

OHIC NATIONAL CONFERENCE

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Building A Culture of Outreach in Small Underserved Rural Towns
No Broadband, No Social Media

Speaker John Robinson

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What is the Definition of A Small Town in America?

- An incorporated or unincorporated community (as defined by the Administrator) with a population of less than 2,500 individuals.

Form of Government

- Mayor
- Aldermen or Alderwomen
- City Clerk
- Police
- Water Sewer Admin
- City Attorney
- Fire Chief of Volunteer Firefighter
- Parks and Recreation Director – Senior Center/Meal site

How they conduct Business

Board Meeting Days-Planning Development District-Supreme Court District

WELCOME TO ISSAQUENA COUNTY MAYERSVILLE, MISSISSIPPI

Facts About Issaquena County

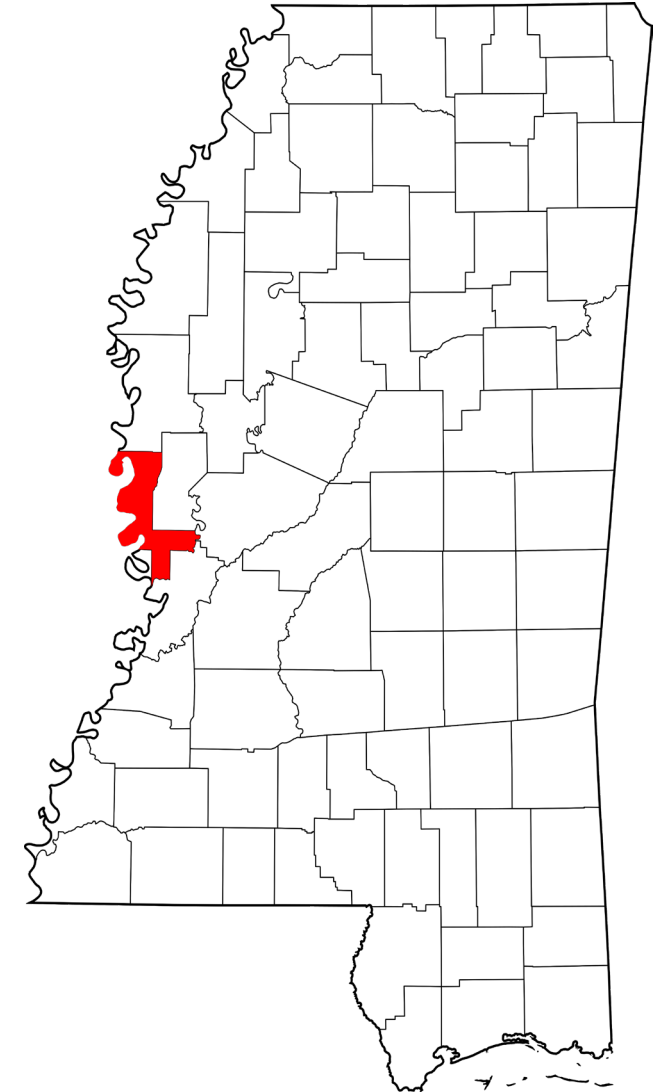
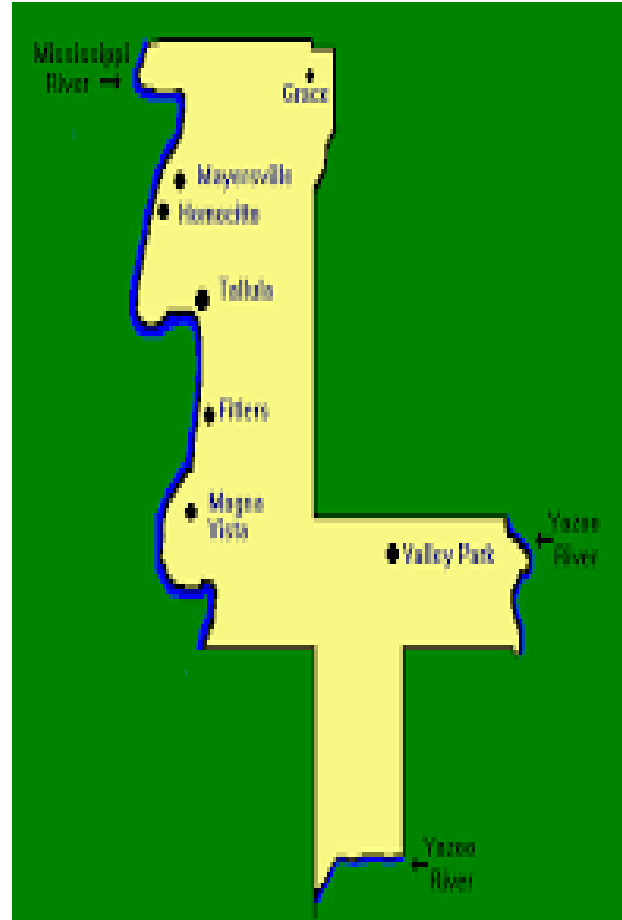
"Issaquena" is a Choctaw word meaning "Deer River".

