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Mayor Dan Hollingsworth's Ruston 21 development plan will help to revitalize the local community.

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## Hollingsworth plans Ruston restoration: Area residents urged to 'plug' into new Ruston 21 development plan

**By: Emily Lafleur**

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Out with the old and in with the new, well not exactly according to the Ruston 21 city development plan freshly launched from the desk of Mayor Dan Hollingsworth.

Hollingsworth said it is important when managing anything to keep in mind long-term effects, plans and goals.

"I saw a need for a plan for the future of our community development," Hollingsworth said. "[The city] cannot just leave such things of importance up to chance."

He said Ruston 21 is the prospective plan that will define Ruston in the 21st century. He said the city hired architect Ken Tipton of Tipton Associates to construct an effective action plan.

"Tipton is a particularly talented individual who has a gift for being very concise and organized," he said. "Tipton also helped lead architectural development efforts [for student housing] at Tech."

Hollingsworth also said he wants Tech to be part of the true community initiative of Ruston 21.

"[Tech] is the biggest working machine in Ruston; therefore we have to [formulate] ways to enhance the school along with taking advantage of the benefits we gain from [Tech]," he said. "The city has to be a mirror of the school."

Stuart Clason, economic development administrator, said there are four main aspects that must be reflected in Ruston 21.

"We must develop a fully comprehensive transportation plan, a [suitable] economic plan based on what citizens want, a future land usage plan that identifies and drives a structure for zoning ordinances and also a commonly missed objective on how to implement or to make all [of the above] plans happen," he said.

Clason stressed another crucial aspect that is intertwined with the projected success of Ruston 21.

"We encourage residents to take initiative in their city developmental interests," Clason said.

"Whether you are a Tech student, Tech professor or long time resident of Ruston [the city] wants people to take ownership of their community and get plugged in."

Trevor Torres, development intern at the city of Ruston and a senior speech communication major, said Ruston is on its way to better days as the Ruston 21 action plan includes new construction and restoration strategies.

He said this is a huge project which will only enhance Ruston's image.

"Ruston 21 will build upon the city's reputation as a leader in higher education, commerce and culture," he said.

Of course, there will be challenges ahead which include hard work and community involvement in order for Ruston to reach its full potential said Clason.

He expanded on hurdles the city will face.

"Community buy-in along with an overall implement plan is the [bulk] of the challenges," Clason said.

He said due to the country's current economic status, funding for Ruston 21 will have to be creatively approached.

"Basically, things cost money, and money is tight on the federal, state and local levels," Clason said. "Where [will] the money come from? Well, [the city of Ruston] is hoping to get citizens to buy in and visualize what the value of getting their funding and support will do for the community."

Clason said the beginning steps for Ruston 21 are conversing with the community to see exactly what citizens want.

"We are just now beginning to write the chapters of the master plan," he said.

Clason said he encourages Tech students to make Ruston a place they would like to call home one day, even after graduation.

"I challenge students to get involved and make this city one they want to stay at," he said. "With Ruston 21, [hopefully] students will see they don't have to go somewhere else to obtain the lifestyle they want."

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