Not in the Labor Force (Household Survey Data)

About 2.1 million persons (not seasonally adjusted) were marginally attached to the labor force in February, 466,000 more than a year earlier. These individuals wanted and were available for work and had looked for a job sometime in the prior 12 months. They were not counted as unemployed because they had not searched for work in the 4 weeks preceding the survey. Among the marginally attached, there were 731,000 discouraged workers in February, up by 335,000 from a year earlier. Discouraged workers are persons not currently looking for work because they believe no jobs are available for them. The other 1.3 million persons marginally attached to the labor force in February had not searched for work in the 4 weeks preceding the survey for reasons such as school attendance or family responsibilities. (See table A-13.)

Industry Payroll Employment (Establishment Survey Data)

Total nonfarm payroll employment dropped by 651,000 in February. Since the recession began in December 2007, about 4.4 million jobs have been lost, with more than half (2.6 million) of the decrease occurring in the last 4 months. In February, employment declined in most major industry sectors, with the largest losses occurring in professional and business services, manufacturing, and construction. Health care continued to add jobs over the month. (See table B-1.)

Employment in professional and business services fell by 180,000 in February. The temporary help industry lost 78,000 jobs over the month. Since December 2007, temporary help employment has declined by 686,000, or 27 percent. In February, job declines also occurred in services to buildings and dwellings (-17,000), architectural and engineering services (-16,000), and business support services (-12,000).

Widespread job losses continued in manufacturing in February (-168,000). The majority of the decline occurred in durable goods industries (-132,000),

with the largest decreases in fabricated metal products (-28,000) and machinery (-25,000). Employment in nondurable goods manufacturing declined by 36,000 over the month.

The construction industry lost 104,000 jobs in February. Employment in the industry has fallen by 1.1 million since peaking in January 2007. Two-fifths of that decline occurred over the last 4 months. Employment fell sharply in both the residential and nonresidential components of the industry in February.

Employment in truck transportation declined by 33,000 in February; the industry has lost 138,000 jobs since the start of the recession in December 2007. Nearly two-thirds of the decline (-88,000) occurred over the last 4 months. The information industry continued to lose jobs (-15,000). Over the last 4 months, employment in the industry has decreased by 76,000, with about two-fifths of the decline occurring in publishing.

Employment in financial activities continued to decline in February (-44,000). The number of jobs in this industry has dropped by 448,000 since an employment peak in December 2006, with half of this loss occurring in the past 6 months. In February, job losses occurred in real estate (-11,000); credit intermediation (-11,000); and securities, commodity contracts, and investments (-8,000).

Retail trade employment fell by 40,000 over the month and has declined by 608,000 since December 2007. In February, employment decreased in automobile dealerships (-9,000), sporting goods (-9,000), furniture and home furnishing stores (-8,000), and building material and garden supply stores (-7,000). Employment in wholesale trade fell by 37,000 over the month, with nearly all of the decline occurring in durable goods.

Employment in leisure and hospitality continued to trend down over the month (-33,000), with about half of the decrease in the accommodation industry (-18,000).

Health care continued to add jobs in February, with a gain of 27,000. Job growth occurred in ambulatory health care (16,000) and in hospitals (7,000).

The change in total nonfarm employment for December was revised from -577,000 to -681,000 and the change for January was revised from -598,000 to -655,000. Monthly revisions result from additional sample reports and the monthly recalculation of seasonal factors.

Weekly Hours (Establishment Survey Data)

In February, the average workweek for production and nonsupervisory workers on private nonfarm payrolls was 33.3 hours for the third month in a row. Both the manufacturing workweek and factory overtime decreased by 0.2 hour over the month to 39.6 and 2.6 hours, respectively. (See table B-2.)

The index of aggregate weekly hours of production and nonsupervisory workers on private nonfarm payrolls fell by 0.7 percent in February. The manufacturing index declined by 2.0 percent over the month. (See table B-5.)

Hourly and Weekly Earnings (Establishment Survey Data)

In February, average hourly earnings of production and nonsupervisory workers on private nonfarm payrolls rose by 3 cents, or 0.2 percent, seasonally adjusted. Over the past 12 months, average hourly earnings increased by 3.6 percent, and average weekly earnings rose by 2.1 percent. (See table B-3.)

The Employment Situation for March 2009 is scheduled to be released on Friday, April 3, at 8:30 A.M. (EDT).

The PDF version of the news release

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Last Modified Date: March 06, 2009

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Division of Labor Force Statistics Suite 4675, 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE Washington, DC 20212-0001 **U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Division of Current Employment Statistics**

Suite 4860, 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE Washington, DC 20212-0001

www.bls.gov/CPS | Telephone: (202) 691-6378 Do you have a CPS data question?www.bls.gov/CES | Telephone: (202) 691-6555 | Fax: (202) 691-6641 Do you have a CES data question?

Alcohol Consumption and Attitudes to Violence among College Students

Drinking alcohol in a convivial social setting led to less favorable attitudes to violence and an apparent increase in pro-social feelings. These were the findings of two separate experiments with undergraduate students who were drinking in a familiar social setting. They were contrary to the hypothesis that alcohol consumption would lead students to more positive attitudes to violence when intoxicated or drunk.

These findings support research evidence that the effects of alcohol on behavior are strongly affected by situational factors.

Source:

Mitchell, I.J., Rutherford, V., Wrinch, K. and Egan, V. Paradoxical effects of alcohol intake in a convivial social setting on attitudes to violence, *Addiction Research & Theory,* 2008, *16(5),* 503-513.

Additional Information

- Intoxication and Judgment
- More: Controversies

This site is maintained by Prof. David J. Hanson, Ph.D.
Questions? Comments? E-mail him: hansondj@potsdam.edu
Sociology Department, State University of New York, Potsdam, NY 13676.

Dear Public Safety Committee Members:

I, _____, owner/operated/manger of _____, located at _____, wish to voice my **strong** opposition to the proposed liquor tax increase. Experts in the food service industry, noted that restaurants have only a 20% chance of surviving 2 years in the current economic climate, failure rate of restaurants are up 13% from less than a year ago (Small Business Development Center – Bradley University, Peoria, IL.) With the economy in the worse shape since and perhaps including the Great Depression of the 1930's (CNBC March 2009), unemployment has increased by 5 million people in the last 12 months (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics), consumer confidence is the lowest in 23 years (ABC news January 2009), and experts predicting it could easily be 5 years before things get noticeably better economically (Warren Buffet March 2009) an increase of 60% in liquor tax is a crippling financial burden, unwarranted, and would result in fewer job opportunities at my establishment and subsequently less payroll taxes paid. It will lower average check amounts and further reduce the likelihood of community individuals eating/dining out, subsequently reducing overall sales and city/state taxes produced. The profit margin is so tight and competition so fierce in the food industry that an increase of 67% will only have a drastic negative economic impact on my establishment, employees, and patrons. I ask that the proposal to increase liquor tax NOT be approved by the Public Safety Committee and NOT be sent to the City Council for further consideration. Thank you very much for your commitment to the City of Jonesboro and thoughtful consideration of this issue.

