Measures and Milestones

Charting Our Path to Prosperity

THE CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

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THE KENTUCKY LONG-TERM POLICY RESEARCH CENTER

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THE KENTUCKY LONG-TERM POLICY RESEARCH CENTER

PREFACE

The Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center sponsored a November 1997 conference, *Measures and Milestones: Charting Our Path to Prosperity,* to consider the challenge of measuring the Commonwealth's progress toward a future of shared prosperity. The conference was designed to allow voices of experience to guide and join participants in an important effort to unite the "passion" for constructive change emerging across the Commonwealth with the "correctness" of accurate indicators of progress. One objective of the conference was to present findings and solicit input on 26 long-term goals for the Commonwealth and indicators of progress toward those goals. The proceedings from the conference are presented here.

Policymakers, educators, and planners from the public, private and nonprofit sectors, and citizens interested in the future of the Commonwealth attended this one-day conference. The keynote address on citizen engagement was an important highlight of the day's discussion. It was framed by six panel discussions: *Forging Community Vision*—How true "community" visions of progress can be shaped and advanced; *Launching the Vision*—How successful state, county, municipal, and citizen-based visioning efforts were designed and launched; *The Media and Community Development*—How and to what extent the media should become involved in community development initiatives; *Choosing Indicators*—Why measuring progress is key and how to choose indicators; *Staying Power*—How to invest community initiatives with staying power; and *Citizen Participation*—How much citizen participation is enough and how it can be effectively marshaled.

The Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center will sponsor a conference each year that is designed to raise awareness about important trends affecting our future and to generate ideas on how to deal with the opportunities and problems created by these trends.

THE KENTUCKY LONG-TERM POLICY RESEARCH CENTER

The Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center was created by the General Assembly in 1992 to bring a broader context to the decisionmaking process. The Center's mission is to illuminate the long-range implications of current policies, emerging issues, and trends influencing the Commonwealth's future. The Center has a responsibility to identify and study issues of long-term significance to the Commonwealth and to serve as a mechanism for coordinating resources and groups to focus on long-term planning.

Governing the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center is a 21-member board of directors that includes four appointees from the executive branch, six from the legislative branch, and 11 at-large members representing citizens groups, universities, local governments, and the private sector. From the at-large component of the board, six members are appointed by the Governor and five by the Legislative Research Commission. In accordance with its authorizing legislation, the Center is attached to the legislative branch of Kentucky state government. The makeup of its board, however, affords it functional independence and permits it to serve both the executive and legislative branches of government equally, as well as the public.

Michael T. Childress is the executive director of the Center. Those interested in further information about the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center should contact his office directly:

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We wish to thank *Governor Paul Patton* for his supportive opening remarks and his presentation of the first annual Vic Hellard, Jr., Award. We are also grateful to *Dr. Carolyn J. Lukensmeyer* for her inspiring keynote luncheon address.

We are grateful for the contributions of the following individuals who served as panelists for the conference: *Steve Beshear, Bill Bishop, John Bowling, Michael Bransford, Judith Clabes, Brenda Cockerham, Tom Forsythe, Jeanne Gage, Lori Garkovich, Tom Gish, George Graves, Daniel Hall, Ron Hustedde, Betty King, Sylvia Lovely, Mary Helen Miller, Penny Miller, Stephen H. Miller, Rita Mitchell, Ron Payne, Mark Peterson, Rona Roberts, Jeanette Rogers, Phil Scharre, Billie Sebastian, Nancy Stone, René True, Alayne L. White, Bob Whitmer,* and *Edward Yager*.

We would also like to acknowledge the able assistance of Center interns, Steve Clements, Phil Jenks and Dana Patton, who helped manage conference logistics. We also remain grateful for the services of photographer *Jeff Fossett* of the Legislative Research Commission staff, *Danny Davis* and the staff of Pro/Video Sound and Lighting Productions for their services in audio and videotaping portions of the conference, and *Bess Councill* of ExecSec for her transcription of the audio tapes.

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WELCOME

Senator Nick Kafoglis

It is my privilege to be the 1997 Chair of the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center's Board of Directors. This year's conference is exceptional in several different ways. This is the first time we've held our conference at a site outside the Lexington-Frankfort-Louisville corridor, and your attendance here today indicates that you will travel outside the "Golden Triangle," especially if we hold it in such a beautiful facility as this Center for Rural Development.

We are also presenting the first Vic Hellard, Jr., Award in honor of a beloved figure in Kentucky public life, whose vision provided the inspiration for the establishment of the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center. To open our conference and to make the presentation of the first Hellard Award, we are greatly honored to have with us the first citizen of the Commonwealth, Governor Paul Patton, who, in less than two years as Governor, has achieved historic changes for the Commonwealth. Please join me in welcoming our "can-do" Governor, the Honorable Paul E. Patton.

Senator Nick Kafoglis, 1997 Chair of the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center, welcomes participants to the Center's conference, Measures and Milestones.

From the left, George Graves, Director of the Kentucky Center for Public Issues; Michael Childress, Executive Director of the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center; Dr. Penny Miller, 1997 Vice Chair of the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center's Board; and Larry Dale Keeling, an editorial writer with the ***Lexington Herald-Leader,*** *continue discussion of conference topics.*

OPENING REMARKS

Governor Paul E. Patton

Governor Paul E. Patton

Thank you, Senator Kafoglis, and thank all of you very much. Thank you for a warm reception, and for inviting me to start off this conference. Let me congratulate the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center Board and staff on the work that you have done. I have read your publications, and they have been very much an inspiration and guide to me as I try to plot a course for the Commonwealth. I am confident that they have been equally valuable to the legislature and other leaders in this state.

I really believe that we need to emphasize long-term planning. Even though we were a leader in this nation in the years before the Civil War, in the century after it we fell behind. We lived for today, did not plan for the future, did not invest in our people, did not invest in our infrastructure, and dropped from being one of the leaders of this nation to one of the states that was the furthest behind.

I have seen a reversal of that trend over the last decade or so. Kentucky is more willing to look to the future of its children and plan ahead to work to build a better Commonwealth. That's the way I've tried to lead the Commonwealth over these past two years. I have done things, like addressing workers' compensation, that build our business capacity in the short run. But I know that we will build a stronger economy in Kentucky by increasing the productivity of our workforce, and in this world, in this nation, at this time, that must mean increasing the mental capital of our workforce.

I applaud the leaders of Kentucky over the last decade, including Senator Kafoglis, June Lyne, and other members of the General Assembly, who in 1990 faced up to the reality and the opportunity that a Supreme Court verdict gave to this Commonwealth and made what I believe is the most bold step made by Kentucky in this century: the commitment to build that foundation of elementary and secondary education into a world-class educational system.

I had the pleasure of being in Washington where Kentucky, for the Kentucky Education Reform Act, was one of ten honorees by the Ford Foundation for their Innovations in Government Award, based on a study by the Kennedy School for Government at Harvard. It is certainly a pleasure for me to be the Governor of this state when I can see our state honored in national forums for its vision and courage and set as an example for other states to follow. It's a pleasure for me to be able to attend a national education conference, as I did in New York about a year ago, and know that as other states struggle with issues, we have already dealt with them in Kentucky. And, while they are struggling with things we addressed seven or eight years ago, I can advise them of problems they can anticipate. Once you have made the fundamental decisions, the struggle is not over; it is in fact a continual struggle. It's a pleasure for me to be recognized as one of the leaders in education in this nation because I'm the Governor of the state that is recognized as one of the leaders in education.

You may know I am Chairman-elect of the Education Commission of the States, that organization established by the governors a generation ago to lead educational change in this nation. I'm the Chairman of the Southern Regional Education Board, the organization we in the South have established to provide leadership in education. That is a result of long-term planning and our administration has been able to carry that vision forward and address postsecondary education, building upon the foundation of elementary and secondary education. All of these things together show a Kentucky that is now looking to the future.

While I was at the dinner in Washington, I had the opportunity to sit by the head of the Kennedy School of Government as he was talking about campaign finance reform. He asked me some questions about it and obviously did not know that Kentucky had made major advances in that area. I explained to him what we have done and he said, "Please send me some more information on that because that sounds like the most effective system that I have ever heard of." He invited me to go to Harvard and address the people there about what Kentucky has done to try to look to the future and have a more effective system of selecting our major leaders in state government.

I see a Kentucky that looks to the future and the work of this organization is vital in allowing the policymakers of this Commonwealth to really look at these issues long range. Though things like education and basic infrastructure are absolutely vital, they are certainly not the only things that we need to look at. An issue that this conference addresses, the building of civic capital or getting people reconnected with government, is equally valid and in fact is another subject of study in partnership between the Ford Foundation and the Kennedy School of Government.

How do we get people reconnected with government? It's very, very vital. It seems that we have lost the concept that we are the governed. We're viewing government as some remote entity disconnected from us as individuals that on the one hand provides things that we need and want, and on the other hand is some enemy, something that takes our tax money and even beyond that does things that we oppose. We have lost that sense of government being us and that is a terribly dangerous attitude for citizens in a democracy. We must, through forums such as this throughout the state, reattach our people to government and get them to understand that if we are going to have a great society in this nation, state, or individual community, then we as people have to build it. We cannot sit back and wait for government to build a good community. We can't sit home and just criticize; we must get engaged. I understand that is the purpose of this conference, and that is important, perhaps not as visible as education, roads, water or basic infrastructure, but equally important.

I understand that Bill Bishop registered for this conference. He talks about the need to build civic capital and certainly he is right, and that is one of the very vital elements of building a community. We as a state have struggled with how to build a stronger community and economy in eastern Kentucky. This is something that I am obviously very personally interested in and very committed to. So we have decided to select two communities in eastern Kentucky, Hindman and Jenkins, and see if through a concentrated effort we can build a viable self-sustaining economy in those two communities, see what we are doing wrong, and perhaps learn more about how we need to adjust our strategy.

One of the things that we are going to concentrate on is how to build civic capital. How does government get people involved on a local level? How do we separate the line between brainwashing and government coercion and government education? How does government get people more involved in building their community and more appreciative of the fact that it is up to them? Those are questions that I don't have the answer to, but that you will be discussing during this one-day conference. I will be anxious to review the results of your work. So, again, let me compliment the entire staff of the Center, the Board, and each of you for participating in this conference.

Thank you very much.

THE VIC HELLARD, JR., AWARD

Senator Kafoglis:

Thank you, Governor. It is now time for us to make the first presentation of the Hellard Award. The Hellard Award is given in honor, in memory, of Vic Hellard, Jr., the long-time director of the Legislative Research Commission. Vic had a distinguished career. He was an attorney and a legislator. I served with Vic when both of us were freshman legislators in the 1972 legislative session. We formed a steadfast friendship at that time. Subsequently, he became the Director of the Legislative Research Commission, and behind the scenes he worked to improve the professionalism and effectiveness of the staff and became a strong voice for legislative independence.

Vic was also a quite accomplished actor. Many of you probably saw him perform in community theater. All his friends remember his playful wit. One of his favorite tricks was to give me a call, knowing that I was a doctor, and ask, "Is this Dr. Kafoglis?" I would say "Yes" and would listen very attentively. He said, "Well, I've got a temperature of 106 and I need somebody to do something right away." I would be very concerned and say "Meet me at the hospital right away." Then he would start laughing and say, "This is Vic Hellard."

Though he had a playful wit, he had great seriousness of purpose, and the thing that was so impressive about him was how he was effective without being out front. He inspired other people to achieve their potential, and he loved for other people to get credit. The Hellard Award recognizes an individual for his or her work in the interest of the future of the Commonwealth. The criteria for the award include the demonstration of long-term vision and innovation, championship of the equality and dignity of every person, efforts to enhance the processes of a democratic society, and an approach to work distinguished by commitment, caring, generosity, and humor. The Hellard Award recipient was selected by the Board of the Long-Term Policy Research Center from a very impressive list of nominees made by the public. It is my pleasure now to ask Governor Patton to present the first Hellard Award.

