

## **That Can't be Right! We're 413!**

The U.S. Census reports that our fair Village has lost population in the last ten years. The 2000 count placed Scales Mound's population at **401**. The 2010 count places our population at **376**, which is a loss of 25 people. When the Village received the current count information our reaction was "That can't be right!" Many types of funding are based on population count. Because of the importance of the census count, the Village undertook a recount to check the U.S Census Bureau's count. We printed a map and block-by-block listed every house and rental unit within the Village's corporate limits. Next we accessed a count to each unit. Because we're such a small and close community, we knew each home and for the most part knew everyone that resided there. If we weren't sure of the number of residents in a unit we either inquired with the current occupants or contacted the Landlord's to obtain the correct count. When all said and done, we're confident our correct count at the time of census (April 1 2010) was **413**.

Somehow, the Census Counter missed 37 of our friends and neighbors. It may not seem like a very big number, but there are definite downsides to the undercount. First, it gives the illusion that our fair Village is in decline, when in fact, for the past three decades Scales Mound has been slowly growing even when many small towns are in decline.

The next and arguably most important reason is **funding**. Certain sources of funding are based on the census count, and the 37 missing from our count could cost the Village an estimated 30,000.00 in lost revenue over the next decade.

The Village is investigating the option to contest the 2010 count but as you may imagine, it's not easy. The Federal Government allows us to contest the count on any of three grounds. 1. The boundary map of the counted area is incorrect. 2. The number of residential units within the counted area is incorrect. 3. The Census Bureau has made a clerical or mathematical error in tabulating the counted area.

We have reviewed the boundary map of the Village and it seems to be correct. Our re-count efforts have tabulated 184 residential units, and the Census Bureau reported 183 units. Although every unit counts, it's clear that this was not the problem. The final check would be the mathematical count. When the Census Bureau counts an area it divides the area into blocks and includes a number of residents in each block. When they're finished with the count, the block totals are added to produce a final count. If there is a mathematical error in the addition of the block count then the overall count can be contested. Upon review of the block count map it is clear that the Census taker missed population in several areas throughout the Village. Although we will continue to investigate all options to get our count corrected, it seems at this time we have no grounds to contest the count and we quite possibly may have to live with the inaccurate census count.

**The lesson to us all is "BE COUNTED". When you receive documents from the Census Bureau, fill them out and send them back. It is truly important to your community.**

