Speaker Bios

Joe W. Barker

Joe Barker has served as Executive Director of Southwest Tennessee Development District (SWTDD), a regional planning and economic development organization, since 2007. He has a diverse background in public service in both state and local government. Barker has served as both Mayor of the City of Savannah and Hardin County, Tennessee.

In 2003, Governor Phil Bredesen appointed Barker to the position of Assistant Commissioner of the state Department of Economic and Community Development. In 2006, Governor Bredesen appointed Barker to lead Tennessee Tomorrow, a public/private partnership focused on rural economic development.

During his tenure as assistant commissioner, Barker represented the Governor on the Delta Regional Authority and Appalachian Regional Commission. He oversaw the Tennessee “Best Practice Model” Three-Star Program and launched the Tennessee Main Street and Retire Tennessee Programs.

During his tenure at SWTDD, the highly successful Regional Economic Development Initiative (REDI) was launched which is a collaboration of eleven rural West Tennessee counties. REDI focuses on education/workforce development, technology, entrepreneurship, and capacity building. REDI has received national accolades for its impact in rural communities.

Pam Alexander

Pam is founder and President of HarnessPoint Community Solutions. Her firm works with nonprofit organizations to enhance their impact and sustainability through research, strategy development, evaluation and capacity-building services.

HarnessPoint Community Solutions applies tools such as feasibility studies, needs assessments, strategic planning, project development, and grant writing to help clients challenge their own perceptions about the design, delivery and impact of programs and services. Pam has a special interest in helping organizations with institutional capacity building through the development of mission-focused revenue streams for long-term growth and economic resiliency.

Pam teaches graduate courses in nonprofit management at two universities. She also volunteers with First Presbyterian Church Jonesboro, BancorpSouth Community Advisory Council, United Way of Northeast Arkansas, and the Jonesboro Land Use Advisory Committee. She has served on the ACDS board since 2012. In addition to her other activities, Pam tends to an organic garden and a menagerie of two- and four-legged creatures. You can connect with Pam on LinkedIn.

Diane Tatum

Diane Tatum has 35 years’ experience in the electric utility business and recently retired as the Southeast Regional Customer Service Manager for Entergy Arkansas. She currently serves on the boards of the Pine Bluff-Downtown Development, Jefferson County Port Authority, Arkansas Public School Resource Center and board president of the Arkansas Business & Education Alliance. Previously, she served on the Pine Bluff Area Community Foundation Board of Directors, and as the Board President for the HUD funded Golden Age Apartments. Diane continues to be a busy and involved Arkansan.

Representative Fredrick J. Love

Rep. Fredrick J. Love of Little Rock is serving his second term in the Arkansas House of Representatives. He represents District 29, which includes part of Pulaski County.

For the 89th General Assembly, Rep. Love will serve on the House Public Health, Welfare and Labor Committee; the House Insurance and Commerce Committee; the Joint Committee on Advanced Communications and Information Technology; and the Joint Budget Committee.

For the 88th General Assembly, Rep. Love served on the House Revenue and Taxation Committee, where he chaired the Personal and Corporate Income Taxes Subcommittee. He also served on the House Agriculture, Forestry and Economic Development Committee, and the Public School Desegregation Lawsuit Resolution Task Force.
A graduate of Joe T. Robinson High School, Rep. Love earned a bachelor’s degree in political science and a master's degree in public health from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. He is currently working toward completion of a doctorate degree in public health.

Rep. Love works as a grants administrator for Pulaski County. He is vice chair of the Young Black Professionals of Arkansas. He has served on the Pulaski County Child and Youth Services Advisory Board, where he is parliamentarian, and the Little Rock Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission, where he is education committee chair. In addition, Rep. Love is a worshipful master with the Prince Hall Masonic Order.

Rep. Love and his wife, ShaRhonda, attend the Methodist Church. They have a young son.

**Mayor Michael Watson**

Mayor Mike Watson is a native Arkansan and has been a resident of Maumelle since 1996. He joined the Maumelle Department of Public Safety as a volunteer firefighter the next year and has served with the Maumelle Firefighters until 2007, when he was sworn in as mayor.

In addition to Mayor, Mike remains on the Board of the Metropolitan Planning Organization for Central Arkansas and served as the President of Metroplan in 2012, Board Member for the Pulaski County Solid Waste District, Former Board Member on Metro Little Rock Alliance and a member of the Pulaski County Inter-Governmental Council.

Mike also served on the Maumelle Planning Commission for nine years. He was the chairperson for six of those nine years.

Mike attended the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, where he earned a surveying associate degree in 1979. He is a registered professional land surveyor in the state of Arkansas.

Mike left his career at Crafton, Tull, & Associates, Inc. in Little Rock to assume the duties of mayor in 2007. Mike began working there in 2005. He was previously with The Mehlburger Firm, Inc, where he worked for 23 years.

Mike is currently a member of the Maumelle Rotary Club. In addition to his volunteer contributions in Maumelle, Mike also participates with Love Truth Cares Ministries and has made thirteen trips to Honduras to assist in building projects, one mission trip to Nicaragua, as well as disaster relief projects in the Gulf Coast area and in Little Rock, Scotland, Clinton, Carlisle, Marmaduke, Mayflower and Vilonia, Arkansas.

Mike is a member of the Pleasant Valley Church of Christ, where he has served as a deacon for the past eight years. He and his wife Debbie have been married for 35 years and have one daughter, Amanda, son-in-law, Nathan and Granddaughter, Reagan.

When Mike isn’t working or volunteering his services, he enjoys outdoor activities like hunting and fishing.

**David Stowers**

David Stowers is a degreed chemist working as a Special Projects Coordinator with the Southwest Arkansas Planning and Development District. He is a Registered Environmental Manager and is currently writing Hazard Mitigation Plans for 11 of SWAPDD’s 12 counties.

Prior to joining SWAPDD, David was an Environmental Program Manager for the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission. He authored the policies under which CDBG Water and Wastewater Grants are awarded and administered by that agency, and he was a Certified Floodplain Manager who trained local floodplain administrators on National Flood Insurance Program issues.

David was an Enforcement Administrator for the Air Division of the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality, and his background also includes chemical manufacturing and environmental laboratory analysis.

He attended Youngstown State University and the Graduate School of Chemistry at the University of Texas at Austin.