OKLAHOMA'S WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS: ECONOMIC INDICATORS OF RURAL ECONOMIES

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This thesis is dedicated to the rural communities of Oklahoma and their weekly newspapers. It was inspired by the twelve years spent with my husband, Terry, in the weekly newspaper business. We experienced first hand the working relationship shared between the community, main street businesses, and the weekly newspaper. It is my hope that this study might contribute to the survival of small but important rural communities.

I wish to thank my advisor, Dr. Steve Tweedie, for his guidance, teaching skills, and most of all, his persistence to see this project completed. There were times when I lost sight of the goal but he never wavered. The other members of my committee, Dr. George Carney and Dr. Louis Seig, provided professional advisement and support during this process. I value their expertise. A special thanks to Dr. Tom Wikle for setting in at the last moment. Their greatest contribution has been their friendship over the past years.

None of this would have been possible without my husband Terry whose encouragement began almost thirty years ago; and to our children, Vance, Travis, Dallas, and Derrick for loving and encouraging me as their "non-traditional Mom."

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Geographers are often preoccupied with various censuses because they identify certain patterns that can be used to predict future demographic and economic trends. However these are not aggregated on national, regional, state, or even county levels that may or may not give an insight to local situations. The census data are too far removed from main street economics to reveal the underlying reasons as to why a local bank fails, why the lumberyard closes its doors, or why rural population growth is sporadic from one community to another. As a result, a question becomes, "What other instrument can be used as a monitor or indicator of local economies?" One possible indicator could be the community newspaper.

Historically, newspapers indicated the existence of towns and "civilization" (Duhaime 13). Long before Oklahoma's statehood in 1907, newspapers sprang up throughout Indian Territory as groups of people of various backgrounds began to form communities. As a natural expression of either contentment or discontentment, or simply for quick economic gain, the newspaper became one of

the institutions by which these communities established their identity and expressed the culmination of their economic activities. Historian Donald Whisehunt in "The Frontier Newspaper: A Guide to Society and Culture" suggested that frontier newspapers were like "barometers" of societies that were far removed from the outside world. He wrote, "The early arrival of newspapers in such primitive forms was merely a harbinger of a more complex civilization" (727).

Statement of the Problem

By 1930, Oklahoma settled down from its territorial flurries. According to the United States Bureau of the Census, approximately 1,574,000 people lived in the rural areas while only 822,000 people lived in the urban areas. Like today, two major metropolitan areas, Tulsa and Oklahoma City, existed. However, unlike today, the rural areas dominated the economy of the state. The numerous smaller "cities," sparsely distributed through the state, were flanked by many small towns which often supported weekly newspapers. Weekly newspapers, also known as the community press, are traditionally defined as those newspapers published three or fewer times a week.

According to the 1930 Ayers Newspaper directory, 371 weeklies represented the rural communities of Oklahoma (362-390); however, by 1992, only 173 weeklies endured, although the state's population nearly doubled during that period.

The number of rural weeklies is even less than the reported 173 because they are listed with the urban weeklies (Oklahoma Press Association, 1991). Why are there fewer rural weekly newspapers today?

Over the past 60 years, the fast-growing metropolitan areas eventually absorbed many of the rural communities forcing their newspapers into a new class of suburban weeklies. A few papers became dailies, but most of them just closed their doors because the population and main street businesses, for one reason or another, declined.

The decline of Oklahoma's Main Street businesses since the 1930s was indicative of the national movement away from an agriculture-based society. The retail businesses whose economies were dependent on agriculture and agri-related businesses found their economic base eroded by the decreasing farm population and 1980s farm financial crises. Oklahoma suffered an additional economic blow with the "oil bust" in the early eighties as well.

With the reduction of taxable retail sales, fewer dollars were collected to maintain or to expand the local infrastructure. Eventually, better employment opportunities and better living conditions in the metropolitan areas encouraged the outmigration from the depressed rural areas. Over time, the doors of rural Main Street retail stores closed--a fact supported by a trip down the Main Street of most rural Oklahoma towns where vacant buildings and boarded

windows face now deserted streets. Consequently, rural Oklahoma is now characterized by depopulation, pockets of persistent poverty, high rates of unemployment, farm foreclosures, bankruptcies, and a deteriorating infrastructure (Schuler 2).

A number of federal and state solutions have been proposed to improve the quality of life and reverse the current economic trends in the rural sectors. For example, in January of 1992, Governor David Walters announced a "sweeping" rural legislative program to improve economic growth and development in rural Oklahoma (Crane). One year later, a hiring and spending freeze was mandated because the state was financially strapped. What about the programs set forth to aid in recovery of rural areas? Even if the state government was in the position to pour unlimited funds into the rural economy, according to Oklahoma State University agricultural economists, it will be difficult to deal with these economic woes in a collective manner:

> Economic development is a complex topic with no single formula for success. Each community in Oklahoma will have to analyze opportunities and limitations given financial, social, natural resource and human capital availability (Oklahoma Extension Service 1990).

If this is the case, how will the state and local leaders monitor each independent, local economy for communi-

ties with limited budgets and capabilities? Each town's newspaper may be the solution.

A model of the interaction between the newspaper, the business community and the population demonstrates the sensitivity of the newspaper to the local economy (Figure 1).

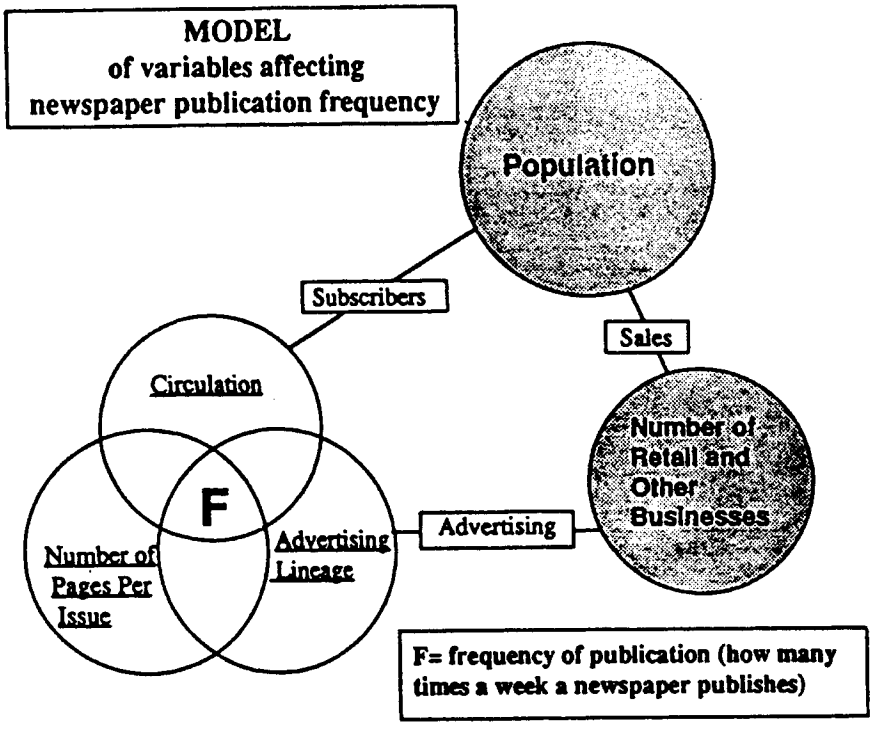


Figure 1. Model of the Interaction of the Community Newspaper and a Small Town.

In this model, the cornerstones of the economy are **population, retail businesses, and the newspaper.** Population is the focus of the model because it affects both the sales of retail businesses and the subscribers to the newspaper. The newspaper anchors the model with four working components: advertising lineage, circulation, number of pages,

and (F) frequency of publication.

The interaction between retail businesses and population becomes evident with the overlapping of advertising lineage and circulation of the newspaper. Although the combination of advertising lineage and circulation certainly governs the size or number of pages each issue will contain, it is mainly the weekly advertising lineage that determines in the short term the number of pages the paper will print from week to week (The Oklahoma Publisher 1). In the long-term, circulation increase or decline eventually becomes more of a decisive factor. The overlapping of the advertising lineage, circulation, and the number of pages results in the (F)frequency the newspaper is published.

The number of merchants are in direct proportion to the population of the consumers. Indirectly, the size of the consumer population dictates the size of newspaper and whether it is a daily or weekly publication. If a community's population or number of businesses fall beneath a certain threshold, the local newspaper has to re-adjust weekly by cutting or adding pages. Usually, anywhere from 50 to 70 percent of the newspaper content is devoted to advertising, the main source of income for newspapers. One constraint is due to postal rules for second-class mail which limits publication content to no more than seventy-five percent advertising (NewsInc. 9).

In the event of long-term economic change, the freque-

ncy (F) of publication may be adjusted. In the case of a booming economy with the increase of sales and circulation, editors will constantly have trouble "squeezing" in local news. Generally, when the economy is stimulated not only does the advertising and circulation increase, but community activities increase as well, creating more news copy which competes with advertising for space in the newspaper. In almost every case, advertising prevails. The publisher will either increase the number of pages depending on cost breaks in printing or publish more often. If the increase in advertising is substantial over a long period, most publishers opt for increasing frequency in publication because of the flexibility; however, the change in frequency of publication merits careful consideration because there is an increase in personnel, printing, mailing cost, and equipment (NewsInc. 8). These same considerations can also be applied to a declining economy but in reverse.

Purpose of the Study

The objective of this research is to examine the relationship between community newspapers and the viability of rural Main Street economics. The results of the research may provide a basis for development of an alternative to the census for evaluating local rural economic situations.

Significance of the Study

This study focuses on the relationship between rural newspapers, local population, and local businesses, and their potential contribution to rural development studies that are concerned with the recent economic decline of rural areas. Although community leaders are usually aware of the general state of the local economy, this study may provide a specific guide to those concerned with rural development.

Scope of Study and Data Sources

The overall area of study is limited to all rural communities in Oklahoma with a weekly newspaper in 1980, 1983, and 1990. This time period is ideal for comparing economic extremes for each community and how weekly newspapers reflected those times. The "oil boom" was still in full swing in 1980 but by 1983, according to agricultural economist, Gerald Doeksen, the Oklahoma oil rich economy was "busted." By 1990, Oklahoma's economy was recovering from the jolt of the "oil bust."

By 1980 all communities with weekly newspapers, except for Olustee, reported city sales tax collections to the Oklahoma Tax Commission, providing an insight to retail activities of the small towns. For advertising lineage, the Oklahoma Historical Society newspaper archives were utilized. Additional newspaper data are available through the Oklahoma Press Association.

In this study, a **rural community** and **small town** are used as synonymous terms for communities of low population density beyond the urban areas. **Rural areas** encompass not only rural communities and small towns but also outlying areas whose economies are inseparable from small towns. The term **Main street economics** refers to self-contained small towns or rural communities built around central business districts.

Limitations

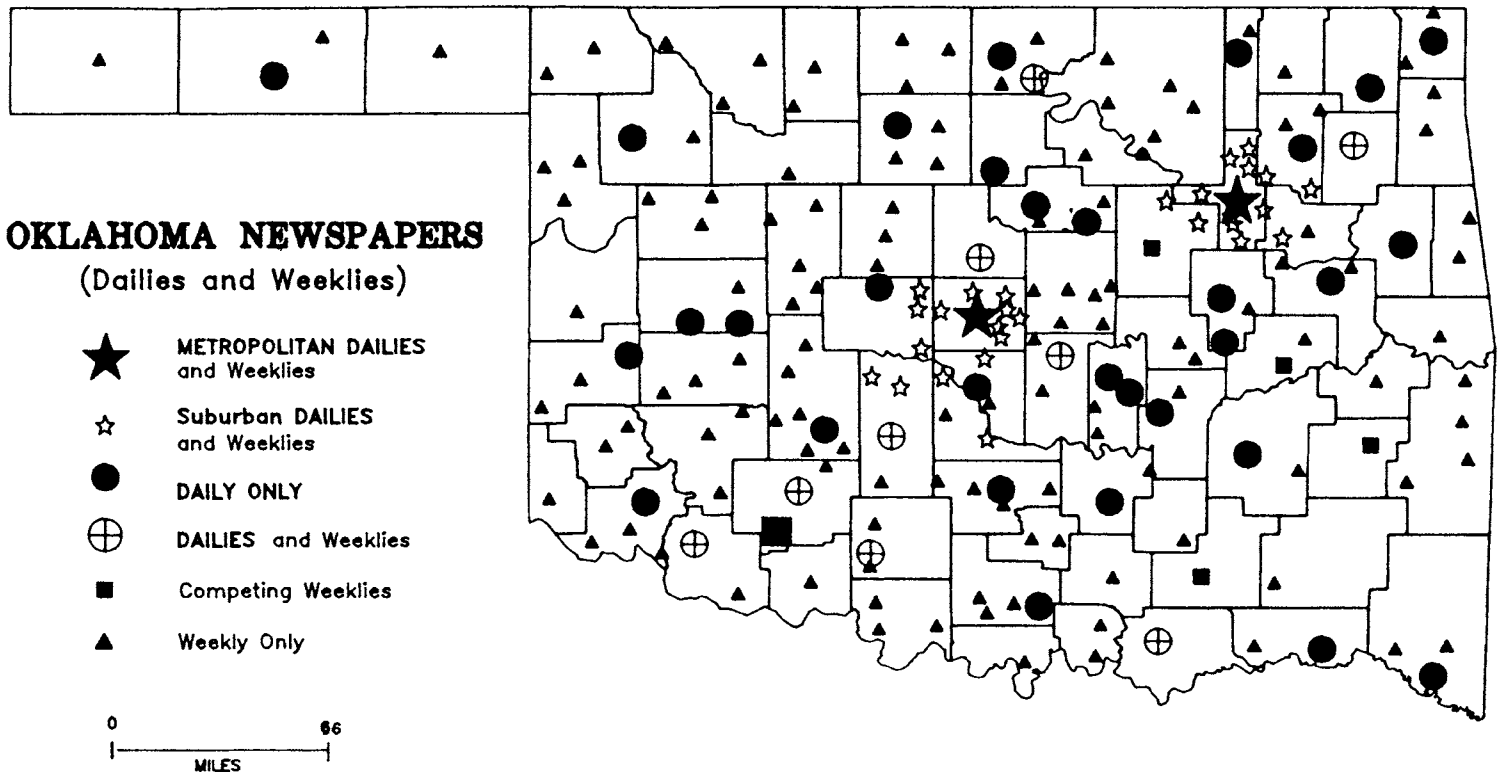
Several geographical limitations deserve consideration. In the past, weekly newspapers were typical mainly in rural communities; however, today a number of "suburban" publications along the economic fringes of the urban areas. Other newspapers are just beyond the city limits. The "shopper weeklies" or "give-a-ways" are common place in the suburbs as well. These types of newspapers are a "growth industry." In each case, these communities and their weeklies reflect very little of rural economies--their economies are interwoven with the dominant metropolitan markets (NewsInc. 5). In order to clarify the study and focus on rural areas, this study excludes any community newspapers within fifteen miles of Oklahoma's two major cities: Oklahoma City and Tulsa. Weeklies that competed with daily newspapers were also eliminated. These papers were located either in or within 8 miles of the smaller cities whose broad economic bases are

not typical of rural Oklahoma communities.

Thematic Maps

As in all geographic studies, a general reference map is important for understanding the relationships that exist between central points of interest. This is particularly true in this study of newspapers because some of the variables identified are relevant to other communities based on distances and types of newspapers. Figure 2 shows the general distribution of the various types of newspapers located in Oklahoma. A series of eleven maps based upon Oklahoma's eleven Sub-State Planning Districts shows the names, location, and types of state newspapers (Appendix A).

The six newspaper categories include: metropolitan dailies and weeklies; suburban dailies and weeklies; small and medium cities with only daily newspaper and those with dailies and weeklies; rural communities with competing rural weeklies and those with only a weekly newspapers. The symbols for each represents types of newspapers and do not indicate circulation size. Although newspapers types generally fall within a certain range of circulation, exceptions are common. As an example, the Perry Journal is a daily newspaper with a circulation of only 3,286 while the Cordell Beacon, which is a weekly, has approximately the same size circulation (Appendixes C).



* 1990 Oklahoma Press Association Display Advertising List

Geographical Studies of Newspapers

R.E. Preston used daily newspaper circulation to reexamine Christaller's central place theory from two different perspectives: first, the size of circulation was ranked to determine the hierarchy of urban dominance; second, circulation patterns were used to calculate a linkage index between urban areas (Preston 204-205). Additionally, a number of studies use the newspaper's contents as a source of information about human activities over place and time. Limited studies exist using the presence of newspapers as a symbol of civilization or settlement patterns by historical geographers (Duhaime 1-137). However, according to Dr. Claud Davidson of Texas Tech University, rural geography expert, little research has been conducted comparing the actual economic status of the community newspaper and the demographic and economic situation of the rural community.

The methodology developed in this study provides a new approach to better evaluate and monitor rural economies by using weekly newspapers.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

> This is America--a town of a few thousand...its Main Street is the continuation of Main Streets everywhere (1).

Sinclair Lewis, recipient of the Nobel Prize for literature, recognized the symbol for American small towns--Main Street. He wrote Main Street in 1920 when small towns were still viable (1-377). Today, Main Street is not the continuation of Main Streets everywhere. Small towns of yesteryears are losing ground for they are vanishing from the rural landscape, leaving behind only ghosts and relics of times past. The decaying landscape and economic decline of rural communities, an unsettling phenomena, shakes our confidence in the "great American dream."

But even as early as the 1890s, the nation-wide decline of rural communities, a result of the diminishing population, alarmed social scientists. Analytical studies during the first half of the century focused on population sizes and shifts because comprehensive social and demographic data was unavailable until the 1970 census (Johansen and Fuguitt 14).

Since that time, numerous studies have reported all

aspects of rural economies in an effort to understand and explain the spiraling economic and social decline of small towns. Most of the literature predicts a gloomy future for their economic revival (Lewis 324).

In Dying Community, Sociologist Marion Clawson writes that communities whose economies are linked to exhaustible natural resources such as oil or timber experience "fast growth and fast decline" while the more numerous agricultural-based communities experience a slower decline. In fact, according to Clawson, these wide-spaces in the road "may or may not be dying; they are not dead." Rather their economic function has shifted from agriculture to local supplier of what Walter Christaller, geographer, first identified as "first order goods." But for the most part, Clawson's prediction of the survival of these small communities resounds the same death toll--an economic epitaph for all rural communities (55-83):

> Here lies a dying community--no, nothing can help--not government programs nor concerned citizens. Let it die in peace.