Respectfully Submitted,

Signature: _____

Job Title: _____

Date: _____

Effects of Prohibition in Arkansas Counties

Patrick A. Stewart
Arkansas State University

Catherine C. Reese
Arkansas State University

Jeremy Brewer
Arkansas State University

Previous research has implied that alcohol availability affects the frequency of alcohol-related crashes. This study uses multiple regression analysis to examine the influence of county-level alcohol control policies on drug- and alcohol-related arrest rates and related incidents in Arkansas. The research controls for such other county level variables that might affect alcohol related crashes as the number of law enforcement officers, median income, and population density. Findings suggest that prohibition policies do not play a systematic and significant role in reducing arrests and accidents. Further, the number of police officers per 1,000 residents is a more potent determinant of both adult and juvenile alcohol and drug arrest rates. Controlling access to alcohol may even have counterintuitive effects on behavior.

Americans have attempted to control the conditions under which we drink alcohol for longer than the nation has existed. Early laws focused on restricting excessive consumption and it was not until the nineteenth century that alcohol came to be viewed as a social evil (Grant 1933). The states began to prohibit the use of alcohol actively then, with Minnesota adopting a law making alcohol illegal in 1852. In general, the earliest to support the notion of prohibition were the New England states, reflecting their puritanical culture. Congress then famously enacted national Prohibition, which was later repealed and was originally intended to be temporary anyway, in 1917.

Today there are over 3,000 counties in the United States; alcohol control policies vary widely and are in their hands. Eighteen states directly own and control their package stores, while 32 issue licenses for private entities to sell alcohol (Distilled Spirits Council of the United States, Inc. 2002). States of

either type can have dry counties, or counties where alcohol sales are prohibited, although the dry condition is more prevalent in the license states and today in general is more common in the Southeast. One scholar who reviewed state liquor licensing stated, "The choice of the dry option does not necessarily imply the absence of consumption nor the absence of liquor sales in the locality; instead, it implies liquor will be obtained from nearby wet localities or from the underground economy in the dry jurisdiction" (Toma 1988, 511).

In some counties in Arkansas, a resident of a dry county need not even resort to acquisition via an underground economy. Rather, one need only pay small annual dues to be a member of a club that has secured a liquor sales permit. Craighead County, Arkansas, for example, the home of Arkansas State University and the city of Jonesboro, with a population of 55,000, is nominally dry and has been ever since it was voted that way while the soldiers were away fighting in World War II (Weinstock 1984). Today the county is arguably the most populous dry county in the United States and has twelve such permitted private, alcohol-serving clubs (Heard 1999b).

Past research implies that *alcohol availability* affects the frequency of alcohol-related crashes (Colon 1983; Giacopassi and Winn 1992; Jewell and Brown 1995) and suggests a public safety basis for morality-based regulations. However, other studies provide evidence that such policies do not work and limit individual freedom based upon spurious understanding of policy outcomes (Dull and Giacopassi 1988; Giacopassi and Winn 1995). Specifically, an Arkansas study relating arrest rates to *alcohol availability* on a county by county basis has been central to the rhetoric of alcohol sales opponents (Grossman 1997).

Several studies have shown mixed results concerning the effectiveness of wet or dry policies on actual behavioral outcome measures, namely motor vehicle accidents. A study by Brown, Jewell, and Richer (1996) shows wet counties as having 2.145 more fatal alcohol-related motor vehicle accidents than dry counties. Colon (1983) finds that states with county-level prohibition have significantly higher motor vehicle fatality rates than states without. Likewise, a time-series analysis of 17 recently wet and 17 recently dry counties in Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, and Mississippi, found traffic fatality rates were higher in wet counties (Giacopassi and Winn 1992). However, Dull and Giacopassi (1988), in their examination of Tennessee, found county-level alcohol policy had no significant effect on motor vehicle fatality crashes. Likewise in Kentucky, Winn and Giacopassi (1993) found no significant differences in alcohol and non-alcohol related fatal motor vehicle accidents, although dry counties had significantly lower nonfatal and property damage accidents.

This study takes a two-stage approach to examine the influence of county-level policies concerning the sale of alcohol in Arkansas. First, we replicate and extend a study used to support the prohibition of the sale of alcohol based on arrest rates. Second, we replicate studies carried out in Kentucky and Tennessee to consider whether alcohol-prohibition policies have an effect on alcohol and drug related automobile crashes, an outcome measure that better reflects behavior. In both sections we use analysis of variance (ANOVA) to consider the effect of policy alone and multivariate ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analysis to test a more fully specified model before drawing conclusions. We conclude by discussing policy options in light of the findings.

Alcohol Policy in Arkansas

In a study of great policy salience for Arkansans, Grossman (1997) examines adult and adolescent drug and alcohol arrests in Arkansas by comparing 43 dry with 32 wet counties in the state. He reports that between 1992 and 1996 an average of 12.5 arrests for drunk driving per 1,000 people in wet counties took place compared to the rate of 8.7 arrests per 1,000 in dry counties. Grossman also finds an average of 32 arrests per 1,000 for adult alcohol and drug related crimes in wet counties, compared to the rate of 21 arrests per 1,000 in dry counties. He concludes that alcohol acts as a "gateway" substance, leading to the use of other drugs, since there were 2.5 drug-related arrests per 1,000 juveniles in wet counties as compared to 1.7 arrests per 1,000 in dry counties. Overall, Grossman concludes that the ready availability of alcohol is a key factor in alcohol- and drug-related crimes.

The importance of Grossman's research in determining county-level public policy in the state of Arkansas is indisputable. Specifically, proponents of alcohol control policy have made frequent and prominent use of his findings, pointing to his analysis to buttress morality-based arguments. For instance, prohibitionists state that having a wet county could lead to "a decline in morality, increased drunk driving and a decrease in family values" (Hinkle 1999) and could lead to higher rates of alcohol addiction (Heard 1999a). These arguments are premised on Grossman's (1997) assertion that alcohol is a "gateway" to drug use which "establish(es) the condition for illegal drug use" (1) and that limiting access to alcohol will prevent their use. However, recent research suggests that drug and alcohol addiction is at least partially genetically predisposed (Sufka 2000).

Multiple critiques may be applied to his methodology and corrections, suggesting the need for a more rigorous analysis. First, Grossman's distinction

between wet and dry counties is incomplete. While wet counties serve alcohol in restaurants, bars, and taverns and sell it from package stores and other outlets, and dry counties prohibit its sale outright, there is an intermediate category of damp counties in which alcohol is served in private clubs to members who pay a fee for membership. Specifically, within Arkansas are 32 wet counties allowing alcohol sales, 32 damp counties only allowing the sale of alcohol within private clubs, and eleven dry counties not allowing any alcohol sales. We introduce this distinction in Table 1 to better capture the state of Arkansas' alcohol policy.

