

Florida official has advice for making Greenville 'cool'

By E. Richard Walton

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Florida Secretary of State Glenda Hood advised leaders in Greenville Wednesday to avoid a "cookie cutter approach" when it comes to developing a cool city.

Hood, appointed by Gov. Jeb Bush three years ago, said the community has to embrace its biggest strength.



Hood

"I think it's very important that we maintain the character of our old neighborhoods," she said. "And make sure positive growth in one community doesn't negatively impact another."

She said nothing people desire most needs to be surrendered: "safety, livable neighborhoods and strong and diversified businesses."

"Our culture is who we are as a people," said Hood, Orlando's mayor for 12 years. "Remain true to the city's uniqueness."

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Hood said when disagreements develop, face them.

"Try to build a consensus by including the entire community," she said. "Let everybody air their feelings."

Hood said, "Greenville is definitely cool." She said, "The Vision 2025 is certainly focused on that."

Her lecture at the Gunter Theatre is part of a Vision 2025 lecture series. It was sponsored by the Riley Institute of Furman University.

Hood's points hit the nail on the head for Jeannie Tanner, a Furman sophomore.

"It makes sense to try to get communities tied together so that they know each other," Tanner said.

Hood said leaders need to envision a future beyond his or her own back yard.

"We cannot accomplish anything unless we think regionally," she said. "Technology has erased regional boundaries."

George Lachanos, whose family has owned property in the West End for 70 years, said he applauded the public-private business partnerships promoted by Mayor Knox White and City Council.

He said the tax increment districts created by the city have given an infusion of energy in the trendy West End. The city of Greenville has a variety of tax increment districts to spur growth.

David Shi, Furman University's president and Hood's host, summed up her talk: "So much of what Glenda discussed resonates with us."

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