

GLEN BROWN SR.

1. What is the greatest need for the city at the moment that you would like to address? This is a great question, but it is related to many of the needs of Pine Bluff. We need a better tax base, lending institutions to produce businesses and a quality of life that creates an environment that people would be happy to visit and reside here.

2. What is the greatest need for your ward that you would like to address? Not only in my ward, but all wards need to address flooding, littering and illegal dumping problems.

3. With the defeat of the current 5/8-cent sales tax, how do you plan to work with the city government to facilitate ongoing and future capital improvements? I'm not against a tax that would help Pine Bluff with capital improvements, but we must be reminded that the citizens of Pine Bluff pay some of the highest taxes in the state already. With more shopping areas and department stores, taxes will increase for the residents who live here, as well as visitors who travel through our city.

4. Which improvements are of most importance to you? Rebuilding houses on vacant lots would be one of the most central improvements, especially in the east and west areas of Pine Bluff. We also need improved street lighting and flooding issues repaired.

5. Eleven of the 28 homicide victims in Pine Bluff last year were 18 or younger. What is your plan for helping to improve safety among young people? We will continue to fund our police department and find ways to convey to our youth that there are negative



consequences of committing crimes. I would like to see homicide rates reduced. I understand that law enforcement cannot be in every place in which a crime takes place. However, a program that serves to educate our youth on positive alternatives to crime and crime prevention tips would certainly be a step in the right direction. Weekly family meeting nights with parents and youths could provide a positive dialog between law enforcement and families.

6. How do you plan to help Pine Bluff regain its standing as a retail hub for southeast Arkansas? I have been constantly having conversations with the mayor about asking the chamber to bring more shopping areas and restaurants to Pine Bluff. Some of these issues are for council members to handle, and some are not. As council members, we can make suggestions and assist from a city perspective. Sure, the stores we currently have in the city are great, but I would love to see an Olive Garden, TGIF, IHOP, Marshall's, TJ Maxx, Home Depot, Ross, and other stores in Pine Bluff. With the addition of these stores, nine counties would benefit greatly.

7. What is your plan for attracting families of potential employees at GTL Americas, which will be built 15 miles north of the city but in Jefferson County, to live in Pine Bluff?

I'm not sure about how to get families to move into our area with GTL Americas. That is sometimes a personal matter concerning where to live, but I think that this company will be a great asset to our area, and it will certainly bring new employment opportunities to Jefferson County



KENNETH GRAY SR.

1. What is the greatest need for the city at the moment that you would like to address? The city of Pine Bluff has so many needs and therefore it is important to have progressive leadership that will collaborate with the mayor to tackle issues, particularly for Ward 3. The top of the list is probably revenue. This is the catalyst to address all of the other issues plaguing our progress or growth. Without this, practically everything is idling or on a decline in all areas. No administration would outright reject this with a conscionable mindset if they are putting the city first.

2. What is the greatest need for your ward that you would like to address? Ward 3 needs leadership that progresses crime prevention with more surveillance cameras and drug task force missions. Ward 3 is over-run with vacant/abandoned structures that need to be removed, particularly in the Westside loop area. If the houses are going to be removed, we need a land redevelopment plan. We also need leadership that focuses on bringing socioeconomic resources to improve social and economic well-being. These resources exist but need a connector. I am prepared to serve in that capacity.

3. With the defeat of the current 5/8-cent sales tax, how do you plan to work with the city government to facilitate ongoing and future capital improvements? In the absence of a dedicated tax to grow the city, our focus must shift toward retention, expansion, and the start of new business.



It is my goal to engage the Westside Business Association and other business owners in the Third Ward to understand what would assist in the retention and growth of their business. The city needs to aggressively control spending in the hope of not losing our essential services and at the same time complete those projects that will generate immediate revenue. It is going to require critical thinking and business practices through those that can leverage their influences to attract more dining options, and shopping choices that adapt to the needs of the people without jeopardizing the local businesses that have long been established. I can bring those opportunities to the city council in the form of legislation.

4. Which improvements are of most importance to you? It is important that we prepare the next generation of entrepreneurs to start new businesses. The UAPB incubator and The Generator are important to developing that talent. I also refer to my first statement on city/Ward 3 needs. We must clean up and redevelop our residential and commercial districts so that we can retain and recruit population. These actions will sustain and increase revenue to continue capital improvements.

A most notable improvement would be to remove the negative stigma associated with our public display of the city council as the outsiders look upon us as a joke or believe that we can't understand simple legislation as presented through repetitive questions and failing to recognize the response as given. This drama alone can deter investors, entrepreneurs, or probable new residents wanting to locate here or move back home to where they once resided. No matter how much we promote our city, the city council's public display is a huge part of the equation. All these issues and more are important and are linked. To improve the city and show an impact, we must address education, jobs, housing, blight and social welfare all at the same time.

5. Eleven of the 28 homicide victims in Pine Bluff last year were 18 or younger. What is your plan for helping to improve safety among young people? The Group Violence Intervention is an excellent start to keeping youth safe in our community. I attended the seminar when other city representatives visited Pine Bluff and discussed the effectiveness GVI has had on their community. I support the GVI and would advocate for more funding for that work. I also know developing more relationships between our parks and recreation department and our schools can help with safety. We need to keep our children active and focused on their future.