Second, Grossman's pooling of data from 1992-1996 artificially inflates the difference between counties, at least in the descriptive sense, and does not reflect changes that may have occurred within a county during that period of time. Namely, population size increases and decreases while its composition changes, police force size waxes and wanes, and enforcement emphases change. As a result, we replicate Grossman's study using the most recent data available—from 1997, and limit it to a cross-sectional analysis. Further, the reliance on descriptive statistics alone is misleading. Arrest rates alone do not tell us how much variance occurs and whether these differences are significant. In addition, Grossman combines some variables, such as adult alcohol and drug arrest rates, and ignores others, including juvenile drug and alcohol arrest rates. To correct for this we suggest a difference of means test to assess whether the differences between wet, damp, and dry counties are meaningful for all available alcohol and drug arrest rate data.

Finally, an emphasis on arrest rates alone to measure the negative outcomes of alcohol-related activity is not reliable. Arrests are affected by a number of variables, the key variable being the number of police officers available to arrest individuals. Deviant behavior committed in private is not reflected in official crime statistics until a person is arrested. We deal with this problem by testing a more fully specified model, taking into account this policy-related variable by including a measure of the police force within a county based on the number of *police per 1,000 residents*.

It seems unlikely that policy alone affects behavior, criminal or otherwise. Thus, we add variables to capture the effects of factors other than public policy that might affect behavior. Variables representing the demographics of a county include *population density* and *median household income*. We hypothesize that a more densely settled area will affect such dependent variables as *crashes* and *injuries* positively, so to speak, simply because there are more things to hit and more people to injure. *Median household income* is included as a control as well; perhaps wealthier counties support higher levels of public service, which in turn may lead to more arrests.

Table 1. Wet, Damp, and Dry Counties in Arkansas

Wet Counties	Damp Counties	Dry Counties
Arkansas*	Ashley	Clay*
Baxter	Benton	Crawford
Calhoun	Boone	Grant
Carroll	Bradley*	Lafayette
Chicot*	Clark	Lincoln*
Cleveland*	Cleburne	Madison
Conway	Columbia	Newton
Crittenden*	Craighead*	Perry
Cross*	Faulkner	Scott
Dallas	Fulton	Searcy
Desha*	Hempstead	Stone
Drew*	Hot Springs	
Franklin	Howard	
Garland	Independence*	
Greene*	Izard	
Jackson*	Johnson	
Jefferson*	Lawrence*	
Lee*	Little River	
Logan	Lonoke	
Miller	Marion	
Mississippi*	Montgomery	
Monroe*	Nevada	
Ouachita	Pike	
Phillips*	Polk	
Poinsett*	Pope	
Prairie*	Randolph*	
Pulaski	Saline	
St. Francis*	Sevier	
Sebastian	Sharp	
Union	Van Buren	
Washington	White*	
Woodruff*	Yell	

Note: * = Delta County

In addition, variables representing the geography of a county, which also may be expected to have an effect on outcome measures, include number of *total square miles* in a county, number of *highway miles* per square mile in

a county, and whether the county is a *Delta county.*[1] County size and the number of *highway miles* in a county are expected to have a positive impact on arrests and crashes because more automobile traffic will likely take place. Finally, the geographic significance of the Delta is that due to its proximity to the Mississippi River, the land there is flat, while land in the rest of the state is often hilly or mountainous. Thus, we expect fewer crashes in Delta counties. In order to assess the inclusion of these independent policy and control variables, we use a multivariate model of statistical analysis.[2]

Methodology

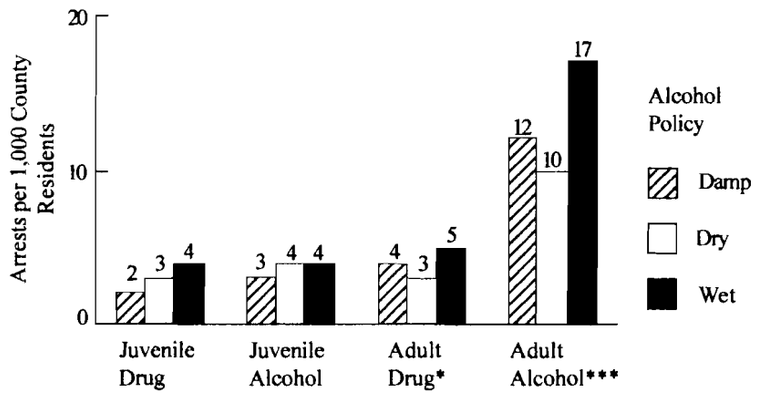
In this study we consider 74 of 75 Arkansas counties. We drop from our analysis Pulaski County, home to Little Rock and 350,418 residents because it is the only urban county in a predominantly rural state and it has had a skewing effect on data analysis. Data analyzed in this study were collected by the Institute for Economic Advancement at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) and titled, "Risk Factors for Adolescent Drug and Alcohol Abuse in Arkansas." These data were collected for use by the Arkansas Department of Health, Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and consider juveniles as those between the ages of 10 and 17 and adults as those who are older than 18 years. Drug-related arrests for juveniles and adults are based on violations such as possession, sale, use, growing, and manufacturing of illegal drugs. Alcohol-related arrests are based on such violations as driving under the influence (DUI), liquor law violations, and public drunkenness. Population data were compiled by Demographic Research, Institute for Economic Advancement at UALR and the number of police were compiled from data collected by the Arkansas Crime Information Center (1997).

Alcohol Policy and Arrest Rates

The first stage of analysis is a replication of Grossman's (1997) study. Here we analyze arrest rates in the 74 rural counties of Arkansas. Data are transformed, in line with Grossman's study, to reflect arrests per 1,000 people, and in the case of juvenile arrests, per 1,000 of those aged 10-17. Departing from Grossman, we consider four variables: *juvenile drug arrests*, *juvenile alcohol arrests*, *adult drug arrests*, and *adult alcohol arrests*.

An analysis of descriptive statistics, illustrated in Figure 1, reveals that juvenile alcohol and drug arrest rates are significantly lower than adult alcohol arrests and slightly lower than adult drug arrest rates, as can be expected

Figure 1. Arrest Rates by Type in Damp, Dry, and Wet Counties in Arkansas in 1997



*significant at .10 **significant at .05 ***significant at .01

from a population that predominantly does not use intoxicants until the mid- or later-teenage years. However, the difference between mean county *juvenile drug arrests* and alcohol arrests per 1,000 people is slightly less than one; in comparison, the difference between mean adult drug and alcohol arrests shows that adults are arrested for alcohol nearly three and one-half times as often as for drugs. This suggests that juveniles may turn to drugs as intoxicants of choice due to relatively equal access to drugs compared to liquor, a factor that is not the case with the adult population.

The main question is whether alcohol related policy, in the form of wet-damp-dry ordinances, affects arrest rates. As discussed earlier, in this analysis we attempt to improve on Grossman's (1997) work by discriminating among those counties not allowing alcohol to be sold in any manner, those counties allowing private clubs to sell alcohol on their premises, and those counties allowing the sale of alcohol from liquor stores and on the premises of clubs and restaurants.