These towns, however, do not "die in peace."

A resurgence of small town population occurred briefly in the late 1930s and much to the experts' surprise, again in the 1970s with a reversal of past trends of country-to-city migration. The 1930s fluctuation was attributed to the masses of people who were devastated by the "Great

Depression." Many found economic relief in the rural areas by returning to family farms while others simply found cheaper housing and availability of food--or at least the possibility of producing food. However, the demographic anomaly of the 1970s was quite unexpected. It caused a flutter of speculation and excitement among researchers. Almost all demographic literature notes the unusual switch of urban-to-rural migration trends of the 1970s (Swanson 1).

Demographers suggest that the fluctuation of population was just a pause in the national movement of rural-to-urban migration trends. Low overhead, inexpensive housing, direct transportation routes, and the security of small town living provided a brief reprieve from the metropolitan pressures. However, by the 1980s, the demographic trends reverted to their original course--the outmigration of rural areas. The outpouring of population from the countryside is still evident in the 1990 census (Fuguitt, Brown, and Beale 25-30).

What is Rural?

Two general themes dominant most of the literature on rural economics. First is the lack of a definitive understanding of the difference between "rural" and "urban." The boundaries and definitions between rural and urban areas vary from one census to the next, and in most cases, researchers just redefine census definitions. Since the

1950s, communities with less than 2500 population are defined as "rural;" however, economically and sociologically they are many times comparable to towns greater than 2500 which are considered "urban." The second theme complicates the matter even more so--the lack of data at local levels.

In The American Small Town: Twentieth-Century Place Images, John Jakle commented on the confusion in trying to study small towns using current and past census definitions,

> . . . no official census definition of the small town and thus inadequate published data, it was easier to study population shifts from metropolitan to nonmetropolitan regions. The later areas contained no cities with populations greater than fifty thousand, and were comprised primarily of open country, villages, and towns (168).

Geographer Keith Hoggart of the University of London maintains that a number of rural economic studies define "rural" as merely an area of low population density as opposed to the high density areas of urban sectors. Consequently, many of these studies fall short in explaining of the complexity of rural economies (35-40).

Geographers John Fraser Hart, Neil E. Salisbury, and Everett G. Smith, Jr. concurred with Hoggart's observations. In a study that preceded the 1970 census, they discovered that in small, unincorporated communities with less than 2,500 population, the "dying villages," were not "dying" but

actually gaining in population as opposed to larger, incorporated communities (34). They summarized their examination of village growth by suggesting that geographers should be more aggressive in discovering the reason for growth rather than relying too heavily on population numbers alone.

Despite the lack of clarity or understanding of what is "rural," most rural economic and population studies can be classified into three broad groups: rural/urban demographics; Main Street economics; and theoretical explanations of central place patterns.

Rural Economic and Demographic Studies

Rural/Urban Demographics. Many small town demographic studies lie beneath the generic blanket of rural/urban demographic studies. Frequently, these are on a **national** or **regional** scale using census data at the county level for demographic breakdowns between rural and urban or metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas.

Rural sociologists Glenn V. Fuguitt, David L. Brown, and Calvin L. Beale in Rural and Small Town America provide a current, comprehensive overview of rural areas and small towns by examining demographic, socioeconomic, and employment data from the federal censuses. They compensated for the confusion caused by different census definitions by aggregating and comparing data for standard areas for the

various decades (Fuguitt et al. 1-471).

According to rural geographers Harley E. Johansen and Glenn Fuguitt, the last and most comprehensive study of both population and economic conditions of small towns was by Edmund des Brunner in 1924 and again in 1933. He surveyed only 140 incorporated villages with population between 250 and 2,500 people (506-509). Almost fifty years later, Johansen and Fuguitt expanded on the number of incorporated villages to include a sampling of all incorporated communities in the United States--a national scale. In The Changing Rural Village in America they provided an overview of the village populations and economies found in the United States (1-258).

However, many researchers are concerned with the truly undefined "small towns." In Population Change in the Upper Lake States, geographer John Fraser Hart suggested that county-level data distort the spatial distribution of population between farm population, places, and what he terms as "coronas of overspill" areas. Thus he used townships to isolate the substantial population residing in the unincorporated rural areas (221).

Despite the differences in scales and definition of the studies, the results generally indicated a decline in rural population. Hart wrote that "changes in the distribution of population provide a single a measure, or index, of changes in human perception of and interaction of complex variables"

(221). Indeed, the loss of population indicated greater economic problems for small town's main streets.

Main Street Economics. Many of these studies do not provide a clear picture of the individual community or Main Street economics. Their focus is too broad. To gain a greater understanding of what has occurred in each community and to answer the more important question of "why," a few significant studies have narrowed the geographical focus to localized regions and to specific communities.

Although Fuguitt, Brown and Beale's Rural and Small Town America: The Population of the United States in 1980s perspective was on a national scale, they wholeheartedly agreed. They summarized their findings on small towns:

> Yet there is another theme running throughout this work--that of regional and local variability....revealed continued local variations in population structure and change and in economic conditions. Although the desire to explain and make policy prescriptions often leads to broad generalization, there can be no one future for rural and small town America (438).

"Local variation" is the key phrase in understanding and developing local solutions. Some of best and most extensive documentation of local small town economies has been published by state agricultural colleges as agricultural experiment station bulletins beginning with

rural sociologist Charles Galpin's The Social Anatomy of an Agricultural Community in 1915. The format of these studies varies but often are on-site surveys conducted in the retail and service districts of a few communities. In most cases, the studies reveal a loss of retail and service business along with loss of population (Fuguitt et al. 237). Rural geographers have also conducted site-specific or limited regional studies of changing retail and market structures noting the changes in the rural areas. Rural geographer Claud M. Davidson wrote that small town economies are highly specialized to one or two industries; thus their economies were extremely sensitive to the slightest fluctuation in the economy making them ideal to use as models for larger communities.

In Retail Facilities in Colorado Boomtown, Davidson studied the impact of "boom" or "bust" conditions on retail activities of oil-based communities in northwestern Colorado during the 1980s and compared them to recreation-retirement and agricultural towns (249). On the opposite end of the economic spectrum, in The Changing Small Town in the Sunbelt (5-9), Davidson surveyed and reported on the recent surge of recreation and retirement communities in the Sunbelt, which pumped new monies into declining small towns and creating a "booming" economy. Davidson's studies, like those of agricultural economists and other rural geographers, identified the threshold, range, and functions of trade

areas based on a working definition of Walter Christaller's central place theory.

Central Place Studies

"Central place theory" explains the spatial distribution of central places and the economic relationship between retail centers and their surrounding rural areas. The population of these trade areas correlate with retail sales which in turn relates to the distance consumers are willing to travel to purchase certain order of goods. The trade centers with greater population will predictably have more functions or numbers of commercial businesses. In theory, the geographic distribution of these trades centers forms a hexagonal pattern of regularly spaced places given a homogenous physical environment. In reality, of course, even the Great Plains does not reach this ideal (King 9-91).

Hierarchy of Central Places. Since the introduction of Christaller's model in 1933, numerous studies have reexamined the central place functions of trade centers. In one notable study, economic geographers Brian Berry and William Garrison's "The Functional Bases of the Central Place Hierarchy," studied 33 trade centers in Snohomish County, Washington. Within that study, they recognized a hierarchy of central places at levels or tiers, each having its own market area and developed a model or technique to identify the hierarchical system (143-154).

Other central place studies have examined the functional bases of small communities. In The Functional Bases of Small Towns, Howard Stafford, rural economist, sampled 31 small towns in southern Illinois with a 1960s population of 5,000 or less (165-174). Stafford used the same method and compared his results to Edwin N. Thomas' earlier study of functional bases for small Iowa towns (10-16). He concluded that the economic bases of small towns were very predictable and the main function of these towns was local service centers or central places.

Distances from Trade Centers. In Edward Hassinger's original research of Minnesota small towns, he found that "there was a systematic positive relationship between growth and distance from centers of 2000 population or larger" (131-136). Since 1957, his research has inspired several follow-up studies with similar results (Rikkinen 313-325; Fuguitt and Deeley 53-65; Hart and Salisbury 140-160).

Sociologists Butler and Fuguitt researched farm centers in Wisconsin that were less than 2,500 population, replicating and expanding upon Hassinger's original study to include more urbanized areas and remote areas. Like Hassinger, they found there was an association concerning the distances between small towns and their population changes. Unlike Hassinger's positive findings, their results revealed a negative association between "population change and distance to nearest large town" (396-409).

In Do Villages Grow?--Some Perspectives and Predictions, geographer Gerald Hodge discussed the various literature concerning small towns as trade centers including Hassingers original work. From these studies, he developed several hypotheses in trying to predict growth or decline of rural communities as trade centers based upon previous rates of change. He predicted in 1966 that farm trade center would continue to decline; small communities could not provide more specialized goods and services; small trade centers within 10 miles of larger trade centers would disappear; and rural people would have to travel as much as one-third farther to reach a center offering basic commodities (183-196).

Size of Trade Areas. John E. Brush, geographer, offered additional research on 234 central places in Wisconsin whose economies were similar to those of northern European agricultural areas. In a comparative analysis of Christaller's original study, he recognized the functions and spatial distribution of three different sizes and types of trade centers: the hamlet, the village, and town (380-402). Each village type provided a certain level of functions according to their distances from other communities. He also compared theoretical trade centers from previous works including Christaller's and found, in contrast to Christaller, a tendency for trade centers cluster together rather than be evenly distributed.

In the Changing Urban Hierarchy in Scotland, R.D.P Smith, geographer, classified and compared Scottish communities based upon the number of functions and service offered between 1951 and 1971 to those of England and Wales. Smith followed the method used in an earlier study (1944) by A.E. Smailes, also a British geographer, who identified the urban hierarchy of England (41-51). A number of observations were drawn including a recognition that the weekly press plays a "fairly critical role in the smaller central places." In a subset of 162 centers, he measured changes in the relationship between the number of facilities and population. As an indicator of population change, the weekly paper demonstrated the highest correlation of all businesses. In a brief abstract, he wrote,

> Associations are demonstrated between changes in population, facilities (functions), and retail trade; the locality population is the most closely linked but local newspapers are the most sensitive indicator of change (1).

Smith recognized the value of the weekly press. However, there have been relatively few studies using the newspaper as a means to determine the importance of the central place. In an study published in 1936, Selden Menefee, an urban geographer, used the circulation of daily newspapers as a tool to determine the size of a trade area. In his studies, he found that people tend to subscribe to

the newspapers of the areas where they prefer to shop (64). In more recent research, the circulation of newspapers was used to determine centrality and linkages between central places (Preston, 201-221; Lueck, 10-23).

Other Studies

In addition to these geographic and demographic studies, a wide range of cultural studies of rural communities are covered by an umbrella term of "rural sociology." These studies range from general to specific case studies of the complexity of the unique social structural characteristic of small towns. Often, these studies are included in agricultural economic research that attempts to gain a better understanding of the problems involved in decision-making in these communities (Flora et al. 1-334).

Studies of rural/urban demographics, Main Street economics and Central Place patterns are just part of the wide range of studies trying to improve our understanding a highly complex problem: the decline of rural communities. These studies form a foundation for future decision making in helping to develop rural economic policies at national, regional and local levels.

Chapter III

RESEARCH DESIGN

General

Retail businesses in small communities provide employment, merchandise, services, personal incomes, and tax revenue, and, in general, are the source of economic activity for small towns. However, their success or failure depends upon various aspects of the community's economic health: population characteristics, changes in consumer preferences, growth or decline of nearby towns, introduction of major retailers such as Walmart, the health of the local economic base and a host of socioeconomic variables. At best it is a complex situation.

Like retail businesses, the success of weekly newspapers depends on and reflects the size and economic health of the local community. The ideal role of the newspaper includes interacting with the community which in turn stimulates the local economy. This is particularly evident with retail sales which are directly related to the number of subscribers or size of circulation. But just how sensitive are newspapers to the local economy? Can circulation alone be utilized as an economic index?

This study addresses two questions: (1) Is the circulation of a weekly newspaper a useful predictor of a community's economic viability; (2) What variables are related to the success of a weekly newspaper as measured by circulation?

Research Methodology

The research methodology used was a statistical analysis of 100 weekly newspapers that published consistently in 1980, 1983, and 1990. An additional 29 newspapers were in a state of change during that time (Table 1) due to changes in the local economies. Of these 29 publications, five newspapers were new; 15 ceased publication; nine other weeklies changed frequency of publication (such as a weekly becoming a bi-weekly or a daily dropping down to a bi-weekly). The 100 stable newspapers served as models of successful newspapers.

The first part of this study analyzed the 100 communities with weekly newspapers. First, retail sales were used as a measure of a community's economic viability. Second, factors related to circulation of their weekly newspapers were examined. In each case, a multiple regression model selecte independent variables that helped to explain variation in retail sales and circulation. Independent variables included: town and county population; distances to other communities with weeklies, small or large

TABLE I

TOWNS EXPERIENCING CHANGES IN NEWSPAPERS

Towns	1980:	1983:	1990:
Beggs	E	-	-
Blair	E	E	-
Caddo	E	E	-
Calvin	E	E	-
Cherokee	E	E	C
Drumright	E	E	-
Duke	E	E	-
Eakley	-	-	E
Eufaula	E	E	C
Fort Gibson	-	-	E
Gotebo	E	E	-
Hobart	E	E	C
Jet	E	-	-
Ketchum	E	E	-
Kaw City	-	E	-
Lexington	E	-	-
Meeker	-	E	E
Muldrow	E	-	-
Nowata	E	E	C
Oologah	-	-	E
Pawhuska	E	E	C
Quinton	E	-	-
Sayre	E	C	C
Snyder	E	C	C
Texhoma	E	C	-
Tipton	E	E	-
Valliant	E	C	C
Weleetka	-	E	E
Wilburton	E	E	C

E Existed
C Changed in Publication
- Ceased Publication

dailies; whether or not the newspaper was located in a county seat; and school enrollment figures. Selection of these variables was based upon certain assumptions:

a. The larger the town and county population, the larger newspaper circulation and retail sales.
b. Higher retail sales indicates more business which should have a positive effect on circulation and advertising revenues.
c. The larger the school enrollment, the larger the newspaper circulation and retail sales.
d. County seats would be major trade centers with a potential for greater newspaper circulation and retail sales.
e. Distance from other competing newspapers indicates the size of a community's trade area which should be reflected in the circulation and retail sales.

Types of Data Collected

The following information was collected for each of the 100 communities:

City Retail Sales

City sales tax collection records of the 1990 Oklahoma Tax Commission were used to calculate the actual retail sales for each community.

Newspapers Information

The Oklahoma Press Association's Advertising Rate List provided the vital statistics for all newspapers including circulation, paper sizes and frequency of publication.

Community Population

The population for each of the 100 communities and counties was taken from the 1990 population census by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. The communities of Allen, Geary, Hydro, Maud, and Stroud straddle county lines. In these cases, county population was determined by averaging the population of both counties.

School Enrollment

Oklahoma Report: The Oklahoma Indicators Program, a new publication by the Department of Education, listed enrollment of all school districts in Oklahoma for 1990-1991.

Public schools serve as the hub of social activities for communities and their surrounding areas. With the depopulation of the countryside, schools are consolidating. Many school districts are much larger than just the local community.

School activities and enrollment directly affect newspaper content, circulation, and advertising lineage. The lack of a sufficient tax base results in the elimination of a number of extra-curricular activities including the school newspaper. In some cases, the local newspaper substitutes for the traditional school newspaper by providing a "school page."

Distance To Competing Newspapers.

This category built in an isolation factor which identified newspapers with very little nearby competition and those more likely to serve as major trade centers. The type and circulation of newspapers nearest to each weekly newspaper were categorized as a weekly, small daily, medium daily, and metropolitan daily.

The daily newspapers with circulations less than 10,000 were considered small dailies while medium-size daily's circulation ranged between 10,000 and 30,000 subscribers. The metropolitan newspapers of Tulsa and Oklahoma City and their surrounding suburban smaller dailies and weeklies were classified as metropolitan newspapers whose combined circulations exceeded 100,000. The fact that there are no daily newspapers with circulations between 30,000 and 100,000 reflects the economic gap between rural and urban economies. The distance between communities with newspapers was estimated using the 1993 Official State Map by the Oklahoma Department of Transportation.

