

**Statement of
David Williams**

Director, Gaston County Planning and Development Services
and
Chair, Gaston County Complete County Committee

**Information Policy, Census, and National Archives Subcommittee
Oversight and Government Reform Committee**

2154 Rayburn House Office Building
Wednesday, December 2, 2009
2:00 p.m.

“The 2010 Census: How Complete Count Committees, Local Governments, Philanthropic Organizations, Not-for-Profits and the Business Community Can Contribute to a Successful Census.”

Thank you Chairman Clay, Ranking Member McHenry, and Members of the Subcommittee on the Census for inviting me to testify before you today.

My name is David Williams. I am the Director of Planning for Gaston County, North Carolina, and also the Chair of the county's Complete Count Committee. On behalf of the Gaston County Board of County Commissioners and Gaston County Manager, I will discuss the activities of the Gaston County Complete Count Committee in my testimony. I have kept my written testimony in bullet form and will instead speak in more detail on these issues.

Gaston County's Philosophy/Goal

- To achieve an accurate count (count everyone in urban and rural areas)
- Increase response rates
- Urban/rural strategy (must employ both)
- Municipal Population Estimate (126,865)
- Rural Population Estimate (now within the city limits) (78,106)

Census 2000 Strategy

- Complete Count Committee Makeup (primarily governmental staff)
- Some of the Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Gaston in 2000"
- Slogan: "I – Count"
- Gaston County Commission Funding approximately 16k for marketing to show its commitment
- Examined Master Address List (discovered numerous addresses were missing, however able to correct through the LUCA Program)
- Long Range/Current Planning Program
- Subdivision Process Billboards and Bumper Stickers
- Census 2000 "I – Count" video

Census 2010 Strategy

- Complete Count Committee recommendations: Complete Count Committee makeup more diverse/more volunteer driven (technical, outreach, diverse/special populations managers at county level)
- Establishment of CCC began in May 2009
- Slogan “It counts to be counted”
- Census Awareness Week (February 2010)
- Assessing response rates in urban/rural areas of county
- Employ the city/town councils – elected officials seminar, meets quarterly
- Work with town/city planning directors to assess hard-to-count areas – GcaMP (Gaston County and Municipal Planners Group); Gaston County Police/County Building Inspections
- Use knowledge-gained rezonings, planning applications to assess difficult areas to count
- County-wise GIS (Geographical Information System) to pinpoint hot spots for growth
- Establish all government buildings as Census Question Centers
- Post Census information on all school websites; Facebook
- Employ the Ministerial Alliance
- Establish a health care committee as a subcommittee to work with hospitals, health care professionals and providers (lunch-and-learn) to market the Census
- Develop a Census 2010 video to be shown on the Local Government Access Channel for Gaston County
- Work with the local newspapers to donate space to conduct stories on Census
- Market at grocery stores, churches, gas stations, rural corner stores, and restaurants
- Art contest for all levels of schools

General concerns

- Urban mistrust
- Rural mistrust

Mr. Chairman and the subcommittee, thank you and that concludes my testimony. I look forward to your questions.