

Letter To The Editor: Let's Encourage Local Vendors, With Younger People Involved, At Next Year's Alton Expo

by Abe Lee Barham

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The Alton Expo this year had an incident that I don't feel has been fully vetted. I have a couple of concerns. First, the incident with the children fighting at the Expo was unfortunate, but we were lucky no one got injured and no gunfire.

As citizens of Alton, what can we do to stem this which brings me to my second point? The lack of hometown vendors at the Expo is something that we should take a deep look at with city officials. The commissioners have to do a better job to incorporate local people.

Alton is a community made up of families and the Expo is one of the highlights towards the end of the summer.

Asking everyone what can we do to encourage entrepreneurship? I feel if we had more family vendors at the Expo that would help curve a lot of the children's bad behavior. When a family introduces their child or cousin to assist in the business, they become familiar with how to run the business. Hopefully, this will encourage kids from misbehaving and turn that negative into a positive. We can assist the kids in maybe selling T-shirts next year at the 2022 Alton Expo. We have to give our kids the incentive to curve the violence that is occurring in our community.



The \$600 vendor license fee to become a vendor at the Expo is steep. The city council and new Mayor David Goins should look into how we can encourage the people to become vendors. When you become a vendor, this would be a great opportunity to

become a brick-and-mortar establishment. For example, a vendor could open a restaurant that will bring revenue to the city and also bring more people to the city. We have to think outside the box.

Also, we should think about what programs we currently have and ensure we provide education to those possible vendors; maybe a vendor workshop.

The Alton community definitely dodged a bullet this year, but next year who is to say it won't be so fortunate.

Abe Lee Barham

Alton

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