Types of Towns

The second part of this study examines the relationship between circulation and advertising in detail. In order to investigate this possibility, cluster analysis, as an exploratory tool, was used to identify four types of towns or trade centers (See Tables II, III; Figures 3,4,5):

TABLE II

TOWNS RANKED ACCORDING TO
THE CIRCULATION OF THEIR
WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS

Towns	Cir.*	Annual Sales	Town Pop.*	Pct. Town/Co.	Co. Pop.*	Co. Seat	Sch. Enrol	Pct. Sch/Town
Type A:								
Waurika	1,928	$ 8,322,367	2,088	29	7,010	Y	556	26
Mangum	2,485	13,304,250	3,344	50	6,559	Y	686	21
Walters	2,667	8,721,333	2,519	38	6,651	Y	701	28
Tishomingo	3,013	17,255,250	3,116	31	10,032	Y	886	28
Fairview	3,141	20,070,533	2,936	36	8,055	Y	732	25
Marietta	3,265	16,660,300	2,306	28	8,157	Y	810	35
Watonga	3,286	21,305,900	3,408	30	11,470	Y	939	28
Antlers	3,400	16,421,033	2,524	23	10,997	Y	1,065	42
Cordell	3,460	14,851,000	2,903	23	11,441	Y	687	24
Average	2,960	15,212,441	2,794	31	8,930	Y	785	28

TABLE II (Continued)

Towns	Cir.*	Annual Sales	Town Pop.*	Pct. Town/Co.	Co. Pop.*	Co. Seat	Sch. Enrol	Pct. Sch/Town
Type B:								
Wakita	441	$ 1,684,700	453	8	5,689	N	178	40
Taloga	656	1,512,167	415	8	5,551	Y	235	57
Waynoka	872	4,566,183	947	10	9,103	N	277	29
Canton	993	4,215,817	632	6	11,470	N	397	63
Buffalo	1,203	5,167,467	1,312	32	4,063	Y	377	29
Arnett	1,241	2,383,100	547	12	4,497	Y	214	40
Laverne	1,480	6,623,250	1,269	31	4,063	N	378	30
Medford	1,837	5,542,500	1,172	21	5,689	Y	314	27
Cheyenne	1,879	4,990,933	948	23	4,147	Y	305	32
Average	1,178	$ 4,076,235	855	17	6,030		297	38
Type C:								
Wilson	584	$ 4,551,500	1,639	4	42,919	N	466	29
Garber	700	2,504,167	959	2	56,735	N	405	42
Comanche	965	6,851,350	1,695	5	42,299	N	313	18
Barnsdall	1,178	3,377,300	1,316	3	41,645	N	520	40
Yale	1,373	3,941,300	1,392	2	61,507	N	566	41
Haskell	1,405	5,393,067	2,143	3	68,078	N	743	35
Fairfax	1,535	6,231,467	1,749	3	41,645	N	550	32
Hominy	1,612	9,138,933	2,342	6	41,645	N	765	33
Talihina	1,895	6,699,533	1,297	3	43,270	N	588	45
Chelsea	1,915	6,967,550	1,620	3	55,170	N	888	55
Average	1,316	$ 5,565,617	1,615	4	49,491	N	580	37

TABLE II (Continued)

Towns	Cir.*	Annual Sales	Town Pop.*	Pct. Town/Co.	Co. Pop.*	Co. Seat	Sch. Enrol	Pct. Sch/Town
Type D:								
Fort Cobb	493	$ 2,625,650	663	2	29,550	N	362	55
Eldorado	566	1,034,700	573	2	28,764	N	133	23
Covington	620	1,380,900	590	1	56,735	N	313	53
Okeene	1,000	5,923,100	1,343	12	11,470	N	335	25
Rush Springs	1,009	2,906,150	1,229	3	41,747	N	580	47
Erick	1,039	4,691,367	1,083	6	18,812	N	286	26
Maysville	1,044	5,265,475	1,203	5	26,605	N	448	38
Cyril	1,102	4,672,067	1,072	4	29,550	N	384	36
Wetumka	1,407	5,938,233	1,427	11	13,023	N	548	39
Davenport	1,650	3,279,900	979	4	29,216	N	407	42
Average	993	$ 3,771,754	1,016	5	28,547	N	380	38

*Abbreviations:
Cir.--Circulation
Pop.--Population
Co. Seat--County Seat

TABLE III

DISTANCE TO NEAREST NEWSPAPER
(In Miles)

Towns	Weekly	Small Daily	Medium Daily	Metro Daily	Near Daily	Nearest Daily
Cluster A:						
Waurika	10	70	26	112	M	26
Mangum	13	25	81	145	S	25
Walters	20	42	23	113	M	23
Tishomingo	14	33	31	103	M	31
Fairview	20	58	36	88	M	36
Marietta	21	45	18	115	M	18
Watonga	16	28	65	69	M	28
Antlers	30	16	48	165	S	16
Cordell	19	15	77	93	S	15
Average	18	37	45	111		24
Cluster B:						
Wakita	16	41	49	133	S	41
Taloga	10	51	82	116	S	51
Waynoka	26	30	70	140	S	30
Canton	18	43	57	94	S	43
Buffalo	22	33	158	183	S	33
Arnett	13	34	122	174	S	34
Laverne	22	38	126	178	S	38
Medford	11	26	33	109	S	26
Cheyenne	22	32	136	138	S	32
Average	18	36	93	127		36

TABLE III (Continued)

Towns	Weekly	Small Daily	Medium Daily	Metro Daily	Near Daily	Nearest Daily
Cluster C:						
Wilson	7	60	17	114	M	17
Garber	9	23	17	64	M	17
Comanche	15	10	40	55	S	10
Barnsdall	15	56	18	33	M	18
Yale	25	12	20	40	S	12
Haskell	9	34	20	27	M	20
Fairfax	16	51	22	70	M	22
Hominy	9	54	46	36	M*	36
Talihina	40	26	52	155	S	26
Chelsa	22	17	40	46	S	17
Average	17	34	29	64		20
Cluster D:						
Fort Cobb	12	15	38	80	S	15
Eldorado	14	26	83	175	S	26
Covington	9	14	20	55	S	14
Okeene	18	41	39	68	M	39
Rush Springs	10	18	20	65	S	18
Erick	17	34	142	146	S	34
Maysville	12	15	58	48	S	15
Cyril	9	14	22	87	S	14
Wetumka	10	17	33	73	S	17
Davenport	7	25	29	38	S	25
Average	12	22	48	84		22

S--Small Daily
M--Medium Daily
M*--Metropolitan Daily

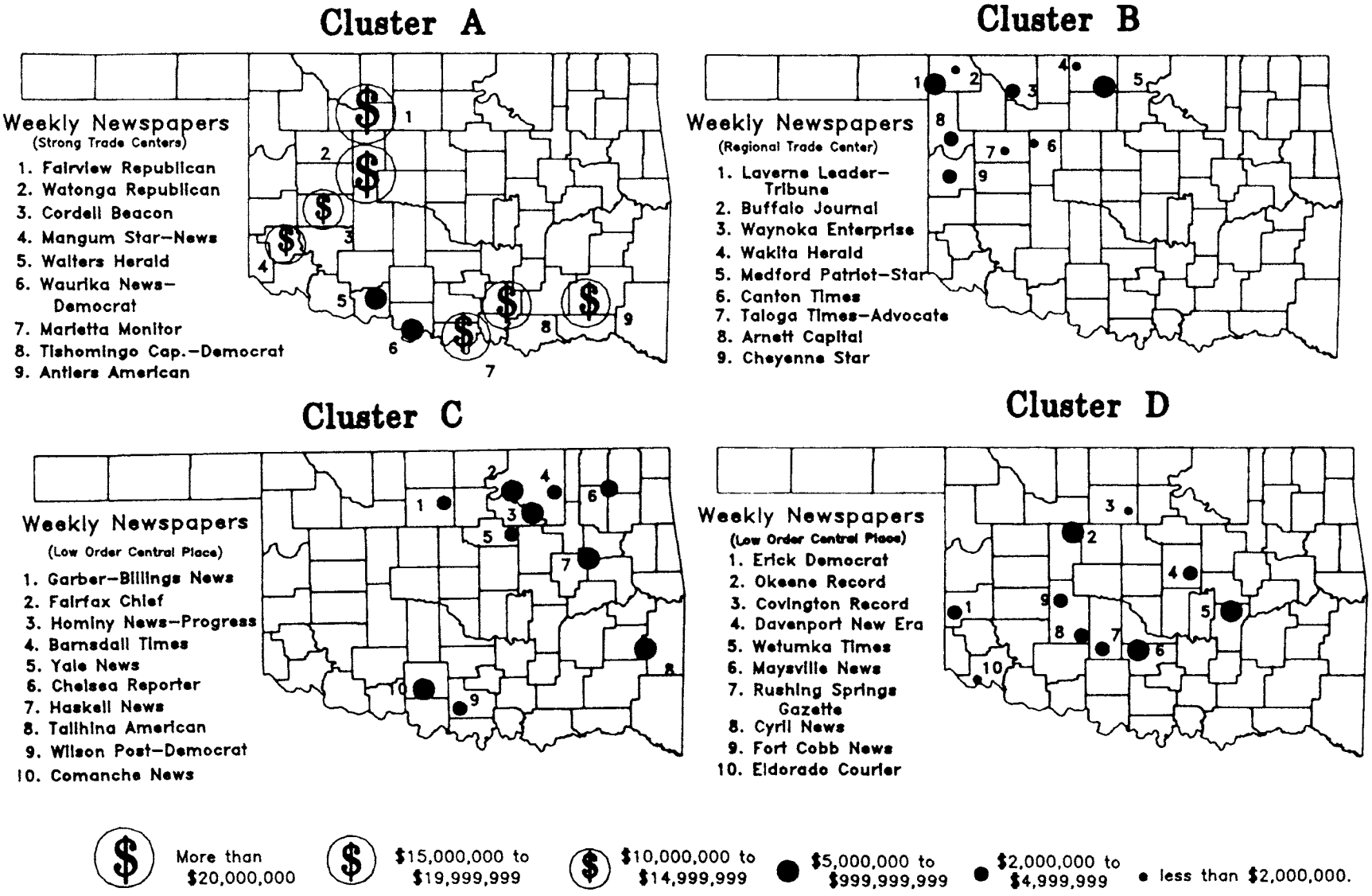


Figure 3. 1990 Retail Sales of Trade Centers.

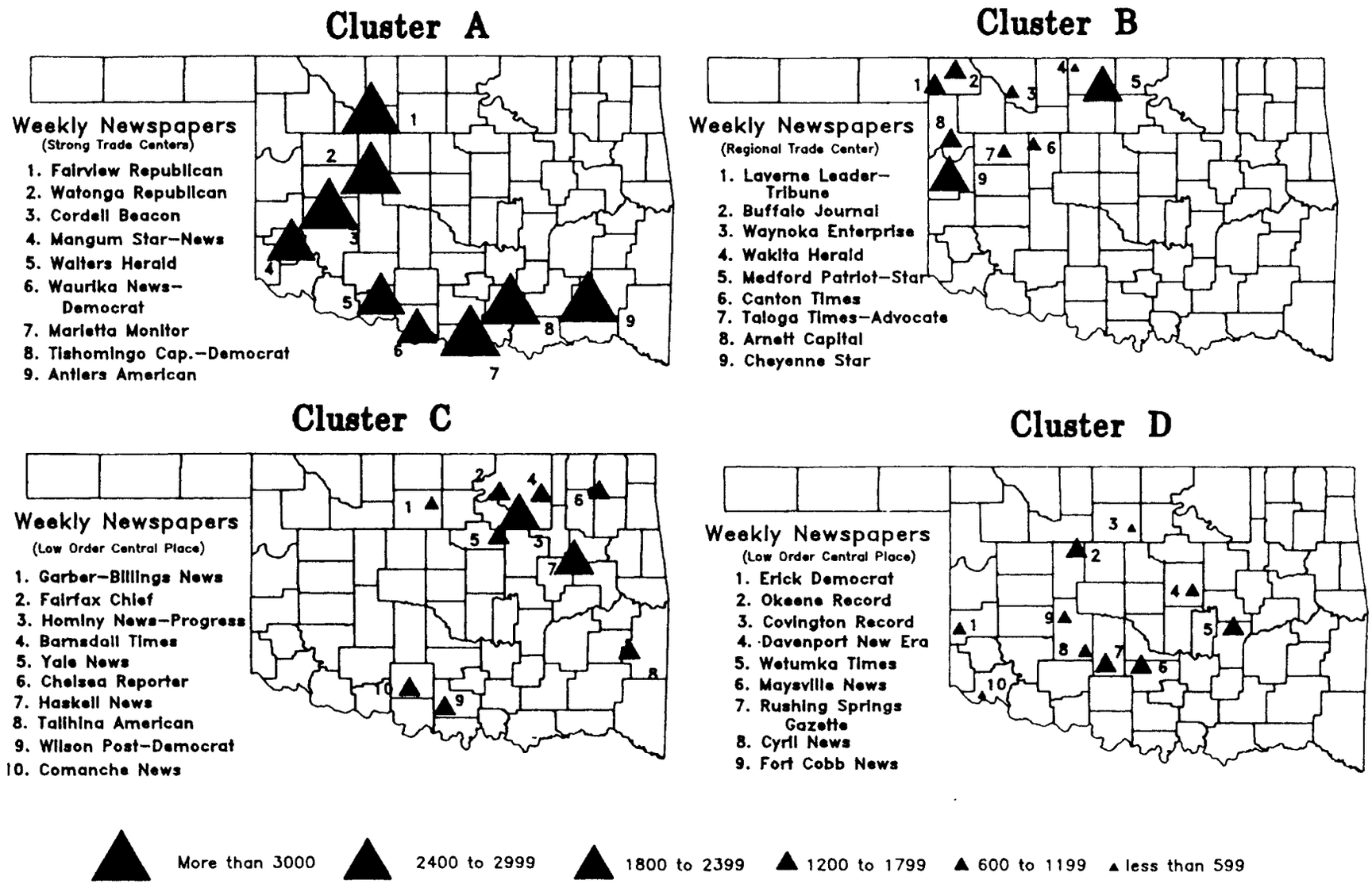


Figure 5. 1990 Population of Trade Centers.

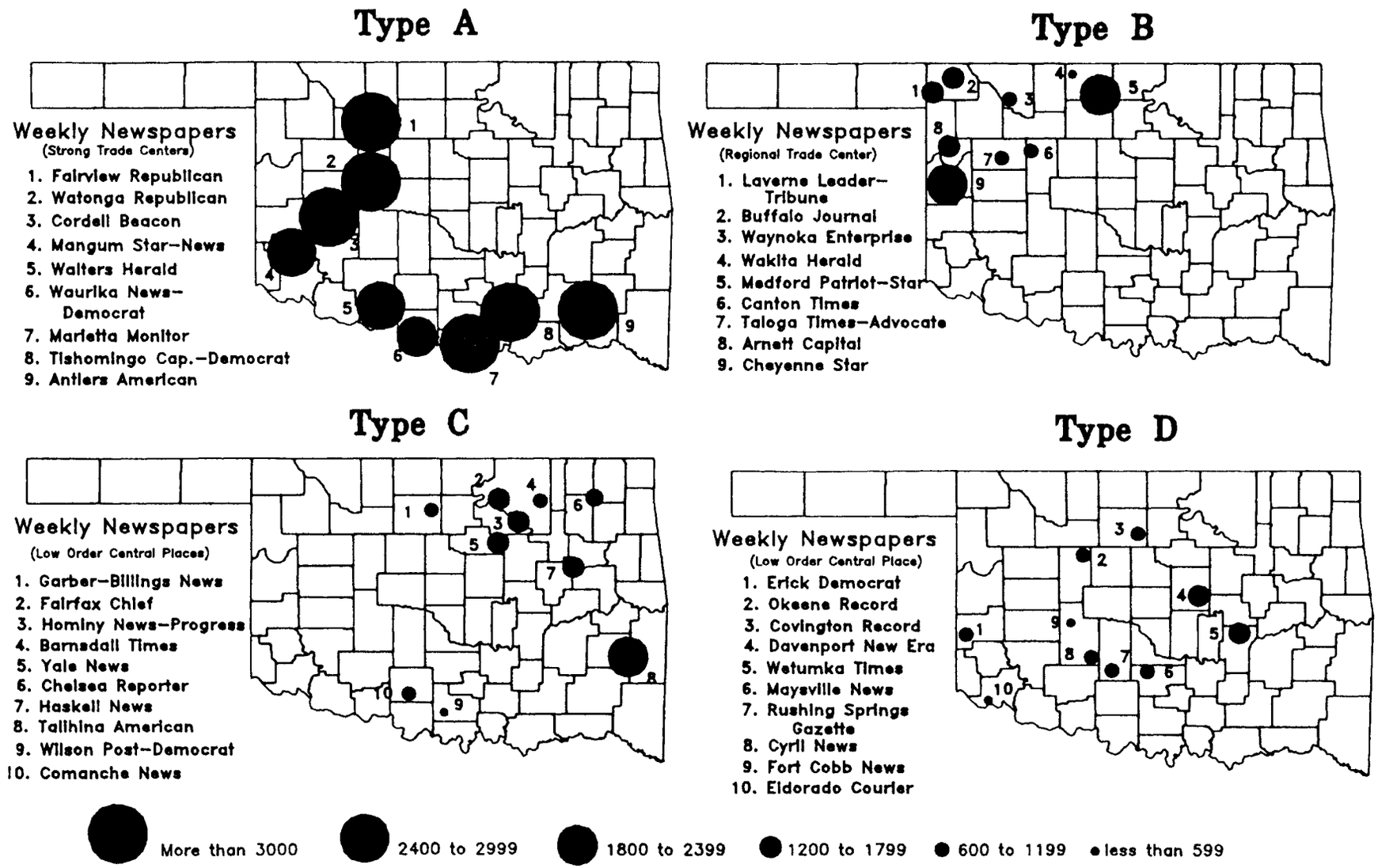


Figure 4. 1990 Circulation of Trade Centers' Weekly Newspapers.

Type A: Strong Trade Centers.

As county seats, these communities function as strong trade centers for their counties, the hub of activities, attracts people in from all parts of the county. In most cases, their long distances from other communities in sparsely populated counties contribute to their strength as major trade centers.

Type B: Regional Trade Centers.

These communities are "regional" trade centers located in the northwestern quadrant of Oklahoma where agriculture-related business dominate the economy. Few towns and low county populations force these communities to function, like Type A, as important trade centers. Of the nine communities, five are county seats.

Types C and D: Low Order Central Places.

Since both of these town types are located within relatively easy range of the metropolitan areas, they share many of the same characteristics. For both types, county populations are larger than those of Types A and B communities; population of their towns accounts but for a fraction of the total county population.

Although town population for Type C is greater than for Type D, county population is much larger than for Type D towns. Thus, in a central place context, Type C communities

play a relatively less important role. None of these towns are county seats which also lessens their importance as central trade centers.

A more detailed analysis of the differences between these four types of towns, and their newspapers, will be presented in the following chapter.

Advertising

Advertising links the community and its newspaper as it is the visual medium by which the economy can be evaluated. First, it identifies the nature of a community and its region's economic base. Second, the amount of advertising in local newspapers provides insights into the economic situation in each rural Oklahoma community. For this sample of 38 communities, newspapers were measured for number of pages, total advertising lineage, and percentages of advertising lineage for various types of advertising.

Explanation of Terms

Certain terms and techniques unique to the news media require clarification. The term "advertisement" is interchangeable with its abbreviated form "ad." Ads are measured in "column inches" which is a standard inch multiplied by the number of columns therefore, a five inch deep ad by three columns is 15 advertising inches. Ad rates depend upon the circulation size of the newspaper. The

larger the newspaper, the higher the rate. For example, if a typical weekly newspaper's rate is $2 per column inch, a three column by five inch ad costs $30. The page size of a newspaper is also calculated by multiplying the length of the printed page by the the number of columns times.

There are five types of newspaper advertisements: national display, display, classified display, classified, and legal. The amount of **national display** advertising is insignificant in weekly newspapers. These ads are placed by enormous corporations such as Coca-Cola or General Motors whose advertising promotions usually focus in areas of high population concentration. **Display ads**, which are large and box-like ads, can be as small as a one column by one inch ad or as large as a full page, such as a grocery store ad. The small, boxed ads on the classified page are **classified displays** and cost more than the simple lined-classified ad. **Legal** notices are ads that are required to be published by law. Legal ads are usually one column wide and set in a smaller type.