Governor Patton:

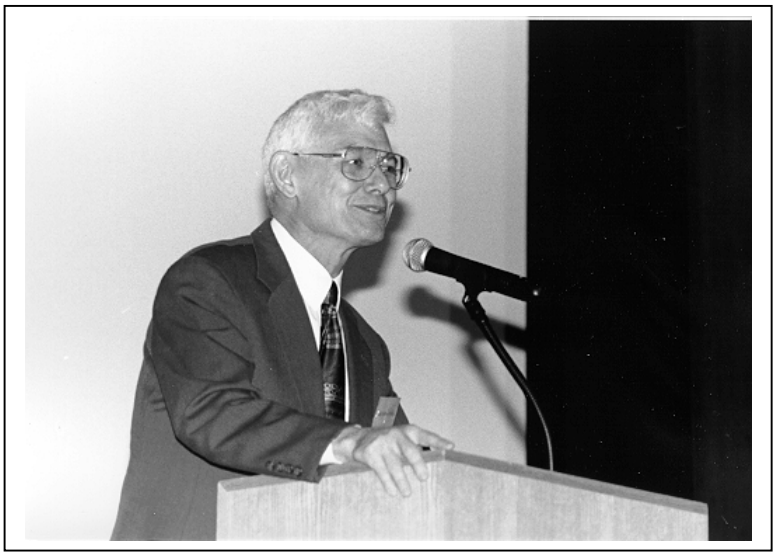
I had the opportunity to get to know Vic Hellard, neither as a member of the legislature nor as a member of the state government, but in working on some legislation. I found him always to be a gentlemen, always an individual who was trying to be helpful and cooperative, and always an individual who had the best of Kentucky at heart. So, Judge Anthony Wilhoit, you are a liked individual, and it is certainly my pleasure to present you this award in recognition of your long and outstanding career in public service in Kentucky.

Judge Wilhoit:

Many of you know that this particular award probably means more to me personally than to anybody else on earth. You put the monkey on my back. I don't know how many years of public service I have left, but I will redouble my efforts now to live up to the high ideals that this award honors and to live up to Vic Hellard's standard that he set for all of us. Thank you so much.

Senator Kafoglis:

I want to recognize Ellen Hellard, Vic's wife. We are just delighted to have you here with us today. Governor Patton, we thank you very much for being with us today.



Judge Anthony M. Wilhoit accepts the inaugural Vic Hellard, Jr., Award, given in recognition of his work in the interest of the future of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Judge Anthony M. Wilhoit recently retired from his post as Chief Judge of the Kentucky Court of Appeals where he served for 21 years. Judge Wilhoit began his career as a police judge and as City Attorney for Versailles. In 1967, he became Woodford County Attorney and served in that post until 1972 when he became a public defender. In 1972, Judge Wilhoit was named to the Kentucky Crime Commission and, in 1975, appointed to the post of Deputy Secretary of the Kentucky Department of Justice. He presently heads the Legislative Ethics Commission. He holds an AB from Thomas More College, a graduate degree and a law degree from the University of Kentucky, and a degree in Judicial Process from the University of Virginia Law School.

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FORGING A COMMUNITY VISION

Panel Members

Moderator:

Dr. Ron Hustedde is an Associate Professor in the Rural Sociology Department of the University of Kentucky and has extensive experience in public deliberation, conflict mediation and curriculum development. He has published numerous articles on conflict resolution, conflict mediation and public deliberation. Dr. Hustedde is a charter member of the Kentucky Chapter of the Community Development Society and is on the Board of Directors of the Kentucky Mediation Center. In addition, he is on the National Faculty for the Kettering Foundation's Public Policy Institutes.

Panelists:

Dr. Lorraine (Lori) Garkovich is a Professor of Rural Sociology in the College of Agriculture at the University of Kentucky. She holds both a BA and an MA in Sociology and a Ph.D. in Sociology/Demography, all from the University of Missouri-Columbia. Dr. Garkovich has been with the University of Kentucky Department of Sociology since 1976.

Dr. Mark Peterson is an Extension Specialist in Community Development with the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service. A native of Iowa, Dr. Peterson came to Arkansas with his wife and two daughters in July of 1989. Prior to that, he was a community development specialist with the University of Missouri Cooperative Extension Service. A past board member of the International Community Development Society (CDS), Dr. Peterson chaired a marketing committee that initiated a marketing/strategic planning effort that addressed major issues facing community development and the CDS through the year 2000. In honor of his support of their community development efforts, the Ponderoso Community Betterment Association named their county road "Mark Peterson Drive." Dr. Peterson received his Ph.D. in Public Policy Analysis and Administration from St. Louis University. He is a past chairman of the Network for Leadership Opportunities, an organization dedicated to fostering leadership development opportunities for the citizens of Arkansas. Dr. Peterson has traveled to 20 countries and given professional papers or consultations in several states as well as Germany, Italy, Peru and Canada. He is the author of *Harnessing the Power of Vision: Ten Steps to Creating A Strategic Vision and Action Plan for Your Community*, as well as other publications. He and his wife Pamela have two children, Rebecca and Katherine. His hobbies include reading, gardening and fishing.

Phil Scharre is a Community Development Specialist with the Tennessee Valley Authority's (TVA) Economic Development Group. He is located in Knoxville and has worked at TVA since 1980. Mr. Scharre provides technical assistance to local, regional and state organizations in the TVA region in planning and implementing a variety of economic development and leadership development activities. He is responsible for TVA's Quality Communities Initiative, which combines total quality improvement principles with strategic planning for economic development. This work has focused on assisting community or regional groups

undertake a strategic planning process that helps them build leadership and teamwork, assess their needs, evaluate economic trends, establish goals, outline recommendations for action, and implement projects. This work is typically with rural communities in the seven-state TVA region. Mr. Scharre has also assisted community and regional leadership development programs and designed and facilitated training workshops for economic development organizations. He has managed TVA's administration of infrastructure grants from the Appalachian Regional Commission and has served as a strategic planning consultant to the National Rural Development Partnership. Mr. Scharre has a masters degree in Urban Planning from the University of Tennessee, a bachelors degree from Eastern Kentucky University, has completed the Economic Development Institute at the University of Oklahoma, and has received training in total quality management and team facilitation methods. He is a native of Louisville, Kentucky.

Panel Discussion

How true "community" visions of progress can be shaped and advanced.

Moderator, Dr. Ron Hustedde:

I am delighted to be here on this gorgeous November morning to hear our panelists talk about community visions of progress, how they can be shaped, and how we can create a shared vision of the future. Why are these efforts important and necessary? And, how do you get started? How do you do it? Our panelists have done a lot of work in this particular area. Dr. Lori Garkovich is a colleague of mine at the University of Kentucky. She has worked in a number of rural communities, in eastern, central and western Kentucky, and has literally involved hundreds of people in examining their vision for their community and strategic planning, moving forward with an action plan out of that vision. She is one of the most energetic people I know, very well liked, and a gifted teacher.

Mark Peterson I also have known for quite some time. Mark is an unusual community developer in that he is highly gifted in his knowledge of classical philosophers. He has engaged whole communities in talking about Socrates, Aristotle and Plato, and he links that to practical community development. Communities have been pleased with their interaction with him. In recent years, though, he has taken it a step forward. His book called *Harnessing the Power of Vision: Ten Steps to Creating a Strategic Vision and Action Plan for Your Community* is just a great how-to-do-it manual. He is well known in Arkansas especially for getting communities involved in visioning strategic planning. So, Mark Peterson, it is great to have you in our state.

Phil Scharre is a gifted man, and originally from Louisville. When I was recently at the Aspen Institute, a think tank in Washington, DC, Mr. Scharre's work with the Tennessee Valley Authority's Quality Communities Initiative was discussed. It is recognized nationally. They involve people and communities in total quality improvement and strategic planning for economic development.

Dr. Garkovich:

I am a faculty member at the University of Kentucky in the College of Agriculture and my position is in the Cooperative Extension Service. The Rural Development staff in the Rural Sociology program has established over the last ten years what we call the SEED program (Social and Economic Education for Development.) Through that program we have made available to communities throughout the state who request our participation and assistance, a

community planning process that has certain principles upon which all of our work with rural communities and urban communities throughout the state is based.

We believe that there needs to be local implementation of all projects. This is not a process where outside experts come in and tell a community what they ought to be doing, but rather the community itself must pull together to create a vision and a plan for the future. It requires broad citizen participation.

We spend quite a bit of time in our visioning process prior to actually doing it. We consider if every geographic area of the community has been identified so that people in those areas have an opportunity to participate in the visioning process. We consider if all age groups have been represented. In all of our processes we've involved middle school and high school students who engage in these kinds of vision forums for themselves and articulate their own sense about what they would like the community to be in the future. Our youngest citizen we have trained as a citizen leader was in sixth grade, and our oldest was in her mid-seventies and did all of the visioning sessions at a senior citizen's center.

. . . the fact remains when people who have been working with the community leave, they absolutely must leave behind a buildup of the strengths in the community so that they can move on on their own.

We want to build leadership skills for future projects. We are just a few people. We leave. It is essential that any kind of development process involve development of skills within the community. People use words like "social capital," "social resources," and "human capital," but the fact remains when people who have been working with the community leave, they absolutely must leave behind a buildup of the strengths in the community so that they can move on on their own. That is strengthening the community resources for future projects. Finally we want to build on the unique aspects of each community that we are involved with.

The goals of our community planning process then that we offer to communities are four. We want to develop long-range community planning that is based on citizen-defined goals and objectives. Quite often, long-range planning involves experts in a local community getting together and deciding where we ought to be heading. Oftentimes, we say we are doing it in the context that we want to help our community become a better place, but the reality is that all too often we never ask the people who live there what they want for their future. So we want to stimulate the creativity and involvement of local citizens in community affairs.

We believe a premise of our activities is that all communities have within them an enormous wealth of untapped energy and innovation and creativity, and all we need to do is work with the communities to help them unlock their own potential. We need to expand the participation of all residents in community activities, groups, and organizations. Once you begin, it is not an issue of how to keep people engaged, but how to find enough ways for them to remain engaged in that community. Finally, we want to increase collaboration and cooperation among community groups and agencies.

The community planning process involves three steps: creating a community vision for the future, setting goals for the future, and developing an action plan. I am going to focus only on that question of building a vision for tomorrow because that is the place at which people make an intellectual and emotional commitment as citizens to become active members of their community. We point out that successful communities plan for something rather than plan in reaction to something. All too often that's the history of what we've done at the community level. We've responded or reacted to situations, rather than plan for a future that we wanted. We encourage communities to understand that successful communities don't simply react to the problems of today, they act to prevent the problems of tomorrow, and the only way to do

that is through effective planning. Successful communities create their own future when their citizens focus on what they want to happen, not just on what is happening.

How often do we hear the phrase, "Well, you can't stop change, or you can't change what's happening, it's going to happen anyway"? The reality is that communities have shown that with effective visioning and planning they can in fact shape that future. Finally, we believe that a vision blends people's values and hopes for the future in the context of their current realities. People learn more about their community as they do this process. The community visioning process then is based on the ideas of community members, it maximizes opportunities for community residents to participate in planning for tomorrow, it is community owned and community driven, and it leads to more effective goal setting and action planning by the community as a whole and agencies and organizations within the community.

The basis of this process is what we call a community forum. The reality is that there are only a few of us and there are many large communities. We must establish a mechanism by which people can come together to talk about their future. A community forum is the vehicle and it involves people talking together to build a better tomorrow.

We must establish a mechanism by which people can come together to talk about their future. A community forum is the vehicle and it involves people talking together to build a better tomorrow.

We train local citizens—members of local organizations, the Rotary Clubs, the Chamber of Commerce, the PTA, youth groups such as 4-H, or homemakers in communities—to be group facilitators. Then they go out into a variety of places throughout their community—organizations, schools, and churches—for a period of time, generally six to eight weeks, and people in that county have an opportunity to talk about the same four questions at the same time. That information is returned to us and from that we develop a summary of what has been said and some suggestions about where they can go in terms of planning afterwards.

The key to this is that we train citizens, and it's neighbors talking to neighbors in situations in which they are comfortable. Our sense is that governments vary in terms of the kinds of opportunities they provide citizens to come and talk to them, but for most of us it's uncomfortable to go to a formal meeting and make a presentation to a local government, a local board of education, or the parks and recreation department. But we all spend time in our communities talking with our neighbors and our friends about what's happening here, what we would like to see happen, and where we would like to see changes made. So this process that we've developed and implemented in five Kentucky communities involves engaging local people to lead their own discussions about their own future.

We have been averaging between three and six hundred participants in local communities in groups as small as 5 and as large as 15 to be involved in this. Generally, we have 35 to 45 community forums in a community. That's an amazing commitment in the amount of energy generated for citizen participation in thinking about their future. This afternoon other people will be talking about what happened in their communities and you will see how that visioning process unfolds then into a strategic planning process. Thank you. The challenge is for us to learn in our engagement practices how we deal with and capitalize on the diverse experiences that people bring to the table when they have not been at the table before.

Dr. Peterson:

Good morning. It's a real honor to be here and to see Ron, Phil, and Lori and my good friend, Larry Dickerson, to be a part of this effort. This is a great facility and it's an honor to be here. It's a great time to be alive. There are so many things happening. There is a lot of

good work taking place in strategic visioning and benchmarking and with the promise of technology for rural communities, it's really a time of promise.

