

On November 14 – 17, 2010 over 125 Oklahomans participated in The Oklahoma Academy Town Hall Conference focused on municipal governance. Invited from a pool of nominees, the participants were an excellent socio-demographic representation of Oklahoma's diverse population. This issue was selected in 2009 by the Academy Board of Directors from responses to a survey of Oklahomans answering the question "What do you consider an issue of critical importance to the future of Oklahoma?" The Board agreed this issue is important, it is critical, and if there is anything that serves as the pulse of a prosperous state, it is the health of its municipalities.

Three plenary session keynote speakers provided serious "food for thought" to the participants as they deliberated over the two full days of discussion. Addressing the Town Hall Sunday evening was Bill Purcell, former mayor of Nashville, TN and currently Advisor to the President of Harvard University in Cambridge, MA. Purcell focused his remarks to "21st Century Cities – Shared Obligations, Shared Commitments and Shared Success. Monday luncheon keynote speaker was Graham Richard, former mayor of Fort Wayne, IN and currently a consultant with Graham Richard Associates, LLC and Non Resident Senior Fellow with the Brookings Institution. Richard focused his remarks on financial adversity to leadership opportunity – "High Performance Strategies for Transforming Cities." J. Mac Holladay addressed the Town Hall as the Monday evening keynote speaker. Holladay's focus was also a challenge. He addressed "Leadership in Difficult Times – A New Reality." He emphasized that the choices that communities make today will affect their prosperity for decades to come.

This document includes the prioritized recommendations as determined by elected representatives from each of the five panel discussion groups. These are the recommendations believed to be most critical to provide municipalities with the tools to operate successfully, efficiently, and effectively now and for the future. It is these recommendations that the Town Hall participants want implemented first! The full findings and recommendations report may be found on the Academy's website at www.okacademy.org. Also on the website is the presentation from J. Mac Holladay.

The Academy Town Hall has become, through a variety of ways, a vital contributor to the progress of our state --- the citizen participation of the Town Hall conference itself, the development of rich resource materials, the prompt publication of the findings, and the implementation of the Town Hall recommendations through a vigorous legislative and community action effort. The Academy's motto is "moving ideas into action" and once again, we invite you to share these recommendations and the effort to implement them.

Julie J. Knutson, President and CEO
The Oklahoma Academy