Method

All 38 newspapers were contacted and asked to mail the last issue of January, 1990, and their back-to-school issue in August, 1990. These issues reflect the economic extremes of a community. Usually, by the last week in January the economy is at its slowest whereas back-to-school issues in

August represent the opposite situation. Only a few publishers kept back issues so advertising lineage for each issue was measured by using the Oklahoma Historical Society Newspaper Archives. The most recent year with a complete set of newspapers on microfilm was 1990. The Historical Society's microfilm system projects each page full-size. Since weekly newspapers vary in page sizes, the Oklahoma Press Association's Advertising Rate List proved to be an invaluable source of information that included page sizes.

All newspapers were analyzed according to the number of pages, total advertising inches, and total percentage of advertising. A detailed content analysis of the advertising in the 38 weekly newspapers noted approximately 75 different types of businesses. For this study, the following types of advertising were measured: grocery, automotive, banks, service, back-to-school promotions, agriculture, classified, church, legal, and real estate. It was expected that:

a. A significant difference exist between August and January for total advertising lineage.
b. Strong trade centers would have more real estate and legal advertising.
c. Church, school, agriculture, and service ads would be more important in smaller communities.
d. Bank and political advertisements are equally important in all communities.
e. Automotive advertising would be more critical to towns farther away from other communities.

Types of Advertising

Pages, Columns, and Size. The number of pages and

columns, and size of paper were used to calculate the number of inches per issue. All ads were measured for an accumulated total number of inches of advertising. Although advertising lineage is submitted quarterly to the post office along with circulation numbers and other pertinent information, it is not reported to the Oklahoma Press Association. This is because the information is regareded privileged since it is considered part of the financial structure of the newspaper.

Agriculture Advertising. The wide range of agriculture-related ads reinforces agriculture as the backbone of Oklahoma's economy. Agriculture-related advertising alone comprised 30 of the 75 types of businesses, reflecting the dominance of agriculture in rural Oklahoma.

They included:

Aerial Spraying
Auctioneer Services
Boot and Saddle Repair
Brush Hogging
Cattlemen's Associations
Conservation Districts
County Fairs
Custom Meat Preparation
Dead Animal Removal
Farm Coops
Farm Equipment Dealerships
Farm Implement Repair
Farmer's Crop Insurance
Fence Supplies
Grain and Feed Stores
Grain Elevators
Harvesting Services
Horse Breeders
Livestock Sales and Services
Liquid Fertilizer
Propane Delivery
Rodeos
Rural Electric Coop
Sale Barn
Seed Companies
Small Engine Repair
Tractor Rentals
Veterinarian Services
Welding

This list of types of agriculture advertising demonstrates the diversity and strength of its contribution to the local

economy. Only the August issues were measured for agriculture ad lineage because of its seasonal activity. All agriculture related ads were measured including those in the classified ad section.

Grocery Advertising. In-town and out-of-town ads were included as indicators of a community's strength as a trade center. One problem associated with this category was that some newspapers did not have grocery ads but used inserts or flyers while others utilized both. In either case, the flyer was not available.

Automotive advertising. All automotive ads were measured including out-of-town ads. Like grocery stores, automotive dealerships are an important aspect of the economy in small communities. They provide both sales and service which are crucial, considering the remoteness of many communities in Oklahoma.

Bank Advertising. Local or nearby banks, the cornerstones of main street economics, provide the financial stability of these communities. They are an important asset to a community and its newspaper. They generally support all community activities and frequently advertise with regular, weekly display ads. In addition to weekly ads, they actively promote all community functions with contributions including special advertising promotions such as back-to-school, fair page, or a school signature page. Loan companies and

financial services were not included in this category because they were sporadic and did not necessarily reflect the local economy.

Church Advertising. Social functions in small communities often include church activities. In addition to individual church advertising, many newspapers have a weekly "support your local church" type of display ad paid for by the merchants. Typically, the display ad has a religious passage and lists the names, addresses, and service times of all the local churches. All religious ads were measured as part of church advertising, regardless who paid for the ads.

Legal Advertising. Legal advertising included all notices required by law to be published including notices by the city, county, and state offices. In certain instances, legal mandates required that they be published in the largest newspaper in the county. In most cases, they can also be published in any county newspaper depending upon the preferences of the lawyers and the specific situation. County seat newspapers receive most of the legal publications because of their convenience. These notices are usually on or next to the classified page; however, many editors will use them as "fillers" throughout the newspaper.

Service Advertising. This category represents small businesses that are crucial to the economy of all small towns. The ads run continuously based on a special rate

offered by the newspaper. Some of the services advertised include: backyard garage repair, child care, lawn mowing services, electrical services, beauty shops, bookkeeping services, plumbing, and number of cottage type businesses. These businesses fill in the gap created by the absence of industry and retail employment in small communities.

Real Estate Advertising. As an indicator of population fluctuation, real estate ads were measured. This included the single line ads on the classified pages, classified boxed ads, and large displayed ads.

Classified Advertising. All weekly newspapers have a classified page or section, however, thse sections differs in format. Many have single spaced "want ads" with boxed display ads dispersed throughout the page. Several newspapers boxed all ads so they were larger. Since legal and large display ads are often located on the classified page, only the single line ads were measured to indicate the level of activity by the local community. The classified section, in general, is a mix of community activities.

Back-to-School Promotion. Many weekly newspapers did not actively promote back-to-school issues although some did have a few individual back-to-school ads. If there was not an obvious issue that reflected back-to-school ads, the issue for the week before school started was selected.

These ads represent advertising types that appear

regularly; they encompass many of the social and economic characteristics of small towns. Analysis of variance was used to identify differences in newspaper advertising between types of towns.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

In the analysis of 100 communities with weekly newspapers, significant Pearson correlation coefficients were obtained for four of the eight independent variables that contributed to the explanation of retail sales (Table IV). As expected, newspaper circulation and town population demonstrated a relatively strong positive relationship with the amount of retail trade. The correlation with school enrollment was weaker but still statistically significant (Table IV).

For circulation, retail sales and town population were highly correlated, although town population was less of a factor in explaining circulation than it was for retail sales. In this case, out-of-town subscribers weakened the relationship between circulation and town population. School enrollment reaffirmed the close ties found between weekly newspapers and local schools.

Although there was a strong, positive relationship between town size (population) and both retail sales and circulation, county population was statistically unrelated to either one. County seat coefficients were weak

TABLE IV

1990 RETAIL SALES AND CIRCULATION OF 100 COMMUNITIES WITH WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS: CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS

Variables	Correlation Coefficients
Retail Sales:	
Circulation	.8145(.001)
Town Population	.8303(.001)
County Population	-.0387(.702)
School Enrollment	.7847(.001)
County Seat	.3859(.001)
Distance to Nearest Weekly	.0306(.763)
Distance to Nearest Daily	.0434(.668)
Circulation:	
Retail Sales	.8145(.001)
Town Population	.7372(.001)
County Population	-.0708(.484)
School Enrollment	.7827(.001)
County Seat	.5564(.001)
Distance to Nearest Weekly	.0444(.661)
Distance to Nearest Daily	.1151(.254)

Coefficients(e.g., .8145(.001) are Pearson correlations with "p" value in parenthesis indicating likely significance.

especially for retail sales but still significant. Usually, county seat newspapers carry most of the legal publications and county-wide news but not all county seat communities capture additional retail sales from the county. For an example, Buffalo, the county seat of Harper county, is located in sparsely settled western Oklahoma where it is a major trade center with little or no nearby competition. The opposite is true for Sulphur, the county seat of Murray county, located in a more populated area with nearby competition from the small cities of Ardmore and Ada.

Distance to other communities with competing weekly or daily newspapers was expected to be a key factor in explaining the amount of retail sales and circulation. However, in this model, distance alone failed to demonstrate a significant relationship or help explain variations in either retail sales or circulation.

In the realms of economic activity, these variables do not operate independently but rather are compounded with increased complexity. Stepwise multiple-regression is a technique designed to explore the interaction among the variables.

A stepwise multiple regression analysis for retail sales selected town population, circulation, county population, and school enrollment as the independent variables which combined to explain 79 percent of the variance for retail sales (Table V). County population

TABLE V

SUMMARY OF THE REGRESSION ANALYSIS
FOR RETAIL SALES

		Independent Variables				
	(Intercept)	Town Pop.	Weekly Circulation	County Pop.	School Enrol.	r^2
First	-3014699.2	6791.9				.689
Second	-4347172.0	4116.8	3535.0			.779
Third	-3476680.9	4420.5	3267.9	-39.9		.786
Fourth	-3432414.2	3770.5	2658.5	-55.6	4067.9	.792

entered the equation as a negative factor, meaning the larger the county population the smaller the retail sales. This suggests that small towns located in more densely populated counties can expect lower retail sales (and probably smaller newspaper circulations) because of greater competition of nearby towns and cities. This is illustrated by the communities of Rush Springs and Seiling. Both towns have approximately the same population, school enrollment and newspaper circulation, but Rush Springs, in a much larger county has less than half the retail sales of Seiling. The Rush Springs newspaper also has a slightly smaller circulation even though the town is a little larger than Seiling.

Town	Town Pop.	County Pop.	Cir.	Ret. Sales	School Enrol.
Rush Springs	1,229	41,747	1,009	$2,906,150	580
Seiling	1,031	5,551	1,069	6,582,100	498

The combination of retail sales, county seat, and school enrollment explained a total of 81 percent of the variance for the circulation (Table VI). Location in a county seat coupled with retail sales accounted for 73 percent of the variance. Town population probably did not enter this regression as a separate variable because of its strong correlation with retail sales.

In an attempt to improve the ability to predict circulation and to investigate the relationship of

TABLE VI

SUMMARY OF THE REGRESSION ANALYSIS
FOR CIRCULATION

		Independent Variables			
	(Intercept)	Retail Sales	County Seat	Schoo Enrol.	r^2
First	793.71	0.001022			.664
Second	746.30	0.000088	673.26		.732
Third	294.09	0.000041	790.69	1.37	.810

advertising to circulation, the four different types of small towns with weekly newspapers were studied in more detail.

PROFILE OF COMMUNITY TYPES

Type A: Strong Trade Centers.

These communities command a strategic economic position within the state. Although their status is often regarded as insignificant because of small town and county populations, as county seats they are in many respects as important as larger communities with daily newspapers. Despite their size, they provide the crucial link between smaller communities and state economic bureaus. In 1990, the small county seats represented 40 counties the total of 604,772 of the state's rural population.

In comparing the four types of communities, Type A towns were characterized by the largest retail sales, retail sales per capita, town population, school enrollment, and newspaper circulation (Table VII). Circulation of the local newspaper frequently exceeded the population, indicating a trade area that extended beyond city limits. Retail sales for Type A were generally two to three times larger than the other communities.

School enrollment as a percentage of the town population was a relatively low 28 percent, while other trade center types averaged 38 percent. This could be

TABLE VII

PROFILE OF FOUR TYPES OF COMMUNITIES
WITH WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS

DESCRIPTION	TYPES A	B	C	D	F Value
1990 Data@:					
Circulation	2,960[a]	1,178[b]	1,316[b]	933[b]	36.26***
Retail Sales (millions)	15.2[a]	4.1[b]	5.6[b]	3.8[b]	36.27***
Retail Sales per Capita (town)	$5,445	$4,768	$3,446	$3,712	
Town Population	2,794[a]	855[c]	1,615[b]	1,016[c]	47.32***
Town Population /County Population	31%	17%	4%	5%	
County Population	8,930[c]	6,030[c]	49,491[a]	28,547[b]	51.14***
School Enrollment	785[a]	297[c]	500[b]	380[c]	22.13***
School Enrollment /Town Population	28%	38%	37%	38%	
Miles to Nearest Weekly	18[a]	18[b]	17[b]	12[b]	1.82***
Miles to Nearest Daily	24[b]	36[a]	20[b]	22[b]	8.71***
County Seats /Number of Towns	10/10	5/9	0/10	0/10	

@ Averages of Data for 38 Communities.

a,b,c,d indicates types that are significantly different from each other.

* F ratio significant at alpha ≤.05.

** F ratio significant at alpha ≤.01.

*** F ratio significant at alpha ≤.001-.0001.

explained by the elderly population that frequently retires in the county seat communities as evident in Table VIII. Strong trade centers like Mangum and Waynoka provide more stores, medical facilities, county and state functions, and retirement homes often desired by older persons than those in the smaller communities of Garber and Rushing Springs.

TABLE VIII

PERCENTAGE OF RETIREMENT AGE
FOR TYPES OF COMMUNITIES

	A Mangum	B Waynoka	C Garber	D Rush Springs
60 years and older	1,921	549	457	480
Town Pop.	3,344	947	959	1,229
Pct. of Ret.	57%	57%	48%	39%

Distances from other communities in sparsely populated counties contribute to their strength as major trade centers. While distances to the nearest competing newspapers were not significantly different, the numbers and smaller size of nearby towns distinguished Type A And B communities, from Types C and D.

Type B: Regional Trade Centers.

Like Type A, the isolation from other communities with weekly and small daily newspapers makes these towns major trade centers in northwestern Oklahoma. The nearest

"competing" newspaper was usually another weekly and communities with daily newspapers were too far away for a competitive edge. These isolated trade centers typically serve the entire county or an even larger area, rather than just the town and its immediate surroundings.

Five of the nine communities are county seats. Town populations dropped to a low range between 415 to 1,312 residents with an average of only 855. County populations were some of the lowest in the state including Harper County with only 4,063 residents.

Also, like Type A, circulation often exceeded the population. Retail sales per capita was less than that for Type A communities but still relatively strong.

Types C and D: Low Order Central Places.

These towns were not as clearly defined as strong central places like those in Type A and Type B. None of these communities are county seats. Larger retail sales for Type C towns set them apart as stronger trade centers than Type D.

County populations were much larger than those for Types A and B; however, population in these small communities was but a fraction of their total county population. Nearby towns with daily newspapers further reduced their roles as major trade centers, especially for Type D communities.

For both types, average circulation was typically less than the town population suggesting two possibilities. First, since the communities were within driving range of the two major metropolitan areas, local residents tended to subscribe to the state's two largest daily newspapers instead of the weekly paper. Second, a more mobile population might not be as tradition bound to the local community as those in Type A and Type B towns.

Type C communities, being slightly larger, had larger school enrollments, but these accounted for about the same proportion of the town's populations.

ADVERTISING ANALYSIS

Stronger trade centers should produce more retail sales, which should be reflected in increased circulation and more advertising lineage in the local newspaper. For the strong Type A communities the data supports this expectation, (Tables IX) and sets these communities apart from the smallest trade centers. Advertising lineage and total percentage for both January and August show these communities to be strong trade centers, with a high average 848.3 inches of advertising in January and 1153.4 inches in August. Seasonal economic fluctuations along Main Street were clearly evident with an approximately 27 percent increase in amount of advertising lineage for August.

TABLE IX

MEAN PERCENTAGES OF NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING

		Type A (9)	Type B (9)	Type C (10)	Type D (10)	F Value
Tot. Newspaper (In.)	Jan.	1624.0[a]	1037.8[b]	1108.8[b]	934.0[b]	(6.2)**
	Aug.	1904.0[a]	1159.1[b]	1285.2[b]	1110.4[b]	(6.2)**
Percentage of Ads	Jan.	51.7	47.0	46.7	42.9	(1.3)
	Aug.	60.0	57.8	53.8	54.4	(0.8)
Percentage of Advertising Types:						
Grocery	Jan.	14.7	12.1	9.0	7.5	(1.1)
	Aug.	10.7	10.3	10.4	9.6	(0.1)
Automotive	Jan.	3.2	2.6	6.1	3.5	(1.9)
	Aug.	3.6	1.5	2.8	3.7	(0.6)
Bank	Jan.	6.2	7.6	8.1	9.0	(0.3)
	Aug.	2.5	6.0	5.8	6.1	(1.4)
Real Estate	Jan.	4.2[a]	0.7[b]	1.6[b]	1.7[b]	(5.5)**
	Aug.	3.3[a]	0.7[b]	1.4[b]	1.6[b]	(4.1)*
Legals	Jan.	10.2	22.4	8.6	8.6	(1.6)
	Aug.	8.8[ab]	17.0[a]	6.6[b]	7.5[ab]	(2.2)
Classified	Jan.	6.6	4.9	7.3	6.2	(1.1)
	Aug.	6.5	4.6	6.2	5.1	(0.8)
Church	Jan.	3.4	2.3	3.4	6.2	(1.0)
	Aug.	3.3	1.4	2.4	3.6	(1.1)
Service	Jan.	5.3[b]	2.6[b]	4.4[b]	11.1[a]	(4.9)**
	Aug.	3.5	2.7	3.6	5.4	(1.7)

TABLE IX (Continued)

	Type A (9)	Type B (9)	Type C (10)	Type D (10)	F Value
Advertising for August Only:					
Back-to-School	10.2[a]	9.7[a]	2.4[ab]	0.0[b]	(3.3)*
Agriculture	1.7	5.9	3.7	5.8	(2.0)

a,b,c,d indicates types that are significantly different from each other.

* F ratio significant at alpha ≤.05.