Dr. Mark Peterson

"Every morning in Africa, a gazelle wakes up that knows it must outrun the fastest lion or it will be killed. Every morning in Africa a lion wakes up that knows it must run faster than the slowest gazelle or it will starve. It doesn't matter whether you are a lion or gazelle, when the sun comes up you better be running." Do you ever feel that way? Strategic visioning focuses our efforts. We don't have to take on the world. It focuses our efforts on what we want to become. There are three important principles for a good strategic vision or a good strategic visioning process.

The first step of a good strategic vision or visioning process is that it must be grounded in the history and values of the people of the community. The second principle is that it must engage the community and connect us with each other. The third principle is that it must stretch us beyond our current perspective, forcing us to describe what we want our community to become. The reason I wore this tie is threefold: one is I am happy to be here; secondly, my daughter did the artwork on it, and when she becomes a teenager it will remind me that she was once sweet and innocent; and, thirdly, this is a vision community Joel Barker talked about, that has a shared vision, and people are happier when they have a shared vision.

One of the concepts which has been very helpful for us is a distinction between a quick fix and sustainable development. A quick fix is solving an immediate problem. There are many times when that is really necessary and appropriate. Sustainable development refers to development processes that are socially, economically, and environmentally viable over the long term. As we interacted with communities about this process, it became apparent that it is not one or the other, even though some communities tend to focus on the quick fix. The real challenge is how to initiate a sustainable development process and sustain that over time at the same time as you handle the quick fixes.

One of the concepts which has been very helpful for us is a distinction between a quick fix and sustainable development. A quick fix is solving an immediate problem . . .
Sustainable development refers to development processes that are socially, economically, and environmentally viable

There are opportunities you have to deal with that come along with a short window of time and the parameters are already set; those would fit under quick fix. Sometimes a community does not have a good experience working together, or it has not been very active and you can rally people together around a single project, a quick fix, that can be a prelude to a sustainable development process.

There is a power of vision. Vision is a compelling mental image of your desire of the future. It can be a simple idea, something you want to become, a business you want to start, or something your community wants to become; but there is a power of vision because it transports us over the current status quo and our current constraints into a desired future. I will give you an example. A medieval supervisor came to see three stonemasons who were working, and he asked the first one, "What are you doing?" and he said, "I'm cutting a stone." He

asked the second person, "What are you doing?" and he said, "I'm working on a parapet." He asked the third person, "What are you doing?" and he said, "I'm building a cathedral that will glorify God for centuries to come." All three were just cutting stone, but the third one had a vision that gave significance to his work and meaning to his life. That is the power of vision.

We talked to David Letterman last night and he gave us the top reasons why your community should initiate a strategic visioning process:

- ✓ Reason No. 10: Somebody sneezes and dust flies off your old plan.
- ✓ Reason No. 9: Half of your community doesn't know if you have a strategic plan.
- ✓ Reason No. 8: The other half of your community doesn't care if you have a strategic plan.
- ✓ Reason No. 7: Your economic base is slipping and there is a general sense that your community is adrift in the global economy.
- ✓ Reason No. 6: You know in your heart that your community is capable of great things if it just had a triggering mechanism.
- ✓ Reason No. 5: Your existing plan is not really a plan, it's just a list of activities that would be good to do.
- ✓ Reason No. 4: Your existing plan is not really strategic, it does not build on the unique strengths, capabilities, or location of your community.
- ✓ Reason No. 3: Your existing plan has no vision. It is a projection of the status quo, rather than a compelling mental image of your desired future.
- ✓ Reason No. 2: You don't want to look back on your community ten years from now and wish you had taken action.
- ✓ Reason No. 1: You realize a strategic vision and action plan that is bold, compelling, and embraced by the entire community is one of the most powerful engines of a community toward a long-term success.

I'll just give you one example. Delray Beach is a Florida community which has had a history of fights and shouting matches at city council meetings. In May 1988, 100 folks came together and participated in a Vision 2000 Retreat to plan for the future of the community. They put together the Delray Beach Decade of Excellence, with short-term and long-term goals. It spurred economic development and became a model for development in the nation.

There are five requirements for a strategic visioning process:

1) A committed core group of people from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors;
2) Commitment from key stakeholders in the community;
3) A planning process that engages the larger community;
4) An organizational structure; and
5) A facilitator.

We put together a publication called *Harnessing the Power of Vision* that explains the strategic visioning process. Whenever you bring folks together and you talk about their future, once in a while politics gets involved in it. Winston Churchill said, "Politics is more exciting than war because in politics you can get killed many times."

The process that we use is called the Ten-Step Community Process. When we begin the process, people start talking to each other and to the mayor, the city council, the Chamber of Commerce, and the school board, about what can be possible and what they need to do to move the community forward. The question always is: Who needs to be involved? You engage the community and legitimize the process. We don't work with the community unless the local government officials have endorsed it. First, form an organizational structure, perhaps a steering committee. Some communities conduct a community attitude survey. Develop a strategic vision and action plan. Seek feedback and commitment from the community. Publicize the plan, implement, evaluate, celebrate, and create an ongoing development process.

In the strategic vision and action plan, there is a strategic visioning component in this community development process where we look at the community as a whole, describe a vision, and develop study action teams. The process we use is very simple. We really ask four questions: Where have you been? Where are you now? Where do you want to go? And how will you get there?

In where have you been, we ask the community to describe those critical defining events that have shaped the community to be what it is. Then the community reflects on these events. It supports what has taken place, and acknowledges the hard work that has gone into the community.

Where are you now? We look at socio-economic data, have the folks develop a strategic map, and do an analysis. This is a strategic analysis of northwest Montgomery in Arkansas, and the context within which that part of the county will have to function. Their success depends upon how well they utilize and interact with all these resources, communities, lakes, rivers, and other resources in the future. We ask them to describe where they want to go and describe major forces or trends that will impact the future of the community. Obviously, the Information Age becomes a part of that. Describe your desire for the future and then develop an action plan.

The critical factors are not how smart you are, how much money you have, or how big your town is, but rather if you believe in yourself, are willing to stretch your boundaries, are willing to make technology your friend and not your enemy, and are willing to work together to achieve your desired vision of the future.

Here's a quick example of a vision. The Sebascott Economic Development Council developed a vision for that community: *Sebascott, the Garden Spot of Western Arkansas, featuring beauty, peace, tranquillity, and economic opportunity for all.* They also have a mission statement for their organization. A mission statement is a very focused statement of purpose. A vision is larger, broader, and it is a compelling image of your desired future. Then, after the vision is developed, you identify critical issues and have study-action teams go through a process of deciding what should be done to address all of those issues.

Ultimately, we end up with a chart that says, in economic development, these are the things that we need to do each year, and who's going to do them and with what resources. A community that does this should have it posted in a lot of places in the community: City Hall and the Chamber and you should see it on billboards. The critical factors are not how smart you are, how much money you have, or how big your town is, but rather if you believe in yourself, are willing to stretch your boundaries, are willing to make technology your friend and not your enemy, and are willing to work together to achieve your desired vision of the future.

I want to share a story about vision. In 473 BC, Persia was the largest and most powerful kingdom in the world. Ahasuarus was the king. He had just deposed his queen, Vashti, because she had dared defy him, and he selected a new queen, Esther. King Ahasuarus' sidekick Haman, who was a scoundrel, was disappointed because Mordecai, Queen Esther's older cousin who raised him, would not bow and scrape when he walked through town. So Haman got the king to sign a decree that on a certain day the Jewish people could be killed and their material possessions taken. Mordecai was distraught and was mourning, as all the Jewish people were. When Queen Esther heard about this, she was concerned but didn't know what to do. At that time they were serious on security. Nobody could come to the King unbidden unless the King put his royal scepter out; if you came to the King unbidden, and he did not put his royal scepter out, you would be killed. Mordecai sent a message to Queen Esther:

"This is your time, you are in an important position, and the future of our people depends on you." She went to the King and he held out his scepter and they were able to resolve that issue. I say to all of you here: This is your time, you are in important positions, and the future of your community depends upon you. Thank you.

Phil Scharre:

Thanks very much. It's good to be here. It's always good to be back in the home state. I'm a native of Louisville and graduated from Eastern Kentucky University, so I'm very familiar with this part of the world. I think Ron, Lori, and Mark have really explained beautifully some of the rationale for visioning, why communities need a shared vision, why it's so important to engage and involve people, as well as giving us some excellent tips on the steps involved in conducting the vision and planning process. Their processes look very good.

There are a lot of visioning and planning approaches. The basic elements are common to most of them but when you conduct these processes with your communities, tailor the approach to meet your specific community situations and start where your community is, because all communities are in a different position.

I'll start my presentation with just a few ideas on why visioning and planning processes sometimes don't work as successfully as we would want them to. Some have worked well, some have worked OK, and some worked for a while.

That will lead to a description of TVA's Quality Community Process, which we hope addresses some of these problems. Sometimes when you get planners involved there's too much emphasis on the final plan or document. We get obsessed with making the perfect plan. Sometimes the planning process is too long. A really good contribution to the strategic planning process in the last few years has been problems first, instead of talking about the vision for the future and making it a positive and compelling vision. Often you don't build that important capacity for teamwork and consensus decisionmaking. We need to improve the capacity of leaders and citizens to work together as teams and to use consensus decisionmaking techniques.

Often not enough widespread community support is garnered, there is no responsible entity or owners of the planning process, and no clearly established expectations. Then a couple of months down the road you find out that people have different expectations about what this planning and visioning process is about.

Sometimes those doing the planning are not involved in the implementation of the plan. Often not enough widespread community support is garnered, there is no responsible entity or owners of the planning process, and no clearly established expectations. Then a couple of months down the road you find out that people have different expectations about what this planning and visioning process is about. Another reason why these processes sometimes fail is not celebrating even minor successes that may happen very soon, or even during the planning process. It's very important to celebrate and recognize success.

Monitoring and publicizing results in the years to come is very important, as well as coordinating and collaborating among the groups to get everyone involved in the sharing of the vision. When you start to design your community visioning processes, think of some of these reasons why they don't work and try to design a process that will address some of those ideas.

In the remaining few minutes, I'll discuss TVA's Quality Community Initiative, a strategic planning process that we've done with communities around the TVA region. TVA serves

parts of seven states and about 200 counties, and we offer this as part of our economic development assistance program. It's based on a few premises. A quality community is one that

1) has a shared vision of the future and knows where it wants to go;
2) has decided how to achieve that vision and has a plan of some sort to achieve the vision; and
3) has adopted the teamwork necessary to continuously improve the community.

Two key words are teamwork and continuously improve because we often don't build a capacity for teamwork in doing these sorts of processes. We also often concentrate on a few successes, get all excited, and accomplish a few things. Then a couple of years later it falls apart, and five years down the road we are wondering whatever happened to it. It is very important to continuously improve every aspect of the community and make progress. The basic philosophical underpinning of quality communities is that various people in the community have ideas and information necessary for improvement, but an environment must be created in which these ideas can be surfaced and tried. That's the role of community leadership, and the purpose of a visioning planning process is to create that environment, to get people involved, to engage people, and to get their ideas out and to try their ideas.

Rick Smyre, a planning consultant, talks about communities of the future a lot. He says that communities of the future that are progressing are characterized by leaders who are open to new ideas, by networks instead of hierarchies, and by pools of men and women who understand the facts and enjoy the trust of citizens that are committed to teamwork. Any visioning process should try to achieve this and try to build a community that has that.

I show this to a lot of communities and ask them if their community looks like this. Most people nod their heads. These arrows are various sectors of the community: education, government, agriculture, tourism, health sector, whatever, all working very hard to improve their part of the community, but probably not working in unison toward some shared goals and shared visions of the future. Typically, communities look like that, and ideally, we would like to look a little more like this. We would like to have citizens and leaders in the various sectors of the community working toward some shared goals.

What is the quality community's process? It's that in a nutshell. Four phases that we take communities through. Our role is to facilitate the process based on the premise that the experts about the community are the folks who live in the community. We are offering a process to help bring that expertise to light and to action. We stole from Dr. Demming a good way to illustrate the continuing nature of the planning and improvement process for communities. One thing that we often want to jump over—we want to get right to the planning and some action—is getting it all organized, making sure we've spent enough time on the planning-to-plan phase, and this can take a few months sometimes to make sure your community has outlined the right process, that you haven't just adopted a consulting suggestion for your steps to go through, but that you have designed it based on your community. Nancy Stone in Simpson County, and Michael (Bransford) and Rita (Mitchell) from Fulton, have done a very good job with that. The organized phase is getting partners involved, designing the actual planning process.

The heart of it, of course, is the planning phase, where we do some team building up front with the planning group, the quality council that we pull together, which has to represent a broad cross section of the community. We do some visioning with them, some team building work, a series of workshops, and always try to get some public input through a series of public community meetings. Sometimes these go really well, and sometimes not so well. In some communities we work with well over 300 or 400 folks involved in a series of community meetings, asking a series of questions similar to what Lori and Mark have talked about—where the community is, where it needs to go—and engaging people in that dialogue about

e the community is, where it needs to go—and engaging people in that dialogue about the future, not just holding public hearings.

