

After the Survey: Planning Next Steps

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As a follow-up to the “Fearless Leaders” article printed in *Perspectives* March 2004 edition, Taos staff once again took time to discuss their community-wide round table event in January 2004.

Community-wide Forum:

The round table forum was conceived by Town of Taos staff after results were in from The National Citizen Survey™. The citizen survey pointed out opportunities for improvement of services. The round table provided a way to bring residents together to discuss issues that came out of survey findings. Taos staff wanted to be transparent about the workings of Town government and work with residents to develop yearly goals and overall benchmarks to assess improvements in specific service areas.

The event, attended by about 90 people, was held on January 17, 2004 at the Town of Taos Convention Center. Staff reports that attendees represented a broad cross-section of the community in age, gender and ethnicity. The mayor, town manager, Town Council members and department heads attended the roundtable. Department staff had produced displays to inform the public of the services that each provides.

Discussion facilitators were located at each of several tables to help identify action steps from citizen recommendations. Suggestions that were not related to action steps or Town services were placed in a “parking lot” in order to review for future reference. The event was from 9am-3pm and included lunch.

Strategic Planning:

The Citizens Survey Task Force (which includes Taos residents and staff) is responsible for consolidating information from these discussions into a final report which is currently being drafted. Results will be published and Town leadership will review the recommendations and action steps and begin to incorporate and implement specific action steps into yearly goals and objectives.

With the completion of The National Citizen Survey™ and input from the community-wide forum, Taos staff has developed key benchmarks to evaluate goals and objectives for upcoming fiscal years. The survey will continue to be an evaluation tool in the years to come.

Quote from Taos staff: “The survey also produced invaluable information about how citizens perceive city government... Citizens on the other hand have had the opportunity to evaluate and grade city services. It’s a win-win situation. All this ties into the bigger scheme, which is to improve the quality of services.”