

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

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- Community-based schools in west of county
- 21st 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

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- 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

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- 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 3rd grade

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