

## White Flag

The current push for ‘red flag’ laws to prevent mass shootings is another small push towards getting us to surrender on the Second Amendment. *USA Today* detailed how thirty people have been detained for making mass shooting threats since the El Paso and Dayton shootings. Oddly enough, the ‘see something, say something’ works when it’s used by parents and friends of the potential perp. A number of these were under eighteen and will now have a record, except, and here’s the catch, in a number of states once you turn eighteen your record is expunged, meaning no matter how much of a crazy threat you were at seventeen now you can pass a background check and get a gun. When politicians are stampeded by the cry of “do something,” that something usually means taking away law-abiding citizens’ guns. A more concrete and useful thing to do would be to change the laws that prevent agencies from seeing criminal records and such from a person’s youth. **DBJ**

## A Good Education

Recent articles in the national media have questioned if a college degree is still worth the money. According to the Brookings Institution, college loans and debt are at all-time highs for young graduates. Some economists say college graduates are not finding the high paying jobs that graduates were accustomed to twenty years ago. “Although higher education may be financially advantageous on average, the flattening of return as costs have continued to rise suggest that college may be an unfavorable financial investment for rising numbers of individuals,” said economist Robert Valetta of the San Francisco Fed in *The Wall Street Journal*.

Be careful of the pundits. A college education is still worth it in the long run as are the trade schools. There is not a “one and only” path to success. There are many. But a good education helps stack the deck to a good life and income.

**DBJ**

## ■ GUEST COMMENTARY

## Delta Strong: United, We All Win

By JON LEVINGSTON



We have all heard the expression, “United we stand, divided we fall.” It has many attributions.

The 6th Century B. C., Greek storyteller, Aesop, illustrated the idea in the fable, “The Four Oxen and the Lion.” The story tells of four oxen huddled together in a field. Standing together, they were able to ward off the interest of a hungry lion. The lion realized he could not kill the oxen when they stood next to each other, as the other three could protect the fourth when attacked. So, the lion walked away and waited. Eventually, the oxen quarreled and, went to separate corners of the pasture to eat. Then the lion was able to attack and kill each one. United they survived, divided they fell.

The concept appears in the New Testament in Mark 3:25,

“And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.” It was used by Founding Father John Dickinson in his pre-Revolutionary War song, “The Liberty Song,” as he wrote, “... By uniting we stand, by dividing we fall.” Perhaps most famously, in the 1858 Lincoln-Douglas Debates, Abraham Lincoln used the phrase to illustrate the idea that the nation could not endure as half slave or half free; rather, it would be one or the other but not both.

A variation on that phrase is illustrated today most effectively by the program created by Frank Howell, executive director of the Delta Council and Tom Gresham, president of Double Quick, Inc. Together, under the umbrella of Delta Council, they conceived a program supported

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## ■ LETTERS

### Kipling’s IF

I thoroughly enjoyed your opening page comments in your August issue. Probably, there hasn’t been a period in the past several decades of American history when Rudyard Kipling’s words “If you keep you head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you ...

“have been more apropos. His words are more relevant today than when he wrote them in 1909. They provide a set of rules for “grown-up” living that’s so missing in today’s society and today’s political world.

Decads ago, when I was in grade school, my teachers

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financially by counties, cities, Chambers of Commerce, business, and individuals throughout the nineteen county Mississippi Delta region. The idea is to use the collective resources of the region to actively, aggressively recruit industries and new economic opportunities to our region of Mississippi. Supporters of Delta Strong understand and appreciate that bringing jobs to any part of the Delta is good for all the Delta.

This thinking has been proven in other regions of the country and, even in our state: the Golden Triangle LINK, is a regional economic development agency focusing on Lowndes, Clay, and Oktibbeha Counties. By working together, those counties have enjoyed great success in attracting over \$5.9 billion in new investment and adding over 6,000 new jobs to the region.

As conceived by Howell and Gresham, Delta Strong is a regional branding, marketing, and business attraction program aimed at bringing manufacturing opportunities to the region. It is designed to assist local economic development officers discover and recruit new industry to their communities. As the economic developer for Coahoma County, I know this idea works. We recently concluded a yearlong recruitment of an outstanding Chicago area steel manufacturing company which will provide a minimum of fifty new jobs for our community. We made contact with this company only through the recruiting efforts of Delta Strong. While our local city and county officials, along with the Mississippi Development Authority, and the Delta Workforce Development Area organization, performed an outstanding job putting together the incentives necessary to attract the business, the opportunity would not have been possible without Delta Strong's initial recruitment and introduction to us of the business.

Make no mistake about it, we acknowledge and are grateful for the outstanding support, both financially and in other significant ways, of the State of Mississippi through the Office of the Governor and the Mississippi Development Authority. They have supported each of the four projects which we in Clarksdale and Coahoma County have developed successfully over the past 23 months. Without them, we would have enjoyed no successful industrial development project.

But, we all appreciate that industrial recruitment is hard, especially to a region of the state which suffers depopulation. We also know that more new jobs can retard and even stop depopulation. In this endeavor, we economic developers need all the help we can get. Delta Strong is the best regional driver of industrial recruitment to the Mississippi Delta. I urge everyone to support the Delta Strong program. United, we can bring more jobs and financial sustainability to the Mississippi Delta. Divided, we will continue to suffer the crippling economic consequences of depopulation and the consequent poverty that follows it.

*Jon Levingston is the Executive Director of the Economic Development Authority of Coahoma County and the Clarksdale/Coahoma County Chamber of Commerce. DBJ*

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