** F ratio significant at alpha ≤.01.

*** F ratio significant at alpha ≤.001.

TABLE X

MEAN OF TOTAL INCHES OF NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING

		Type A (9)	Type B (9)	Type C (10)	Type D (10)	F Value
Newspaper Demographics:						
Total Advertising (inches)	Jan.	848.3[a]	482.7[b]	542.9[b]	413.2[b]	(5.4)**
	Aug.	1153.4[a]	662.3[b]	719.2[b]	622.8[b]	(5.3)**
Advertising Lineage:						
Grocery	Jan.	122.3	55.7	109.0	36.8	(1.6)
	Aug.	131.5	56.7	89.1	79.0	(0.6)
Automotive	Jan.	26.2	15.1	38.5	19.4	(1.6)
	Aug.	43.8	14.4	24.3	18.4	(1.6)
Bank	Jan.	49.2	33.6	35.2	34.6	(0.8)
	Aug.	29.0	33.1	37.6	28.9	(0.3)
Real Estate	Jan.	32.6[a]	9.2[b]	9.4[b]	9.2[b]	(7.9)***
	Aug.	35.8[a]	5.8[b]	10.0[b]	11.0[b]	(8.5)***
Legals	Jan.	91.4[ab]	99.0[a]	45.3[ab]	21.4[b]	(2.4)
	Aug.	99.7	105.3	47.8	40.4	(1.9)
Classified	Jan.	54.4[a]	23.8[b]	35.3[ab]	24.4[b]	(3.9)*
	Aug.	73.0[a]	29.3[b]	39.0[b]	31.5[b]	(6.5)**
Church	Jan.	31.0	11.3	17.0	24.0	(0.9)
	Aug.	34.6[a]	8.4[b]	16.3[ab]	19.8[ab]	(2.2)
Service	Jan.	39.4[ab]	14.1[c]	23.1[cb]	46.7[a]	(3.7)*
	Aug.	38.4	19.3	22.9	35.9	(1.6)

TABLE X (Continued)

	Type A (9)	Type B (9)	Type C (10)	Type D (10)	F Value
Advertising for August Only:					
Back-to-School	121.3[a]	84.33[ab]	9.7[b]	0.0[b]	(4.34)*
Agriculture	20.4	39.6	18.4	24.4	(1.23)

[a,b,c,d] indicates types that are significantly different from each other.

* F ratio significant at alpha ≤.05.

** F ratio significant at alpha ≤.01.

*** F ratio significant at alpha ≤.001.

Since these strong trade centers were county seats, it was expected that there would be more of all types of advertising, especially legal notices. Although the summary data is consistent with this expectation, the differences are not statistically significant. Since only the last issue in January and the first or second issue in August was analyzed some county and city legal advertising undoubtedly was missed (Tables IX, X).

If real estate advertising provides an insight into the level of mobility of a community, Type A communities were by far more active than the other three types. These communities offer more employment opportunities, thus stimulating real estate transactions including home building, sales, and rental opportunities.

Back-to-school advertising lineage provided an additional perspective on the interaction between the community and the weekly newspaper. The strongest trade centers, Type A communities, had more back-to-school advertising in both absolute and relative amounts. This is likely due to their having more businesses to seeking advertising promotions. Larger weekly newspapers were also able to hire extra staff to work with merchants or chambers of commerce to organize these promotions. A progressive newspaper such as the Fairview Republican with 208 inches of back-to-school advertising would be a good example.

Town	Town Pop.	County Pop.	Cir.	Ret. Sales	School Enrol.
Fairview	2,936	8,055	3,141	$20,070,533	732

For the other types of advertising, differences between community types revealed no clear patterns. In most cases neither total amount of advertising nor the percent of the paper devoted to specific types of ads was statistically different.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

Summary

State agencies for rural development lack a source for viable information about individual small towns in Oklahoma. This hampers all efforts to aid rural communities who are in a state of economic crisis. State agencies and local officials have overlooked an obvious source of information--the weekly newspaper. Weekly newspapers provide on-going commentary about daily activities, mores, and, most importantly, the state of main street economics for each individual community. But is it a usable resource in providing a basis for evaluating and monitoring these communities? The intent of this research was to examine the relationship between community newspapers and main street economics.

Economic extremes characterized the 1980s and early 1990s for Oklahoma. Early in the decade, Oklahoma reveled in the "oil boom" despite the setbacks of the "farm crises" of the eighties. The "oil bust" replaced the "boom" in 1983 and the economies of the small rural communities spiraled

downward. Most communities, stabilized by 1990 but not without cost, weakened infrastructure, depopulation, increased poverty, and even in some situations, the loss of their local newspaper. In general, the quality of living in rural communities in Oklahoma declined.

In this study 100 successful weekly newspapers were used as a criteria for identifying viable rural communities. In a statistical model, they were analyzed by using retail sales as a measure of each community's economic viability and additional factors related to circulation of their weekly newspapers. The data collected included: retail sales, newspaper circulation, town and county populations, county seat status, school enrollment, and distances to communities with weekly or daily newspapers.

In this study, it was expected that larger town and county population would result in larger newspaper circulation and more retail sales. There was a strong positive relationship between town size, retail sales, and circulation but county population was statistically unrelated for both retail sales and circulation.

Similarly, it was assumed that higher retail sales indicated more business which should have a positive effect on circulation and advertising revenues. Again, data supported this assumption with retail sales explaining approximately 82 percent of variation in circulation, which in turn, affects advertising revenues.

Another assumption was that the larger the school enrollment, the larger the newspaper circulation and retail sales. In both cases, the correlation was strong.

It was assumed that county seats would be major trade centers with a potential for greater newspaper circulation and retail sales. In general this was true, but the relationship was not as strong as anticipated.

Surprisingly, distance from competing newspapers, an indicator of the size of a community's trade area, was not statistically related to either the circulation of the local newspaper or retail sales. Four types of communities with weekly newspapers were recognized: Type A--strong trade centers, Type B--regional trade centers, and Types C and D--lower order trade centers.

Type A, strong trade centers, were county seat communities in sparsely settled counties. They tend to be larger towns, characterized by higher total retail sales, as well as higher retail sales per capita. These towns had larger newspapers, both in circulation, as well as physical size of the newspaper itself and the amounts of advertising. The amount of back-to-school, real estate, and legal advertising was significantly higher than in newspapers from the other three types of communities. Legal advertising reflected the advantage of county seat status.

Type B communities were relatively small towns, even more isolated in northwestern Oklahoma with few nearby

communities. Circulation of their weekly newspapers was also greater than town population, suggesting a large trade area that extends into the county. Retail sales and retail sales per capita were stronger for the larger towns than in Type C and D. Five of the nine are county seats.

Types C and D, lower order trade places, failed to exhibit strong trade center features. Larger county population and competition from nearby communities with weekly and daily newspapers diminished the size of the trade area for these lower order trade places, especially for Type D communities. In addition to lower levels of retail sales, circulation was generally less than the town population. As expected, the advertising lineage for January for all types was less than in August.

Other than for Type A towns, types of advertising provided little insight into the different local economies. In general, the advertising mixed, and the percentage of the total newspaper space devoted to advertising did not differ significantly among the four types of communities. It was expected that church, school, agriculture, and service would be more important in smaller communities but this was not the case. Analysis of grocery, bank, and automotive advertising revealed no significant differences. Even though these ads did not constitute a major portion of newspaper advertising, they provided a consistent and steady core in each case.

Suggestions For Additional Research

This research suggests that a weekly newspaper's circulation and type of advertising can provide an avenue to gain insights into local economies. Case studies of the different types of communities and their weekly newspapers over a period time would provide a practical application and further test the results of this study.

Part of this process would entail creating a broader data base of advertising lineage. This data would provide a better understanding of not only how advertising reflects the economy of each community.

The actual size of the trade areas was not included in this study but it is an important aspect that needs to be further explored. Additional research could include the development of a method to determine the actual trade area size of each community by using the circulation list of a weekly newspaper. Generally, weekly newspaper publishers are protective of their subscriber lists; but for a case study, it is possible that some publishers would make the list available. This would add a geographic dimension of how and where retail areas overlap and possibly would be beneficial to the state commerce department and the state agricultural colleges who frequently conduct surveys of the central business districts of various communities.

A case study of those newspapers that have changed frequencies of publication might focus in on specific

economic and geographic factors influencing those changes, and give an in-depth and personal perspective to the data. There are several newspapers in Oklahoma where such a study could be completed. Interviews from a detailed questionnaire with publishers of those newspapers could pinpoint the factors influencing the change. A detailed content analysis of those newspapers' advertising lineage and economic news would reinforce the findings.

In addition, a content analysis of local economic news and trends in the current study population might further strengthen the basis of understanding for the linkage between newspaper and community economic health.

-CONCLUSION-

Before the age of microfilm, the "morgue" in a weekly newspaper was a room, a vault or a basement corner where old issues were laid to "rest." The newspaper "morgue" had a sense of finality, for it suggested a place where the actions of small towns were quieted; but in reality, it is the source for understanding economic life of each community. The dusty pages of out-dated issues provide a source to interpret the past in order to forecast the future for small towns. Weekly newspapers in Oklahoma are an invaluable source of indicators of past and present economies, as well as a predictor of future trends.

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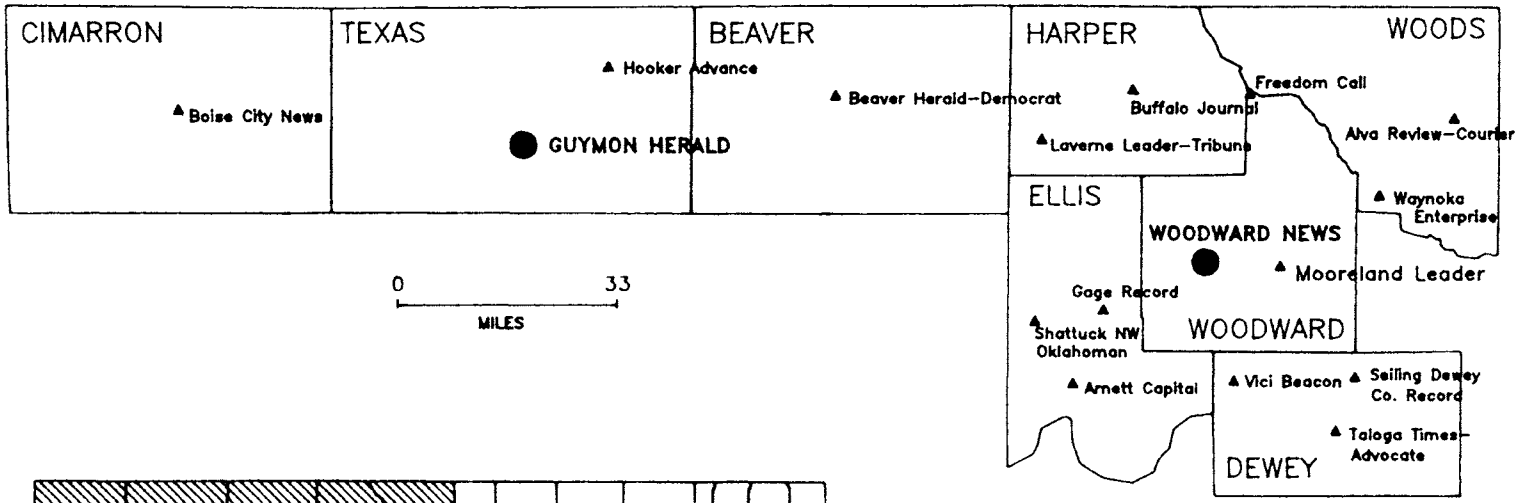
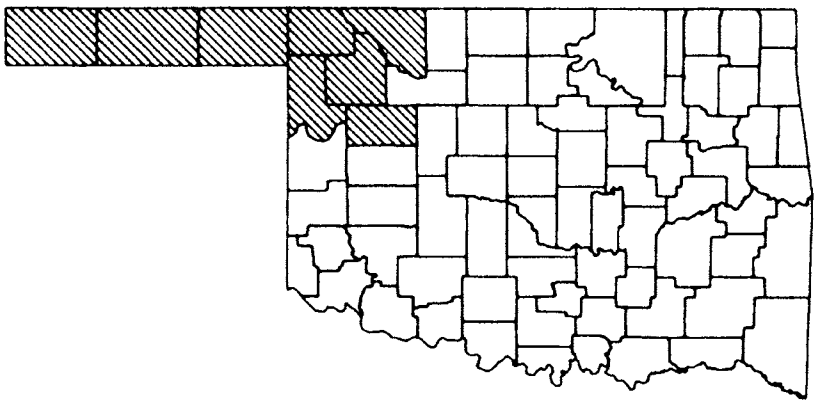
APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

ATLAS OF CITIES AND TOWNS WITH NEWSPAPERS IN OKLAHOMA





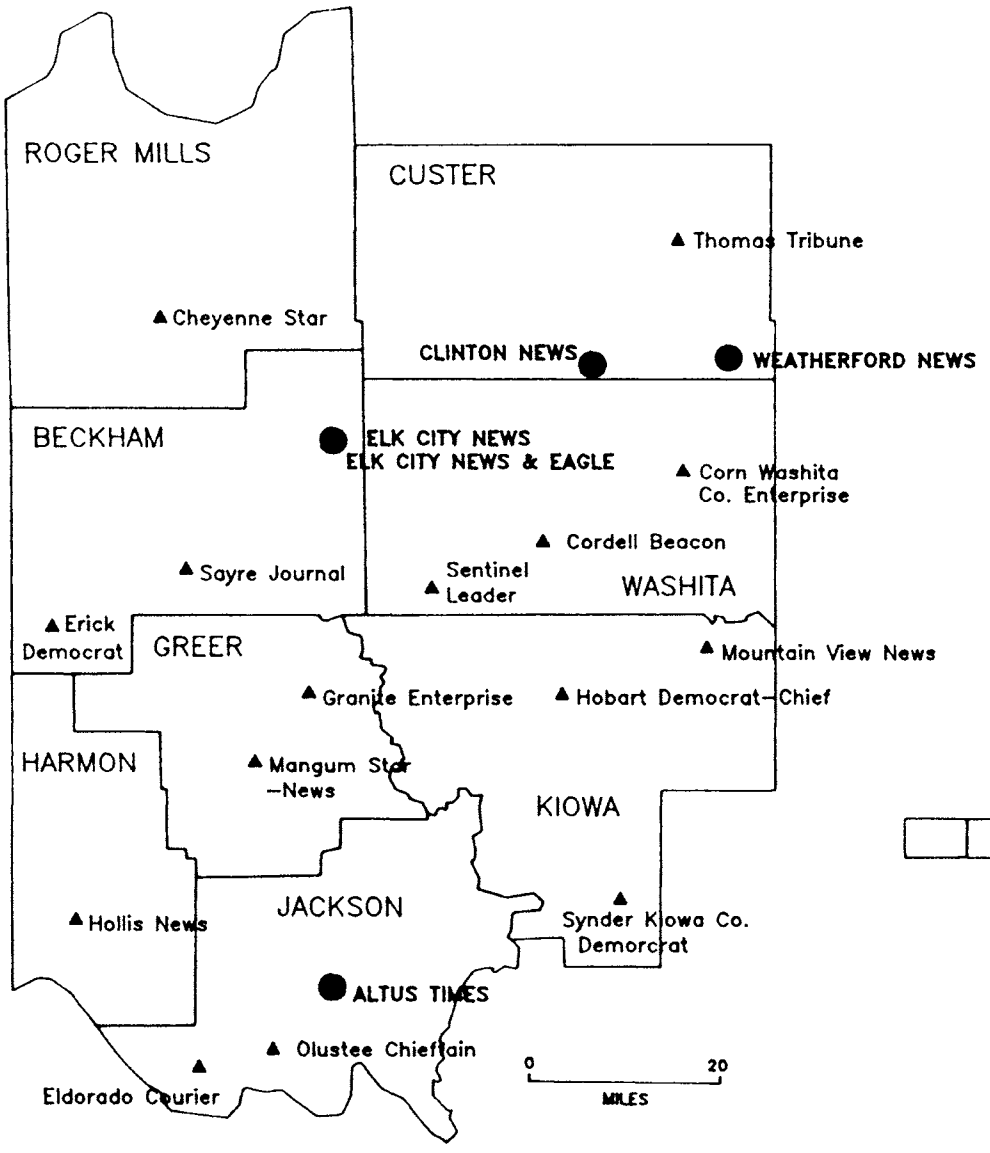
•Sub-State Planning District--OEDA

Oklahoma Newspapers

(DAILIES AND WEEKLIES)

- ★ METROPOLITAN DAILIES and Weeklies
- ☆ Suburban DAILIES and Weeklies
- ● DAILY ONLY
- ⊕ DAILIES and Weeklies
- ■ Competing Weeklies
- ▲ Weekly Only

•1990 Oklahoma Press Association's Display Advertising List



Oklahoma Newspapers

(DAILIES AND WEEKLIES)

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- ☆ Suburban DAILIES and Weeklies
- ● DAILY ONLY
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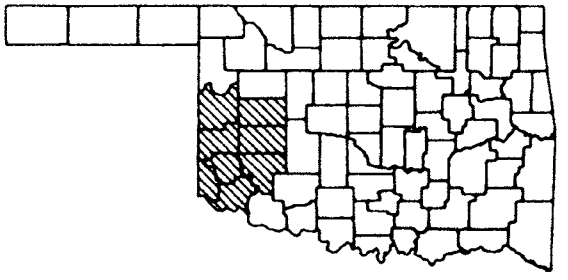
- ■ Competing Rural Weeklies
- ▲ Weekly Only



