

Through Vision's Voice, we take a look at Vision 2025, the plan for Greenville's future unveiled in November 2004. This month, questions have been directed to Russell Stall, executive director of Greenville Forward: The Vision Resource Center, a new organization dedicated to seeing that the goals set forth in the Vision are achieved.



Russell Stall

ance, and virtually every other successful nonprofit organization make extensive use of volunteers, but they also have staff who oversee and empower the volunteer efforts.

BM: Who is involved with the Vision Resource Center?

RS: I will be the executive director and Josh Lane will be a founding director. However, the Vision Resource Center will be much more than this. The organization is not about the organization itself, but about involving and empowering all of Greenville's leaders in the improvement process. As we grow, our use of volunteers will grow exponentially. The involvement in the community is what has made projects like this in other cities work.

BM: How will progress on the goals be measured?

RS: Some of the goals are easily measured, while others will be more difficult to quantify. However, as president of a marketing research company, my job is measurement and converting facts into understandable programs.

We are in the process of developing the goals, tasks, timeliness, and responsibilities for each of the Vision goals.

Additionally, the goals are not set in stone, but are always changing and evolving. The Vision will change as Greenville changes.

BM: How will progress be relayed to the community?

RS: There will be an annual report of progress, as well as individual issue-related white papers. We have also partnered with Greenville Magazine to provide the Greenville community with monthly coverage on the progress of Vision 2025 and its individual facets. We are still in the process of developing the exact process, but are confident that we will have annual measurements that will be meaningful, understandable, and have accountability.

BM: What are your personal favorites among Vision 2025 initiatives?

RS: One of the strongest is empowering young emerging leaders to become more involved in making a difference in the community. We are focused on helping current leadership programs and newly developed ones identify and engage our next round of leaders.

Another favorite is attracting and retaining young, creative people in Greenville.

We also believe the "Rails to Trails" project and the work along the Reedy River corridor from above Travelers Rest to Lake Conestee are important investments in the future of the area. Citizens in Travelers Rest have already moved well along the path to creating a wonderful haven for walkers, hikers, and cyclists with the potential to co-exist with light rail in the future.

Stall, a Greenville native, is president of ResearchWorks, a strategic marketing research consulting company. His interest in the vision started during a high school journalism project in the '70s. He interviewed then-Mayor Max Heller and was impressed by his vision and passion for what Greenville could be.



As Vision 2005 paved the way in the 1980s for the incredible quality of life Greenville enjoys today, Vision 2025 spearheads projects that will further elevate our city, culturally and commercially. The Vision's Voice is one of the many ways that The Cliffs is committed to promoting growth in Greenville.

THE Vision's Voice Q&A WITH RUSSELL STALL

by Becky Mann
presented by The Cliffs Communities

Becky Mann: What is Greenville Forward's role with Vision 2025?

Russell Stall: Building upon the success of the Vision 2005 process driven by visionary leaders in the 1980s, the Vision Resource Center is to be the connecting point for Vision goals. We will work to convert the Vision into an operational plan that is understandable and measurable and to build collaborations to measure progress of the plans with groups and individuals who are held accountable for the results.

While many of the ideas of the Vision would "just happen" even if Greenville Forward didn't exist, an organization focused on the Vision will help programs happen more quickly, logically, and with fewer duplications of efforts. We will also help organizations with potentially conflicting visions understand their differences and focus their efforts to improve Greenville.

Our goals are to:

- Develop and house community "report cards" of progress for Vision 2025 focus areas.
- Be the community contact and advocate for Vision 2025 including press contacts and liaison with Leadership Greenville Alumni.
- Identify and develop young, emerging leadership in Greenville and help them become more engaged and connected in the change process.
- Help non-profit and community-driven organizations meet strategic goals that support the Vision by providing consulting, guidance, and support.
- Support individual projects that help reach Vision 2025 initiatives.
- House the strategic plans of the various community organizations in Greenville.

BM: Why and how did the center originate?

RS: Immediately after the November announcement of Vision 2025 to the community, Josh Lane and I wanted to find a way to have a bigger personal impact on the process. Working in association with David Shi and the other task force chairs, we began exploring possibilities.

As Josh and I talked more about the Vision, it began to make more and more sense that an organization like this had to exist if Vision goals were to be realized.

BM: How does the center coordinate efforts with the Leadership Greenville Alumni Association?

RS: While numerous volunteers, including Leadership Greenville Alumni, will be crucial to bringing the Vision to life, there must be oversight by a dedicated staff. The United Way, First Steps for School Readiness, Upstate Alli-