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[FYI/Events](#)

[Editorials](#)

[Editorial Columns](#)

[Letters to the](#)

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[Obituaries](#)

[Classifieds](#)

[Legal Notices](#)

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[Archives](#)

[Staff](#)

[Advertising Rates](#)

[Circulation](#)

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[Forms](#)

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### Care enough to weigh in on

[Rick Hohlt](#), *Publisher*

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There are few issues more important than growth and development and health care in a municipality, no matter its size.

Both of these topics directly affect residents' quality of life and can determine the direction of a city's future.

Ruston is on the cusp of making advancements in the areas of growth and health care, and the city is encouraging residents to get involved.

On Wednesday, Mayor Dan Hollingsworth will reveal the city's plan for the 21st century. The blueprint hopefully will strike a balance between developing a city that attracts and retains business and retaining its small town charm. That's a tall order, but with collaboration and residents' input, it can be achieved.

The consultants hired to draw up Ruston's master plan aren't creating a design and handing it over to us. Instead, they're presenting a base to provide us with a strong starting point. From there, focus groups and residents will confront Ruston's future challenges, including traffic, infrastructure and business development.

If you care about what the city looks like in the next 10 or 20 years, get involved. Hollingsworth is opening up the city's future plan to residents, and we should take advantage of the opportunity.

For a preview of the "Ruston 21" plan, head to the Ruston Civic Center at 11:45 a.m. Wednesday and see what you can do to contribute.

Another occasion for residents to weigh in on community matters comes as the Lincoln Health Foundation seeks information about health care here.

The group is conducting phone interviews and also will gather community members to gauge their opinions of local health care needs.

We have a unique opportunity to direct how the proceeds from the sale of Lincoln General Hospital will be re-invested in our community. It's a chance to find the gaps and fill them, and it could really

make a difference in people's lives.

If you get a call to participate in this survey, spend a few minutes answering the questions. When a group seeks the opinion of residents in an effort to better the community, we have a responsibility to participate.

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