

Community leaders discuss higher education in North La.

By Kristl Johnston

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The future of higher education in North Louisiana will be determined not by people in Baton Rouge, but by people in North Louisiana.

That was one issue brought to the table during the final Aspen Ideas Mini-Festival session, held Thursday night by The Community Foundation.

Johnette Magner, executive director of the Shreveport-Bossier Business Alliance for Higher Education, said colleges and universities will rely more on community support or maybe even a local tax.

“Higher education in North Louisiana will be determined by us and our action or absence of action,” she said. “If you have to wait on Baton Rouge, you’ll

wait forever.”

Caddo schools art supervisor Henry Price said he wants to see more collaboration between high schools and colleges and universities and student to student.

“We tend to teach in isolation, but you don’t learn in isolation,” Price said. “We need to do a better job teaching students how to work with other students.”

Gayle Flowers, director of career, adult and alternative education for Caddo schools, said the parish is working to make students more social in their learning by adding more group projects.

“They’re working as teams to solve problems,” she said. “Not every teacher is doing it consistently yet, but we are working on it.”

Each July, the Aspen, Colo.-based Aspen Institute holds its Ideas Festival, a renowned conference that unites international leaders to discuss critical global issues.

The Community Foundation of Shreveport takes those sessions and breaks them down to the local level with panelists who discuss how those issues affect North Louisiana.

February 25, 2013

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