

Crowd hears speakers at City Hall — Peace Rally

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“How long?”

“Not long!”

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“Not long!”

That was a chant and answer between DuShun Scarbrough, executive officer of the Arkansas Martin Luther King Jr. Foundation, and about 150 people in front of Harrison City Hall on Friday afternoon.

The crowd had marched to City Hall from the Durand Center where the Nonviolent Youth Summit Part VI — A NEW BEGINNING was held beginning Friday morning.

The group braved cold wind and listened to various speakers, including:

- Harrison Mayor Jeff Crockett, who proclaimed the day in honor of the summit.
- Steven B. Jones, Department of Human Services deputy director. He said the summit held in Harrison was the best of the series so far.
- State Sen. Johnny Key and Rep. John Burris. Key read a proclamation from the state Legislature.
- Former U.S. Cong. John Paul Hammerschmidt, who stated his pride in the area.
- Representatives from Attorney General Dustin McDaniels’ and Gov. Mike Beebe’s offices, all of whom issued letters of support for the summit and program.

But it was Scarbrough who spoke last and fired up the crowd before the participants dispersed.

Scarbrough decried Harrison’s reputation, saying that the summit proved it was undeserved. He urged the crowd to abandon the notions they might have held prior to the summit.

He said the city should no longer be judged just by the actions of one person, that there should be no further judgments passed on Harrison based on someone renting a Post Office box in Harrison, but not living there.

His comments drew cheers from the crowd.

“Now,” Scarbrough said with a laugh, “how are we getting back?”

After the rally was over and the participants were loading on buses or walking back to the Durand Center, Crockett was asked his opinion of the entire event.

“I thought it was awesome,” Crockett said. “It gives kids from outside Harrison a chance to see Harrison, then take that back to their schools and parents and say, ‘Harrison is not a bad place to be.’”