

Major Components of the Delta Rhythm & Bayous Alliance Proposal for Pine Bluff Heritage Tourism and Economic Development

- 1.) *Renovation of the Old Masonic Building to house the Delta Rhythm & Bayous Heritage Center.* The city will provide funding for this renovation in conjunction with other sources. The Center will be devoted to housing the story of Jefferson County's incredible music, film, television, literary, theater, and fine arts traditions. Three entities will occupy floors of the building including the PB/Jefferson County Historical Museum which will focus on exhibits related to film, television, and theater. The Delta Rhythm & Bayous Alliance will occupy a floor focused on music traditions of the area. The Southeast Arkansas Arts and Science Center will work in collaboration with a partner organization to house a timeline of artists in Jefferson County, including UAPB. A potential funding source partner includes the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program and the City of Pine Bluff.
- 2.) *Renovation of the two-story Masonic Temple property at the mid-block on 4th Street or the potential purchase of the former Matthews Hardware store (directly across the street) for the purpose of housing the Arkansas Entertainers Hall of Fame (AEHF).* The AEHF will move from its current space at the Pine Bluff Convention Center to the 4th Street area. It will continue to function under the auspices of the Pine Bluff Convention Center though. Particular consideration will be given to a venue which allows for the growth of future exhibits and administrative space.
- 3.) *Creation of the largest outdoor mural gallery in the United States will occur between the north/south boundaries of 2nd and 4th streets and the east/west boundaries of Walnut and Alabama.* The Delta Rhythm & Bayous Outdoor Gallery will be devoted to illustrating the highlights of music, arts and the bayous throughout the region from Pine Bluff to Greenville, MS. Decorative walls will be installed and painted by artists throughout this downtown corridor along with murals on existing buildings. A total of 75 murals will be completed over a 10 year period. The city will seek easements from property owners to install walls for murals. It will also install or repair sidewalks to accommodate pedestrians. The UAPB Art Department Chair has agreed to provide vital assistance in coordinating the arts aspect of this.
- 4.) *Development of a small outdoor park on the lot located at 238 West 3rd (directly behind the Old Greyhound Station).* This lot will be purchased by the city and will be developed into a mini-park facility with a stage and electrical capacity for musicians and for other related performances. It will include park benches, landscaping, and art.
- 5.) *Establishment of an Arts, Crafts, Antiques & Music Center including a Food Court.* The city will purchase the former Bingo Hall property located on the corner of 4th and Chestnut. This building and its parking lot will serve as a small business

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market. The building, which was formerly a grocery store, maintains a wide open interior floor design which is ideal for sectioning. This would allow stalls for individual business owners to rent in selling locally made products, antiques, crafts, music, art, books, and other related cultural items. The large parking lot adjacent the building will serve as a food truck court. The UAPB Business Incubator can be contracted to help provide services to business.