The final plan does not have to be something very large or terribly complex. It can be as simple as a brochure or a poster sometimes, as long as it gets people doing something, again toward a shared vision of the future. Again, we borrowed a lot of tools and techniques from total quality improvement that business and industry have used. Total quality improvement is really just a philosophy of management as well as some problem-solving tools. We tried to take some of those tools and techniques that help people work together better, examine problems, and do some planning to solve those problems.

One of the toughest things when we do the visioning statement process is getting folks to understand the difference between a vision and a mission because we all tend to be very mission oriented. A vision is what we want to be; a mission is what we are going to do.

I know that is a quick overview of the process, which can take anywhere from a few months to six months or longer. Guard against taking too long in doing a visioning and planning process because folks get burned out and most of us are geared toward some action pretty soon. I am glad Mark mentioned he put up a vision and a mission that a community had worked on. One of the toughest things when we do the visioning statement process is getting folks to understand the difference between a vision and a mission because we all tend to be very mission oriented. A vision is what we want to be; a mission is what we are going to do.

It's sometimes hard to get folks to take that time necessary to look at what they want to be in the future. That's one of the things that a vision process helps folks do: bring the community values to light and help people understand that maybe they have been fighting with each other for years and have different ways of looking at and doing things, but they really have a lot of the same shared values and shared vision for the future.

I'll close with a couple of thoughts. We have been doing this strategic planning for a long time with communities and it seems things happen not necessarily according to the plan that we have carefully prepared, but because of the planning. Several years down the road, if you look at what happened as a result of the visioning and planning process, a lot of things may have happened that weren't spelled out in the plan, but they happened because of the planning you went through during the visioning and civic engagement process. That's a real benefit.

One final thought on visioning is we can sometimes get caught up in creating a perfect vision statement for the future. It's not what the vision is; it's what the vision does. Does it compel people to action, pull people together, or make things happen? That's very important to remember. It's not what the vision is, but what it does. Does it bring folks together?

Questions, Answers, and Comments

Audience Member:

I've been through several visioning processes, some that really didn't engage government. How do you get government involved when they may not see a need for it, and may even feel threatened by the whole process?

Dr. Garkovich:

I think there's two things: First, the planning process cannot be initiated from outside the community, rather from within. Things that are done to communities don't work, so from our perspective, success begins when the process is initiated from within the community. Secondly, the planning for the process is as important as the outcome, and that means getting the stakeholders to the table, not only the local people in terms of citizens, representatives of agencies and organizations, but also getting people who are the ultimate decision makers to the table also, and that occurs in the beginning.

Audience Member:

Southern Kentucky is the only one of the five regions in the state that does not have a state university and as we go through our visioning process often I've heard people say, "Why can't we have higher education in the southern region when there are Eastern Kentucky University, Western Kentucky University, Northern Kentucky University, and the southern region has only a two-year community college that does not have enough classrooms?" We've asked for a student center with a cafeteria and classrooms and a group of people, our legislators, the President of the College, the Mayor of Somerset, and a lot of other people have gone to Frankfort and had a meeting with the Governor. Now how do we get some action?

We did the visioning process here in Pulaski County and that was one of the key questions that came out, one of the goals that was established, or articulated, by a large number of people. We talked about it in different kinds of groups within the county. I think what you've been doing is the way you can do it. Communities to some degree have control over the things that affect them, but there are some decisions that are made that they cannot necessarily influence, although joining together does build strength.

I heard the Governor's Inaugural Address, in which he said, "I'm from eastern Kentucky, but I will govern the state: the east, the west, the north, and the south, the rural and the urban, the Democrats and the Republicans." And, now it hasn't been done because we've asked for some of these hundreds of millions of excess dollars for a building here at our community college. Our local people are working on changing the name of this Somerset Community College to what it has become, a Southern Kentucky Community College. The President says it has become regional since he has been President. The enrollment has more than doubled, and there are students here from many southern Kentucky counties. They have off-campus centers in Laurel and McCreary Counties, and I just don't understand any good reason why our need for higher education is being ignored.

Dr. Peterson:

A lot of communities say that their problem is that they don't have enough resources and usually it's because they don't have a good vision. Visions attract resources. You are on the right track starting with a vision. Also, as Lori said, band together with other folks, explore a lot of different options, and we are fortunate to live where you have a chance to vote.

Dr. Hustedde:

We have had a lot of common themes among our three speakers: that if visioning, strategic planning is going to work, it has to be locally driven and designed; you have to work on building commitment, including government, and building networks, building consensus on who we are, who do we want to be. Focus on who you are and what your strengths are as a community. Again, focus on locally defined goals and efforts. Another component I heard among the speakers was there needs to be some time to celebrate the accomplishments of

strategic visioning, strategic planning, and to stop and take the time to do that. Celebrate the goodness of the community.

Thank you very much for traveling long distances: Arkansas; Knoxville, Tennessee; Lexington. I am pleased to be with you all today.

LAUNCHING THE VISION

Panel Members

Moderator:

Dr. Penny Miller is an Associate Professor and the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Political Science at the University of Kentucky. She received her BA, MA, and Ph.D. from the University of Kentucky. Dr. Miller is a member of the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars, the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center Board of Directors, the Kentucky Center for Public Issues Board of Directors, and the Kentucky Women's Leadership Network. She has served as Chair of the Kentucky Commission on Women and a member of the Kentucky Supreme Court Gender Fairness in the Courts Monitoring Committee and has been a TV, radio, and newspaper election analyst for Kentucky and national stations and publications. Dr. Miller is the co-author of two books, *The Kentucky Legislature: Two Decades of Change* and *Political Parties and Primaries in Kentucky* and author of *Kentucky Politics and Government: Do We Stand United?*. She was a member of the National Women's Advisory Committee for Clinton and Gore. She and her husband, Bob, have two adult children and two granddaughters.

Panelists:

Jeanne Gage has more than 13 years of experience in community development. Her background includes public policy research, fundraising, strategic planning, organizational development, and community organizing. The National Development Council certifies her as an Economic Development Finance Professional. Prior to her current position, Ms. Gage was associate director of Eastern Kentucky University's Center for Economic Development. Ms. Gage has served in a number of volunteer positions, including two years as president of the League of Women Voters of Kentucky. She has a degree in philosophy from Berea College. Ms. Gage is director of sustainable communities at the Mountain Association for Community Economic Development (more widely known as MACED) in Berea, a regional organization which provides opportunities and resources to help citizens build sustainable, healthy, equitable, democratic and prosperous communities in Kentucky and Central Appalachia. Since its creation in 1976, MACED has combined research and policy analysis with technical assistance and financial investments to stimulate development that benefits low-income households.

Billie M. Sebastian received a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Kentucky. From 1988 to 1993, Ms. Sebastian worked with the Legislative Research Commission and the Long Term Policy Development Committee, which designed the concept of the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center. In August 1993, she joined the Center's staff where she has worked with the *Scanning Kentucky* and *Visioning Kentucky's Future* initiatives. In June 1997, Ms. Sebastian was invited to address the *Visión: Monterrey 2020* conference in Monterrey, Mexico. She has been a certified foster parent since 1988 and has served as First Vice President of the Kentucky Foster Care Association and twice was a delegate to the National Foster Parent Association annual conference. She is a past president of the Franklin County Humane Society, has served on the Board of Directors of two Kentucky Arabian organizations, and has served as event staff for

11 U.S. National Arabian Championship Horse Shows. Ms. Sebastian is a member of Memorial Baptist Church in Frankfort, Kentucky.

Nancy S. Stone is the Executive Director of the Franklin-Simpson County Chamber of Commerce. Prior to her work there, Ms. Stone served on the broadcasting and news staff of Franklin Favorite-WFKN, Inc. She is a Board Member of Kentucky Chamber of Commerce Executives and West Kentucky Corporation, serves on the Consulting Committee for Communities of the Future, is a Site Visit Team Member of the Kentucky Industrial Development Council, and serves on the Barren River Area Development District Transportation Council. She has also served on the Boards of Directors of the Kentucky Council on Child Abuse, Franklin Simpson Memorial Hospital, the Simpson County School-Community Partnership, the Mammoth Cave Regional Foundation, and the Cave Region Matching Funds Committee. Ms. Stone has served as Chairman of the Simpson County Bicentennial Committee, the Simpson County Tourism Commission, the Simpson County Historic Properties Trust, and the Mammoth Cave Regional Foundation. She is a graduate of Portland High School in Portland, Tennessee, and attended Vanderbilt University. Ms. Stone is a graduate of Leadership Kentucky and the Kentucky Institute for Economic Development, and completed the University of Georgia Institute for Organization Management. She was recognized as the Woman of the Year in 1991 by the Business and Professional Women's Club, and received the School Bell Award from the Kentucky Education Association and the Community Service Award from the Simpson County Extension Service.

Dr. Edward Yager is an Assistant Professor of Government at Western Kentucky University. He worked in California local government for five years before earning his Ph.D. from the University of California at Santa Barbara. Dr. Yager has presented several conference papers on strategic planning and local economic development and has published articles on the same theme, including a recent article in the *Economic Development Review* examining university technical assistance to strategic plans for local economic development. He is a former President of the Kentucky Political Science Association (1996-97) and currently serves on several community committees, including the Mayor's Select Committee on Local Government Policy, the Communities of the Future Project, and the International Relations Committee of the Bowling Green Area Chamber of Commerce. He is finishing his sixth academic year at Western, where he teaches courses in American government and public administration. He and his wife, Marie, have two children in elementary school.

Panel Discussion

How successful state, county, municipal and citizen-based visioning efforts were designed and launched.

Moderator, Dr. Penny Miller:

I am Vice Chair of the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center Board. We are extremely pleased to have all of you with us this morning. We are now going to focus on efforts that are taking place in Kentucky and examine successful efforts at the local, state, multi-county and county-wide levels of initiatives. We also have geographical distribution, as we will be examining things occurring in Bowling Green, Simpson County, south central Kentucky, and statewide initiatives dealing with visioning.

We have a very impressive and caring panel. Instead of taking the time to introduce them in great detail, please read their bios, which are enclosed in your packets. They are very impressive people and have been long involved in efforts of strategic planning and helping their communities and the state. Dr. Edward Yager, Assistant Professor of Government at Western Kentucky University, will start off this panel. His research interests focus on local economic development capacity issues, and he has come this morning to talk about the visioning efforts that have taken place in Bowling Green.

Dr. Yager:

Good morning. I am honored to be here this morning and to address you on a very important and timely topic. In Bowling Green, we have a Communities of the Future initiative and this initiative has essentially two objectives. The first objective is to foster increased citizen participation and shared vision on community issues. The second objective is to try to introduce a longer-term perspective on those community issues.

The Communities of the Future program is premised upon a growing body of research that strongly suggests that community collaborative initiatives are an effective means of addressing community issues; but, moreover, it contributes to what has been described as social capital or social infrastructure—important elements of trust in working relationships between individuals within a particular community. Scholars such as Robert Putnam out of Harvard, Chris Larsen, syndicated columnist Neal Pearce, and others have done substantial research in this area that have developed these results.

The Communities of the Future project is sponsored by the Bowling Green-Warren County Chamber of Commerce in partnership with the City of Bowling Green and Western Kentucky University's Institute for Economic Development. Those are the major sponsors of the Communities of the Future program, which is not limited to Bowling Green, but includes 30 communities across 15 states that have their own Communities of the Future visioning programs. With the assistance of Rick Smyre, a consultant from North Carolina, a steering committee was organized and has met to establish direction and strategies for community consensus building and team building.

Most recently, a neighborhood leadership initiative by the City of Bowling Green, spearheaded by Chuck Coates, is an important component of the Communities of the Future Program. This initiative entails the identification of leaders in neighborhoods throughout the city who will work with a municipally funded neighborhood liaison officer that will provide a conduit for information between the city and the neighborhoods. The liaison officer will also work with various neighborhood leaders to develop their skills in consensus building on important priority issues that need to be addressed, such as the reduction of drug use, illiteracy, or day care. Those priorities will be identified in neighborhood forums led by a leader selected by the neighborhood, rather than a municipal worker, but that leader will be trained in facilitation skills and consensus building techniques by the city employee. We are pretty excited about this initiative and the employee will be hired in the first week of December.

A second element in the Communities of the Future program is actually within the city bureaucracy. Mr. Coates has implemented consensus building within management ranks. He believes that he will be able to identify successful strategies and techniques within the city bureaucracy that will have some relevance as well to community consensus building through the Communities of the Future Program.

