

# BIG FIVE COMMUNITY SERVICES, INC.

(A Community Action Agency)



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GEORGE NEWBERRY  
Chairman of the Board

CAROL AMMONS  
Executive Director

September 10, 2009

James H. Dunegan, City Manager  
City of Durant  
P. O. Box 578  
Durant, OK 74701

**Re: *Partnerships Supporting Economic Recovery***

Dear Mr. Dunegan:

As the local community action agency and a *Partner Supporting Economic Recovery*, Big Five Community Services, Inc. is an organization that understands the critical need for infrastructure improvements to provide significant opportunities for economic development and improve the quality of life, safety and strengthen partnerships in Durant, while benefiting the surrounding communities.

The Big Five office is located at the intersection of University and 1<sup>st</sup> Street across the highway from Southeastern Oklahoma State University (SOSU) and fully knows the extreme danger at the intersection and the vital need to enhance signalization and provide a walk over pedestrian bridge. Students, visitors and faculty face a dangerous challenge to cross 1<sup>st</sup> Street, which is also State Highway 78, between the campus facilities.

Since our organization serves individuals, children and families through multiple services, such as, Head Start, Workforce Development, Housing and Prescription Assistance through RX for Oklahoma, Big Five recognizes the impact all of the identified projects will have to sustain and create new jobs to improve the quality of life. While developing economically over the past several years, the small, rural City of Durant and Bryan County suffers with a growing population of low-income families who are financially struggling. The approximate median household income is \$27,888 with an unemployment rate of 5.8%. The transportation improvements will affect thousands of families in a positive way for the long-term and improve the overall livability conditions.

The TIGER grant funds for the proposed surface transportation improvements are essential to continue the Big Five's intense efforts towards economic development, quality of life, safety and partnerships. The improvements will directly affect the city's industrial parks, opportunities for new jobs, sustain existing employment and the intense efforts to solicit new business for a solid financial future in Durant and for the surrounding areas, located in southeastern Oklahoma.

The Big Five Community Action Agency supports the efforts of "**Partnerships Supporting Economic Recovery**", and is dedicated to continue the collaboration for all efforts to preserve and create jobs, increase economic activity.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Carol Ammons".

Carol Ammons, Executive Director