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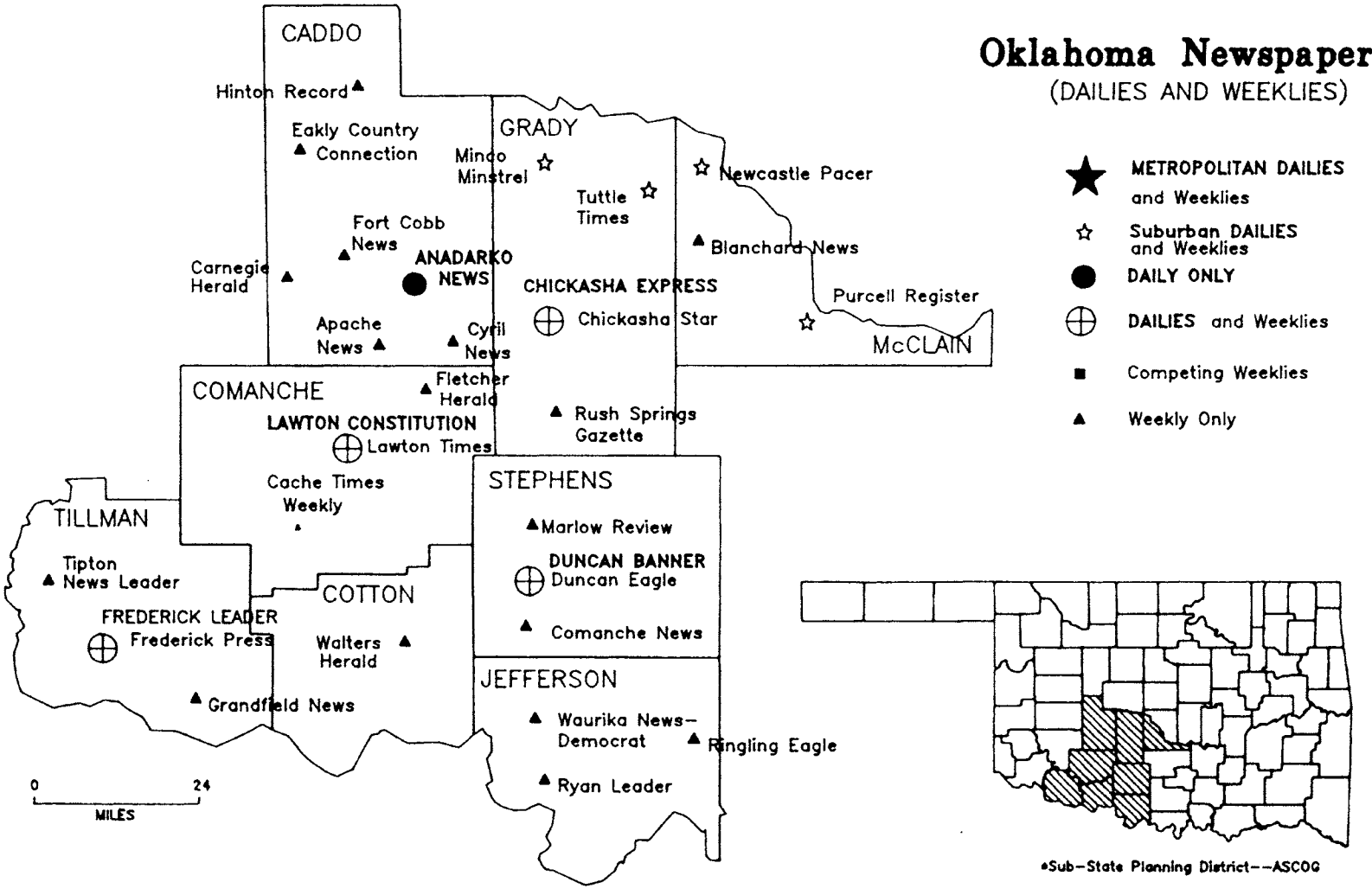

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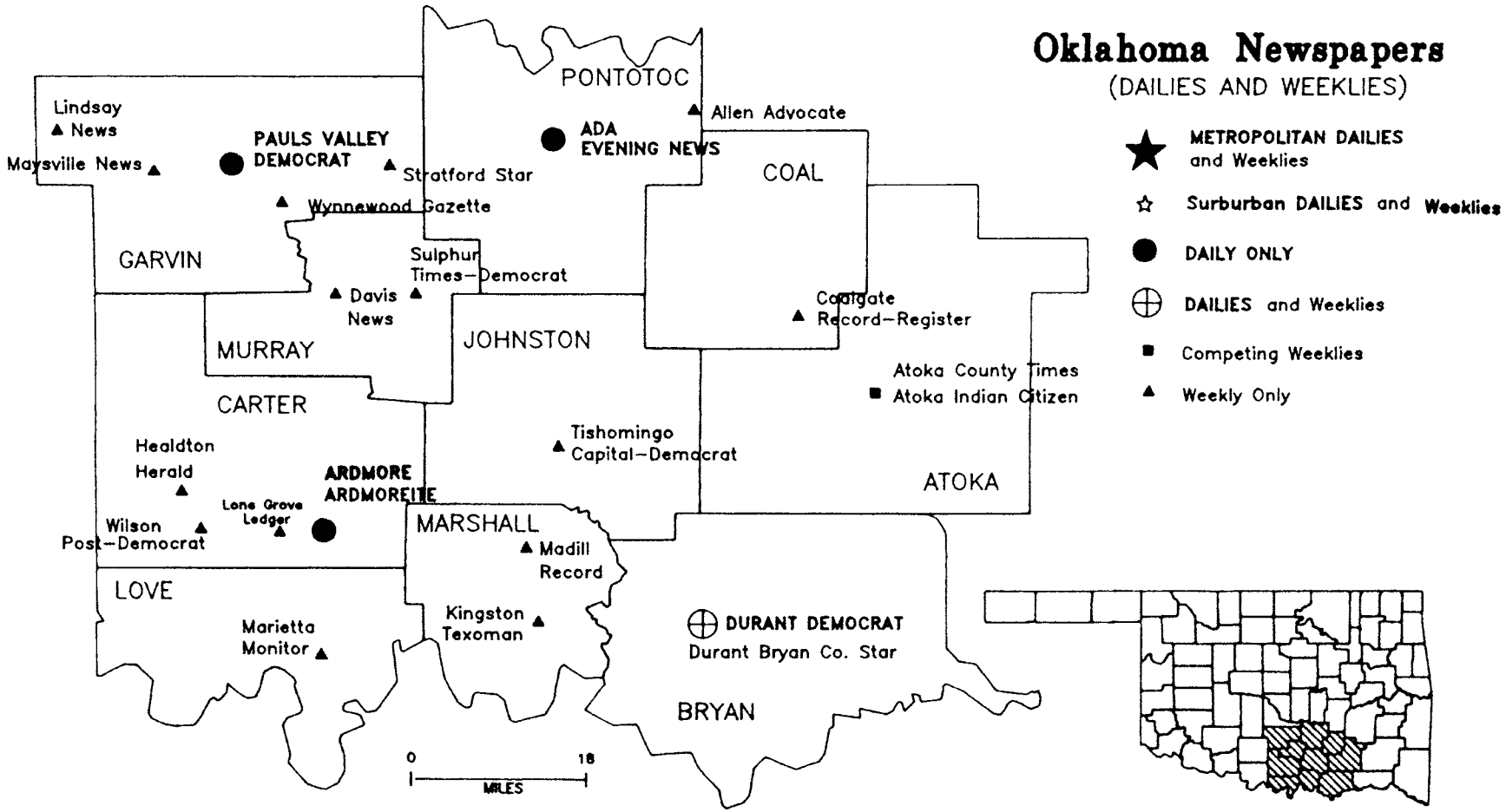
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Weekly Only
PONTOTOC
Lindsay News
Maysville News
PAULS VALLEY DEMOCRAT
Stratford Star
Wynnewood Gazette
ADA EVENING NEWS
Allen Advocate
COAL
GARVIN
Sulphur Times-Democrat
Davis News
Coalgate Record-Register
MURRAY
JOHNSTON
CARTER
Atoka County Times
Atoka Indian Citizen
Tishomingo Capital-Democrat
Healdton Herald
ARDMORE ARDMOREITE
Lone Grove Ledger
Wilson Post-Democrat
ATOKA
MARSHALL
Madill Record
LOVE
Marietta Monitor
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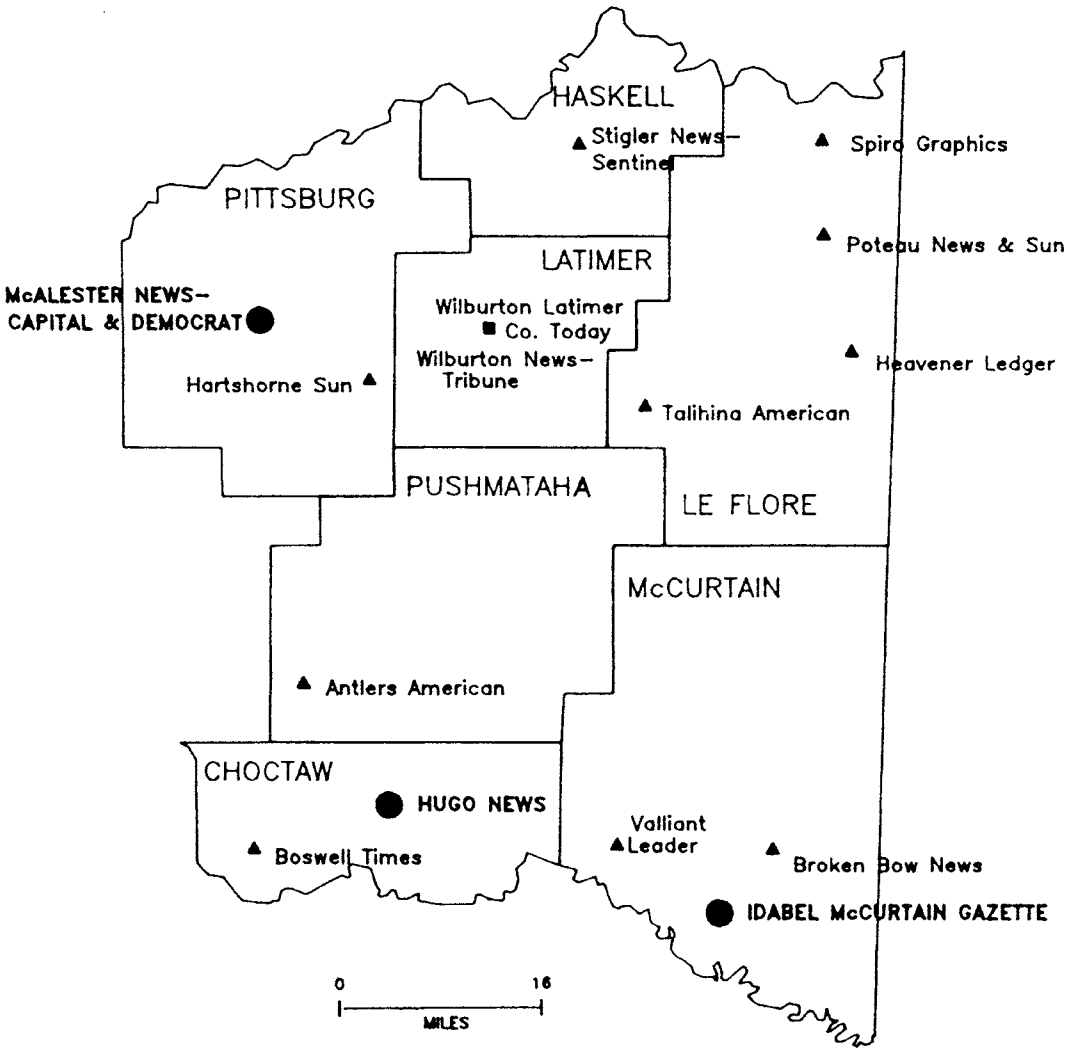
*Sub-State Planning District--SODA



Oklahoma Newspapers

(DAILIES AND WEEKLIES)

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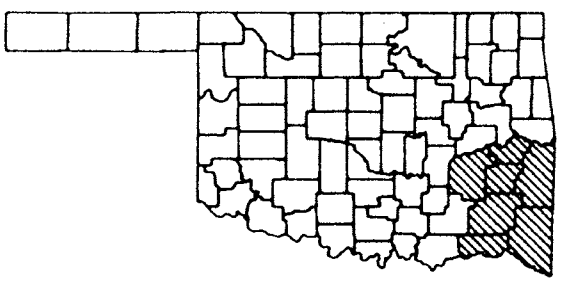
- ⊕ **DAILIES** and Weeklies
- ■ Competing Weeklies
- ▲ Weekly Only



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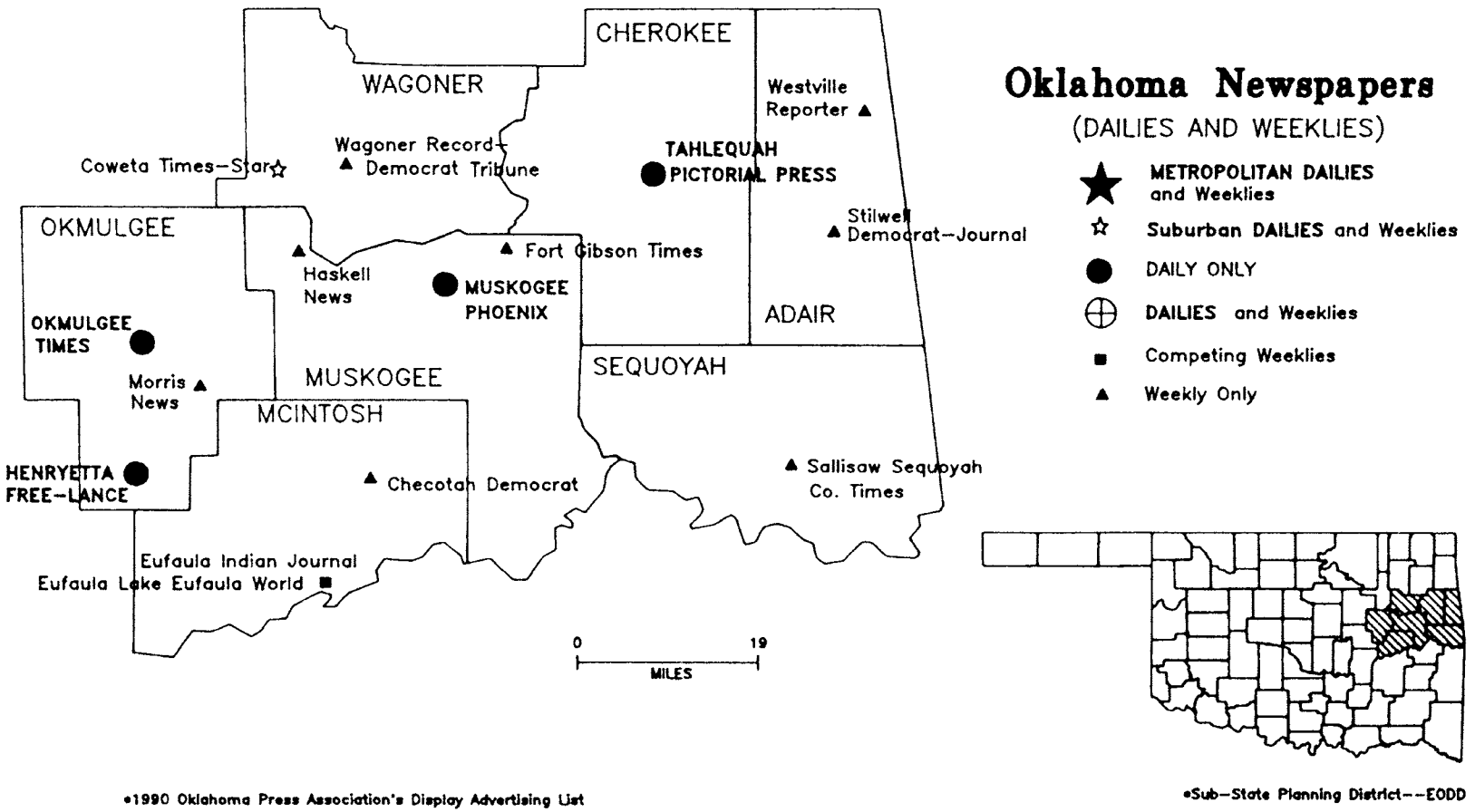


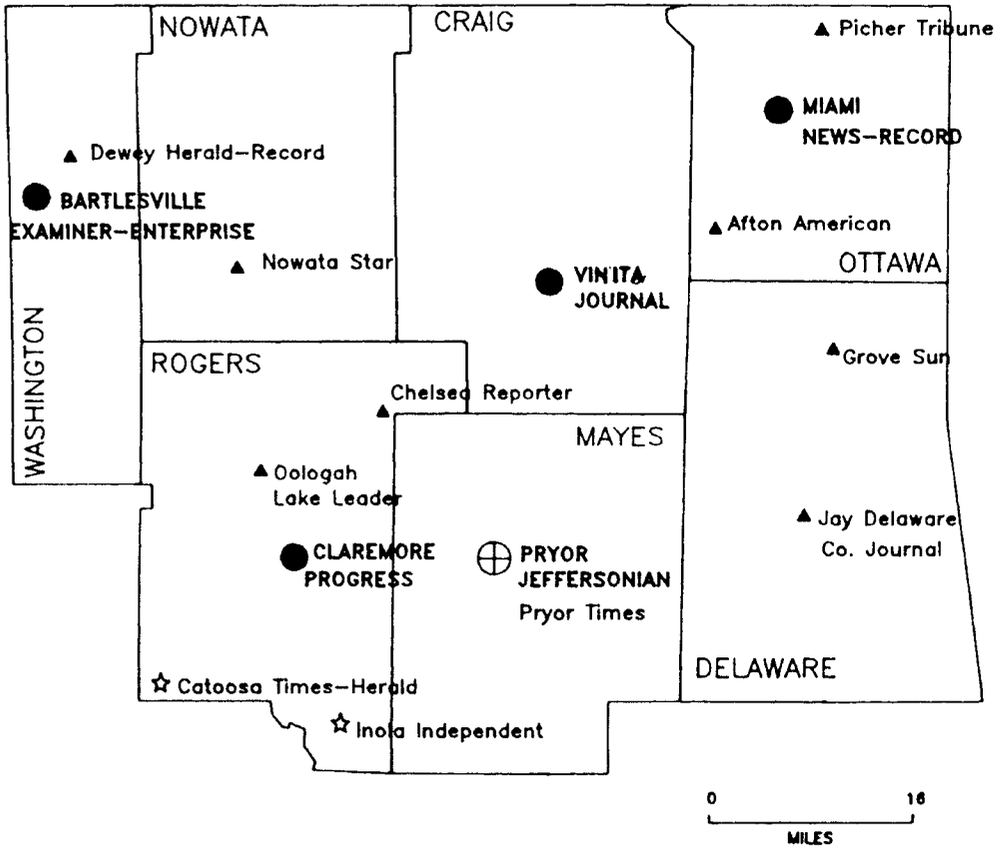
Oklahoma Newspapers

(DAILIES AND WEEKLIES)

- METROPOLITAN DAILIES and Weeklies
- Suburban DAILIES and Weeklies
- DAILY ONLY
- DAILIES and Weeklies
- Competing Weeklies
- Weekly Only

•1990 Oklahoma Press Association's Display Advertising List

•Sub-State Planning District--EODD



Oklahoma Newspapers

(Dailys and Weeklies)

- METROPOLITAN DAILIES and Weeklies
- Suburban DAILIES and Weeklies
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- Competing Rural Weeklies
- Weekly Only