Finally, I recently returned from an intensive four-day workshop sponsored by Interaction Associates. This is an international consulting firm for providing facilitation skills, team building techniques, and consensus building techniques. Most of their clients are Fortune 500 companies. Teamwork is important within private sector corporations in order to reach organizational objec-

tives, but many of those principles are also relevant to community consensus building. I am looking forward to employing what I learned at that workshop in working with the neighborhood liaison officer and various private citizens within the neighborhoods of Bowling Green. There's been substantial research in this area that has been able to identify civic benefits, that is, a closer engagement between citizens and their government derived from community consensus building, but also economic development benefits derived from this process as well.

I would like to emphasize a number of case studies that are available in two books. The first book, *Collaborative Leadership, How Citizens and Civic Leaders Can Make a Difference*, was authored by professors and consultants from the University of Colorado and has a number of case studies where community collaboration works. They emphasize the civic benefits; that is, citizen engagement on political issues, much of what Governor Patton was talking about earlier this morning, connecting government with citizens through community collaborative processes. But economic benefits can be derived as well. That's the subject of the second book, *Grassroots Leaders for a New Economy*, written by economic development consultants out of Silicon Valley, but it features cities emphasizing community collaboration for economic development. I would strongly endorse both of these books and the case studies that are presented. Thank you.

Dr. Miller:

How many of you are currently involved in a local visioning initiative at the city level? The county level? Multi-county initiative? Statewide? And how many folks do we have from state government that have strategic planning within their departments? All of those reports and strategic planning efforts were instrumental to our Center's visioning efforts. Our next panelist will be talking about citizen-based visioning efforts that have been done at the multi-county level. Jeanne Gage is Director of Sustainable Communities at MACED.

Ms. Gage:

Thank you. The acronym MACED stands for the Mountain Association for Community Economic Development. I am going to talk about MACED's sustainable communities initiative which I direct. There are two goals of this initiative. The first is to demonstrate that a community's ability to come together and cooperate for the common good is the primary factor in determining how successfully it will address the challenge of sustainable development. Earlier Governor Patton referred to this ability as civic capital. A lot of people call it social capital or social capacity, but what we are talking about is people coming together and cooperating for the common good.

The second goal is to develop a long-term strategy for sustainable community development decisionmaking at the local level through the creation and support of citizen-based action teams. Our sustainable communities initiative is currently testing this model with two county-level action teams located in Letcher and Owsley Counties in Kentucky. The Owsley action team has been around since 1992 and the Letcher County action team since 1996. As we work with both of these groups, we are developing this model using what we have learned and actually we've gotten so much interest in this that we will probably be launching into a national effort. When the panel was introduced, they said we were going to talk about successful efforts and we won't know if this is successful for a number of years, but we feel confident that we are heading in the right direction.

Our initiative is based on the belief that there are three basic dynamics operating within communities and though these aren't the only dynamics, we think they are very important to what happens in communities. The first is economy. Economy is the management and use of resources to meet household and community needs. The second dynamic is ecology, which is the pattern of relationships between living things and their environment. The third dynamic is equity. Equity is

about treating people with fairness and dignity. We call these the Three Es of sustainable development.

The way MACED defines sustainable development is as a process of making decisions that consider the long-term effects on the economy, ecology, and equity of communities. The goal of sustainable development is to develop each community's ability to be healthy and prosperous over the long term. What does all this have to do with community-based visioning? MACED has developed ten steps, which are described in more detail in the booklet, *Communities by Choice: An Introduction to Sustainable Community Development*.

One of the steps in the 10 steps is to share a vision of the future. So I am going to focus on that step specifically. But, before we can create a shared vision of the future, we need to ask a couple of questions. The first is, if we are going to come together and cooperate for the common good, what is the common good? We have to be able to answer that question for our own communities. The second question is, who is "we"?

Action teams are citizen-based, nongovernmental organizations . . . They are inclusive. They believe, as an old Quaker saying goes, everybody has a piece of the truth.

We chose the action-team model as a vehicle for addressing these questions. The action-team models that we are working with in Owsley and Letcher Counties are both operating from a basic set of principles. Action teams are citizen-based, nongovernmental organizations. One of the ones we are working with is incorporated; the other isn't. They are inclusive. They believe, as an old Quaker saying goes, everybody has a piece of the truth.

They are willing to address long-term issues. They haven't come together around a specific problem, but to look at long-term issues. They use consensus decisionmaking and that's not just majority vote. You have to have general agreement of a representative group of people before you can move forward with an issue. They believe in shared responsibility and empowerment, so they don't just have a few people or staff members doing everything, but they share the work and they share the rewards.

They meet at least monthly. They use action learning, which is learning by doing. They involve action team members by conducting research and going on trips and they are trying to get beyond the flip chart, just sitting and brainstorming, writing it all up, and spitting it back out. They are proactive, not reactive. They understand the difference between development and growth. We talk about this difference more in the *Communities by Choice* booklet.

They cultivate trusting relationships between people on the action teams and with organizations and elected officials within the community. They consider the impact of their decisions on other communities because there are a lot of decisions that we can't make in a void. We all share air, water, and other things that cross political boundaries, so they think about how their decisions affect other communities. They are flexible and accountable for their actions.

In the community-based visioning with the action teams, we started by asking a couple of basic questions. You can ask different questions and get at the same issues, but these are the questions that we have asked. What is important to our community? In answering that question, you end up getting a list of the community's values. We think these values are key to future decisionmaking. They are also key to developing the vision of the future. We also ask, what are the criteria that we want to use for development decisions? These become a list of principles. We ask, what do we want to be? This will be the community's vision. Then, is this where we are currently headed? This helps identify what needs to change.

Both of our action teams have gone through this process and they have kept working until they each formed a set of values, a set of principles, and their mission statement. Every time the action teams make decisions, they refer back to these to ensure that they are meeting the common values and principles that they have agreed upon.

One thing to consider is that the purpose of the visioning process is to capture people's hearts and imaginations, not just to get a vision statement. If you can't get people excited about thinking about the future and what is possible, then you are not going to have any action on that vision. A vision is not just what you can see in your head that you want that community to be like. It's about the character of communities and about how communities function. It's hard to visualize equitable relationships in a community, but you need to think about what are the characteristics and personality of our community, and what do we want it to be like?

A shared vision is not the same as a vision that is shared. You don't want a small group of people to get together, form a vision, and then broadly share it with the rest of the community and call it a shared vision. You really need to involve a broad segment of the community. There are different ways to do that. Not everybody likes to come to meetings and that's not the only way to involve people. You can use newspapers, radio shows, the Internet, field trips and plays, and other things to involve people in thinking about their community.

When gathering information, you need to distinguish between facts and opinions. I've gone through several visioning sessions with groups where everybody gets together and gives their opinions on what's happening and then decides what they want to happen. If it's not based on this common information base, you can head off in a lot of unproductive directions. You need to focus on what is possible, to be able to turn the "we can't"s into "how can we?"s in your facilitating of the process. You need to be intentional about who "we" is and make sure that the group you brought together is broadly representative of the community, that there is a broad range of views at the table. Otherwise, you are not going to develop a shared vision.

Woulda-Coulda-Shoulda

All the Woulda-Coulda-Shouldas
Layin' in the sun,
Talkin' 'bout the things
They woulda-coulda-shoulda done...
But those Woulda-Coulda-Shouldas
All ran away and hid
From one little did.

from *Falling Up* by Shel Silverstein

Creating a vision is not about making one choice. It's about a pattern of choices over a long period of time. So you need to make sure that you don't focus too much on creating one vision, but rather on how you make thoughtful choices over time, and that you establish a process to continue to keep those choices thoughtful.

Finally, visions must lead to actions; if they don't, it was a waste of your time. We think that's why the action-team model works, because you have a group that can take that vision and begin to act on it. T. S. Elliott once said, "In dreams begin responsibilities." I have another famous quote I'd like to share with you from Shel Silverstein. This is a poem called *Woulda-Coulda-Shoulda*. "All the Woulda-Coulda-Shouldas Layin' in the sun, Talkin' 'bout the things They woulda-coulda-shoulda done... But those Woulda-Coulda-Shouldas All ran away and hid From one little did." We think our action teams are turning into little dids and we would like to see more of that happening in Kentucky.

Dr. Miller:

Thank you. Our next panelist, Nancy Stone, is a real doer in Simpson County and she's going to tell you about the visioning efforts that they designed and launched there.

Ms. Stone:

I am so glad to be here. Thank you for having me today. I am the Director of a Chamber of Commerce in a very small community, Franklin, in Simpson County. Bowling Green and Warren County is not the last place that you exit on I-65 going into Tennessee; it is Franklin in Simpson County. The state of Kentucky does not end at Bowling Green, and Chuck (Coates) would disagree.

I'm going to talk about a community visioning process from the most basic level, a small rural community that still has its economic growth partially embedded in agriculture, and about the practical application of an existing community visioning program. We used two different programs within our community that led us to our new enthusiasm and a whole new outlook. I am here to talk from the perspective of where the rubber meets the road. In order for you to know about our community visioning process that we began the preparation for about three years ago, you have to know why.

Nancy Stone recounts the experiences of the Simpson County visioning process.

By most standards, Simpson County is considered a successful community. We've had more than our share of industry since the 1950s. And even though we are the twelfth smallest county in the Commonwealth, we rank twelfth in the production of corn and soybeans, among other things. So you can see that agriculture and industry are both very important to us. Three years ago, a poultry-processing plant announced it would locate in our community. We were going to have 1,600 new jobs and a brand new market for all of that grain. I'm not sure that everyone understands that when these live animal farms and these processing plants enter into our state, they are coming into the western part of the state because they want the grain. Most of them will have their own feed mill with them because they have a formula which helps enhance and speed up the growth process. So, we felt we had the best of both worlds with this particular industry. It seemed so right that the officials and the people that worked on it were absolutely stunned when they found out that there was very strong local opposition. The opposition ultimately forced our city officials to withdraw their support and ultimately kill the project. Environmental groups founded most of this opposition.

All of this came on the heels of a legalized liquor referendum that was hotly contested and defeated. How many of you are from small rural communities? You know that nothing stirs the blood in Kentucky in a small rural community like a liquor issue. When the dust cleared following these two fiascoes, our community was left devastated. Neighbors and family members weren't speaking. We were at probably the lowest point that I can remember in the 30 years that I have lived in the Franklin-Simpson County community.

The Chamber decided that we had to take the initiative to try to lead the community in some way to help them repair the damage that had been done. So, in the heat of all of these things, we approached the City Commission and the Fiscal Court. We asked for their endorsement to seek out projects that would help us to achieve those goals that we had set. They did endorse it, but the caveat was that it was not to cost them anything. We were welcomed whatever we wanted to do.

Our first goal was to open up communication within our community. We wanted people to start talking to each other again and try to heal some of those wounds. Secondly, we wanted to offer a really frustrated small community the chance to have a voice in its development. I am from Tennessee, about 12 miles down the road from Franklin, but we do live on I-65. Franklin is located on I-65; Nashville is about 35 minutes to the south of us, and Bowling Green 15-20 miles to the north of us. Both are experiencing unprecedented growth. That growth is beginning to press in on our small community.

The change is happening, and small communities really have trouble when change is inevitable. People feel frustrated and feel as if they are losing control. We felt that our community was experiencing that in a very strong way. So we wanted to give them a voice in the development of our community as it was beginning to be noticed. As luck had it, we tapped into the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce Certified Community Partnership Program that was offered to Chambers and we were one of the first five communities to be chosen to participate in that new program, which replaced the old Certified Cities Program.

Then we found another program called the TVA Quality Communities Program. You've heard Phil Scharre and you will also hear Tom Forsythe today. Either one of them could drive into Franklin, and they got to be such regular visitors to our area that they were almost on a first-name basis with everybody in our community. The police and the McDonald's people knew them.

The good news about these two programs was that we did begin to regain our enthusiasm and we did heal some old wounds. That enthusiasm has not diminished. The program has forced us to take a very long, hard look at ourselves and helped us find our place again in the scheme of things for south central Kentucky and north central Tennessee. It has enabled us to focus on our future in a very positive way.

First, the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce asked us to do a thorough analysis of our community. We set up a team with broad-based leadership and knowledgeable participants and did a very thorough job on that analysis. We exposed warts and all and were brutally honest about our problems. If you have followed *The Courier-Journal* or the *Bowling Green Daily News* for the last 15 years, you know that we have had a very colorful political history in our community, and we were honest in our assessment of that situation along with other problems. The process in itself is cathartic, to be perfectly honest about all your problems, put them in black and white, and hand them over to a resource team of strangers. I was very proud of our group for the effort that they put into that.