We use analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test for significant differences when comparing county data by the wet-dry-damp alcohol policies. See Figure 1. Analyses of the outcome variables concerning arrest rates suggest that

only differences in adult alcohol—F = 8.006, p = .001—and adult drug arrests, with F = 2.988 and p = .057, are significant. The wet-damp-dry policy distinction does not have an effect on *juvenile alcohol arrests* and *juvenile drug arrests*, F = 1.669 and F = .653 respectively, p-values not reaching significance for either. In this sense, we achieve only partial support for Grossman's 1997 research findings.

However, one critique of Grossman's study is that arrests reflect enforcement activity, not the effectiveness of wet-damp-dry policy. In addition, other demographic variables are expected to play a role in arrests. To understand what determines arrest rates, a more fully specified model is run using OLS regression and the data are presented in Table 2. The policy variables of wet-damp-dry counties are entered here as dummy variables with dry counties as the reference variable. We also include the policy variable of number of *police per 1,000 residents* in a county, reflecting the enforcement and deterrent capacity of a county. Control variables representing the geography and demographics of a county parcel out other influences.

The variables of immediate interest, those regarding the limitation or prohibition of alcohol sales, do not have the effect anticipated by supporters of these policies when controlling for other pertinent variables. Specifically, wet and damp counties are not significantly different from dry counties when considering juvenile drug- or alcohol-related arrests. In fact, while the finding is not statistically significant, wet and damp counties are less likely to have juvenile drug and alcohol arrests than are dry counties. This suggests that in the absence of legally obtainable alcohol in a county, juveniles turn to breaking the law to use alcohol and drugs, a contradiction of the gateway hypothesis forwarded by Grossman's report.

Analysis of the other policy variable expected to have an effect on arrest rates, number of *police per 1,000 residents*, supports the contention that having more police leads to more arrests. For every added police officer per 1,000 residents, arrests of adults for alcohol-related reasons increase by nearly four and one-half per 1,000 residents and adult and juvenile drug arrests increase approximately by one. This suggests, rather obviously, that police are doing their job by arresting people who violate laws.

Other variables reaching significance are the number of *highway miles* per square mile in a county, *population density,* and *median household income. Highway miles* in a county contribute to juvenile alcohol arrests, likely due to the existence of a car culture in which young adults socialize, travel, and consume alcohol, not necessarily in that order. *Median household income* is predictive of juvenile drug arrests, although interestingly operating

Table 2. Regression Predicting Arrest Rates by Type from Alcohol and Other Policy Variables in Arkansas in 1997

	Juvenile Alcohol Arrests		Juvenile Drug Arrests	
Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error	Coefficient	Standard Error
Constant	-1.040	3.671	-4.508*	2.271
Wet County	-0.954	1.472	-0.743	0.911
Damp County	-1.382	1.296	-1.270	0.802
Police per 1,000 Residents	1.280	0.826	1.164**	0.511
Total Square Miles	-0.004608	0.004	0.0005085	0.003
Highway Miles	0.02175**	0.011	0.006165	0.007
Population Density	-0.001195	0.010	-0.001624	0.006
Delta County	-1.197	1.025	-0.430	0.634
Median Household Income	0.0001503	0.000	0.0002175**	0.000
Adjusted R^2	0.046		0.208	
F-Statistic	1.448		3.435***	
	Adult Alcohol Arrests		Adult Drug Arrests	
Constant	9.888	6.443	4.666**	2.347
Wet County	3.337	2.584	0.315	0.941
Damp County	0.851	2.274	0.215	0.828
Police per 1,000 Residents	4.438***	1.449	0.986*	0.528
Total Square Miles	-0.006957	0.007	-0.003301	0.003

Table 2. continued

	Adult Alcohol Arrests		Adult Drug Arrests	
Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error	Coefficient	Standard Error
Highway Miles	0.01431	0.019	-0.007537	0.007
Population Density	-0.002683	0.018	0.0003582**	0.007
Delta County	-1583	1.799	0.149	0.655
Median Household Income	-0.0002288	0.000	-0.0001264	0.000
Adjusted R^2	0.234		0.101	
F-Statistic	3.821***		2.041*	

*significant at .10 **significant at .05 ***significant at .01

Sources: Arkansas State University (1998), U.S. Census Bureau (1990)

in the opposite direction than hypothesized; increased county affluence leads to higher levels of juvenile drug arrests. Finally, the density of a county's population leads to more adult drug arrests, possibly due to the existence of specific drug cultures not available in more sparsely populated counties.

Alcohol Policy, Drunk Driving, and Motor Vehicle Accidents

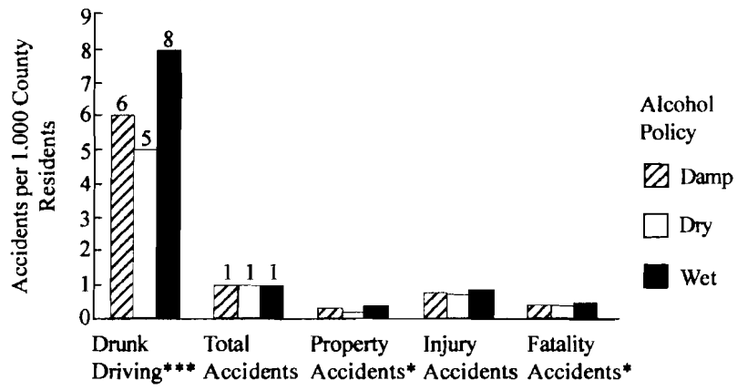
While arrest rates may provide important indicators of the effectiveness of alcohol policy enforcement, they do not consider actual outcomes. Tangible consequences--in other words, those having public safety implications and presenting a better assessment of the impact of alcohol policy—may be seen in the form of drunk driving arrests and alcohol and drug related automobile crashes. Specifically, proponents of damp and dry laws expect that limiting or prohibiting sales of alcohol will reduce consumption and thereby reduce negative outcomes such as drunk driving and motor vehicle accidents. As a result, we analyze five alcohol and drug related outcome measures per 1,000 county residents: *drunk driving arrests*, *total crashes*, *property damage crashes*, *injury crashes*, and *traffic fatalities*.

Drunk driving arrests are based upon violations for driving or operating any vehicle or common carrier while drunk or under the influence of alcohol or narcotics. Data from the Arkansas Department of Health are used here. Outcome variables that are not as likely to be affected by the number of officers include measures of alcohol and drug related accident rates and are taken from the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department (1997 and 1999). While some forms of accidents are likely to slip through the cracks, especially in rural counties where property damage may be less extensive and police presence not as large as in more urban areas, accidents leading to injury and death are more likely to be discovered. Therefore, motor vehicle accidents provide a reasonable behavioral measure of wet-damp-dry policy outcomes.

