

FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LAURA STRICKLAND

Not everyone values small town living. Small towns or rural areas are assumed to be less ambitious than urban people. It is assumed that small towns don't know progress and innovation. Some people in a small town reinforce the idea of not having a future by constantly repeating, "I remember when I was a kid, this town had so many stores downtown and now there's nothing."

I challenge each of you to move beyond those thoughts! We are a community of innovation, ambition, growth, teamwork, and most importantly, people. When I share with others what makes Sylacauga special, I immediately say The People. If you think differently, then reflect back to this past weekend when a community rallied together to locate someone who had wandered from their home. No one asked what she had achieved, what her financial status was, which neighborhood she was from, or any other unimportant questions. A community just recognized that a family was missing their loved one and everyone near and far came together to help find her. That is a community: It is the people!

I also watched last year as our "small town" rallied together to support our small business owners through the pandemic. We witnessed many small business owners paying it forward and giving back to others while they themselves were working morning to night for their own survival. That's a community, and I promise you didn't see that happening in urban or metropolitan areas, but it happened right here in Sylacauga.

I challenge everyone in our community to say hello to that person you don't recognize when you are shopping or going to the post office. Smile at someone. I think you will be amazed at the end result when we value our greatest resource: our people! Everything else will begin to fall right into place because we are a "small town!"

Warmest Regards,



SYLACAUGA
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE