

A Strategic Summer in Bibb County

An appropriate tagline, or motto, for this summer might be “A Strategic Summer in Bibb County.” While that will certainly be true for me, I hope it also becomes a staple for many others in Bibb County, too. Although summer offers a welcome respite for many people, especially students and educators, life does continue.

This is a very important summer in the history of Bibb County for many reasons. We are kicking off the Bibb County Farmers Market in June, something I will discuss again in this column before the Market opens June 12. And, you’ll be seeing plenty about it from Helen Dunnavent in her weekly series of articles.

Equally important, however, are two other initiatives underway that will hopefully generate a similar buzz. The first is the formation of a Leadership Bibb Alumni Association, and the second is the renewal of the Bibb County Strategic Plan. They are separate endeavors, yet they are connected in an important way---they require YOUR participation in shaping Bibb County’s future.

Let’s first examine the Alumni Association...why have one? For starters, Leadership Bibb has prepared and inspired 55 adults and 24 youth in the last few years to get involved and work for the good of the county. What is the use of training these good people and not offering ways to get them involved? After all, that’s one of the main objectives of leadership---to get people involved!

The association will be formed and led by leadership alumni, but membership is open to anyone. If you wish to join, contact our office (if you haven’t already done so) by phone at 205-926-3117 or by email at mdh0007@auburn.edu

One of the immediate goals of the Leadership Bibb Alumni Association will be to help facilitate and get people involved in the renewal of the Bibb County Strategic Plan. The 2004-2009 Plan is expiring, and Alabama Power Company’s Economic Development division will be helping to renew the plan for 2009-2014.

Exactly what is a strategic plan? A Google search will net about 38 million results, but the best and simplest way to define a strategic plan is to view it as a road map that determines where an organization or community is headed, how it will get there, and how it will know if it reaches its destination.

The new plan will be shaped from two participation sessions---one on Tuesday evening, July 21 and another on Thursday evening, July 30. Exact times and locations will be announced soon. For now, though, save those dates and plan to participate in this renewal, whether you are an educator, public servant, business owner, student, or a concerned citizen interested in working to improve Bibb County and its natural, cultural and economic assets.

This may sound painful and challenging, and indeed it probably will be if it’s approached in the right way. Honestly, had someone asked me 15 years ago about participating in something like this, I might have said “why do you want my input? Go to the big shot politicians and let them do what they’re elected to do.”

If only I had known what Extension and the Auburn University Economic and Community Development Institute have since learned---that increasing the quantity of leaders is the best way to long term community prosperity. Come and help make Bibb County a better place to live for us and our children!