Univariate analysis of *drunk driving arrests* and the four automobile crash related variables initially suggests that arrests and all forms of crashes, with the exception of fatality crashes, are higher in wet than in damp counties, and higher in both wet and damp counties than in dry counties. See Figure 2. However, the difference in means among counties with wet-damp-dry alcohol control policies is statistically significant at the .01 level only for *drunk driving arrests*—$F = 5.304$ and $p = .007$. Mean differences among counties are significant at the .10 level for *traffic fatalities*, $F = 2.762$ and $p = .07$, where more alcohol and drug related traffic fatalities occurred in dry than in wet or

damp counties, and property damage accidents—F = 3.009 and p = .056—with fewer accidents in dry than wet or damp counties. Finally, the differences in means among wet, damp, and dry counties are not significant in either accidents where injuries occur, F = .517 and p = ns, or total accidents, F = 1.659 and p = ns.

Figure 2. Accident Rates by Type in Damp, Dry and Wet Counties in Arkansas in 1997



*significant at .10 **significant at .05 ***significant at .01

Multivariate analysis using OLS regression provides a more finely honed analysis of the determinants of crashes. Specifically, we expect that in addition to the policy variables of *alcohol availability* and *enforcement capability*, variables concerning a county's geography and demography will have an effect on *drunk driving arrests* and motor vehicle accidents.

When considering the policy variables, we find, as was the case with arrest rates, that alcohol policy tends not to have a significant effect on either *drunk driving arrests* or automobile accidents, with the exception of *property damage crashes*, in which case slightly more accidents occurred in wet than dry counties, and accident fatalities, where residents of damp counties are less likely to suffer a fatal accident than those living in a dry county. The failure of these variables systematically to account for *drunk driving arrests* and accidents suggests that prohibition of alcohol sales within a county does

Table 3. Regression Predicting Accident Rates by Type from Alcohol and Other Policy Variables in Arkansas in 1997

	Drunk Driving Arrests		Alcohol/Drug Accident Fatalities		Alcohol/Drug Injury Accidents	
Variables	Coefficient	Std. Error	Coefficient	Std. Error	Coefficient	Std. Error
Constant	8.915 ***	3.236	0.292	0.136	0.02418	0.261
Wet County	1.101	1.298	-0.07338	0.055	0.008622	0.105
Damp County	0.213	1.142	-0.08171*	0.048	-0.004721	0.092
Police per 1,000 Residents	1.725**	0.728	-0.002895	0.031	0.06983	0.059
Total Square Miles	-0.003767	0.004	0.0001788	0.000	0.00007053	0.000
Highway Miles	0.005944	0.010	0.0001343	0.000	0.00004256	0.001
Population Density	0.003777	0.009	-0.000007215	0.000	0.0002907	0.001
Delta County	-0.412	0.903	-0.05154	0.038	-0.05120	0.073
Median HouseholdIncome	-0.0002639	0.000	-0.00001320	0.000	0.00001013	0.000
Adjusted R^2	0.167		0.065		0.002	
F-Statistic	2.853***		1.639		1.017	

Table 3. continued

Variables	Alcohol/Drug Property Damage Accidents Coefficient	Std. Error	Alcohol/Drug Total Accidents Coefficient	Std. Error
Constant	-0.404**	0.182	-0.317	0.382
Wet County	0.124*	0.073	0.127	0.153
Damp County	0.06033	0.064	0.03716	0.135
Police per 1,000 Residents	0.07066*	0.041	0.147*	0.086
Total Square Miles	0.0004467**	0.000	0.0005989	0.000
Highway Miles	-0.0004031	0.001	-0.0002661	0.001
Population Density	0.0002468	0.001	0.0003532	0.001
Delta County	-0.106**	0.051	-0.182*	0.107
Median Household Income	0.00001532*	0.000	-0.00002299	0.000
Adjusted R^2	0.286		0.168	
F-Statistic	4.697***		2.874***	

*significant at .10; **significant at .05; ***significant at .01

Sources: Arkansas State University (1998), U.S. Census Bureau (1990)

not affect the ability of individuals to become intoxicated and to drive afterwards.

The only policy variable having a systematic predictive impact on *drunk driving arrests* and *total crashes* is the proportion of police in a county. As can be expected with drunk driving, the more police, the more arrests. Specifically, for every additional police officer per 1,000 residents, an additional 1.7 *drunk driving arrests* are made. On the other hand, the finding that the more police officers there are per 1,000 citizens in a county, the more total alcohol and drug related property damage and total accidents occur, is a bit counterintuitive. This finding might indicate either a policy decision to deal with a perceived problem of drunk driving by employing more police, or it may imply that police are discovering more accidents.

Of the geographic and demographic variables, the Delta dummy, geographic size and *median household income* significantly affect property damage and total accidents. Specifically, there is a greater likelihood of crashes outside the Delta, which can be expected due to the Delta's flat terrain and to the rest of the state being either hilly or mountainous. Geographically larger counties had more *property damage crashes*, potentially due to the need to travel greater distances. *Median household income* has a slight positive effect on property damage accidents, likely due persons of higher income having more personal property that could potentially be damaged.

Discussion

Multivariate analysis of adult alcohol and adult drug arrest rates shows that crime control capacity in the form of the number of *police per 1,000 residents* is statistically significant and is the most powerful determinant of adult alcohol arrest rates. However, the policy variable concerning wet-damp-dry counties, while operating in the expected direction, does not achieve statistical significance. Therefore, we can conclude that with adult arrest rate data, Grossman's assertions do not hold.

In addition, based on Grossman's "gateway" hypothesis, both juvenile drug and alcohol-based arrest rates should be highest in wet counties, then damp, and finally lowest in dry counties. When analyzed using multivariate OLS regression, juvenile alcohol and drug arrest rates are higher in dry than in either damp or wet counties, although the relationships are not statistically significant.

Univariate analysis of differences in drunk driving and accident rates based on county alcohol policy, with the exception of alcohol and drug related

crash fatalities, suggests a distinct rank ordering on the basis of wet-damp-dry alcohol policy applied in a county. However, only *drunk driving arrests* operate in the expected direction and reach statistical significance when using ANOVA.

When considering multivariate relationships for *drunk driving arrests* and *total crashes*, the policy variable of *police per 1,000 residents* in a county tends to be statistically significant. While we expected that having more police leads to more *drunk driving arrests*, the finding that the number of *police per 1,000 residents* either has no effect on accident rates, or is associated with an increase in them, suggests that such policies do not have an effect or are reactive. Additionally, and pertinent for our study, the wet-damp-dry county policy distinction does not hold up well under further scrutiny in the multi-variate model. Significant findings in the expected direction occur only for comparison of wet and dry counties with property damage accidents, and counter-intuitively, with more drug and alcohol related fatality accidents in dry than damp counties. What does make a difference are geographical and cultural variables such as county size in *total square miles*, whether the county is located outside the Delta, and *median household income*. In other words, alcohol and drug related accidents are most likely determined by the distance to be traveled and how many different objects will be likely hit, whether man-made or geographical.

Conclusions

By using more well-specified models than have been used in the past for the state of Arkansas, we can see that the results of this study have policy ramifications that may be generalizable beyond the individual state. This study demonstrates that county-level public policy regarding the availability of alcohol is a relatively insignificant determinant of such important outcomes as arrest and motor vehicle accident rates.

