

Residents of Polk community of Combee looking to clean up

Through the years residents of Combee a community just east of Lakeland, say their once nice neighborhood has fallen victim to trash, fast cars, crime and other factors that usually accompany growth.

Lorna Nieb and Cassie Hunt, two Combee residents, are gearing up to take back their neighborhood.

"I want to live in a safe neighborhood that I can be proud of," Nieb said of her effort. "My major issues are air quality and water quality. I'd like to have some safety checks put in place."

Hunt has lived in the area for more than 30 years and says Combee's once clean environment has disappeared as crime rose.

"It [crime and grime] devalues the property," Hunt said.

"I think people need to take care of their property, whether it's a slum lord or a neighbor."

The two women are confident that they can polish their imperfect neighborhood with assistance from the Polk County Health Department. Health department employee Tim Mayor will make sure they get all the tools necessary.

"It's all community driven," Mayor said of the initiative. "The health department is there to provide structure; we'll keep the process moving and we'll provide technical support."

Mayor says that after an 18-month process that will used to identify the community's main areas of need, they will draw up a plan of action to solve the problems.

"It will empower the community to understand that they can do something about their community," he said.

By improving the area around them, Mayor says residents can improve their own health. Nieb and Hunt are excited and eager about reaching that goal in order to restore Combee to what it once was.



Combee residents want to make their community into something to be proud of.



Nieb is one of several residents leading the effort to clean up the community.