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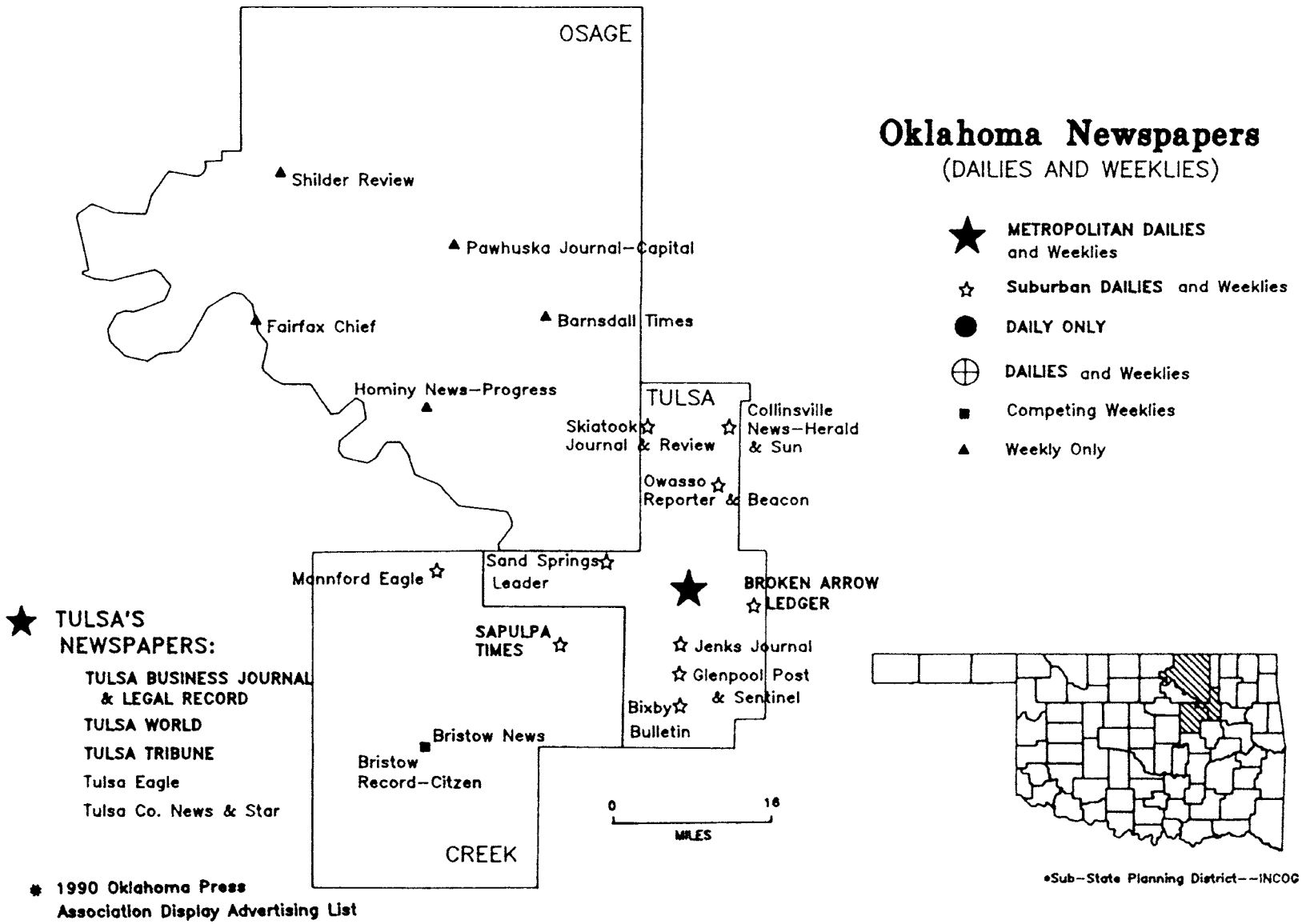
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Beacon
Sand Springs Leader
Mannford Eagle
BROKEN ARROW LEDGER
SAPULPA TIMES
Jenks Journal
Glenpool Post & Sentinel
Bixby Bulletin
Bristow News
Bristow Record–Citzen
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16
MILES
CREEK
TULSA'S NEWSPAPERS:
TULSA BUSINESS JOURNAL & LEGAL RECORD
TULSA WORLD
TULSA TRIBUNE
Tulsa Eagle
Tulsa Co. News & Star
* 1990 Oklahoma Press Association Display Advertising List
Oklahoma Newspapers
(DAILIES AND WEEKLIES)
METROPOLITAN DAILIES and Weeklies
Suburban DAILIES and Weeklies
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DAILIES and Weeklies
Competing Weeklies
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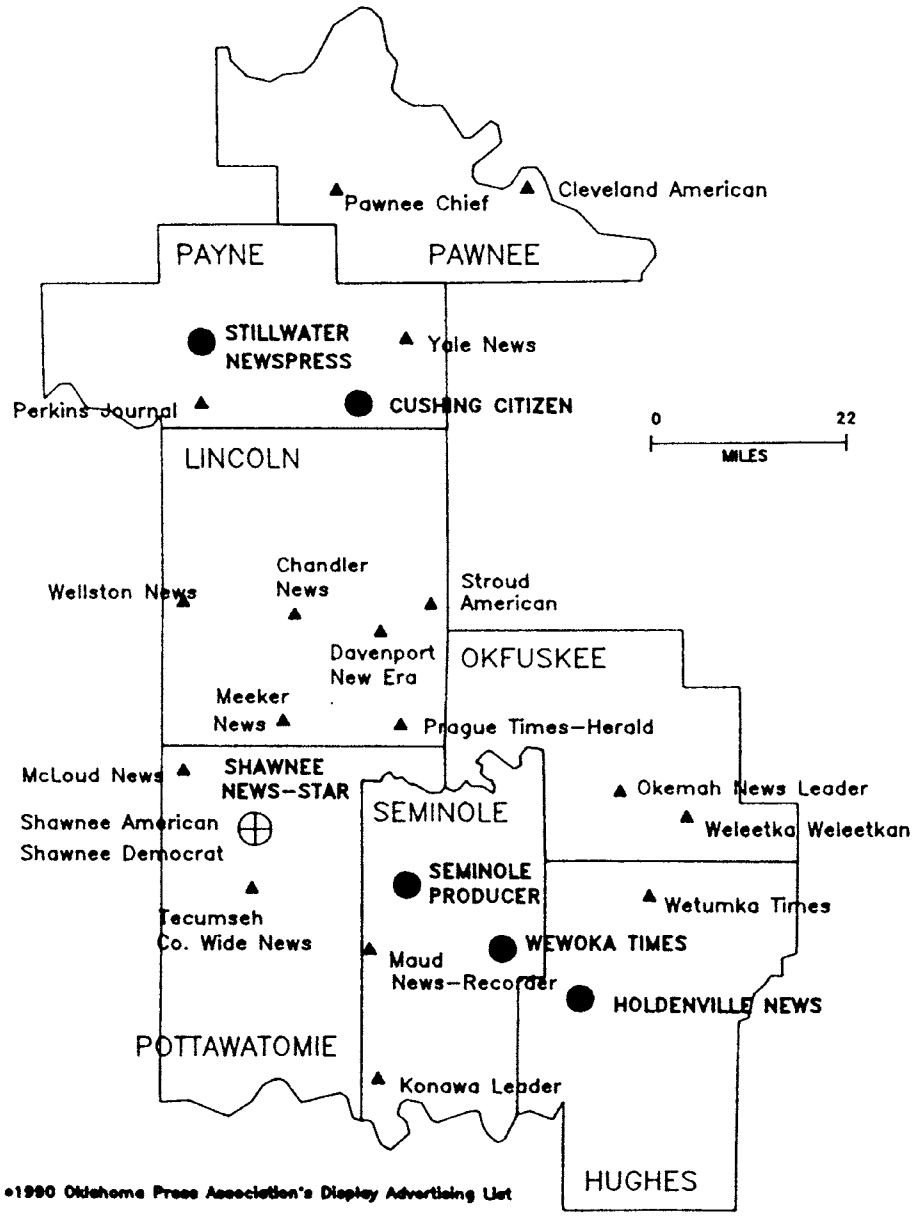
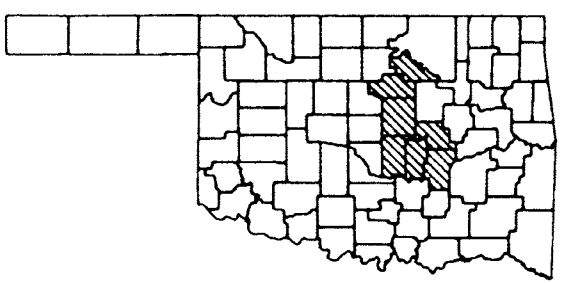


•1990 Oklahoma Press Association's Display Advertising List

Oklahoma Newswpapers

(DAILIES AND WEEKLIES)

- ★ METROPOLITAN DAILIES and Weeklies
- ☆ Suburban DAILIES and Weeklies
- ● DAILY ONLY
- ⊕ DAILIES and Weeklies
- ■ Competing Weeklies
- ▲ Weekly Only



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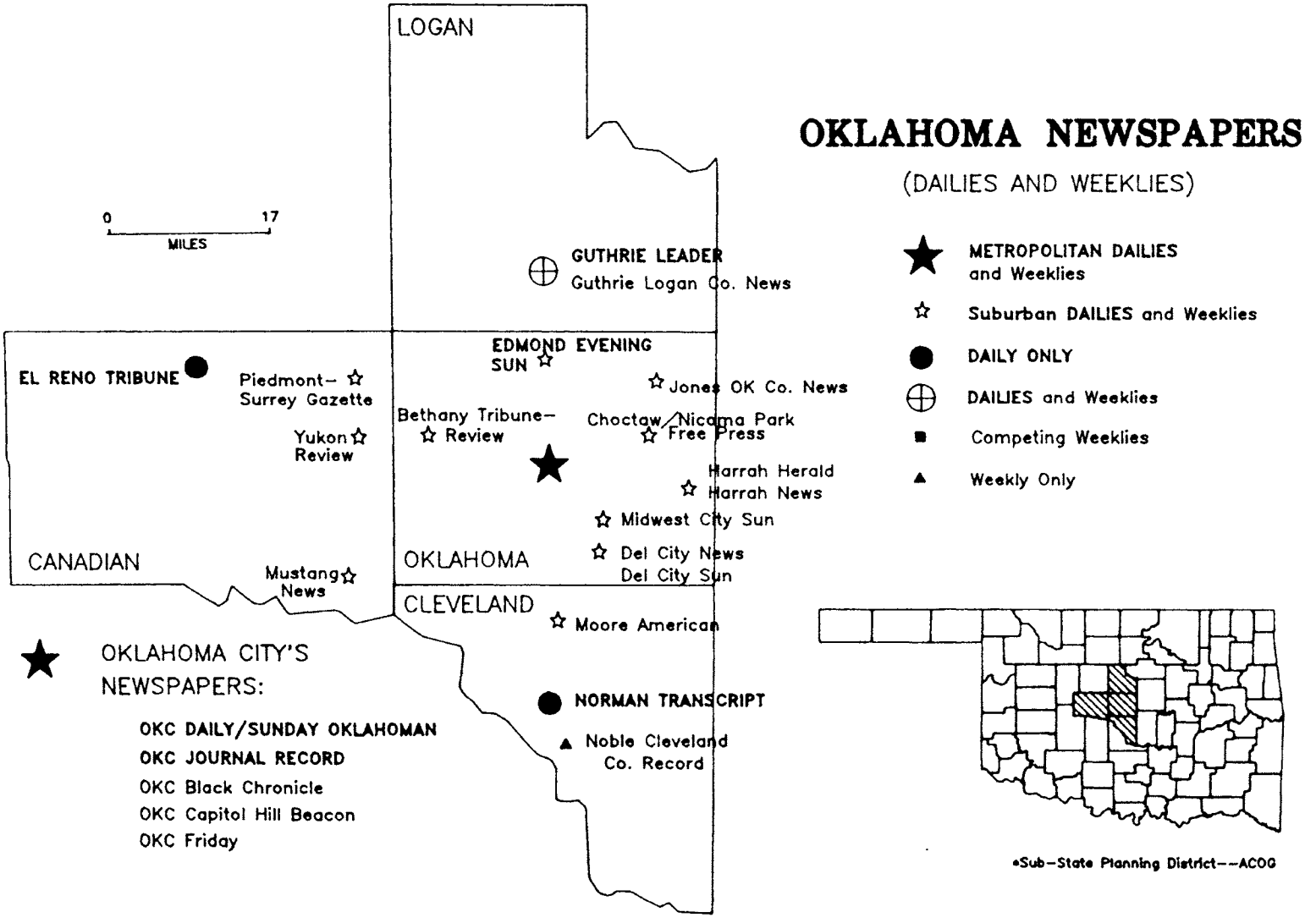


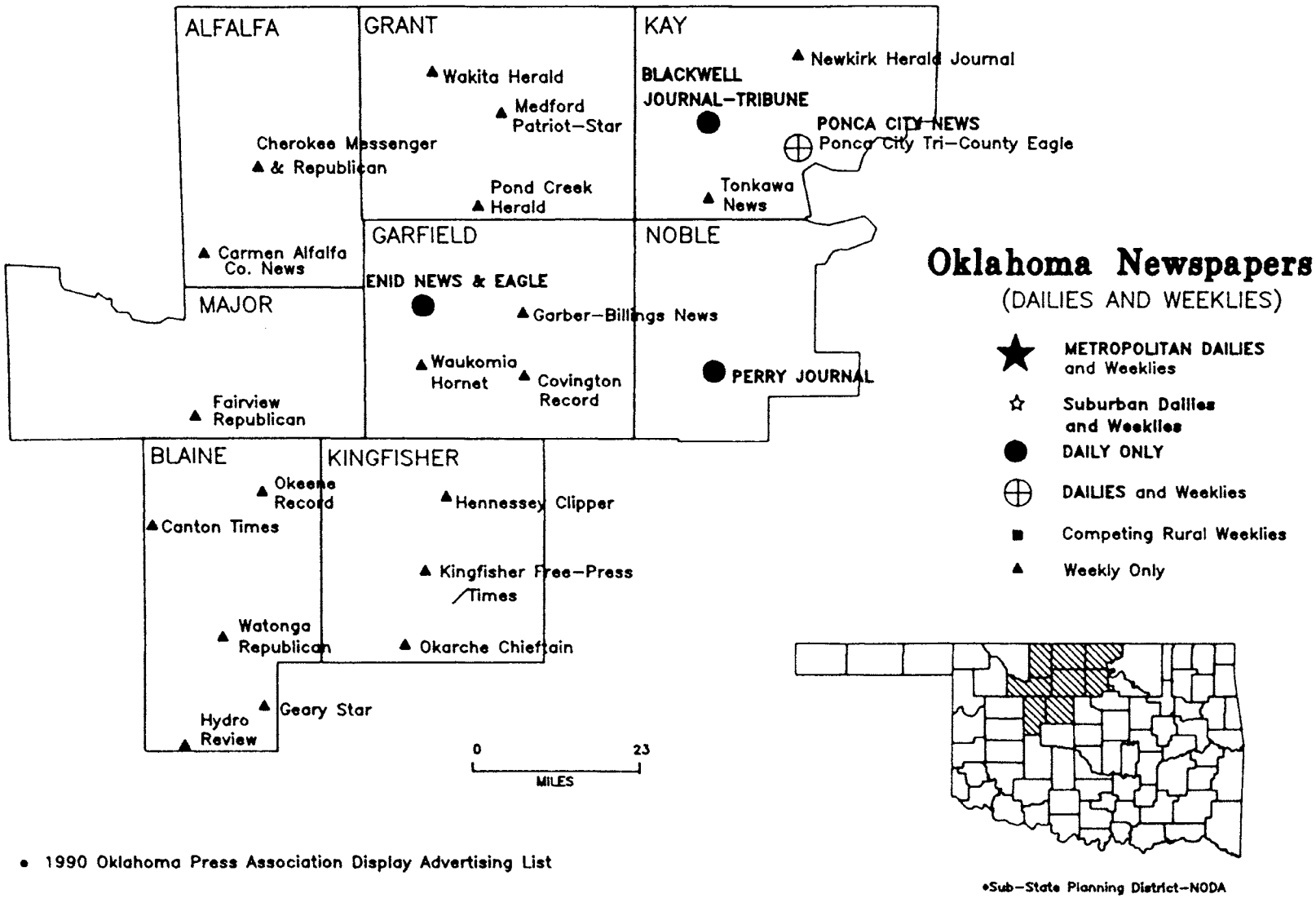
OKLAHOMA NEWSPAPERS

(DAILIES AND WEEKLIES)

- METROPOLITAN DAILIES and Weeklies
- Suburban DAILIES and Weeklies
- DAILY ONLY
- DAILIES and Weeklies
- Competing Weeklies
- Weekly Only

•Sub–State Planning District––ACOG

* 1990 Oklahoma Press Association Display Advertising List



• 1990 Oklahoma Press Association Display Advertising List

APPENDIX B

1990 POPULATION OF OKLAHOMA'S CITIES AND TOWNS AND THE CIRCULATION OF THEIR NEWSPAPERS

POPULATION OF OKLAHOMA'S METROPOLITAN AREAS AND THE CIRCULATION OF THEIR DAILY\WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS

City\Newspapers	City Population	Newspaper Circulation
OKLAHOMA CITY	444,719	
Dailies:		
Oklahoma City Daily\ Sunday Oklahoman		320,990
Oklahoma City Journal Record		4,451
Weeklies:		
Oklahoma City Black Chronicle		28,627
Oklahoma City Capitol Hill Beacon		1,650
Oklahoma City Friday		19,334
Tulsa:	367,302	
Dailies:		
Tulsa Business Journal & Legal Record		1,371
Tulsa Tribune		65,693
Tulsa World		125,207
Weeklies:		
Tulsa County News & Star		2,023
Tulsa Eagle		7,400

1990 POPULATION OF OKLAHOMA CITY AND TULSA'S SUBURBAN AREAS AND CIRCULATION OF THEIR DAILY\WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS

City\Newspaper	City Population	Newspaper Circulation
Oklahoma City		
Dailies:		
Edmond Evening Sun	52,315	9,871
Weeklies:		
Bethany Tribune-Review	20,075	3,945
Blanchard News	1,922	2,688
Choctaw/Nicoma Park Free Press	8,545	1,988
Del City News	23.928	2,330
Del City Sun	23,928	893
Harrah Herald	4,206	1,430
Harrah News	4,206	1,674
Jones Ok Co. News	2,424	1,056
Midwest City Sun	52,267	8,626
Minco Minstrel	1,411	807
Moore American	40,318	1,397
Mustang News	10,434	2,583
Newcastle Pacer	4,214	1,535
Piedmont-Surrey Gazette	2,522	731
Purcell Register	4,764	5,348
Tuttle Times	2,807	1,439
Yukon Review	20,935	7,548
Tulsa		
Dailies:		
Broken Arrow Ledger	58,403	3,460
Sapulpa Herald	18,074	7,309
Weeklies:		
Bixby Bulletin	9,502	2,331
Catoosa Times Herald	2,954	1,035
Collinsville News-Herald	3,612	2,096
Coweta Times-Star	6,159	1,878
Glenpool Post & Sentinel	6,688	893
Inola Independent	1,444	880
Jenks Journal	7,493	1,935
Mannford Eagle	1,826	1,658
Owasso Reporter & Beacon	11,851	3,401
Sand Springs Leader	15,346	5,205
Skiatook Journal & Rev.	4,910	1,195

1990 POPULATION OKLAHOMA'S SMALL CITIES AND CIRCULATION OF THEIR DAILY NEWSPAPERS

City\Newspaper	City Population	Newspaper Circulation
Ada Evening News	15,820	9,656
Altus Times	21,910	6,783
Anadarko News	6,586	5,812
Ardmore Admoreite	23,079	13,114
Bartlesville Examiner-Enterprise	34,256	13,368
Blackwell Journal-Tribune	7,538	2,852
Claremore Progress	13,280	7,133
Clinton News	9,298	5,271
Cushing Citizen	7,218	2,732
El Reno Tribune	15.414	4,190
Elk City News	10,428	1,423
Enid News & Eagle	45,309	25,011
Guthrie Leader	10,518	3,459
Guymon Herald	7,803	3,707
Henryetta Free-Lance	5,872	2,461
Holdenville News	4,792	3,010
Hugo News	5,978	2,877
Idabel McCurtain Gazette	6,957	7,667
McAlester News-Capital & Democrat	16,370	11,735
Miami News-Record	13,142	8,259
Muskogee Phoenix	37,708	20,898
Okmulgee Times	13,441	5,619
Pauls Valley Democrat	6,150	3,926
Perry Journal	4,978	3,286
Seminole Producer	7,071	5,400
Stillwater NewsPress	36,676	11,368
Tahlequah Pictorial Press	10,398	6,580
Vinita Journal	5,804	3,998
Weatherford News	10,124	4,741
Wewoka Times	4,050	1,131
Woodward News	12,340	6,411

1990 POPULATION OF OKLAHOMA'S SMALL CITIES AND CIRCULATION OF THEIR DAILY\WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS

City\Daily and Weekly Newspapers	City Population	Newspaper Ciruculation
Chickasha Express	14,988	6,318
Chickasha Star		1,879
Duncan Banner	21,732	11,996
Duncan Eagle		35
Durant Democrat	12,823	6,524
Durant Bryan Co. Star		735
Frederick Leader	5,221	3,200
Frederick Press		2,121
Guthrie Leader	10,518	3,459
Guthrie Logan Co. News		3,111
Lawton Constitution	80,561	28,047
Lawton Times		1,396
Ponca City News	26,359	12,699
Ponca City Tri-Co. Eagle		727
Pryor Times	8,327	5,292
Pryor Jeffersonian		3,352
Shawnee News-Star	26,017	13,407
Shawnee American		143
Shawnee Democrat		192

1990 POPULATION OF OKLAHOMA'S RURAL TOWNS AND THE CIRCULATION OF THEIR COMPETING WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS

City\Newspaper	City Population	Newspaper Circulation
Atoka County Times	3,298	3,750
Atoka Indian Citizen		2,700
Bristow Times	4,062	475
Bristow News		3,403
Eufaula Indian Journal	2,652	3,600
Eufaula Lake Eufaula World		4,045
Wilburton Latimer Co. Today	3,092	1,614
Wilburton News-Tribune		2,695

1990 POPULATION OF RURAL OKLAHOMA TOWNS AND CIRCULATION OF THEIR WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS

Town\Newspaper	Town Population	Newspaper Circulation
Afton American	915	910
Alva Review-Courier	5,495	1,569
Allen Advocate	972	1,118
Antlers American	2,524	3,400
Apache News	1,591	1,235
Arnett Capital	547	1,241
Barnsdall Times	1,316	1,178
Beaver Herald-Democrat	1,584	2,300
Boise City News	1,509	1,712
Boswell Times	643	475
Broken Bow News	3,961	1,798
Buffalo Journal	1,312	1,203
Cache Times Weekly	2,251	946
Canton Times	632	993
Carmen Alfalfa Co. News	459	506
Carnegie Herald	1,593	1,860
Chandler News	2,596	4,222
Checotah Democrat	3,290	2,920
Chelsea Reporter	1,620	1,915
Cherokee Messenger & Republican	1,787	2,222
Cheyenne Star	948	1,879
Cleveland American	3,156	2,946
Coalgate Record-Register	1,895	1,855
Comanche News	1,695	965
Cordell Beacon	2,903	3,460
Corn Washita Co. Enter.	548	925
Covington Record	590	620
Cyril News	1,072	1,102
Davenport New Era	979	1,650
Davis News	2,543	1,940
Dewey Herald-Record	3,326	144
Eakly Country Connection	277	1,361
Eldorado Courier	573	566
Erick Democrat	1,083	1,039
Fairfax Chief	1,749	1,535
Fairview Republican	2,936	3,141
Fletcher Herald	1,002	933
Fort Cobb News	663	493
Fort Gibson Times	3,359	1,385
Freedom Call	264	490
Gage Record	473	505
Garber\Billings News	959	700

(Continued)

Town\Newspaper	Town Population	Newspaper Circulation
Geary Star	1,347	831
Grandfield News	1,224	814
Granite Enterprise	1,844	920
Grove Sun	4,020	2,347
Hartshorne Sun	2,120	1,155
Haskell News	2,143	1,405
Healdton Herald	2,872	1,858
Heavener Ledger	2,601	3,200
Hennessey Clipper	1,902	1,713
Hinton Record	1,233	921
Hobart Democrat-Chief	4,305	2,773
Hollis News	1,849	2,584
Hominy News-Progress	2,342	1,612
Hooker Advance	1,551	1,807
Hydro Review	977	815
Jay Delaware Co. Journal	2,220	1,387
Kingfisher Free-Press \Times	4,095	4,148
Kingston Texoman	1,237	2,417
Konawa Leader	1,508	1,550
Laverne Leader	1,269	1,480
Lindsay News	2,947	2,580
Lone Grove Ledger	4,038	1,129
Madill Record	3,069	3,926
Mangum Star-News	3,344	2,485
Marietta Monitor	2,306	3,265
Marlow Review	4,416	3,343
Maud News-Recorder	1,204	205
Maysville News	1,203	1,044
McLoud News	2,493	1,254
Medford Patriot-Star	1,172	1,837
Meeker News	1,003	1,237
Mooreland Leader	1,157	989
Morris News	1,208	971
Mountain View News	1,094	1,050
Newkirk Herald Journal	2,168	1,427
Noble Cleveland Co. Record	4,465	2,024
Nowata Star	3,896	2,226
Okarche Chieftain	834	648
Okeene Record	1,343	1,000
Okemah News Leader	3,085	2,820
Olustee Chieftain	701	147
Oologah Lake Leader	828	1,508
Pawhuska Journal-Capital	9,825	1,870
Pawnee Chief	2,197	2,720
Perkins Journal	1,925	2,155

(Continued)

Town\Newspaper	Town Population	Newspaper Circulation
Picher Tribune	1,714	2,483
Pond Creek Herald	982	873
Poteau News & Sun	7,210	5,528
Prague Times-Herald	2,308	2,420
Ringling Eagle	1,250	1,000
Rush Springs Gazette	1,229	1,009
Ryan Leader	945	494
Salisaw Sequo. Co. Times	7,122	6,057
Sayre Journal	2,881	1,922
Seiling Dewey Co. Record	1,031	1,069
Sentinel Leader	960	1,134
Shattuck NW Oklahoman	1,454	1,458
Shidler Review	487	837
Snyder Kiowa Co. Democrat	1,619	1,280
Spiro Graphic	2,146	2,781
Stigler News-Sentinel	2,574	4,020
Stilwell Democrat-Journal	2,663	5,873
Stratford Star	1,404	1,000
Stroud American	2,660	2,394
Sulphur Times-Democrat	3,596	4,824
Talihina American	1,297	1,895
Taloga Times-Advocate	415	656
Tecumseh Co. Wide News	5,750	3,023
Thomas Tribune	1,246	1,320
Tipton News Leader	1,043	702
Tishomingo Cap-Democrat	3,116	3,013
Tonkawa News	3,127	1,751
Valliant Leader	873	1,560
Vici Beacon	751	1,069
Wagoner Record -Democrat/Tribune	6,894	3,319
Wakita Herald	453	441
Walters Herald	2,519	2,667
Watonga Republican	3,408	3,286
Waukomis Hornet	1,322	534
Waurika News-Democrat	2,088	1,928
Waynoka Enterprise	947	872
Weleetka Weleetkan	1,112	826
Wellston News	912	428
Westville Reporter	1,374	2,138
Wetumka Times	1,427	1,407
Wilson Post-Democrat	1,639	584
Wynnewood Gazette	2,451	1,843
Yale News	1,392	1,373

APPENDIX C

100 SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITIES WITH WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS

100 SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITIES WITH WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS

Town	Retail Sales	Town Pop.	County Pop.	Cir.	Cty. Pop.	Sch. Enrol.	Dist. to Wkly.	Dist. to Dly.
Afton	2,666,167	915	30,561	910	0	381	10	10
Allen	3,028,550	972	23,571	1,118	0	417	32	19
Antlers	16,421,033	2,524	10,997	3,400	1	1,065	30	16
Apache	4,939,886	1,591	29,550	1,235	0	583	9	18
Arnett	2,383,100	547	4,497	1,241	1	214	13	34
Barnsdall	3,377,300	1,316	41,645	1,178	0	520	15	18
Beaver	8,563,350	1,584	6,023	2,300	1	417	47	68
Boise City	9,186,233	1,509	3,301	1,712	1	435	81	62
Boswell	2,652,000	643	15,302	475	0	413	30	20
Broken Bow	37,614,450	3,961	33,433	1,798	0	754	36	11
Buffalo	5,167,467	1,312	4,063	1,203	1	377	22	33
Canton	4,215,817	632	11,470	993	0	397	18	43
Carmen	1,340,800	459	6,416	506	0	166	16	40
Carnegie	8,098,167	1,593	29,550	1,860	0	705	8	27
Chandler	28,073,600	2,596	29,216	4,222	1	1,047	8	22
Checotah	30,790,033	3,290	16,779	2,920	0	1,362	27	18
Chelsea	6,967,550	1,620	55,170	1,915	0	888	22	17
Cheyenne	4,990,933	948	4,147	1,879	1	305	22	32
Cleveland	28,112,400	3,156	15,575	2,946	0	1,543	9	33
Coalgate	9,668,367	1,895	5,780	1,855	1	692	34	13
Comanche	6,851,350	1,695	42,299	965	0	313	15	10
Cordell	14,851,000	2,903	11,441	3,460	1	687	19	15
Corn	865,500	548	11,441	925	0	203	18	14
Covington	1,380,900	590	56,735	620	0	313	9	14

(Continued)

Town	Retail Sales	Town Pop.	County Pop.	Cir.	Cty. Pop.	Sch. Enrol.	Dist. to Wkly.	Dist. to Dly.
Cyril	4,672,067	1,072	29,550	1,102	0	384	9	14
Davenport	3,279,900	979	29,216	1,650	0	407	7	25
Davis	12,672,900	2,543	12,042	1,940	0	814	9	19
Eldorado	1,034,700	573	28,764	566	0	133	14	26
Erick	4,691,367	1,083	18,812	1,039	0	286	17	34
Fairfax	6,231,467	1,749	41,645	1,535	0	550	16	22
Fairview	20,070,533	2,936	8,055	3,141	1	732	20	36
Fort Cobb	2,625,650	663	29,550	493	0	362	12	15
Freedom	902,350	264	9,103	490	0	107	24	35
Gage	1,325,083	473	4,497	505	0	165	8	21
Garber	2,504,167	959	56,735	700	0	405	9	17
Geary	5,052,367	1,347	42,940	831	0	441	13	30
Grandfield	3,055,167	1,224	10,384	814	0	283	36	34
Granite	3,686,500	1,844	6,559	920	0	272	13	25
Hartshorne	9,448,500	2,120	40,581	1,155	0	835	40	12
Haskell	5,393,067	2,143	68,078	1,405	0	743	9	20
Healdton	15,600,560	2,872	42,919	1,858	0	676	7	35
Heavener	13,766,450	2,601	43,270	3,200	0	869	12	74
Hennessey	13,597,450	1,902	13,212	1,713	0	760	12	18
Hinton	7,892,667	1,233	29,550	921	0	481	13	23
Hollis	9,515,900	2,584	3,793	1,849	1	788	29	35
Hominy	9,138,933	2,342	41,645	1,612	0	765	9	42
Hooker	6,357,100	1,551	16,419	1,807	0	431	43	19
Hydro	2,876,000	977	20,510	815	0	321	17	8
Kingston	6,243,200	1,237	10,829	2,417	0	809	8	25
Konawa	6,384,400	1,508	25,412	1,550	0	705	12	10

(Continued)

Town	Retail Sales	Town Pop.	County Pop.	Cir.	Cty. Pop.	Sch. Enrol.	Dist. to Wkly.	Dist. to Dly.
Laverne	6,623,250	1,269	4,063	1,480	0	378	22	38
Madill	31,245,267	3,069	10,829	3,926	1	1,098	8	25
Mangum	13,304,250	3,344	6,559	2,485	1	686	13	25
Marietta	16,660,300	2,306	8,157	3,265	1	810	21	18
Marlow	27,656,500	4,416	42,299	3,343	0	1,351	10	10
Maud	2,598,900	1,204	42,086	205	0	467	12	11
Maysville	5,265,475	1,203	26,605	1,044	0	448	12	15
Medford	5,542,500	1,172	5,689	1,837	1	314	11	26
Morreland	2,585,233	1,157	18,976	989	0	420	24	10
Morris	3,344,900	1,208	36,490	971	0	836	27	6
Mountain View	2,967,400	1,094	11,347	1,050	0	450	7	32
Newkirk	7,995,567	2,168	48,056	1,427	1	685	28	14
OKeene	5,932,100	1,343	11,470	1,000	0	335	18	39
Pawnee	12,307,500	2,197	15,575	2,720	1	854	21	27
Perkins	6,464,967	1,925	61,507	2,155	0	1,144	28	11
Picher	2,496,700	1,714	30,561	2,483	0	448	24	7
Pond Creek	3,351,975	982	5,689	873	0	304	11	18
Prague	14,667,367	2,308	29,216	2,420	0	960	19	17
Ringling	5,237,780	1,250	7,010	1,000	0	504	10	27
Rush Springs	2,906,150	1,229	41,747	1,009	0	580	10	18
Ryan	2,074,867	945	7,010	494	0	273	10	36
Seiling	6,582,100	1,031	5,551	1,069	0	498	10	32
Sentinel	2,974,200	960	11,441	1,134	0	368	17	29
Shattuck	6,479,150	1,454	4,497	1,458	0	392	8	30
Shidler	1,218,300	487	41,645	837	0	293	17	25
Snyder	5,050,900	1,619	11,347	1,280	0	546	18	22

(Continued)

Town	Retail Sales	Town Pop.	County Pop.	Cir.	Cty. Pop.	Sch. Enrol.	Dist. to Wkly.	Dist. to Dly.
Spiro	12,104,800	2,146	43,270	2,781	0	1,412	10	52
Stigler	25,520,000	2,574	10,940	4,020	1	1,161	35	39
Stilwell	27,332,343	2,663	18,421	5,873	1	1,345	12	24
Stratford	3,644,200	1,404	26,605	1,000	0	501	20	16
Stroud	19,823,033	2,660	45,066	2,394	0	785	7	18
Sulphur	29,986,700	4,824	12,042	3,596	1	1,342	9	32
Talihina	6,699,533	1,297	43,270	1,895	0	588	37	26
Taloga	1,512,167	415	5,551	656	1	235	10	41
Tecumseh	21,341,033	5,750	58,760	3,023	0	1,897	20	7
Thomas	4,673,892	1,246	26,897	1,320	0	385	20	17
Tishomingo	17,255,250	3,116	10,032	3,013	1	886	14	31
Tonkawa	1,138,147	3,127	48,056	1,751	0	676	27	10
Vici	2,949,933	751	5,551	1,069	0	300	19	18
Wakita	1,684,700	453	5,689	441	0	178	16	41
Walters	8,721,333	2,519	6,651	2,667	1	701	20	23
Watonga	21,305,900	3,408	11,470	3,286	1	939	16	28
Waukomis	2,858,600	1,322	56,735	534	0	489	12	8
Waurika	8,322,367	2,088	7,010	1,928	1	556	10	26
Waynoka	4,566,183	947	9,103	872	0	277	26	30
Westville	8,108,700	1,374	18,421	2,138	0	935	12	28
Wetumka	5,938,233	1,427	13,023	1,407	0	548	10	17
Wilson	4,551,500	1,639	42,919	584	0	466	7	17
Wynnewood	10,040,333	2,451	26,605	1,843	0	789	12	9
Yale	3,941,300	1,392	61,507	1,373	0	566	16	12

VITA 2

Neysa Ann Clark

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: OKLAHOMA'S WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS: ECONOMIC INDICATORS OF RURAL ECONOMIES

Major Field: Geography

Biographical:

Personal data: Born in Modesto, California, August 15, 1945, daughter of Hubert and Mildred Barnes. Married Terry Michael Clark, August 8, 1964. Children born: Vance Conrad, July 29, 1967; Travis Austin, November 2, 1969; Dallas Page, November 4, 1971; Derrick Rogers, September 24, 1975.

Education: Graduated from Bethany High School, Bethany, Oklahoma, in May, 1963; received Bachelor of Science degree in Geography from Oklahoma State University in December, 1991; completed requirements for the Master of Science degree at Oklahoma State University in May, 1994.

Professional Experience: Laboratory Instructor for Physical Geography at Oklahoma State University, 1991-1992; Graduate assistant, Spring 1992; internship as surveyor for the State Historical Office of Preservation, January to August, 1992.