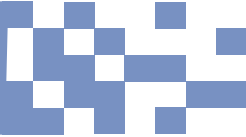


THE Vision's Voice
MEET GREENVILLE FORWARD



presented by The Cliffs Communities
by Becky Mann

Almost every business or organization has at least one: a strategic plan that required hours and hours of effort but was forgotten almost as soon as it was published. Greenville Forward was established to see that Vision 2025 never becomes a dust-gathering shelf ornament.

"The entire purpose of Greenville Forward is to make sure that we don't set aside the good work, the big ideas, the dreams, and the plans that were set forth in Vision 2025," says Baxter Wynn, minister of pastoral care and community relations at First Baptist Church, and chairman of the board of directors for Greenville Forward. "We're keeping people involved. We're keeping people talking and working and motivated and focused on implementing the plans that were set forth in the Vision."

Greenville Forward's mission is to benchmark, measure, facilitate, guide and champion Vision 2025 goals and initiatives and to identify and develop the emerging leaders who can shepherd the vision forward. To accomplish that mission, report cards and an annual report on progress are developed, and an annual survey is conducted to assess community perceptions on performance toward goal attainment. The organization works to identify young leaders and to give them the tools they need including educational programs and networking forums to get involved in vision dialogues and initiatives.

Greenville Forward provides consulting, guidance and support for non-profit and community-driven organizations that can enhance vision progress by meeting their own strategic goals. At the same time, Greenville Forward identifies and supports community projects that are the focus of vision efforts and works to forge collaborations



An graphic explanation of the many facets of Vision 2025. For more information, contact Russell Stall at 233-8443 or rstall@greenvilleforward.com

and alliances that can serve as catalysts for positive change. Finally, Greenville Forward works to keep the community informed about the Vision and community needs, so that people understand where Greenville stands with respect to Vision goal attainment.

The organization's staff consists of Executive Director Russell Stall and Program Director Brock Koonce. Serving on the Greenville Forward board with Wynn are Alan Hamada, Rockwell Automation; Jim Burns, Greenville County Council; Audrey Dodson, Diversity Leadership Academy, Richard Riley Institute of Public Policy; Ben Haskew, Greater Greenville Chamber of Commerce; Curtis Harkness, Greenville Technical College; David Johnstone, Charles Townes Center at Sterling School; Josh Lane, Ferebee Lane; Deb Richardson Moore, Triune Mercy Center; Seldon Peden, Ashton Group/Urban League; Liz Seman, Hands On Greenville; Christina Schlieffer, Luz de Luna Marketing; Michelle Shain, Greenville City Council; David Shi, Furman University; and Marcus Williams, Michelin.

Greenville Forward grew out of a Leadership Greenville idea that someone or something be dedicated to monitoring Vision progress. Very quickly, Wynn says, the decision was made to create a separate, independent organization with individuals dedicated to waking up in the morning to do exactly that. With a \$300,000 grant from the Community Foundation of Greenville and \$50,000 from the Hollingsworth Fund, Greenville Forward began moving the Vision forward.

Vision initiatives are now making strong progress, Wynn says, because of the energy and passion of

the people involved. Greenville Forward, he explains, puts those people together. "We're sort of a central clearinghouse when people are interested in a particular project," he says. "We put them together in the same room with other people that they may not have known before."

In every area of the Vision 2025 plan – arts, aviation, diversity, economy, education, environment, talent retention, families, health, international issues, parks, sense of place, planning and transportation – progress is being made. As examples, Wynn cites the Families and Social Services task force, which currently is looking at issues including homelessness and alcohol and drug addiction services.

"Whether it's the folks interested in the arts, parks and recreation, transportation – any one of those task forces – there are passionate people willing to give time, effort, and blood, sweat and tears to improve the quality of life in the community," he says. "I can constantly amazed at the energy in this community, at the people that are committed to our future and making that future brighter. That may sound like fluff, but it's just absolutely a true statement." ■



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.

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