The Kentucky Chamber put together a resource team, studied our analysis, and came back with suggestions. One was a community visioning process. Enter the TVA, Phil Scharre, Tom Forsythe, and the Quality Communities Program. Again, limited finances and resources crippled us, but TVA's program was free. Phil Scharre and Tom Forsythe spent many hours with us and we are indebted. I want to take this chance to thank TVA. We could never have done this without them.

Tom and I worked long hours trying to develop a core committee to establish a program that would fit our specific community needs. We decided very early on that a healthy cross section of the community would be invited to that first table. We invited what I call the "old sore tails" in the community—the ones that write the letters to the editor on a regular basis, filled with half-truths. They are never happy about anything, always complaining, and, even though the commu-

nity generally knows that they are full of hot air, just the fact that they're doing what they are doing sometimes can ruin a project. The theory was that if they were invited and participated in that first program, they would expend some of that negative energy in supporting our program, and it worked. One of our most avid supporters happened to be a farmer, a fine fellow, who has gotten to be one of my really good friends. This program really did make a difference for him.

The opening session was led by Phil Scharre and Tom and lasted about three or four hours. The program they put together included team-building exercises, which were extremely important to our program, because we had such a diverse group of people, with such differing opinions that we had to have that team building in order to make this entire program work.

We developed a vision statement. Keep in mind that we had everything from the farmer to a nun, to an African-American female minister, to the Mayor, to the Judge, and to people who had trucking companies. It was really a cross section and they all had different ideas. Finally, after long hours, our vision statement reads as follows: "Franklin-Simpson County is a friendly community in which our neighbors may differ but are not divided. Our families cherish the value of our heritage while progressing toward a quality future. We promote stewardship and perpetuation of our God-given resources and proudly possess the title of "the Garden Spot of the World." Garden Spot of the World is a Simpson County joke.

We had excellent attendance, and the secret to having good attendance is to feed them . . . a great many people will come straight from work. If they know they can grab a bite and be gone in an hour or two, they are much more willing to participate.

Numerous planning meetings followed the opening meeting. We had excellent attendance, and the secret to having good attendance is to feed them. We fed them really often because we usually had 5:00 or 6:00 meetings and a great many people will come straight from work. If they know they can grab a bite and be gone in an hour or two, they are much more willing to participate. I have a story about Tom Forsythe that gives an idea of the kind of commitment this TVA official had to us. Tom lived about 100 miles from where we were. One night he asked for permission to bring a dish. He has an award-winning recipe for Crappie Gumbo. So one night we fixed a little rice and had Crappie Gumbo. That did a lot to endear him to the people of our community and I still get requests for that recipe.

We wanted input from as many people in our community as possible so we enlisted the help of civic groups and extension service members for responses to a questionnaire we developed. At that point, we decided we were going to have public forums. We chose four sites that we thought would attract the most people. We were very sensitive about what particular parts of our community would draw the most people; for instance, we held one forum at what was once an African-American school located close to a heavily-populated African-American section of our community. We felt, by having it there, those citizens would feel more comfortable and we would get better attendance. We also had one meeting at the art gallery and it drew a certain group of people in our community that felt very comfortable there. We had two different meetings within the school system and one at what we call the Ag. Building was basically for the farmers. We had good participation there.

We chose 16 people who received facilitative training from Phil Scharre and distributed posters. One of the smart things we did was to include the editor of the paper as part of our regional group. He gave us wonderful support and publicized our meetings, which was absolutely crucial to the success of our process. We also made it a point to include the high school students in our community and made sure they were aware that they would be welcome at the public forums. Simpson County has about 16,500 people. We had 125 people attend the public meetings and about 300 responses from the civic clubs and extension service.

Tom Forsythe and his wife took all the flip chart pages, spread them all through their house, used two computers, and compiled all the information. That was wonderful, and one of those things that we have to thank Tom for. As we put all that information together, we published it. Our newspaper did our vision statement and top issues for us. We put together a booklet that we distributed, but we isolated those six top issues and formed committees that continue working on them.

I'll share some of the results. Our downtown restoration project was strengthened by the community's interest in maintaining our historic downtown. The industrial board changed from a volunteer organization to a city- and county-funded board with broad representation. The community park system is being expanded, and a full-time director has been hired. The most exciting thing is that a new community center should open in 1998, developed by a partnership of the school system, the city, and the county. This is unprecedented in the Commonwealth. We are also examining regionalization of government services. In future meetings, probably in January or February, we are going to have experts speak to our community about the pros and cons of a "metro-government." Those are some results that our community identified as being important to them.

To sum up the skills and attributes that were necessary to pull together our very successful visioning process, first we had to recognize the need. That's probably most important for most community visioning processes. You have to be really honest, because you are just spinning your wheels if you are not being honest with yourselves and the communities that go through this process. You have to be very sensitive to all the issues that are involved. Tenacity is important and you have to be able to hang in there because sometimes it gets pretty discouraging. You have to have tolerance, be a good listener, and have a good sense of humor. Thank you very much.

Dr. Miller:

It's very apparent that Simpson County has a wonderful comedienne. Thank you for sharing that. Our last panelist is one of the vital staff members of the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center. Billie Sebastian also heads our scanning operation.

Ms. Sebastian:

In concert with the other panelists, I am also going to be speaking about a visioning and strategic planning effort, but ours is the one generated at the state level. We approached our visioning effort by asking four basic questions. The first question was "Where are we going?" Here's where we examined the trends that were identified by over 100 experts based on their observations and experiences and we published those in our first two biennial trends reports, *The Context of Change* and *Exploring the Frontier of the Future*.

The second question is "Where do we want to be?" Answers to these questions were based on input from Kentucky citizens. We held over 15 public forums, one in each Area Development District, in the Fall of 1994 and asked all the attendees at the meetings where they wanted Kentucky to be in 20 years. Then we created a draft Vision Statement that was mailed to almost 3,000 Kentuckians, and asked for their input. Finally, we held a conference in the Fall of 1995 in Lexington and those participants helped fine-tune our Vision Statement.

Our third question then was "How do we get there?" Many state agencies have written strategic plans, but there wasn't any unifying plan at the state level for government as a whole. So, based upon all of their individual strategic plans, we crafted goals and indicators of progress or benchmarks to include what we had learned from the citizen input and from the other state agencies about what they wanted for Kentucky in the future.

Our fourth question is "How do we monitor progress?" These indicators of progress or benchmarks are data driven in that we have gotten as much information as we could find on what we hope would indicate progress toward any individual goal. Then we will solicit a "report card" from Kentuckians to see how they think the Commonwealth is doing.

So our first question was "Where are we going?" Remember this is just the first step in a four-step visioning process and that examines trends in five basic areas. The first area is communities, where demographic shifts are currently underway. The second area is education, where increasing importance is placed on educational attainment. The third is the economy, and we note the impact of globalization and technology on Kentucky's welfare and the workforce. The fourth area is the environment, where we are making progress but are still experiencing some problems. And the fifth area is government, noting that voter participation is considerably lower in Kentucky than in the United States as a whole, but we do have higher social capital, a stronger sense of trust, and higher rates of volunteerism.

We are going to examine these a little more closely. Again, these are just some sample trends organized around the five thematic areas showing where we are going. First we'll look at communities. Kentucky's population is aging and the state's age 65 and over population is expected to increase by an additional 55 percent from 1995 to 2020, and many people are returning home to Kentucky. So we've had a net gain of 82,000 migrants from 1990 to 1995.

Education needs are changing as well, as technology plays a larger and larger role in industry and the workforce must adapt to that. It's increasingly important for Kentucky's labor force to continue training to keep up. Of the projected job openings between 1994 and 2005, only 1 percent of those that require no special training will have very high or high to medium wages, while 91 percent will have very low or low to medium wages. Conversely, of the projected job openings that require a bachelor's degree or more, 80 percent will have very high or high to medium wages compared to only 1 percent that will have very low or low to medium wages. Kentucky's educational status is rising and literacy levels here in Kentucky are above the national U.S. average. Additionally, the number of Kentuckians with a bachelor's degree continues to rise and the same is true of those with high school diplomas.

Globalization is a key trend for Kentucky's economy as Kentucky firms are now competing with firms worldwide rather than just next door or in the next state. Kentucky's exports have exceeded the U.S. average and foreign firms now employ over 70,000 Kentuckians. Information technology is a key to Kentucky's economy. In a recent survey we learned that almost 70 percent of Kentucky's population either owns or has access to a personal computer at work, school, or elsewhere, and this figure compares favorably to the United States in that it's about the same as the U.S. average.

Environmentally, Kentucky has made progress, yet still experiences some problems. Air quality is improved with reduced concentrations of air pollutants. And even though we are generating more solid waste than ever, more people are disposing of it properly, with an estimated 80 percent of Kentucky households participating in garbage collection. Also, the percent of impaired water waste in Kentucky continues to decline, but public water systems are not universal, and one in five households still do not have access to public drinking water systems. Additionally, over half the public water systems that we do have had one or more violations in 1995.

Voter participation in national, state, and local elections is still relatively low and consistently lower in Kentucky than in the United States as a whole, but social capital is high in the Commonwealth and Kentuckians express high levels of trust and commitment to volunteer activities. An example of a positive counterbalance that is underway would be the motor-voter law to increase the number of registered voters.

Now that we know where we are, our second step is to decide where we want to be. So from the public forums, the mass mailings, and the 1995 conference, the citizen input helped to create the Vision Statement for Kentucky's future. "We envision a future for the Commonwealth of

Kentucky that unites us in common purpose and builds on the strength of our heritage and our resources. We see vibrant nurturing communities, lifelong quality education opportunities, a sustainable prosperous economy, a clean, beautiful environment, and honest participatory government at all levels." The Vision Statement encompasses all five thematic areas that we mentioned earlier. The second step in the process is to ask, "How do we get there?" From the key phrases in the Vision Statement, we developed 26 long-term goals, organized around the five themes: communities, education, economy, the environment, and government. Our *Visioning Kentucky's Future* document outlined all the goals.

The community goals specifically concerned families, housing, health care, social capital, and diversity. Our education goals included lifelong learning; an internationally competitive education for our students; the health and well-being of our children; partnerships between parents, teachers, and communities; safe, stable, learning environments for children; and, of course, the arts and humanities. The economy goals focus on poverty, globalization, and technology as key trends. Infrastructure and entrepreneurism were included here. The environmental goals covered concerns about our natural resources: recycling and pollution, for example. Our government goals included accountability in government at all levels, the justice system, and civic participation.

How do we monitor progress? This was our fourth step in the process. Similar to *Oregon Benchmarks* or *Minnesota Milestones*, we also used indicators of progress toward the individual goals. These indicators must be measurable and they should be comparable. Ideally we would like to have both historical data and comparative data for the United States and other states. But the data do not always have to be readily available because in many cases no data has yet been collected on an indicator that we've determined to be an important measure of progress toward our goals. So, in some cases, we used a survey instrument to begin collecting data.

Here's an example. Goal One is: "Kentucky's communities will be safe and caring places and enable all citizens to lead productive, fulfilling lives." This demonstrates how subjective the goals can be and how difficult the process might be to determine which indicators would be good ones to measure progress toward a goal. For instance, how do you determine communities that are "caring places" and what would be a "fulfilling" life? But, the indicators that we chose to use were safe communities, crime, neighborliness, and access for the handicapped.

We surveyed citizens in 1996 through the University of Kentucky's Survey Research Center about safe communities and found that 93 percent of those surveyed said they either always or usually felt safe in their communities. Here, of course, we have no historical or comparative data, but with this one year's data we have established a baseline that we can build on. For the crime index, we did have both historical and comparative data, so we can determine that the crime rate in Kentucky has been consistently lower than in the United States for the past several years. And, like the question about safe communities, we surveyed citizens through the UK Survey Research Center about neighborliness. We asked Kentuckians how many people they thought they could rely on in a time of need, and only 7 percent said none, 74 percent said 5 or more, and an enviable 8 percent said they could rely upon 50 or more people if they needed to.

A survey to determine how citizens think Kentucky is doing is going to be mailed out to over 6,000 people and ask them if they think we are making progress, losing ground, or standing still on each goal. The report with measurements is due to be published in January 1998. This, however, is a work in progress, and we expect to update this information with new data every two years.

In summary, the process for planning strategically for Kentucky's future included four steps and four key questions: first, identifying trends to see where we are going; second, determining a vision or where we want to be; third, setting the goals to determine how we get there; and, fourth, identifying indicators of progress toward the goals. Thank you.

Dr. Miller:

Thank you very much. Because we started late, we are unfortunately unable to entertain any questions right now, but we do hope later you can meet with our panelists and talk to them about their projects. As Nancy said, one of the most important things to do is feed people. That's next on the agenda. Thank you panelists.

