

Human trafficking to be top priority in 2019 legislative session

By Speaker of the House Philip Gunn

Human trafficking was brought to my attention last year while attending a conference. I always assumed this was a problem other states experienced, not Mississippi. I did not fully understand that this issue takes place all around us; and, like many of you, I



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was unclear on the definition of human trafficking and what it actually encompasses. For that reason, I have made addressing human trafficking in Mississippi a top priority for the 2019 legislative session.

In October, we hosted a one-day conference in Jackson on the issue and brought in experts from around the country. Human trafficking is compelling a person to do any type of work against their will. This includes any form of labor with a commercial exchange accompanied by some type of force, fraud or coercion.

Human trafficking is a \$150 billion a

year industry in our country. Globally, approximately 24.9 million people are enslaved. It is essentially free labor. With trafficking, unlike drugs, you can sell a product (human) repeatedly. If we can remove the profit from this industry, we can perhaps dis-incentivize traffickers and save lives.

Mississippi has strong laws and penalties on its books regarding human trafficking and has a B ranking overall, making it among the top fifteen states with the strongest laws addressing child sex trafficking. We want to do everything we can to get Mississippi to an A rating like our neighbor-

ing states of Louisiana, Tennessee and Alabama.

My goal this session is to increase awareness about all forms of human trafficking—labor and sex trafficking. We can achieve this in several different ways. We must strengthen our agencies to empower survivors and treat them with dignity. We must have consistent identifying measures (among law enforcement, educators, etc.) and responses to exploitation situations. We must remove barriers to identification—exploitation is not inevitable.

The national human trafficking hotline number is 888-373-7888.

Board of Aldermen gives outlook for 2019

EDITOR'S NOTE: Clinton's elected officials were asked to submit their 2019 outlooks. Received responses are published below.

Ricki Garrett Alderman at Large

As we begin the New Year, I would like to wish everyone in Clinton a Happy New Year and share my hopes for a very good year for our city. The month of January is both a looking back at what has been accomplished in the previous year and a looking forward at what is possible for the New Year. Although we have made some progress in 2018, there is still much to be done for our city to be the best it can be.

First, I want to express my appreciation to the Chamber of Commerce and Main Street Clinton for all their efforts to enhance the quality of life for our citizens. We are so fortunate to have events such as Red Brick Roads, Fresh at Five, the Christmas parade, and many others that are brought to us through the volunteer efforts of these organizations. The Clinton Visitor Center, the Clinton Community Nature Center, the Quisenberry Public Library, and our many civic organizations have also enhanced our quality of life through their many activities.

I also want to express my appreciation for our City departments that, every day, provide for our public safety, public works, recreational activities and legally and fiscally sound government. Although we, as a Board of



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Aldermen, make public policy for our city, it is the Mayor and the City employees who carry out the never-ending work of the City.

I hope all of you have had a chance to participate in a Clinton Next program, in order to share with us your vision for the future of Clinton. It is imperative that we make the decisions today that will move Clinton into a positive and successful future. That is going to require developing a long-range development plan for the city, strictly enforcing the City codes, enticing new businesses to Clinton, building much needed housing, and encouraging the rehabilitation of our older, existing neighborhoods. It also requires the full development of Olde Towne and Clinton Boulevard to their maximum potential and the addition of walking and biking trails.

Please join the Mayor and Board of Aldermen in helping make Clinton the city you want it to be. Share your ideas, participate on committees and boards, and take advantage of every opportunity Clinton has to offer.

Jim Martin Ward 2

2018 was a good year. We ended the year with a nice budget surplus. Hopefully, 2019 will be even better.

Street paving, while completed later in the year than anticipated, began in earnest. The ten-year plan to have one-tenth of the roadways paved each year has begun. While the road that you live or work on may



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be further down the list, hopefully you have driven on some of our new smooth roads. It is my hope that we can expedite the initial paving of all the roads, since we are way behind on maintenance, before relying exclusively on the ten-year repaving plan. We had some such advances this year.

We greatly appreciate the Hinds County Board of Supervisors for their contribution to our road paving. Hinds County provided approximately \$1.5 million for the paving for Clinton-Raymond Road, Springridge Road, College Street, Clinton-Tinnin Road, Cynthia Road and Neal Street. That was a nice advance on the initial paving plan.

The Mississippi Legislature agreed on a division of BP settlement funds, which will provide \$1 million to Clinton for infrastructure. The Mayor and Aldermen are reviewing how best to utilize these funds. Some of these funds may go to some severe road restructure areas, rather than just paving.

The Mississippi Legislature passed a bill to divert some of the online sales taxes to cities for infrastructure. While the first funds will not be provided until late 2019, with annual increases in the funds until full funding in 2021, those funds are certainly welcomed. The Mayor and Aldermen are looking to roll back the 2018 tax increase for road work as these online sales tax diversion funds are received.

So, in 2018, we paved \$2.5 million worth of roads. This was the \$1.5 million from Hinds County and \$1 million from the City budget - \$400,000 plus the \$600,000 tax increase. In 2019, we have \$1.1 million in road funds from the City budget, plus the \$1 million from the BP funds.

It is certainly nice to see these road

improvements in 2018 and continuing into 2019 and beyond.

All Clintonians have been encouraged to "buy in Clinton," whenever possible. Positive results have been seen from your efforts. Sales tax revenue continues to increase. We, therefore, know that our businesses are benefiting from your spending habits. Let us all continue to shop and dine in Clinton and invite others to join us. Supporting our present businesses and restaurants encourages other businesses and restaurants to come.

Bill Barnett Ward 3

As I look forward to 2019, I feel good about the positive things that are happening in the city and in Ward Three.

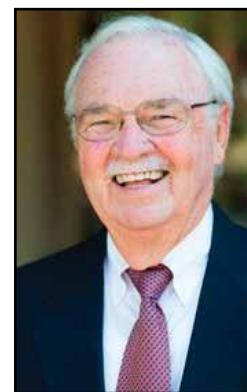
Construction of new homes in our ward make it the fastest growing ward in Clinton. Cedar Place, Copper Creek, and Windsor Plantation homes are going up at a record pace.

With the opening of Fire Station #4, we are able to continue to provide better fire and health service to the citizens in the northern Clinton.

The Clinton Lions Club is working on a \$150,000 grant from Lions Club International along with several other groups on plans for a new Lions Club Park. The new park will be built just south of the old park on Leake Street. The new park, when completed, will be a state of the art park that meets all ADA standards.

As your alderman, I will continue to

cont. on page 3



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