



## Ruston 21 Ruston 21 Community Core Planning Takes Place

by Mary Margaret Storey

The City of Ruston has engaged the professional services of an internationally recognized planning firm, Sasaki Associates, to assist the city in the creation of a comprehensive development plan for the Community Core. This effort is a direct response to citizen expectations communicated through the community visioning process at the initiation of the Ruston 21 planning effort.

Planning will focus on developing a shared community vision for a vital core: exploration will include opportunities to capitalize on existing cultural and civic assets, opportunities to integrate residential neighborhoods with commercial and civic fabric, opportunities to develop destinations for visitors and members of the local community, and opportunities to attract new development consistent with the values and vision of the whole of the Ruston community.

The emphasis is on what Ruston 21 organizers are calling the "community core area," which encompasses the downtown and university areas, as well as extended portions of downtown to the south and the east. "The core is the heart and soul of Ruston which holds its civic treasures and its future," Ruston 21 project consultant Ken Tipton said. "It holds long-standing businesses, a university, historic neighborhoods and community gatherings. We want to assure the long-term vitality of our core, because communities that have sprawl at a high rate are left without a soul."

In addition the team will study infrastructure necessary to support anticipated development, and assess market data to assure that plans are grounded in an achievable reality. The intense planning workshop was conducted over a four day period beginning July 21, 2009. The process engaged multiple community stakeholders gathering information on challenges and aspirations as well as evaluating planning options in an effort to find the optimum approach for core development. Ruston 21 Community Visioning Day, which generated feedback from more than 400 city residents in November, provided the principles upon which Ruston 21 is based. This further research is designed to formulate practical strategies based on those principles.

Even though there was a sizable turnout for the Ruston 21 Community Visioning Day held last November and the Regional Meetings held this past February, Ruston Mayor Dan Hollingsworth said that continued interest and participation on the part of the entire community is crucial to the success of all of these efforts. For more information, go to [www.ruston.org/Ruston21](http://www.ruston.org/Ruston21).



Photo courtesy City of Ruston  
The eye-catching water fountain at Railroad Park dazzles.

Lori Faile, Development Coordinator for the City of Ruston, expressed the same concern about community awareness and participation, and invited further inquiries by contacting her at 318-251-8644 or by email at [lfaile@ruston.org](mailto:lfaile@ruston.org).

For more information on Sasaki Associates, visit their website at [www.sasaki.com](http://www.sasaki.com).

Photos courtesy City of Ruston

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