We find that juvenile drug and alcohol arrest rates are not significantly different in wet, dry, or damp counties. Our results correspond to prior research conducted by Winn and Giacopassi (1993) and Dull and Giacopassi (1988). Our results refute Grossman's (1997), on the whole, since the ready availability of alcohol has mainly an opposite, although not statistically significant, effect than that which his study purports. Specifically, the "gateway" theory as related to alcohol is unsupported, as is his contention that arrest rates tell the whole story of the effects of public policy.

Overall, the number of *police per 1,000 residents* is a more potent determinant of both adult and juvenile alcohol and drug arrest rates than is

local alcohol policy. Alcohol policy tends not to have a systematic, significant effect on *drunk driving arrests* or automobile accidents in Arkansas. In addition, *enforcement capability* as measured by the number of *police per 1,000 residents* is a more significant factor in explaining both property damage and *total crashes* than is local *alcohol availability.*

The counties in Arkansas, as well as those in other states, that propose that deterrent effects arise from their prohibitory alcohol policies, should reexamine the reasons underlying those policies. This study suggests that whether alcohol is legally available does not have as significant an effect on people's behavior as whether a local jurisdiction invests in an adequate police force. The findings of this study additionally imply that moralistic ideas about controlling access to alcohol may even have counterintuitive effects on individual-level behavior.

Notes

[1] Other variables considered due to their use in previous studies, but not included here include police per total road miles in a county, urban road miles per square mile in a county, and county road miles per square mile in a county. These three were omitted because they are highly correlated with *population density*—pearson's r = .949, .963, and .843 respectively—and present a threat to the equations through multicollinearity. We chose to include *population density* in the equations because it is a precursor to the other three variables.

[2] To assess the soundness of the OLS regression equation as specified, we considered threats of multicollinearity and heteroskedasticity. While there is significant correlation between independent variables, no bivariate correlation coefficient exceeded .8, a level considered highly indicative of multicollinearity (Lewis-Beck 1980, 60). We ran additional multicollinearity diagnostics with each of the models and considered measures of tolerance, variance inflation factors, eigenvalues, and condition indexes; findings suggest no significant threat to the equations as tested (Norusis 1992, 341-44). Finally, analysis of partial plots for each of the equations was carried out with no indication of heteroskedasticity.

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2008 QUALITY OF LIFE SURVEY

CITY OF JONESBORO

February, 2008

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The Quality of Life Series

The ASU Center for Social Research (CSR) began its Quality of Life (QOL) series in 2003. The series' goal is to assess the quality of life in Jonesboro on a regular basis. The current 2008 survey is the fifth in a series, and highlights changes in the city.

2008 Jonesboro Quality of Life Survey

Methods

The Center for Social Research carried out a telephone survey of Jonesboro residents from January 27 to February 5, 2008 for a total of 8 sessions. A total of 400 surveys were completed using Random Digit Dialing. The results have a confidence level of 95% (accurate 19 times out of 20) and a margin of error of +/- 4.9 percentage points. All completed surveys are eligible for analysis. Amongst the issues addressed in this report are Jonesboro resident opinions on transportation policy, environmental quality, public safety, neighborhood satisfaction, wet-dry policy towards alcohol, and attitudes towards Jonesboro political figures.

These surveys are designed to provide an ongoing picture of how voters view local government services and the general quality of life. They highlight the problems that are of the greatest concern to the citizens, as well as areas of satisfaction in the city. The survey can be used to assess the effects of events, programs, and policies. In addition, the survey can also inform the public and officials about specific areas of perceived deterioration or improvement. We further analyze select data on the basis of respondent education, income, age, whether the respondent has a child under the age of 18 living with them and sex; however, we do not have enough data to accurately analyze differences on the basis of ethnicity.

The results of the Quality of Life surveys represent the perceptions and opinions of the adult population in the city. The results are not objective measures of the quality of life or the quality of government services.

The survey was conducted by trained M.A. and M.P.A. students from the Department of Political Science as part of their course requirements. Specifically, we would like to thank Travis Brooks, Leland Butler, Lauren Dowless, Adam Federle, Matt Fleetwood, Michelle Freeman, Sarah Gillis, Jason Gregory, Tanner Pickett, Joseph Richmond, Tina Taiwo, Craig Teague, and Jack Turner.

The Center for Social Research is a 13 telephone interview facility housed in the Department of Criminology, Sociology and Geography at Arkansas State University and is a joint effort of that Department and The Department of Political Science's Masters of Public Administration (MPA) Program. The study was supervised by Drs. William P. McLean, Assistant Professor of Political Science, and Patrick A. Stewart, Masters of Public Administration Program, Director. For more information regarding these results or the Center for Social Research, please contact Dr. William P. McLean or Dr. Patrick A. Stewart at the Department of Political Science (870) 972-3048.

Problems and Quality of Life

The best way to assess the quality of life is to ask people what is the biggest problem facing their city. Nearly one-third of the citizens maintain traffic is the biggest problem facing Jonesboro, although it is decreasing in magnitude in comparison with 2005-06, with no other issues that coming close in terms of levels of concern. The other categories of concern were issues related to crime and drug use (17.8%), with specific mentions of crystal methamphetamine, which decreased from the previous year. Of greatest interest is that the third highest issue of concern is the ongoing Jonesboro mayor-city council conflict, with just over seven percent of survey participants responding on this issue. And considering the ongoing furor over the wet-dry issue, just over five percent mentioned it as the biggest problem facing the city, with both sides weighing in, a relatively small percentage on an issue that might be diminishing in importance. The growth/planning category included uncontrolled growth, poor planning, and a high percentage of respondents concerned with drainage and flooding, although this category had only five percent weighing in. The "Other" category was created for responses that were not mentioned more than once by respondents. For the sake of brevity, these responses were not included.

What is the biggest problem currently facing Jonesboro?

	2005 Percent	2006 Percent	2007 Percent	2008 Percent
Crime/Drugs	13.0	11.0	22.6	17.8
Traffic/Road Conditions	50.0	40.0	30.1	32.8
Economy/Jobs	5.0	4.0	5.7	6.2
Wet/Dry County	N/A	5.0	8.7	5.2
Growth/Planning	N/A	5.0	6.7	5.0
Mayor/Council Relations	N/A	N/A	N/A	7.2
Other	22.0	24.0	24.4	6.5
DK	10.0	11.0	7.5	15.2

One of the more important questions concerning life in Jonesboro asked respondents how satisfied they were with life in Jonesboro. Findings suggest that an overwhelming majority of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with their life in Jonesboro, as less than four percent were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with life in Jonesboro.

Jonesboro better, worse, or stayed the same

	QOL 2008 Percent
Very Satisfied	51.0
Satisfied	45.2
Dissatisfied	2.8
Very Dissatisfied	.8
DK	.2

Alcohol Policy

Opinions concerning alcohol policy in Jonesboro continue to be highly polarized, with equal numbers of respondents holding positions in support of and opposition to returning Jonesboro to "wet" status when the margin of error is taken into consideration (+/- 5 percent). When asked how strongly respondents support or oppose Jonesboro becoming "wet", where alcohol may be sold in liquor stores, grocery stores, gas stations and other outlets, those in opposition held a slight advantage in this survey, with forty two percent stating they either "strongly oppose" (31.5%) or "oppose" (11.2%) this option. Those supporting Jonesboro becoming "wet" comprise 37 percent of respondents, with just below twenty percent of respondents stating they support this option and just under eighteen percent stating they "strongly support" allowing alcohol sales. A large percentage, nearing one in five respondents, neither supported nor opposed this policy, while nearly four percent did not know or refused to answer.

