

Barnwell County Promise Zone Town Hall

Southern Carolina Business Center, July 9, 2015

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Q: What are Barnwell County's strengths?

- Strong rural transportation program
- Airport can land jets
- Cheap land
- Plenty of available housing (lots of houses on market)
- There is a lake in the downtown area
- Collaborative partnerships
- Museum across from the primary school
- State-of-the-art library
- YMCA
- Good vocational school
- Good parks
- Available workforce that needs training
- Early childhood development centers
- Rail
- U.S. Highways 278 and 78
- Centrally located -- near Savannah, Charleston, Augusta, Columbia
- Large amount of property available for industrial development
- Beautiful natural resources
- Strong economic base in agriculture
- Strong human services collaboration
- Historical churches
- Tourism opportunities, such as the state park at Healing Springs
- Hunting and fishing
- Towns work together
- Excellent golf course
- People are friendly
- Close to ports in Charleston, Savannah
- SRS brings lots of money and high skills into the area

Q: What is your vision for Barnwell County for 2035?

- Vibrant retirement community
- A connector Interstate
- 2.5% unemployment
- Epicenter for software tech development, such as 3D, robotics
- Railroads throughout the county
- Brand new schools

- No empty store fronts
- Industry competes to come to Barnwell
- Healthy citizens and economy
- Kids stay here and work here; give back
- All citizens are employed locally
- Thriving art center that rivals Savannah
- More doctors in county
- Removed the stigma of alcoholism
- More veteran-owned and service-disabled veteran-owned business
- More vibrant neighborhoods
- Young people involved in civic organizations; engaged citizenry
- More service club involvement
- Bigger and better hospital
- Better higher education opportunities
- Family-friendly entertainment -- pools, state park, bowling
- Entrepreneurial small business opportunities and support
- More national-accredited early childhood development opportunities
- Less crime
- Everyone has a home
- 100% graduating from high school
- Better school technology
- Barnwell County University
- Improved roads and infrastructure
- Filled industrial parks
- Nicer rental apartment complex areas for young people
- Shelter for battered men or women
- Transition housing for prisoners
- Strong Internet access for growth
- Better cell phone service

Q: What would you do to grow jobs in Barnwell County?

- Better integrated technology through school system and businesses
- Internships
- Educated and students with business-internships
- Education of the workforce
- Education for parents; parenting skills
- More lodging, restaurants for businesses
- New state-of-the-art career center that can train people for what businesses need
- Job retention-help for existing industry; working with existing industries to help them expand
- Partnership with non-profit organizations in a county collaboration
- Modern amenities for industries and families
- Publicize assets better

- Local governments should work together; put individual interests aside
- More job vocational training; skills and computers
- Cooperation between career center and industry-training needs
- Transportation improvements for adults who live and work here
- Early childhood and prenatal care
- Increased use of the railroad and airport
- More social, innovative opportunities
- Adult education program for tech training for people 30+ years old
- Custom abattoir (Kingstree has only USDA abattoir in state)

Q: What would you suggest to improve education in Barnwell County?

- Parental involvement in the education process
- Improve the career center; Corporate investment and training with career centers
- Youth apprenticeship program in high schools
- Literacy by third grade
- Increased understanding computers, life skills, public speaking
- Educate parents as first teachers
- A Youth Builder/My Brother's Keeper philosophy, program
- Early exposure to career center for job opportunities for youth
- Vibrant adult education programs
- Expose children to second language in early childhood
- More physical movement/activity
- More viable special education for at-risk, talented and gifted children
- Adequate supplies for teachers and students
- Major IT improvements, K-12 and adult education
- Better technology in classroom
- Broader adult opportunities
- Adults working together better
- Take better advantage of state level opportunities, such as virtual schools
- Better housing, activities and salaries for teachers
- Work together as adults

Q: What are some impediments or barriers to change in Barnwell County?

- Money
- Self-interest
- Attitudes
- Fear
- Lack of collaboration
- Lack of leadership
- Apathy
- Lack of inclusion of the total community

- Expecting teachers to be mothers and dads
- Teach discipline in the home
- Internet access; falling too far behind in technology
- Repeating poverty cycles
- Meetings without taking action
- Afraid of change
- Taxes
- Crime
- Negative attitudes
- Lack of understanding of positive impact
- Low or no expectation
- Worry about where jobs will go first
- Motivating those who feel hopeless
- No goals

Q: If you had only One Big Idea to make the county better, what would it be?

- Countywide Wi-Fi
- Expanded broadband; Best connectivity possible
- Raze dilapidated housing and build new housing
- State-of-the-art early childhood center
- Programming for the youngest children and parents
- More town hall meetings; communications/listening
- Quality four-lane roads
- Private investment to support small business creation and growth-incubator
- Small business incubator that leaves sustainable businesses after money goes away
- Food hub, bigger agricultural sector
- Roads, water and sewer infrastructure
- Expand industrial parks
- Better directional signage to help people find where they are
- Find clusters of the future to target industries
- Spend more on marketing-telling story- on internet
- Improve entertainment for kids so parents will bring them here
- Better early learning for children
- Healthy lifestyle learning and living
- Medical complex
- Allocate \$40M to different places – programs
- 20-hour monorail system with cars equipped with Wi-Fi and stationary laptops; advertisements inside of cars. Service: Blackville-Williston-Barnwell-Kline