

Whether you visit or stay, Oxford Junction is place to enjoy

This summer Oxford Junction, population 573, came together in times of crisis and fun – in new ways and with a revitalized purpose. This community in the far southeast corner of Jones County was spared catastrophic June flooding, yet, 20 households were flooded and two roads into town were washed out. Evacuating families, filling and placing sand bags, feeding the volunteers and displaced families all came in stride for people who had been working side-by-side on projects for the future of their community the past 18 months as part of the Horizons program.

Community needs identified through Horizons has created an emerging leadership and volunteer corps. It was the voice of 12 year old Tiffany Feuss that helped adults understand the need for babysitting classes in the community – the first class was immediately approved by Horizons/Celebrate Oxford Junction as a way to empower youth of all income levels to develop important childcare and business skills.

“There has also been a concerted effort on the part of Oxford Junction residents and the City Council and Mayor to pool our efforts,” said Jones County Sheriff Mark Denniston, Oxford Junction Horizons steering committee member. “The people in town have decided to get some things done and are working with the city government to make things happen.”

Describing the transportation needs of many residents, Denniston says, “We have many retired elderly in the community on fixed incomes that can’t or don’t drive. We have organized volunteers who provide rides, and we are working with other county groups to establish a long-term solution to this need.”

A clothing drive is underway to supply a clothes pantry; free computer classes were offered through the public library; scholarships are available for youth to attend summer camps; a nuisance property was restored to a delightful home by a Horizons couple who continue to mentor the single parent who purchased the home from them; and many hours have been invested in getting nonprofit status for the Oxford Junction Improvement, Inc. and raising funds so the group can sustain the momentum they have built.

“One goal of Oxford Junction Improvement is to provide grant funding to projects that create skill building opportunities,” said Barb Dabling. “I’ve lived in this town a long time, but Horizons helped me hear perspectives I’ve never heard before. I see things differently. I guess that’s why I ran for city council.”

As a newly elected council person, Dabling says she is confident that there are many residents that believe Oxford Junction has a future, that things can be done and they are willing to work towards that future. “New residents and long-time residents have emerged, some as leaders others as faithful volunteers contributing in their own way. It all adds up to great community.”

One Horizons work group will install “*Burma Shave*” type welcome signs that say:

**Come for a visit...
Or come to stay...
Either way you'll
enjoy...
Our friendly ways...
Oxford Junction.**

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