

Vision 2020: 'A down payment on the Harbor's future'

The Grays Harbor County Commissioners and the Vision 2020 Committee are looking for citizens willing to look into the future to catch a glimpse of what the Harbor will look like in 15 to 20 years and beyond.

This will be a comprehensive view, including a look at school facilities and educational systems, city and county governance, sports and sporting venues, medical facilities and health care, access to arts and entertainment, infrastructure improvements, a welcoming business climate blended with a preservation of the natural way of life we enjoy on Grays Harbor.

With the help of Jason Robertson from Barney & Worth, we will pattern this effort on similar successful campaigns in Greater Peoria, Ill., and Hillsboro Ore. This will be a planning and "action" document that will not end up on a shelf but will continually be appraised and adjusted as time goes by.



Mike Wilson
My Turn

Our hope is that we can enlist the help of all the citizens of Grays Harbor in combination with the efforts of all the cities and county government to have a unified approach to determining our future.

What would be a special-interest area that you might be interested in? A new theater or ballpark? Civic art or housing growth in rural areas? Walking trails? Handicapped accessibility? Public transportation or animal control?

Maybe all of the above.

These and hundreds of similar concerns will be fair game for discussion.

We know from the public interest expressed at our organizational meeting at the Rotary Log Pavilion in Aberdeen earlier this spring that we have appealed to a large group of citi-

zens from a broad spectrum of Grays Harbor.

How about you? Are you willing to dedicate a small bit of time to fashion a future that will benefit your children and grandchildren?

Could you see yourself contributing some small sum, perhaps as little as the cost of a cup of coffee or a latte, to make this venture successful?

Several weeks ago, fellow Commissioners Bob Beerbower, Al Carter and myself went to the Vision 2020 Committee with a check and a challenge. We were willing to *invest* an initial \$50,000 to jumpstart this campaign and set an example that we hope will be matched by other cities, businesses and interested citizens for the future of our communities.

Notice the emphasis on "invest." Being naturally frugal individuals, we expect this investment to create a successful product that will pay dividends for many years.

Many of us have regretted the fact that Grays Harbor has not experi-

enced the growth that we have seen in other areas of the state, such as Seattle, Vancouver or even Thurston County. Conversely, we have not experienced the traffic congestion, urban sprawl or building moratoriums because of unchecked growth.

On the Harbor, we are now seeing a surge in home building, business location and tourism in unprecedented proportions.

Because we have lagged behind these other areas, we have a unique opportunity to profit by their bad experiences and "get it right" the first time here in our hometowns.

Can we count on you to help?

If so, you can begin by attending a meeting from 10 a.m. until noon Aug. 23 at the Rotary Log Pavilion. Jason Robertson will address us on how to take the first steps to our bright new future.

If a day meeting is not suitable for you, don't worry. We will be scheduling subsequent meetings as we strive to involve as many people as possible

in this important process.

Let us use as our example the early citizens of Aberdeen. Led by Sam Benn, they were willing to roll up their sleeves and lay rails into the city. That step insured that Aberdeen would share in modern commerce. I believe that work ethic is still alive and well everywhere on the Harbor. That is the wellspring we wish to tap in order to get going on this project.

Please join us. You won't regret it!

The Grays Harbor Community Foundation has established a fund so that it may act as the "fiscal agent" for Vision 2020. The public is encouraged to donate to support the Building a Sustainable Grays Harbor Vision 2020 Program. Tax-deductible donations may be made to:

The Grays Harbor Community Foundation, P.O. Box 615, Hoquiam, 98550.

Please make note of the purpose.

Mike Wilson of Aberdeen is a Grays Harbor County commissioner.