

# Daily World



## DBP generating community involvement

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Turning the community of Helena-West Helena around is a "multi-stepped" process. According to Ben Steinberg, the president of Bancorp South and head of the Delta Bridge Project, there are many steps that must be taken to ensure job growth will succeed and, in turn, revitalization of the town also succeeds.

Steinberg spoke to the Helena-West Helena Rotary Club Wednesday about the works of the Delta Bridge Project and upcoming goals the DBP has for Phillips County.

"We want to be accountable to the community and be transparent, so I want to give you an update of where we are and hopefully Joe (Black) and I and Dr. (Steven) Murray can accept your comments and suggestions," Steinberg stated. "The Delta Bridge Project is really moving forward and I think it has accomplished a lot. The project through the work that we have supported through other groups in the community has generated about \$52 million in Phillips County."

The work of the DBP includes abatement of nuisance properties, removal of abandoned cars and cleaning up of

empty lots. According to Steinberg, the work already has had a positive impact.

The community looks a lot better," Steinberg added. "The reason for that is more than 175 burned out, abandoned houses have been torn down. More than 400 cars have been towed from the roads and that has been done through a partnership with the city."

Another thing the DBP has done is work

with the Chamber on a feasibility study to expand the ethanol and bio-diesel industry



**Ben Steinberg, president of Bancorp South, addresses the Helena-West Helena Rotary Club about the Delta Bridge Project and the work that is going on through that organization. (Mark Haney Photo)**

involvement to make these become a

part of the community. In addition they have played a role in the construction of the Helena Health Foundation's Vasudevan Wellness Center, Southern Place Apartments, which resulted in 20 high-quality units for low income families.

"There are some real exciting projects in the pipeline right now and we really need the community's

reality," said Steinberg.

According to Black, one such project is a master plan for the city for what he called, "connect the dots." In the plan, all of the aspects of the development of the city come into play.

He added that if one aspect of the project were not there, the master plan would not succeed.

"I know a lot of people say that they want jobs to come here, but if the other steps aren't there, the whole project will not succeed," Black stated. "There has to be the education factor, the living quarters, the transportation system and the financing. If all of these are not in place before the jobs come in, it will all collapse."

Black and Steinberg stated that the most important factor in making the DBP successful was communication with the public and work with city and county officials. They added that while there are a number of projects in the works, there is always a niche for anyone who wants to help.

"If your thing is helping renovate Centennial Baptist Church then there's room for you to help," Black stated. "If your thing is helping revitalize Cherry Street, there's room for you to help. It's just a matter of getting involved."