Of Mississippi's 82 counties, Issaquena County has the fewest residents with just 1,308. This accounts for just 0.04% of Mississippi's total population.

Mayersville is the county seat. Population 433

Mayersville children attend school in a neighboring County (Sharkey Co.).

There are six county supervisors.



What are some disadvantages of living in small towns?

Disadvantages of Living in a small town

Disadvantages for seniors living in a small town

Fewer Well-Paying Jobs- Limited job opportunities

Family members leaving you behind to seek better pay/job opportunities in larger cities

Fewer Educational Opportunities

Family members leaving home (college/advanced degrees) and not returning home creating pathways to social isolation

Limited access to goods and services

No Big-Box stores

Food deserts

None or limited healthy food options

Harder Access to Medical Specialists

While a doctor or family practitioner is likely available pretty much anywhere, more specialized healthcare professionals may not be available

No pharmacies

Costly Transportation

Higher cost of living- Small town pharmacy

An elderly person needing services unavailable in their town will have to travel sometimes as far as 100 miles one way.

BROADBAND

WHO CAN SURVIVE WITHOUT IT

WHY ISN'T EVERYONE USING BROADBAND?

The broadband saga, while the digital divide has been an issue since the early 2000s the consequences of not having broadband internet service were exposed when the Covid pandemic hit, and people were forced to work and attend school from home.

The FCC defines broadband as having download speeds of a minimum of 25 megabits per second (or Mbps) and upload speeds of at least 3 Mbps.

Across the country, rural households and low-wage workers are stuck with slow or no internet.

Currently, some 42 million Americans have no access to broadband, according to *Broadband Now*, a data technology company.

Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) While 51.6 million households are eligible for ACP assistance, just 13 million households are enrolled in the program

A recent survey by *Education Superhighway* found 75% of people in many communities don't know this program exists. Ohio 1.9M and North Carolina 1.7M Number of Eligible Households on average have 35% enrolled.

Income at or below 200% of the 2022 federal poverty guideline, you're eligible for the ACP.

You may also qualify if you got a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year, or if you're already enrolled in programs like SNAP, Medicaid, the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program (Section 8 Vouchers), or project-based rental assistance (PBRA).

Interactive Exercise- 60 seconds let's Have Fun

Building A Culture of Outreach in Small Underserved Rural Towns

The Three Big Threes Stage One: Preparation

Three Things to Get Your Foot in The Door

- Do your research, to create a who's who list. The movers and shakers may not be among the top ten.
- Ask comfortable questions. Don't be an investigator. Just have a simple conversation.
- Simplify your purpose. Get straight to the point on how you can help provide services.

Google Time

- Municipal League or Association www.mmlonline.com/conferences (Mississippi Municipal League)
- City Government
- Facebook the officials
- Stores, shops, restaurants, and local organizations (Delta Health Summit).
- Compile a list of faith-based organizations and visit their website
- Wikipedia- Who's their Most Famous Citizen? What is the own known for? Morgan Freeman

Three Things to Achieve at the Outreach Event

The Three Big Three
Stage Two: Outreach Event

Make It Memorable

- Maximize the outreach event to include multiple services, and resources at your disposal that people need.
- Identify community stakeholders and start building relationships.
- Bring in other partnerships to share resources. Help them highlight their local services.

Silver City Tornado Disaster Outreach



PARTNERS

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

Faith-Based

South Delta AAA

City of Jackson Water Crisis Assistance Outreach



PARTNERS

AARP Mississippi
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY
City of Jackson
Jackson Hinds Comprehensive Health

Trio (Home Delivered Meals Provider)
Jackson Fire Department
Mississippi Department of Health

Three Things to Do to Sustain a Working Relationship

The Three Big Three
Stage Three: Sustainable Relationships

Be A Next-Door Neighbor

- Formulate a plan of action for those people who were most helpful. These are people who want to see their town flourish.
- Connect with people who can circulate information year-round. Leave a volunteer in place.
- Have a continuation plan that includes participation and support of future events. Follow up with phone calls, cards, and emails as if you were a family member.

Follow up

- Send Thank You.
- Ask for a town calendar for future participation.
- Schedule your next visit with prospective volunteers. Carry your plan with you.
- Connect! Connect! Connect!

"Many Hands Make Light Work"

Thank you!

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