

## **Jasper County Promise Zone Town Hall**

Jasper County Government Building – Ridgeland - July 16, 2015

*Facilitator: Andy Brack | Attendees: 112 people*

### **Q: What are Jasper County's strengths?**

- Seven interchanges on Interstate 95
- Close to two ports
- Four military bases within 30 miles
- Natural resources
- Community resources -- potential to collaborate
- People
- Proximity to other communities
- Strong timber industry
- Tourism
- Agricultural heritage
- Location
- Potential for growth
- Potential for industrial development
- Clean air, clean water, no light pollution
- Dedication to natural resources
- Water and sewer infrastructure provides a good basis for growth
- Wildlife
- Access to rail
- Technical schools for workforce training
- Access to workforce development
- Potential Jasper port
- Good weather
- No snow
- Diverse local population with vast collaboration potential between new and longtime residents

### **Q: What is your vision for Jasper County for 2035?**

- Lots of green spaces still
- Parks and recreation facilities
- More hotels and restaurants
- New and better schools
- More industry
- Lower tax rate
- Affordable housing for rental

\* reflects an addition from group notes provided after the meeting

- More home ownership
- Training and development
- Thriving Boys and Girls club
- Public transportation
- Countywide Internet access
- Countywide cell service
- Better infrastructure with natural gas to more people
- More green power sources
- Jasper port is thriving
- Diverse economy
- We're known for something big, like wine in Napa Valley
- Road and infrastructure development to grow the rural area
- Transportation connectors to the rural areas
- Natural resource balance with industrial growth
- Zoning that supports balance
- Water and sewer available in rural areas of county
- New abattoir to certify USDA meats
- YMCA
- More sports complexes offering multiple sports
- Emergency centers in rural areas – Urgent care
- Energize U.S. Highway 321
- More agriculture
- Available jobs so kids stay here
- Niche agriculture growth and market like asparagus used to offer
- Institution to work with at-risk kids
- Senior housing

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

- Rural area educational centers
- Research an educational model that will fit us
- Enhance education
- Training programs like CATE
- Collaboration among Chambers and government agencies
- More school to work programs
- Improve and expand water/sewer in rural areas
- Education
- Adult education
- Technical colleges
- Increase small businesses and entrepreneurship
- Qualified workforce
- Water and sewer in west area

\* reflects an addition from group notes provided after the meeting

- Community-based schools in west of county
- 21<sup>st</sup> tools for educational use
- Assembly-based manufacturers
- We need to tell our story better
- We should define ourselves and prioritize
- Expand media
- Business development for lower taxes
- Strong community communications
- \* More parenting programs
- \* Attract a factory
- \* Better pre-K to 12 education
- \* More affordable senior housing
- \* Be open to change
- \* Internet
- \* Wetlands bank for remediation, management
- \* Urgent care center
- \* More commercial sites
- \* Increase agricultural production
- \* Use natural resources
- \* Better representation in Columbia
- \* Collaborate on branding of agriculture
- \* Become a regional farmers market

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

- Better teacher salaries
- Better educators
- Early childhood centers
- Increased mentoring programs
- Incentives to retain teachers and administrators
- More parental involvement
- Have a parent university
- Make K3-6 mandatory
- Positive reporting
- Reduce class size
- Programs for at-risk kids
- Better access to technology
- Countywide access to the Internet
- Parent partnerships; teach parents value of education
- On-the-job training programs
- Increase reading
- Train teachers on current technology tools

\* reflects an addition from group notes provided after the meeting

- Apprenticeships
- Internships
- Community partnerships
- \* More after-school programs
- \* Rural area educational center
- \* Daycare center collaborations between pre-school and school districts
- \* Research education models that fit our demographics
- \* Community-based schools throughout the county
- \* Better school bus transportation (kids spend too much time on the bus)
- \* On-the-job farm training
- \* Increase salaries to encourage longevity
- \* New libraries

**Q: What would you suggest to reduce crime in Jasper County?**

- High tech law enforcement
- Separate behavior center
- Behavior counseling agencies
- Diverse recreational opportunities beside athletics
- Neighborhood watch increases
- Substations in rural areas
- Increase law enforcement and hold them accountable and more visibility
- Promote better parental relationships
- Community-based policing
- Help kids to set goals and dream big
- Improve education to decrease poverty to reduce crime
- Mentoring programs including job shadowing
- \* Supervised recreational center
- \* Reduce school dropout rate
- \* More after-school programs
- \* Mentoring
- \* Collaborations with pre-K centers
- \* More recreation and parks; Boys and Girls clubs
- \* Improve education to decrease generational poverty
- \* More fire stations
- \* More jobs
- \* Decent pay

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

- Our mindset – we're negative
- Trust

\* reflects an addition from group notes provided after the meeting

- Being informed and involved
- Open communication
- Better race relations
- Bias to action
- Transparency
- Accountability
- Ownership of your actions
- Good old boy system
- Fear of change
- Lack of active listening
- Need for a commitment to a cause
- Acting on perception not reality
- Selfishness
- \* Open communication

**Q: If you had only one big Idea to make Jasper County better, what would it be?**

- Transportation improvements
- Spreading the wealth throughout county and region
- Bring in the Jasper port
- Really invest in our children on all fronts -- improving education, reducing crime, etc
- Strategically invest funds in younger children
- Mandatory parenting classes before becoming parent
- Focus on the common good not just specific groups
- Strategically spend money on common whole
- Shopping center corridor on Interstate 95
- Vertical farming to utilize space better
- Invest in agricultural cluster with specialty crops targeted
- Green power investment
- Advanced technology training center for diverse training
- Jobs for immediate skills with training for future jobs with high skills
- Widen and improve Interstate 95
- Rebrand this area for niche marketing
- Develop alternate air field for military jets out of Beaufort
- Promote agriculture
- Be the next vacation capital
- State-of-the-art Internet infrastructure
- Truck driving school
- Access to affordable health care and facilities
- Volunteers in medicine
- Train all children to read – 100 percent reading at level by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

\* reflects an addition from group notes provided after the meeting