

**PRIORITY RATING OF THE CHALLENGES TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM
THE SOUTHERN ARKANSAS UNIVERISTY (MAGNOLIA) BREAKFAST MEETING**

Priority Points	Challenges to this Region's Development	Under our Control?
17	Insufficient state funding for airports and surface transportation. (This group considered that the need was for funding for highways.)	S
0	The area is not very ethnically diverse & less attractive to some.	
5	State funding for higher education is not keeping pace with enrollment growth	S
0	Arkansas is a flyover state.	
9	We lose our college graduates and the best of the younger generation to other areas	S
9	Businesses face too much uncertainty as they wait for federal government decisions on cap and trade, health care reform, etc. (Uncertainty)	H
0	Environmental restrictions resulting from EPA policies or law suits filed by other states.	
1	It is hard to recruit and retain skilled workers (i.e., those without four-year degrees but with skills in technology, advanced manufacturing, etc.)	S
0	The declines in the rural and small community health care system.	
0	Amendment 82.	
7	The small and/or declining population.	S
1	Insufficient high-tech infrastructure, e.g., broadband.	S
4	The state's inability to compete with our neighboring states.	
2	The effect of term limits by which we will lose experienced legislators to represent us in the capitol.	
3	We lack the quality of life amenities to attract workers and employers.	S
2	Communities do not have a tax with revenue dedicated to economic development.	S
5	Our schools are not sufficiently preparing graduates for college or for jobs.	S
3	The crime rate and concerns about public safety.	S
0	Racial tensions and divisions within our communities.	
0	Insufficient public transportation.	
1	We are not good enough at working together regionally; we get hung up on boundaries; our plans and efforts are not coordinated.	H
0	Our per capita tax burden is too great.	
1	We need new leadership; leaders with vision and willingness to work to the greater good; and the next generation of leaders.	H
3	Drugs—workers are unable to pass drug tests; they undermine our families and communities.	L
0	Site selectors have preconceived notions that work to our disadvantage.	
6	Too much of our available labor pool lacks skills and a work ethic.	S
0	Arkansas's usury law.	
6	Card check or employee free choice.	S
1	Other: Reprioritize education needs, vocational training for unskilled workers who are not college material.	H
2	Other: State involvement in recruiting. Employers need to be more proactive.	H
2	Other: Tapping into knowledge resources in the region-companies & skills	
5	Other: If the state does not recognize the value of the resources that Southwest Arkansas contributes to the economy and does not invest in roads, southwest Arkansas will be at a disadvantage.	S
5	Other: Lignite Development in South Arkansas	S

The discussion groups allocated a total of ten (10) priority points across the twenty plus challenges. In this table, the priority assessment has been converted to a 100 point scale. The discussion groups then assessed the highest priority challenges on the extent to which we can “control” them locally, regionally, and/or at the state level, with H for high control, S for some, L for low control, and N for no control. This table reports an average assessment of the degree of control.

At this meeting, a total of five additional challenges were added by the groups. (These appear at the bottom of the table.) The participants also edited a couple of the challenges. In the first row of the table, they focused the challenge on funding for highways. In the sixth row they added the word “uncertainly” as a parenthetical.