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

Dr. Carolyn J. Lukensmeyer

I am absolutely delighted to be with you. It's great to be here, to see some old friends, such as Paul Cook and Mike Childress, people who I saw when *America Speaks* held a conference at Wing Spread. Your state was extraordinarily well represented. *America Speaks* did a year-long process of evaluating citizen engagement projects across the United States against a set of clear criteria and at the end of that process chose to invite three of those communities to be test beds for a process that will go on for several years around integrating face-to-face citizen participation with the use of new technologies, interactive television, and the computer networking process. Kentucky was one of the projects chosen. One of the things I know from a local perspective is it is very difficult to keep a contextual perspective around what you are doing at home and if it's being noticed anyplace in the world. The answer is yes.

You clearly have an extraordinary commitment in this state to citizen engagement. I am going to take speaker's prerogative and spend all my time only on citizen engagement today, and I will be very up front with you why. I had the privilege the last 25 years of working always on issues of democratization, first in the workplace in the corporate world for 13 years, and then in government, first as Chief of Staff to Dick Celeste in Ohio and then with an extraordinarily dedicated team around Vice President Gore at the national level. And the result of virtually 25 years of work in the public and private sectors is relative to issues of equitable equability; whether that's access, opportunity, the issue of access to vote, or taking the responsibility to vote.

Where we are in this country today, we need to be paying very close attention, whatever your job or role is, to how democratic our process is. We are the oldest, most mature democracy on the face of the earth that has an individual Bill of Rights, along with a Constitution for our collective good. Let me call the country an organization. There are many, many benefits to working in a mature organization, a lot of standards, principles, and protocols in place that make it work, no matter who takes over.

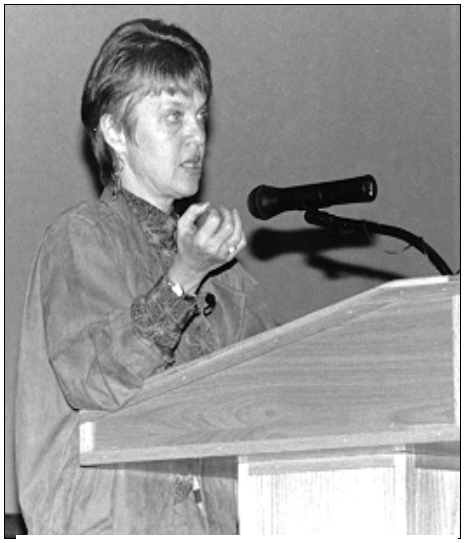
But what also happens on the other end of that maturity? Unfortunately, in a mature organization, you start to take things for granted. You close down new ideas. If you move into the corporate world, in this country it's about 20 years ahead of the public sector in understanding that there was an absolute necessity to change how the bureaucracy really operated. We went from being noncompetitive in major world industries to almost losing position, and on a 15-year cycle, coming back in almost every single one of those industries because the bureaucracies were blown apart and redesigned.

That process is now beginning to occur in government as well. From my experience with Governor Celeste in Ohio, which I will always count as an extraordinary gift, and what I have experienced in Washington, DC, one thing that anybody who is straight with you in the world of politics and government will acknowledge is that no leader in that arena can change the institution of government unless the will and voice of the people is walking hand in hand with them. Those places where real institutional change occurred in the State of Ohio that have gone on through a different Governor of a different party, and they are very dramatic examples, occurred because there was an educated population who had voice on those issues that was consistent through the change in government.

Now, we still have an extraordinarily large number of examples of that working at the local level, sometimes at the regional level, and at the state level. We in current political economic history have no examples of that working at the national level. Based on what has been said about my background, you may assume that my bias about this is Democratic, but if you do, it is a wrong assumption. I got into the game clearly out of the issue of democracy building in public policy.

Set aside your feelings about President Clinton as a leader, and he is the only sitting President in this century that walked into office where there was a clear national mandate on a national issue and nothing happened. What was the issue? For 10 years, a majority perspective on the issue of health care was building in this country and by the time he got elected, it was above 65 percent. He didn't even have a mandate in terms of a majority vote in his own election, but that mandate was there in terms of national health care reform.

Now, we can all do our Monday-morning quarterbacking about the mistakes the Clinton team made in their attempts to reform health care. They made a lot of mistakes, but the fact that no reform occurred can be laid solely at the desk of the ineffectiveness of the Clinton team. I will leave you with one statistic in terms of what it takes. Remember our nation is about collective voice, majority opinion, and needs to go somewhere. Between May and September 1994, more dollars were spent on the national advertising campaign by the coalition of interests that would lose something significant if national health care reform passed than was spent by George Bush and William Clinton together to run for the office of the President in 1992. So, not just the political arena in this country has learned how to use advertising in the national media to influence majority perspective but all the other segments of our society have equally learned that.



Dr. Carolyn Lukensmeyer

Now somebody at this moment may be asking why I am talking to you about this, why am I pushing this issue at this level? I sat in your auditorium and I heard extraordinary stories. I heard the beginning of the fabric that I've seen all over the United States of America where citizens in their local communities across all their individual differences are able to tell you stories just like Jeanne and Nancy were telling you. They have said, "The future of our community in terms of our quality of life, education, environment, health, etc., is more important to us than partisan politics, than liberal conservative ideologies, than differences on any of the spectrums that divide us when we are thinking about voting politically. If we want our life in our community to be different, we are going to have to create the mechanisms that allow us to set in motion a process."

All three of the speakers I heard talked years, not days, weeks, or months, about what it takes to build an infrastructure in a community to come to a collective vision and then have the mechanisms in place to turn that vision into an implementable action plan over time. That's a move from individual citizen concerns about the quality of life in a community, exactly like a majority of individual citizens' concerns about the state of our health care system in our country, but we are finding and developing mechanisms on a local, regional, and state level, of how to take that individual concern, respect the individual differences, fashion a plan that keeps everybody inside, and commit resources over time for the long haul.

Let me have all of you in the room stand who either have participated in that citizen voice project, vision to action, and/or are helping run one. Right now in your life you are in some place a partner, participant, or person carrying responsibility in that kind of process at the community level. Would all of you stand up for whom that's true? That's extraordinary. Are you surprised at your number? In some way, that has become part of the fabric of how Kentucky is working at a local level.

The next question is how many of you are engaged now participating in, helping run, or having some responsibility for that kind of project at the whole Commonwealth of Kentucky level, where you know your voice is getting to influence vision and action consistently over time. It certainly looked to me like 60 or 65 percent of this audience at the local level. Stand if you are participating in that at the Commonwealth level. I would guess it is about one third of you. You should feel extraordinarily proud about that fact. That is a higher level than many of the states that I have been in in the last year and one half clearly working on exactly this issue.

And now the last question: How many of you today are engaged in work in some kind of process in which you feel an active participant, because you are doing or taking responsibility to help do it on some issue that would move from vision to implementable action on a national level? Terrific. That's fantastic. It's about 10 or 12 people.

I have stood in audiences larger than this one where no one in the audience stood, but it's also important for us to take in the reality. We dropped from 65 percent to 30 percent to 12 individuals and the health of our community as a whole is directly connected and has been since the founding of this nation to the issue of how does individual voice develop to collective voice for committed action to become the nation, region, state, or community we want to become. I think you should feel tremendously excellent about the numbers of you who are engaged in this locally, at the Commonwealth level, and, frankly, at the national level.

But if we stay wholly committed to the ideals that formed our nation to begin with, what would be the actual number of people who would stand on each one of my questions? The answer is 100 percent of those who wanted to be standing. It's a long step from 60 to 100, from 30 to 100, and from 2 or 3 percent to 100. That is the nature of the citizen engagement challenge facing the country.

It is an incredibly positive story that our national institutions have not yet been penetrated. You are 65 percent for the Commonwealth. I would be curious to know if you are a particular region in Kentucky. Would I see the same thing if I were in another region in Kentucky? Do you think that 65 percent is statewide? How many of you think it's statewide? About half of you; that is fantastic. You should take great pride in that and you need to challenge yourselves to make sure it is not spotty, certain communities around the state, but that people actually know they have the potential and capacity for citizen participation when they want it.

I want to leave you with the key distinction that so much focus has been on relative to this reforming government, the kind of work I did with Vice President Gore in Washington. I have been involved in institutional change for 25 years and I cannot tell you how much more change in how the federal government operates has occurred as a result of this five years' work than I would ever have believed could happen, even though I am basically an optimist.

So let's do one other check. How many of you actually know a real story of significant institutional change in the federal government as a result of the reinvention work that has happened, where you could actually tell a story? For instance, you actually know what happened in customs, in the USDA extension service, or with the border guard? I see three. That's also not atypical anywhere in the country. We have a media institution at the national level that is still spending way beyond 50 percent of the time telling us stories about what isn't working in the government, in the country.

Now I don't know the state of play in Kentucky, but I think it's vitally important that you ask at the state level the media outlets if they tell the 65 percent story of how much is happening at the community level. In most states, the answer is no. The shift has begun to happen at the community level.

Nancy gave a great story there. Have the people, the reporters, and editors involved in this community project; they become real allies. There is a movement of civic journalism in the country at the local level. The problem is we haven't cut through how national media outlets tell us our own stories as Americans, whether it's change in the government or whether it's citizen engagement and responsibility at the local level.

I actually find people more disempowered about the media. Go back to the phrase Jeanne used when she talked about every time you hear the phrase "we can't" you change that to "how can we?" I find people at this stage much more experienced about changing "we can't" to "how can we?" about government, but when we come to the area of media, there is a sense of helplessness. There is a sense of disempowerment around what tools an individual citizen or a group of citizens in a community can use to influence how the media tells us back our own story, and it's profoundly important in terms of citizen engagement.

There is a sense of disempowerment around what tools an individual citizen or a group of citizens in a community can use to influence how the media tells us back our own story, and it's profoundly important in terms of citizen engagement.

I want to give you two examples that I've seen be successful about how a community can do this. In the City of Cleveland, which has the same urban education problems as every major urban location in the country, there was a serious concern after Ohio went through its incredible recession with manufacturing jobs, about how the community would keep its economic base diverse and vital and continue to be growing new jobs. How many people in the audience do economic development? It's the same story the country over, whether you are working on rural economic development or urban economic development.

The Cleveland organization like the Chamber of Commerce did a study. They picked every Rust Belt city in the Midwest that had a similar history to Cleveland's in terms of a massive loss of manufacturing jobs in a short period of time. Ohio's exact numbers were 300,000 jobs gone in 13 months. That would knock the socks out of the center of any urban community. What the Chamber found was that in the 10 Rust Belt cities of comparable size and comparable impact, the local newspaper, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, had 75 percent of the column inches on the front page telling negative stories about the city. I see a lot of heads, people who know about economic development. If a company is looking to invest in a community, what's one of the first things they check? So no matter what good work was being done on a citizen level, locally face to face, as long as the media portrayal of Cleveland was negative, by a factor of three, what chance was there to win the battle for outside investment? A collective group of business, government, not-for-profits, and citizens who owned businesses in Cleveland presented that information to the *Plain Dealer* and worked out over time an agreement to shift the percentage of news coverage in that newspaper about the city itself. That is a way to influence the media.

A similar story is about a parent involvement program in another Midwestern city where 2,000 parents were engaged in a two-year period about a vision for the schools strategic plan, and yet most of what they saw on television and in the newspaper in the community was stories about guns and knives in the school or the percentage of kids not meeting the expected fourth-grade standard for reading. At the same time one of the schools had gotten school-level recognition for the most students to score on a science aptitude and performance test nationally. The good stories were out there, but the same phenomena was occurring in the community, even as

the community was rallying with extraordinary citizen and parent participation, 2,000 parents involved for two and one half years in the development of a strategic vision for the school. Collectively, they had to also shift the balance in the institution of the media in terms of how they tell the story.

As you are more and more successful at the community and the Commonwealth levels, utilizing citizen engagement, be sure that you are clear about the institutional responsibility in the community for telling the story. Do business, the not-for-profits, the religious community, the media, or government tell the story? Have you tied into reinforcing, so you can have the kind of pride that can and should come out of your participation? That becomes embedded in how goes the storytelling about itself, to itself, and to the outside world, and that's how an image changes over time. So challenge every institution to be part of how the story's told in creating a different image in the future.

A second challenge I hope is embedded in what I have said to you. No matter how successful we are in citizen engagement at the community level, if we are unable to take this up every other level in our country, if we go for a decade in which we can tell positive stories at the city level and positive stories of even more than half of the states in the country, but we still have no demonstrated examples of where collective citizen voice changes the nature of the debate at the national level, what's utterly predictable? We will have taken change as far as you can from putting it in an old paradigm, but it communicates from the bottom up, from the local level up, to hitting a barrier essentially unable to change from the top down.

So the strategies need to link with how you use every locally based representative of the federal government or of the multinational corporate investment in your community as a conduit to push the same issues, processes, commitment to citizen voice, to the national and, frankly, at this point, to the global level in terms of responsibility, particularly in the private sector and its impact on what we used to think of as the remote section of Iowa where I grew up.