- 6.) *Zoning for 4th Street.* The Pine Bluff City Council will revise zoning ordinances to maintain 4th Street for new business establishments such as museums, local arts galleries, cafes/restaurants, clubs/entertainment, and recreation. Existing establishments on this street will be grandfathered.
- 7.) *Creation of the Jefferson County Civil Rights Freedom Trail and Phone App.* In order to provide social context for the creation of area music, particularly the blues, a walking trail of signs and markers adorned with art will be developed which pays tribute to legendary civil rights leaders from the area and the events which defined local freedom struggles from the 1800s to the present. A potential trail could include the downtown area and extend to the Saracen Walking Trail & University Avenue. This is designed, in part, to help attract to Pine Bluff the many tourists who come to Little Rock for civil rights tourism.
- 8.) *Addition of Bayou Bartholomew-related signage and/or kiosks at the Delta Rivers Nature Center and at the Curtis Merrill Landing.* In order to provide more understanding of the importance of Bayou Bartholomew, the Delta Rivers Nature Center has agreed to erect informational signage on its walking trails. Signage at the Curtis Merrill landing and walking trails will be installed which relates directly to the many personal stories of the bayou such as baptisms, moonshine, hunting/fishing, and others.
- 9.) *The Delta Blues & Heritage Olympics Festival & The World's Longest Bayou Raft Race.* The Cities of Pine Bluff, Arkansas and Greenville, MS, in conjunction with the Delta Rhythm and Bayous Alliance, will sponsor the Delta Blues & Heritage Olympics Festival which will be a two day event alternating each year in both towns. One day will be devoted to competitions by Delta-only towns in areas such as quartet singing, Greek stepping, cotton picking, Gospel choirs, three on three basketball, fishing, blues guitar playing, and other activities. Prizes will be awarded to individuals and groups. The second day is devoted to concerts highlighting blues, jazz, and southern soul acts. Later in the year, the city will sponsor "The World's longest Bayou Raft Race." This race will attract rafters, kayakers, and paddle boats which will compete along a prescribed course on Bayou Bartholomew. Prizes will be given for categories of boats with no motorized water vehicles allowed.
- 10.) *Creation of an AETN Documentary on the Music Traditions of the Delta Rhythm & Bayous Corridor.* The City of Pine Bluff, in conjunction with other sources such as the Arkansas Humanities Council, will provide funding for a full length documentary

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featuring the development of music legends from the region. This will serve as a powerful branding tool to help the general public associate music

- 11.) *Creation of a City of Pine Bluff full-time position entitled "Heritage Tourism Grant Writer."* The City of Pine Bluff will create a position for a full-time grant writer with the purpose of writing grants for the specific projects delineated in this document. This person will also work directly with the grant writers from the Della Rhythm & Bayous Alliance.
- 12.) *Passage of a noise ordinance for trains passing through downtown PB.* The city council of Pine Bluff will pass a noise reduction ordinance for trains passing through Pine Bluffs downtown area. Precautionary measures will be employed to warn drivers of oncoming trains such as those being utilized in other towns with such ordinances
- 13.) *Creation of a Delta Rhythm & Bayous Highway Website.* The city of Pine Bluff will create a Della Rhythm & Bayous Highway Website which will feature the music and bayous history of the entire region, cultural events, and profiles of interesting people from the region. It will also include youth-developed videos and youth-produced music featuring the story of the region. This youth component of the website will be created at the Southeast Arkansas Arts and Science Center. After the creation of the website, member cities will pay annual fees for maintenance
- 14.) *Passage of an undetermined amount for a city sales tax.* The city of Pine Bluff will pass a sales tax to help provide funding for the aforementioned projects. Because the Della Rhythm & Bayous Alliance believes that more consensus is needed among the public regarding the types of projects funded and the extent of funding the public is willing to provide, the amount is yet to be determined.
- 15.) *Creation of the Pine Bluff Progress Board.* To accommodate multiple parties seeking major funding through the city of Pine Bluff and to better assure the public of transparency throughout the process, the Pine Bluff Progress Board will be formed which will include an official from city government, county government, Simmons Bank, Pine Bluff Rising, the Della Rhythm & Bayous Alliance and one citizen from each ward in Pine Bluff. This group shall provide oversight of the entire project to insure that goals are being met in a timely manner and to help facilitate communication with the public.

Overall Cost for the Proposed Plan: \$40 million

The Delta Rhythm & Bayous Alliance plans to help assist in identifying at least 10% of whatever the final heritage tourism budget is for the plan over a 7 year period.

Delta Rhythm & Bayous Alliance Recommendations for the Pine Bluff City Council

1. Forgo the current resolution before the City Council for the Simmons Go Forward Plan.
2. Allow time (through meetings and informational sessions) for community consensus to develop regarding the amount citizens are comfortable paying in a new tax and the types of initiatives they most value from the Simmons Go Forward Plan, the Delta Rhythm & Bayous Alliance Plan, and any other ideas which may emerge.
3. Re-introduce a new resolution built on the consensus of citizens.
4. Pass the resolution and allow voters to determine whether the package appeals to them.