



## Media Release

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### **DHS Announces Arkansas Volunteer Communities of the Year**

Twelve communities have been selected to receive the 2013 Arkansas Volunteer Community of the Year Award. The communities were chosen for the award based on efforts by volunteers working in each community. Chosen to receive recognition were first-time winners Murfreesboro, Vilonia and Redfield; the communities of Bentonville, Blytheville, Clarendon, Clarkridge, Fayetteville, Fort Smith, Heber Springs, Norfolk and Van Buren, which are past award winners, also were chosen as 2013 winners.

“We are proud to recognize these communities for their volunteer spirit. Their volunteers work hard to make sure area needs are met and that makes these communities better places for everyone to live,” said Sherry Middleton, director of the DHS Division of Community Service and Nonprofit Support.

In each of the cities that won volunteers demonstrated a commitment to helping their fellow citizens and community.

In Murfreesboro, a town with a population of less than 1800, volunteers logged more than 571,000 hours of volunteer work during 2012 through nearly a dozen projects designed to benefit area residents. Some of these projects included running a food pantry, holding an annual coat drive supporting a cancer awareness program and running a local annual festival.

In Fayetteville, a past award winner, thousands of volunteers, including many students from the University of Arkansas, pitched in more than 657,000 hours during 2012 to projects ranging from supporting the city’s animal shelter, and working on the city’s parks and trails, to addressing the problem of food insecurity by working with food pantries, feeding programs and community gardens.

A panel of citizens from across the state served on the selection committee. Some recipients have received the award in the past. However, some of this year’s nominees are first time recipients.

The award presentations will take place at the Arkansas Municipal League’s Winter Conference, which will be held January 29-31, 2014, in Rogers, Arkansas.

The Arkansas Volunteer Community of the Year Awards are sponsored by the Governor’s Office, the Arkansas Municipal League and the Arkansas Department of Human Services Division of Community Service and Nonprofit Support. The Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department provides signs announcing the Arkansas Volunteer Community of the Year designation. The signs are placed at prominent locations along highways outside of the winning cities.

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The Arkansas Department of Human Services Division of Community Service and Nonprofit Support promotes and supports volunteerism in the private, nonprofit and governmental sectors as a means of enhancing the quality of life for all Arkansans. Consulting and training services for nonprofit and volunteer program management are available by calling (501) 682-7540 or (toll free) 1-800-482-5850.