

Allendale County Promise Zone Town Hall

USC-Salkehatchie campus, Allendale, July 8, 2015

Facilitators: Charles Weathers, Andy Brack

Q: What are Allendale County's strengths?

- Dedicated people wanting positive change
- Quality health care providers
- Four-lane highway so you can go anywhere
- USC-Salkehatchie dormitory
- Rural community, but 50 miles from anywhere; in great space; accessible
- Major agriculture production
- Rural hospital competitive against any
- Four-year degrees here
- Railroads
- Airport
- Strong relationship with institutes of higher learning (USC; Denmark Tech)
- Beautiful nature sites for hunting, fishing, trails
- Farmers market
- Library
- Theatre
- Strong arts group
- A few large companies
- Have a state-certified Community Development Corporation

Q: What is your vision for Allendale County for 2035?

- Prosperous college town
- Grow from 9,000 to 30,000 people
- Sound infrastructure
- Nationally-recognized school system, pre-K to 12
- Larger recreational facilities with lots of options
- New hospital
- Reduction in crime
- Increase in traffic/more motel rooms because 1-95 won't be able to handle traffic; 700 motel rooms, restaurants
- Renters come to town
- Educated work force

- Influx of retail businesses (preference is for local, but will take anything)
- Companies bring in big jobs to support community
- State-of-the-art early development center
- People living and working here
- Fire protection for entire county
- Apprenticeships/youth apprenticeships that are a standard part of education
- Public transportation
- Global connection to outside world
- Greater percentage of citizens who own their business
- Housing that everyone can be in
- Community works together for community interests

Q: What would you do to grow jobs in Allendale County?

- Quality education for an educated workforce
- Quality of life improvements
- Public safety/safe neighborhoods
- Capital investment for businesses
- Promoting the county (web site) to tell its story
- Expanding healthcare facilities
- Improved housing
- Positive advocacy of our message
- High school vocational education
- Youth entrepreneurship
- People working together without power struggles
- Better child care
- Recreation for adults and children
- Good YMCA

Q: What would you suggest to improve education in Allendale County?

- More resources
- More healthy meals
- After-school programs, tutorials
- Retention of quality teachers
- Vocational education classes
- New facilities
- More local teachers; fewer foreign teachers
- Continuity in administration from the school board
- Grammar and cursive writing
- Apprenticeships for business

Q: What would you suggest to reduce crime in Allendale County?

- More parental involvement
- Arrest bad guys; enforce current laws
- Adequate resources, such as to implement the Broken Window concept
- Convince jurors to convict criminals legally -- educate jurors
- Address chemical dependencies
- Parents/social workers in school
- Have the punishment fit the crime
- More mentoring and positive role models
- Transitional reentry programs for people getting out of prison
- Identify at-risk kids and provide mentoring programs
- Prison-reentry program
- Reduce dilapidated property
- Officers to be mentors

Q: What are some impediments or barriers to change in Allendale County?

- Money
- Communication (ineffective between county and entities in county)
- "Buddy system" -- the good ol' boy system
- Lack of jobs and skilled workers
- Lack of term limits for officials
- Lack of working together
- Hidden agendas
- School system (people won't come here because of reputation)
- Lack of community leadership ("If we don't have it, we won't grow")
- Proximity to Charleston or Savannah, making it too easy for someone to live or work somewhere else
- Lack of community involvement
- Lack of civic clubs
- Nothing to do for anyone who moves here; few restaurants or amenities
- Internet access
- Cell phone service
- Decreasing population
- Lack of public transportation
- Why aren't we marketing?
- No easy entry into the marketplace
- Stop badmouthing ourselves
- Have had 12 school district superintendents over 14 years; no leadership continuity

Q: If you had only One Big Idea to make the county better, what would it be?

- Develop 100 acres for housing, retail business
- High school tech school
- Cultural/social shift in community (adult activities, after school programs, draw parents in; adult education)
- Infrastructure restoration, sewer, stormwater
- Internet access
- Regional farmers market
- Distribution of agricultural products to the country through railroad hub in Fairfax
- Grow more stuff for SC markets
- Long-term tax incentives for businesses and land
- Job training program
- A world-class amusement park
- YMCA
- Recreational facilities, including a golf course
- More grocery stores
- Marketing to get people here
- Build/remake the community