Further statistical analysis taking into account respondent age, sex, education, school district and whether they have a child under the age of 18 living at home, suggests that those most likely to oppose Jonesboro becoming a wet city are older females. Specifically, when a multi-variable model was run, the most powerful variable predicting support/opposition was age of respondent, with older respondents opposing Jonesboro becoming a wet city. This was followed by sex of respondent, with women more likely than men to oppose Jonesboro becoming a wet city. Finally, respondents with a child under 18 living with them were less likely to support Jonesboro becoming a wet city.

How strongly would you support or oppose Jonesboro becoming a wet city? That is, allowing alcoholic beverages to be sold at liquor stores, grocery stores, gas stations and other outlets?

	2003 QOL Percent	2005 QOL Percent	2006 QOL Percent	2007 QOL Percent	2008 QOL Percent
Strongly Oppose	23.6	23.8	26.9	33.7	31.5
Oppose	21.4	23.4	16.9	15.9	11.2
Neither Support nor Oppose	10.8	9.2	8.4	8.7	17.2
Support	27.9	22.1	23.4	21.9	19.5
Strongly Support	16.3	20.5	23.1	19.0	17.8
DK	N/A	1.0	1.3	.8	3.6

The key finding is that while those holding a strong position on this issue, either strongly supporting or strongly opposing, changed by only two percentage points from the previous year's study, it appears the major shift occurred elsewhere in the populace. Specifically, those who are neutral, neither supporting nor opposing Jonesboro becoming "wet" increased by almost ten percent, while nearly four percent did not know or refused to answer the question. This dramatic change, especially when considered from a historical perspective, suggests this issue is less salient for Jonesboro residents.

Rating Jonesboro's Environmental Services

The high levels of growth in Jonesboro has led to increased demands upon the environment, and with it, increased expectations of services provided by the City of Jonesboro. By asking survey participants their ratings of sanitation services, pollution control, and parks and recreation, we obtain a snapshot of public perceptions of their local environment.

Rating Sanitation Services

Perception of sanitation services by Jonesboro residents remains positive with over four of five of respondents seeing it as "good" or "excellent." Just over one in ten perceive Jonesboro's sanitation services as "fair" while only one and a half percent see it as "poor" or "very poor". On the whole, perceptions of sanitation services have increased since last year, reflecting an upward trend towards the perception of excellence in services.

Sanitation Services

	2005 QOL Percent	2006 QOL Percent	2007 QOL Percent	2008 QOL Percent
Very Poor	0	0	0	.5
Poor	4.0	3.4	1.6	1.0
Fair	13.9	14.1	13.4	11.2
Good	66.0	60.6	64.5	55.0
Excellent	12.2	18.8	16.5	26.8
DK	4.0	3.1	4.1	5.5

Rating Pollution Control

Control of pollution in Jonesboro tends to be perceived relatively positively with just under half of respondents rating it as "good" while just over six percent see Jonesboro's pollution control as "excellent". Nearly one in four respondents see pollution control in Jonesboro as "fair". However, the main trend in respondents is away from perceiving it as poor, with four percent perceiving it as "poor" or "very poor" and nearly eighteen percent not knowing.

Control of Pollution

	2005 QOL Percent	2006 QOL Percent	2007 QOL Percent	2008 QOL Percent
Very Poor	0	0	0	1.2
Poor	8.6	9.1	10.3	3.0
Fair	24.8	26.9	22.6	24.0
Good	50.5	49.1	51.9	48
Excellent	5.6	7.2	6.4	6.2
DK	10.6	7.8	8.7	17.5

Rating Parks and Recreation

On the whole, Jonesboro resident ratings of Parks and Recreation tend to be positive, with nearly sixty five percent rating it as "good" or "excellent". Of the remainder, just under a fifth of respondents see Parks and Recreation as only "fair", and only six percent perceive them as "poor" or very poor. Finally, just over one in ten did not have an opinion. Since last year's Quality of Life poll, parks and recreation has seen their ratings hold stable in the categories "excellent" and "good", while their negative ratings have slid slightly, albeit within the margin of error of five percent.

Parks and Recreation

	2005 QOL Percent	2006 QOL Percent	2007 QOL Percent	2008 QOL Percent
Very Poor	0	0	0	.2
Poor	6.6	4.4	9.2	5.8
Fair	24.8	20.0	22.4	17.5
Good	49.8	53.1	48.8	48.8
Excellent	11.9	17.2	12.1	15.5
DK	6.9	5.3	7.5	12.2

Transportation Issues

Transportation in Jonesboro has long been a public concern, and with recent levels of population growth, public perceptions of added traffic and associated commute stresses can be seen in their responses to survey questions asking for ratings of the city's street and road quality and support for more sidewalks and bike paths in Jonesboro.

Streets and Roads Ratings

When Jonesboro residents were asked how they rated the city's streets and roads, in comparison to the rankings of other Jonesboro city services, they rate streets and roads as amongst the lowest. Specifically, sixteen percent see Jonesboro streets and roads as "poor" or "very poor", while four in ten respondents see it as only "fair". The evaluation of streets and roads as "good" or "excellent" stayed roughly the same, reducing somewhat by just over three percentage points, within the five percentage point margin of error.

Streets and Roads

	2005 QOL Percent	2006 QOL Percent	2007 QOL Percent	2008 QOL Percent
Very Poor	0	0	0	3.5
Poor	25.1	17.5	16.2	12.5
Fair	43.6	42.2	37.8	40.8
Good	28.1	34.7	40.9	37.0
Excellent	2.3	5.6	4.1	4.2
DK	1.0	0.0	1.0	2.0

Support for Sidewalks and Bike paths

Of the items asked in the Jonesboro Quality of Life Survey since 2005, the construction of more sidewalks and bike paths historically receives the greatest amount of support from respondents. This trend continues as eighty-five percent of respondents either "support" or "strongly support" greater pedestrian access, and less than three percent either "oppose" or "strongly oppose" sidewalks and bike paths. At the same time, only eight percent are neutral. Those who don't know has increased somewhat, to five percent. Findings suggest public attitudes continue to overwhelmingly support greater pedestrian access in Jonesboro.

How strongly would you support or oppose more sidewalks and bike paths in Jonesboro?

