

Envision 2020
Advertiser Column for September 29, 2002 edition

From the Director
Lynn Beshear, Executive Director

This column is being written on September 11, 2002 – a landmark anniversary in our country’s history. The timing of this writing is especially fitting because this week Envision rolled out its ninth task force – **Human Relations and Diversity**.

As the almost 3,000 names were read aloud from Ground Zero this morning, we were bombarded with a wide range of emotions – residual shock that this could happen, anger, overwhelming sadness for the victims’ families, resolve to preserve our freedoms while mourning a past way of life that will never return.

Listening to the assortment of names that were read, it was clear that our country’s citizens are the most diverse in the world!

So how does commemoration of 9-11 tie in with Envision 2020?

On this task force, there are names like Taylor, Paek, Gisi, Bhuta, Segal, Jones and Kim. Like all eight preceding task forces, the volunteers are representative of the region, and they are the most diverse group of any task force to date - each from a distinctive culture and each vitally concerned about how folks live together in their chosen home - Central Alabama’s River Region.

Indeed, the first conversation over lunch in December 1999, which ultimately led to the creation of the Envision process, was about the need for better human relations in Montgomery, a topic not new to anyone. At that catalytic lunch meeting, it was clear that the best way to improve race relations was to find things upon which we can agree and focus our energies there. And thus, the regional process that we all now know as Envision 2020 was born.

Working Together. Working Wonders. That is the flagship goal of Envision 2020. And it is the belief of the board and task force participants that if we can work together successfully, we will surely *work wonders* in our five counties. And so it was particularly appropriate that the **Human Relations and Diversity Task Force** had its first meeting the week of this historic anniversary.

The task force’s goal, like all Envision goals, requires that all of us stretch a bit out of our usual comfort zone and strive to become our best selves, both individually and collectively. The goal is: *A community of people, who in the spirit of unity are proud and confident of their diversity and committed to the success of each and the excellence of all.*

Just as the most interesting works of art or fabrics are composed of a variety of colors, shapes, sizes and textures, our region and our towns are more exciting because of the

variety of citizens who live here – people of all colors, beliefs, abilities and interests. And just as fabric must have all threads woven together to preserve its strength and wholeness, so must the people of Central Alabama use their strength through working together to weave our own prosperous future.

As with the preceding eight task forces, volunteers on the **Human Relations and Diversity Task Force** will spend their early meetings gathering information about the region focusing on what is presently available to address concerns that relate the goal. Using the hundreds of ideas shared in the initial 15 public idea-gathering meetings as a foundation, along with the results of their own research, they will set about putting the “meat on the bones” of the strategies of the **Human Relations and Diversity Goal** in the Envision 2020 Plan.

Task Forces: First Public Report Meeting – Huge Success

Theme: Celebrating the People, Progress and Future of Central Alabama’s River Region Autauga, Elmore, Lowndes, Macon and Montgomery Counties

A short-term and highly energetic task force has been working since early summer to plan Envision’s first annual public report meeting.

Citizens of the five-county River Region will get an update on progress on the long range strategic plan they helped prepare at Envision 2020's first annual public report meeting on Oct. 17.

The meeting, to which the public is invited, will be at the Montgomery Civic Center from 5:15 to 7:15 p.m. This meeting is free.

Now 9 task forces with 402 volunteers are at work. Leaders of those task forces will give reports at the Oct. 17 meeting on their progress to date. Task forces scheduled to report are:

1. Downtowns and Riverfronts
2. Economic Development
3. Events, Sports and Programs
4. Financing Public Services
5. Health, Wellness and Healthcare Delivery
6. Human Relations
7. Planning and Zoning
8. Roads and Mass Transportation
9. Tourism

The additional 16 task forces will begin work in coming months.

A portion of the annual report meeting will be devoted to an introduction to the culture of Korea to celebrate the success of River Region cooperation in attracting Hyundai Motor Manufacturing to this area. Mr. Y.S. Kim, CEO of Hyundai Motor

Manufacturing Alabama and other officials from Hyundai, along with their families, will participate in that portion of the evening.

Officials of the company said one factor in the company's decision to come to Alabama was the level of cooperation among the various governmental entities within the River Region.

In Other Action:

Planning and Zoning

Chair, Joel Duke – use his photo

Planning and Zoning – or Land-Use Planning, as zoning is often called, continues to gather information based on important questions: How do we preserve green areas? How do we address the planning needs of small communities? How do we balance transportation with pedestrians? How do we enforce current regulations? Who decides where public buildings, such as libraries are built? Not easy or quickly answered questions! The Task Force has created three subgroups to do further research as the foundation of making recommendations and taking action.

Health/Wellness/Healthcare Delivery

Chair, Dr. Don Williamson - use his photo

Health, wellness and healthcare delivery are critical issues - especially if they are not available – either due to economic situations, lack of transportation, or lack of knowledge. This task force has broken their task into more manageable subgroups to look at three vital issues: (1) Access and Coordination; (2) Prevention and Wellness; (3) Recruitment and Retention of healthcare professionals and auxiliary personnel. Task force members plan to develop a model that can be used in other areas that have both urban and rural communities.

Grant-writing workshops:

The nine active task forces are learning how to fish! One of the fundamental principles of Envision is development of citizens' skills to ensure independence for growth and progress of current organizations and agencies within the five-county region. Knowing that “teaching citizens how to fish” rather than “handing them a fish” can have far-reaching positive results, a two-part grant-writing workshop has been provided recently for task force members. These workshops have been well received and plans are to continue them as additional task forces are formed.

How to get involved

1. Go to the Website at envision2020.org to view the entire plan.
2. Call 269-0224 to sign up for a task force.
3. Use the Envision Plan in all other organizations with which you are affiliated as a guide in activities and planning for the future. You do not have to be on an Envision Task Force to implement the plan – the good news is the plan has already done a lot of the work for you and expresses the will of your friends and neighbors – you can't go wrong by using it as a roadmap.
4. Call us at 269-0224 to have a speaker come to your meeting.

5. Share this positive information with everyone you know – all of us working together can make a difference.
6. Attend the October 17 public report meeting at the Montgomery Civic Center from 5:15 to 7:15 p.m.