

The New Leland Initiative Futures Discussion

At early-2008, Leland has a number of possible future directions to consider.

Discussion of **Futures** items

Facts: Our Population Mix

- ❑ The Mainstreet study done in 2002 pointed out that our dominant age segment was 36-58, with the 18-35 crowd leaving Leland to find jobs and the over-59 crowd leaving to retire. The 36-58yo segment worked outside of Leland, leading the study group to conclude that Leland was considered a ‘good place to live and raise a family’. Increasing the number of entry-level skilled jobs would attract more of the 18-35 crowd, with possible trickle-down to the other age segments (barring promotion out of area, of course).

What ‘mix’ do we want?

- ❑ Leland must continue to grow its residential quality of life—our strong suit at this point. This value-set must not be compromised by other initiatives. QoL initiatives include standard community stability/safety factors, but also includes access to recreation, property values stability, aesthetics, and proximity to non-Leland venues (e.g. Greenville arts).
- ❑ Leland is already keen to grow its tourist/visitor base, and many factors contribute to make this a likely scenario.
- ❑ Leland could also become an IT technology leader quickly, due to overall low Delta technology adoption rates. With the presence of Tech info, and a ready user of IT skills in nearby Stoneville, a few simple initiatives could rapidly propel Leland to a recognized leadership position.
- ❑ As Leland increases its workforce/youth improvement success, so too will its attractiveness to industry increase. Additional baseline industry firms might open facilities here, due to location, QoL, and technologically superior workforce.

Tourist center at the new intersection?

- ❑ The MS-MSA study suggested acquiring the old Baker Gin (across from the Henson museum) for development into a Leland Welcome Center, or securing some other nearby property. With the current plans for the new highway intersection nearby, we might consider calling it a “Delta Welcome Center” and use it to establish Leland as a ‘center’ of the Delta. We could hopefully host webcams to other delta venues—perhaps even with ‘live concierge’ capabilities.

Technology Exports

- ❑ Stoneville Leland can choose to develop tech-export capabilities, from simple ringtones to complex smart-phone software, from simple “I was there” audio-video histories of our elders to new-music works. In the short term, we can simply export advanced communications (e.g. webcams, webcasts, media creation) to nearby areas as they get up to speed, but eventually we will need to produce ‘products’ and not only ‘services.’

Technology testing center

- ❑ The basic computer certifications are products of CompTIA, and require testing centers. IT professionals seeking certification from this international firm must travel to a testing center—often multiple times—to complete their computer-based exams. There are no testing centers in MS north of Jackson, and none within 90-100 miles of Greenville. Setting up a testing facility is straightforward, but requires franchise fees from one of two authorized firms. This is nonetheless a simple matter to implement, and one that immediately creates public visibility for Leland.

Interactive website with multi-media history

- ❑ Leland could leverage investments in youth/workforce training by having them develop an advanced, interactive, media-rich website. The site might be a map of Leland, with pop-ups of history, video, music, webcams, etc.