6. How do you plan to help Pine Bluff regain its standing as a retail hub for southeast Arkansas? We must improve our unemployment rate and overall workforce so that retailers know there is income in Pine Bluff to support their stores. Site selectors for stores are very detailed and if the economy doesn't match their product, they don't come. Therefore, working with our schools to make sure graduates are ready to contribute to the economy is essential. Also, and as stated earlier, we must grow entrepreneurs and their interests. The next William Dillard is living in the Third Ward, but we will never see that entrepreneur manifest if we don't provide opportunities for their development. The Sixth and Main retail and restaurant project is a prime example of the types of action needed.

7. What is your plan for attracting families of potential employees at GTL Americas, which will be built 15 miles north of the city but in Jefferson County, to live in Pine Bluff? As the County seat, Pine Bluff should be a community of choice for everyone getting a job at the GTL plant. We need to create a safe zone surrounding our city. Understanding what other well-mannered cities are doing and bringing those best practices forward through legislation and then enforcing them systematically and broadly in every aspect with a no-tolerance attitude. However, that is not the case, and it has much to do with the challenges I've mentioned in my responses. However, with the progressive leadership that I want to bring to the council alongside other like-minded leaders, we can re-establish the choice designation in our community. Our leaders need to immediately assess the needs of the GTL plant and confer with the local colleges to adapt courses to fulfill those jobs such as technical, welders, chemical technology, environmental specialist, etc. so as the plant progresses to production the workforce will have readily available trained employees

WILLIAM FELLS

1. What is the greatest need for the city at the moment that you would like to address? Improving our quality of life is a great need. To keep residents and attract new ones, we must cultivate good environments. There are areas in the Third Ward that need more street lights, better road conditions, speed humps, and new street signs. We also need a municipal clean team to help reduce roadside waste. The county has a juvenile clean team that works on weekends, which I think we should preserve, but we can cover more ground if the city has a team to cover weekdays.

2. What is the greatest need for your ward that you would like to address? See answer #1.

3. With the defeat of the current 5/8-cent sales tax, how do you plan to work with the city government to facilitate ongoing and future capital improvements? There should be ways to maximize the revenue the city is already collecting. For example, most city departments don't spend their entire budgets each fiscal year. That means they have funds left over at the year that can be redirected toward key priorities. The city should also continually pursue energy efficiency, and investigate ways to reduce our utility expenses in municipal buildings. Our savings may be marginal from this, but when operating on a tight budget, every penny counts. Finally, as a council member, I would support the grant department by identifying grant opportunities that align with the city's objectives and helping them apply for those funds.



4. Which improvements are of most importance to you? Many residents want to see better road conditions, more street lighting, better drainage systems, and more sidewalks. They want the City to hold property owners accountable for blighted structures. They want the City to do its part in creating opportunities that can reduce crime, and attract more activities for families and children. These are important priorities for me because they're important to 3rd Ward residents.

5. Eleven of the 28 homicide victims in Pine Bluff last year were 18 or younger. What is your plan for helping to improve safety among young people? When young people can't find support or opportunity through positive means, they're more likely to search for those things in the wrong places. As responsible adults, from family members to community leaders, we have to work together in providing constructive pathways to support and opportunity. The Group Violence Intervention Program (GVI) was created to do that. The purpose is to connect young people to jobs, mentors, health services, and other resources they need to find support and opportunity. My plan is to support the GVI program by holding the GVI team accountable and making sure they have the resources and staffing they need.

I also plan to do my part in building partnerships with parents, schools, and community organizations, in whatever capacity the City can, to make Pine Bluff a better environment for young people to grow up. Because government officials alone can't succeed in uplifting young people. We also need families to help by promoting structure, discipline, and positive opportunities in children's lives.

6. How do you plan to help Pine Bluff regain its standing as a retail hub for southeast Arkansas?

When I worked for the City, we took the initiative in identifying businesses that people would like to see in Pine Bluff. We contacted those businesses to persuade them to locate here. I plan to continue that outreach as a council member. We can't simply wait for business to come here. We have to knock on their doors, advocate for Pine Bluff, and tell them about our strengths. There is a myth that businesses won't come here because they can't succeed in our market, but that is not accurate. If the right businesses are set up at the right locations, they will succeed. People will patronize them from all over the region. People from all over Southeast Arkansas come to Pine Bluff now regularly to eat and acquire services. Due to our location, we can offer the demand to sustain businesses that people in the region want to patronize.

Once a company does show interest in coming here, we also have to be open to providing incentives they may need to do business here. As long as the incentives are reasonable and benefit the community, I would support them. Finally, to bring in more businesses, we must also work to improve our workforce so they can operate here. As a council member, I would work to connect residents with training programs that are available in the community. Building a stronger workforce is key to not only attracting businesses but also retaining the ones that are here.

7. What is your plan for attracting families of potential employees at GTL Americas, which will be built 15 miles north of the city but in Jefferson County, to live in Pine Bluff? Improving the quality of life is a critical part of attracting new residents. Some areas need better street lighting, road conditions, and drainage. Blighted structures need to be remedied. We need to be business-friendly toward developers to grow our housing supply. The community must have more activities for families to enjoy, whether that's a quality park space or a walking trail down the road from one's house. I plan to work with city departments to cultivate these improvements. The city should also work with local schools to do everything we can in a municipal capacity to create better learning environments, from cleaning up neighborhoods around local campuses to uplifting students through the GVI Program. Helping our school districts create good schools is important because that's what families look for when choosing where they will live. Good schools will also enable local students to obtain jobs at the GTLA facility when it becomes operational. We have several years before the facility becomes operational, but now is the time to start preparing so we'll be well positioned when that time comes.