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'Small-town proud' Level Plains celebrates 45 years

By **Michelle Mann**
Ledger Staff Writer

The Town of Level Plains celebrated its 45th birthday on Friday with the unveiling of an Alabama Tourism Commission historic marker and a barbecue lunch. It was the town's first birthday party, and political and law enforcement officials from across the Wiregrass were on hand to celebrate.

Level Plains was incorporated in April 1965 with 133 residents, said Mayor Tyrus Waters. As of the 2000, census there are more than 1,500 people, 602 households and 444 families residing in the 2.9-square-mile town limits.

Level Plains resident and journalist Casey Strickland outlined

the history of the town at the ceremony. He said town leaders decided to incorporate because the Level Plains children were going to school in Daleville, which then only went to the 9th grade. The students would have had to ride buses to Ozark to finish high school, Strickland said. The town fathers decided to incorporate so the students could go to school in nearby Enterprise.

In 1965 Obetus Waters, Charles Waters, Clyde Thomas, James Waters Sr., Lester L. Whigham and Homer Goodson raised \$160 to hire attorney Kenneth Fuller to draft incorporation papers. Waters, Thomas and William C. Grantham filed a report with the Dale County



Thirty-third Judicial Circuit District Attorney Kirke Adams, left, unveils the historic plaque marking the 45th anniversary of the town of Level Plains in ceremonies Friday afternoon.

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Courthouse on behalf of the 133 citizens, and Dale County Judge of Probate S. Kirke Adams signed the incorporation papers on April 30, 1965. Adams' grandson, 33rd Judicial Circuit District Attorney Kirke Adams, was on hand for Friday's ceremonies.

"I'm proud to represent my grandfather and know that he would be proud to be here if he could today," Adams said.

Waters, Thomas and Grantham were appointed the town's first inspectors for the purpose of electing a mayor and council. Waters was the first Level Plains Mayor. The first town council members were Ray "Gene" E. Averett, J.C. Thomas, Charles Waters, J.F. Waters and O.J. Waters.

Once it was agreed the town would incorporate, there was the matter of what it would be called.

"There are two theories on that," Strickland said. Both theories focused on the reality that the land was flat.

The first mayor donated the land where the community house stood until the town was able to build the first town hall. The building known

as the community house originally stood on the present-day site of the Sportsman's Lounge.

"We are a small town. We have limited resources; we do the best we can, but we're proud people," Waters said. "We're small-town proud."