

[https://www.bgdailynews.com/news/community-members-talk-about-hopes-for-2021/article\\_4f52905b-03da-544f-adc3-85d899724dee.html](https://www.bgdailynews.com/news/community-members-talk-about-hopes-for-2021/article_4f52905b-03da-544f-adc3-85d899724dee.html)

# Community members talk about hopes for 2021

By LILY BURRIS For the Daily News

Jan 10, 2021



Todd Alcott

With the new year, people bring new hopes and goals. For 2021, people are hoping for normalcy after the events of 2020.

In the previous 12 months, the world was encouraged to work from home and stay inside because of the COVID-19 pandemic. People witnessed wildfires and their effects in Australia and the West Coast. Nationwide, people marched and protested for racial justice and the Black Lives Matter movement.



Timothy Caboni

With the new year having just started, people in Bowling Green are talking about their hopes and goals for 2021.

New Bowling Green Mayor Todd Alcott said he has three priorities he wants to focus on in developing the

upcoming strategic plan for the city: homelessness, broadband and greenways.

“I understand homelessness is a serious issue for all cities and it is affecting Bowling Green,” Alcott said. “It’s affecting our police, our parks, our businesses, our homes and I want to have a better understanding of the partnerships that exist to combat homelessness.”

Alcott also said he wants to better understand the factors and possibilities of expanding broadband to homes and residences in order to help students. He also said he hopes to work with the county and the city to expand greenways to connect all parks and paths.

With everything that has happened last year, Alcott said he missed face-to-face conversations and that he will never take them for granted again.

“Just to have the ability to talk to someone and see their face and not have to put a mask on or socially distance ourselves, it’s something I’ll

never forget and I'll never forget what we had before or take that for granted again in my life," Alcott said.

Western Kentucky University also faced challenges in the past year trying to deal with the coronavirus. The university went online in March and spent the fall semester having a combination of online and in-person classes.

"After the shared experience of 2020, I hope we develop a renewed appreciation for the things we may have taken for granted before the onset of the pandemic," WKU President Timothy Caboni said in an email. "Looking ahead to the new year, may 2021 present opportunities for all of us to grow, achieve and succeed."

Other members of the WKU community are looking forward to 2021 and what it might bring.

Joel Lenoir, a mechanical engineering professor at WKU, hopes to be back in the classroom and in the lab with his students again this year.

“I miss being in the same room as my students, I miss that terribly,” Lenoir said. “I had to do my courses synchronously online, but I want to be back in the classroom with my students and I want to be in my lab and in our project areas with our student teams.”

Lenoir said in 2020, he learned tools like videoing classes for students who were away was a good thing. He said he also looks forward to campus life returning to its normal buzz.

WKU dental hygiene student Ifrah Hashi of Bowling Green said she hopes to stay healthy and to graduate in May. She said she wants to travel again once it’s safe to see family and friends.

“I just would love everything to open back up. It’s kind of difficult,” Hashi said about how she wants 2021 to be different. “I have a 7-year-old so it’s

hard finding care for him. I have to be in school by eight, but if he's in school there until about three, then that works out for me."

Hashi also said she hopes to get a job this year and be open-minded and optimistic.

David Weafer of Owensboro, a WKU psychology and communications student, said he knows 2021 won't be completely normal but would like some return of normalcy.

"Honestly, the biggest thing for me is if I could go to a concert," Weafer said. "If I could go to one live concert, I think that would be enough for me."

In 2020, Weafer said he was more reactive to the situation and that this year he wants to be more proactive. He said he wants to find ways to be more social despite the pandemic.

The Bowling Green Independent School District spent the past year facing online education and balancing safety and learning

opportunities. Superintendent Gary Fields has hopes about that balance for the upcoming year.

“My hope for 2021 is that we continue to find ways to allow our young people to have life experiences, which include in-person school and other activities that allow them to satisfy their social-emotional needs,” Fields said in an email. “We can remediate the academic pieces, so we must as a community make sure our children feel safe, feel valued and feel heard.”