	2005 QOL Percent	2006 QOL Percent	2007 QOL Percent	2008 QOL Percent
Strongly Oppose	2.0	.9	0.5	.2
Oppose	3.0	3.4	3.1	2.5
Neither Support nor Oppose	7.6	8.4	6.7	7.8
Support	52.8	43.8	41.9	39.0
Strongly Support	34.0	41.9	46.0	45.2
DK	.7	1.6	1.8	5.2

Public Safety

The trend of high levels of satisfaction with public safety departments (e.g., police and fire) over the last four years of QOL surveys continues. Both police and fire departments are deemed high quality by Jonesboro citizens. If anything, there has been a slight upward trend in public assessment, with the police department being evaluated slightly higher than the previous year, while the fire department made a nearly ten percentage point jump in those considering them "excellent". At the same time, those evaluating the police and fire departments as "very poor", "poor" or even just "fair" has diminished by around six percentage points for each department, suggesting an overall appreciation.

Police

	2005 QOL Percent	2006 QOL Percent	2007 QOL Percent	2008 QOL Percent
Very Poor	0	0	0	.8
Poor	3.0	3.8	4.9	3.8
Fair	18.0	20.6	21.9	16.0
Good	62.0	54.7	57.3	57.8
Excellent	15.0	19.1	13.1	15.8
DK	2.0	1.9	2.8	6.0

Fire

	2005 QOL Percent	2006 QOL Percent	2007 QOL Percent	2008 QOL Percent
Very Poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	0.0	.9	1.6	.5
Fair	7.0	6.6	11.1	5.2
Good	65.0	58.8	63.2	60.2
Excellent	24.0	31.6	18.5	27.2
DK	4.0	2.2	5.7	6.8

To further address issues of safety, citizens were asked a neighborhood specific question. Closely corresponding with approval ratings of the police department, nearly two-thirds of the citizens in Jonesboro feel very safe in their neighborhoods after dark. However, when trends are considered, citizens are feeling less safe than in previous years, with thos feeling either "very unsafe" or "unsafe" increasing from twenty one percent in 2005 to just over a third of respondents this year.

How safe do you feel walking alone in your neighborhood after dark?

	2005 QOL Percent	2006 QOL Percent	2007 QOL Percent	2008 QOL Percent
Very Unsafe	5.0	16.9	11.1	14.8
Unsafe	16.0	8.4	18.0	20.5
Safe	41.0	44.1	37.8	31.0
Very Safe	35.0	28.1	28.8	29.8
DK	3.0	2.5	4.4	4.0

Perceptions of crime being a problem is further analyzed by considering respondents perception of whether crime in Jonesboro has increased, decreased, or stayed about the same. Findings suggest that just under a majority of respondents see crime as having increased over the past year while one-third sees crime levels as staying about the same.

Jonesboro crime change over past year

	2007 QOL Percent	2008 QOL Percent
Decreased	4.9	7.5
Stayed the same	40.6	36.8
Increased	51.4	48.8
DK	3.1	7.0

Neighborhoods

As noted earlier, high levels of growth in Jonesboro have led to new and specific challenges for city government, including zoning and control of abandoned house in many parts of the city. To get a feel for how the public felt about the city's handling of this growth, citizens were asked a neighborhood specific question and then were asked follow up questions about zoning issues and the control of abandoned houses.

How would you rate your neighborhood as a place to live?

	2005 QOL Percent	2006 QOL Percent	2007 QOL Percent	2008 QOL Percent
Very Poor	0	0	0	1.2
Poor	3.0	3.1	4.1	2.2
Fair	10.0	9.4	10.5	9.8
Good	38.0	35.0	42.4	33.2
Excellent	47.0	52.5	42.4	52.5
DK	2.0	0.0	0.5	1.0

Over eight-five percent of the citizens are happy with their neighborhood, rating it as either "good" or "excellent". In sum, trends on this issue have remained relatively constant over the past four years. This happiness does not translate into satisfaction with zoning and control of abandoned houses. Almost the same percent of citizens rate zoning as only "fair" or "poor" as rate it as "good" or "excellent". Meanwhile, one third of respondents did not hold an opinion on the matter, increasing by nearly ten percent voer the previous years QOL studies.

Zoning

	2005 QOL Percent	2006 QOL Percent	2007 QOL Percent	2008 QOL Percent
Very Poor	0	0	0	2.2
Poor	10.0	12.2	7.7	7.5
Fair	33.0	34.7	29.3	27.0
Good	34.0	36.6	34.7	28.0
Excellent	2.0	4.4	2.6	2.2
DK	23.0	12.2	23.4	33.0

The picture painted by the question concerning control of abandoned houses is even worse. Nearly a quarter of respondents feel the city is doing either a "very poor" or a "poor" job of controlling abandoned houses, a substantial increase from 2007. Compared with the thirty percent who see the city as doing a "good" or "excellent" job, the Jonesboro public perceives a major problem over the control of abandoned houses.

Control of Abandoned Houses

	2005 QOL Percent	2006 QOL Percent	2007 QOL Percent	2008 QOL Percent
Very Poor	0	0	0	5.0
Poor	26.0	27.8	16.5	18.8
Fair	25.0	34.4	28.3	28.8
Good	20.0	16.9	28.5	27
Excellent	2.0	4.7	3.9	3.8
DK	27.0	16.3	17.7	16.8

Public Officials and Job Approval

The citizens of Jonesboro were asked to rate elected officials handling of their public jobs. Specifically, citizens were asked to rate Doug Formon as to how he is handling his duties as Mayor of Jonesboro. As a follow up, citizens were asked a more general question about the City Council of Jonesboro and its handling of local government issues.

How satisfied are you with the way Doug Formon is handling his job as Mayor of Jonesboro?

	2005 QOL Percent	2006 QOL Percent	2007 QOL Percent	2008 QOL Percent
Very Dissatisfied	0.7	1.3	2.8	3.5
Dissatisfied	11.0	7.8	6.4	13.0
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	20.0	19.4	24.7	16.8
Satisfied	51.0	50.6	48.3	43.8
Very Satisfied	5.0	14.1	11.6	8.2
DK	12.0	6.9	6.2	14.7

Mayor Formon enjoys an approval rating of just over fifty percent (52% "satisfied" + "very satisfied") down from last year's sixty percent. Meanwhile, those either "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" increased to nearly seventeen percent from just over nine percent in both 2006 and 2007, a statistically significant change. The bulk of the change over the past year comes from those respondents that moved into the "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied", which saw an eight percent reduction, and an increase of nearly nine percent in those who don't know.

The Jonesboro City Council collectively enjoys a forty five percent approval rating, down significant from last years fifty-three percent approval rating. Those holding a neutral "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied" position also declined by nearly the margin of error of five percent, while those who were either "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" increased by five percent from nearly thirteen percent in 2007 to eighteen percent in 2008. Meanwhile, those without an opinion, increased by seven percentage points from the past year.

How satisfied are you with the way the Jonesboro City Council is handling local government issues?

	2005 QOL Percent	2006 QOL Percent	2007 QOL Percent	2008 QOL Percent
Very Dissatisfied	0.7	3.1	2.1	5.2
Dissatisfied	7.0	8.8	10.5	13.0
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	25.0	25.6	26.2	21.5
Satisfied	34.0	45.6	46.5	41.0
Very Satisfied	9.0	9.1	6.2	3.8
DK	24.0	7.8	8.5	15.5