There are no more remote sections of any place. The interdependency is totally real economically at this point, but we haven't created in a similar capacity to make palpable and tangible the interdependence in the other arenas in our lives that determine the quality of our lives: education, health, citizen participation, and the environment. We know the facts, we know the stories, but we don't have the mechanisms in place for it to make a direct link between being able to think local and act global or the reverse bumper sticker that we now need 20 years later which is to think global and act local. So, the interdependency and pushing the window about the link is my second message.

The third message is I've traveled to tons of communities around the country that were successful with their citizen engagement effort for the first two years. It was new, it was exciting, but then, how many of you have already hit that in your community in Kentucky? It worked Round One, but somehow Round One's now done, so the real issue is sustainability and sustainability requires mechanisms that keep that voice in the decision process. I'm sure Nancy could tell you many more stories, but she talked about metro-government, which Simpson County is not quite ready to call metro-government, but the notion that in some place has to be lodged the decisionmaking power that the citizen voice is directly connected to. *America Speaks*, after traveling for eight months around the country finding successful sustainable efforts, developed a list of criteria, or as Jeanne called them, principles, for what it takes to sustain citizen involvement for the long haul.

Let me just close with two quotes that are favorites of mine in terms of the work that you are pioneers in, in terms of a new generation of what citizen activism is for general interest in the United States of America. It's not just about how I get my issue on the table, it's how do I ensure that the general interest of the community moves forward into the future. The first is an Einstein quote. "The problems facing the world today cannot be solved by the same level of

thinking that created them." It's just his wonderful way of saying what lots of us who come out of the education background call thinking out of the box, but when you are at that community table, when you are doing that work, some way keep yourself grounded: have we just recycled what we did before? "The problems facing the world cannot be solved by the same level of thinking that created them."

And then finally, something that is hard to keep in your mind in the global context that we are living in (because oftentimes the issue of size, scale, and scope makes one feel like you really can't do anything about global warming) is the fact that 30 percent of the youth in the United States of America either don't graduate from high school or are functionally illiterate when they graduate. That's a fact today in this country, and yet I'm sure everybody in this room would, like myself, say the only reason I am where I am is the quality of education that I received a long time ago. And, if, when I graduated from high school, someone would have said to me then that, less than 20 years later, we would have grown comfortable as a nation allowing 30 percent of the children of our future to not have a running start upon graduation from high school, or to allow 20 percent of our children to be born under the poverty line, it would have been unspeakable and unthinkable. But in 20 years we got there and have now been there for more than 15. So how do you keep the optimism up, keep the focus, plant your feet and say there is a relationship to what I am doing in Somerset to what's happening with global warming or any other issue you want to pick? A real inspiration to me has always been Margaret Meade and her wonderful quote: "Never, never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world." Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

Thank you. I sincerely hope that the link between what you are doing every day and my choice to take it much broader was valuable to you and felt like the context matters. I have time to take a couple of responses, more than delighted for someone just to stand up and say what you think yourself. You do not have to ask me a question, but just to put a little bit of voice from you back into the room. Does somebody have an idea or statement you would like to share, please?

Questions, Answers, and Comments

Audience Member:

(Inaudible question.)

Dr. Lukensmeyer:

I stopped probably mostly out of time and maybe out of a little bit of anxiety that I was already going broader than some people might hear, but a worldwide phenomena is the creation of NGOs, nongovernmental organizations that are citizen-based groups all over the country. I had the privilege of being in Budapest, Hungary, in September where representatives from 82 nations, who are doing exactly what you are doing in communities in Kentucky, asked how to create engaged citizen participation. We spent five days together and it was extraordinary. It's a wonderful way to use the Internet. Whatever your issue is, whatever your organization is, get on there and you'll find somebody around the globe who is also doing it.

Audience Member:

I am very much concerned about what is going on in the whole world, in the United States, and in Kentucky. There are a lot of things I can't do anything about and to me the most impor-

tant thing that I can do is to help us have higher education available in the southern region of Kentucky, and that I am working on.

Dr. Lukensmeyer:

There is no one issue that is more important than any other one issue. The issue is every citizen finding your niche, planting your feet, and committing to make a difference on that issue, where you live, and its ramifications around the world.

Audience Member:

When you talk about education, do you mean formal education or just involved in communication about what's going on?

Dr. Lukensmeyer:

It's a wonderful question, and I think because I personally feel so much sadness and passion about the formal education part and where we are with it in the U.S., I may have mixed the message. On the issue of voice, I mean everyone. Some of the most compelling and important stories that I've heard in the last year have come from people who, if they finished high school, it wasn't important to them, but the world's changed, too. For my generation even and certainly my parents' generation, the number of ways you could create for yourself an important comfortable life without a formal education was many, many more options than is true for people who are younger than we are. So, voices, it doesn't matter what your formal education is, but if we care about our future, we had better be clear that we need to recommit to everyone ending up with significant enough educational experience to enter the world able to work.

Audience Member:

I would ask you to reconsider that there is a remote place. That's in the halls and back wards of the mental hospitals, for when you enter one, your civil rights are canceled. To earn your citizenship is dependent on the health care system and we who are mental health consumers try to advocate for that, to experience a 51 percent on governing boards. The industry doesn't want you on the governing boards and to experience that if only the "I" self can be validated to the "we" self, and that takes the conscious effort of a society to learn how to back away from the table and to afford social structure, social justice to people wanting to come to the table.

Dr. Lukensmeyer:

I very much applaud and appreciate your choice to share your voice, your principle is extraordinarily important for mental health in this country, and, once again, it's an example where one in four people in this country are in some way personally engaged in the spectrum of mental health services. I don't want to tell a long story, but if I were to personally pick the thing that I am most proud of that we accomplished in Ohio, it would be changing exactly what you just said. In the state of Ohio, there is a law that any community support group that is delivering services in mental health has to have the voice of clients, consumers on that board. So it has to be done. I also want to say to others of you in the audience, when I made the generalization, and I think you know how I meant it, but there is no place that is remote left. I am deeply appreciative of your having given the voice. There are also many places that are still remote. There are whole entire urban neighborhoods that are totally remote from the conversation that we are having in this room. It is the paradox of the time in which we are alive.

The best definition I know about paradox is two things that seem absolutely contradictory, are both absolutely true, and that happens to be the way of the world at the moment that we are alive and have some responsibility for sharing leadership. No matter what position you take, no

matter what truth you speak about, whether it's in the economy, in education, etc., the exact flip side of the negative part of the story exists someplace in this world. And every single one of us in some way has to keep the same commitment that you spoke about, while always acknowledging that there are places in our hometowns, in our own localities where people still do not have the voice. Thank you.

Mr. Childress:

Carolyn, thank you very much. You gave a very inspirational talk. Many of the themes that Carolyn talked about, we are going to carry forward in the afternoon sessions. Thank you.

A capacity crowd listens to Dr. Lukensmeyer's address.

THE MEDIA AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Panel Members

Moderator:

George W. Graves is executive director of the Kentucky Center for Public Issues, a private, independent, statewide public policy organization based in Frankfort. The Center is a partner with the University of Louisville in various ventures, including a new live, hour-long public radio program, "State of Affairs." Mr. Graves is the on-air host of the show, which is broadcast live over WFPL 89.3 FM in Louisville (and taped on KETZ) and focuses on current issues. The Center also publishes the bimonthly *Kentucky Journal*, cosponsors the Shakertown Roundtable, arranges internships at the Legislative Research Commission and elsewhere in state government, conducts a legislative performance survey, organizes political debates, and establishes policy councils to tackle some of our toughest statewide issues such as constitutional reform, selection of judges, and health care. During a 23-year journalism career, Mr. Graves was a reporter and editorial writer for the Louisville newspapers and a writer and editor at *The Hartford Courant* in Connecticut. He has a graduate degree in management, and he held a fellowship at the University of Michigan. Mr. Graves teaches English part time at the University of Kentucky. He has traveled and studied in Europe and Japan.

Panelists:

Bill Bishop is associate editor of the *Lexington Herald-Leader*. He writes a column three days a week on the paper's editorial page. Mr. Bishop graduated from Duke University in 1975. He worked as a reporter at *The Mountain Eagle*, in Whitesburg, Kentucky, and as a freelance writer in Louisville. He and his wife owned and operated *The Bastrop County Times*, a weekly newspaper in Smithville, Texas, from 1983 until 1987. He came to the *Herald-Leader* as an editorial writer in 1988. Mr. Bishop taught a course in rural development at the Sanford Institute for Public Policy at Duke University, where he was senior journalist in residence, and, in 1996, he was the Ford Foundation writer in residence at MDC, Inc., a rural development think tank in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Judith G. Clabes, a newspaper editor since the 1970s and more recently a corporate executive for The E.W. Scripps Co., is the president and chief executive of the Scripps Howard Foundation. The foundation was created in 1962 to promote excellence in journalism through scholarships, grants, and an annual awards program. The foundation also financially supports literacy and volunteer programs in communities where Scripps does business, and administers the corporate giving program. Mrs. Clabes joined Scripps in 1971 as coordinator of the newspaper in education program at the Evansville (Ind.) Printing Corp. She later was community affairs director and associate editor of *The Evansville Press* before being promoted in 1978 to editor of *The Sunday Courier & Press* in Evansville. She became editor of *The Kentucky Post*

in Covington, Kentucky, in 1983. In 1995 she moved to the Scripps corporate headquarters in Cincinnati and became special projects director for the newspaper division. She has been a trustee of the Scripps Howard Foundation since 1990.

Thomas E. Gish, a native of Letcher County and a resident of Thornton, is editor and publisher of *The Mountain Eagle*, a weekly newspaper published in Whitesburg. He has won a number of awards, including the Citizen's Advocate Award presented by the Ralph Nader Foundation, the University of Arizona's John Peter Zenger Freedom of the Press Award, and a special Environmental Policy Institute award for contributions to the reduction of strip mining and other environmental issues. Mr. Gish is a member of The Kentucky Journalism Hall of Fame and a University of Kentucky graduate.

Rita Mitchell is a 1976 graduate of Murray State University, Murray, Kentucky, and holds a BS degree with a double major in journalism and speech. From 1976 to the present, Ms. Mitchell has been employed as a journalist/photographer for *The Fulton Leader* in Fulton, Kentucky. Since 1985, Ms. Mitchell has also worked as a freelance public relations provider. In May 1997, Ms. Mitchell was a presenter at the Tennessee Valley Authority Quality Communities Conference in Nashville, Tennessee. This fall she was one of four Rotary Foundation Group Study Exchange team members from Rotary District 6710 visiting District 1220 in England. Since November 1995, Ms. Mitchell has been a member of the Blue Ribbon Committee, which carries out the TVA Quality Communities Initiatives program in Fulton. She was a two-term president of the Fulton-South Fulton Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Mitchell was a co-recipient with her husband, William Mitchell, of the Chamber of Commerce 1997 Industry of the Year Award for Fulton Publishing Company. She is a member of the First United Methodist Church and has two children: Ben, 16, and Morgan, 10.

Panel Discussion

How and to what extent the media should become involved in community development initiatives.

Moderator, George Graves:

I'm the Executive Director of the Kentucky Center for Public Issues, a private nonprofit, independent public policy organization, based in Frankfort. This is one of the things I get to do as part of my job and I take great delight in it. I'm also a former journalist or, as some people have encouraged me to say, a recovering journalist, as though you never completely get away from journalism and maybe Judith Clabes has something to say about that, too.

I realize we are up against a couple of things here. You are probably feeling just a tad sleepy, maybe a little overrelaxed, concluding this is Thursday and you probably don't have to go back to work today. You've driven a long way. You got up early.

I'm here to let you know that we don't intend to show you any overheads or slides or to be talking heads up here. We want to have a conversation with you, and we will call upon you if necessary. I think I recognize enough folks out there to give you a hard time. What we want to accomplish in the next hour is to acquaint you with this panel, and it's a very diverse panel in many ways. I encourage you to take a look at the brief biographies in your packet and as you do that, I'll reacquaint you with these folks.

On my far left is Rita Mitchell, Editor of *The Fulton Leader* in far western Kentucky. To my immediate left is Judy Clabes, who has had a very distinguished career in journalism with the Cincinnati papers, a former nationally syndicated, nationally recognized, and honored columnist, and now President and Chief Executive of the Scripps-Howard Foundation. To my immediate right is Tom Gish, who is in his 40th year of editing and publishing *The Mountain Eagle*, whose motto is "It screams." When *The Mountain Eagle* screams, a lot of other people scream and best they should because *The Mountain Eagle* has sustained a long and very recognized, often outside of Kentucky, effort to improve conditions in eastern Kentucky. To my far right is Bill Bishop, Associate Editor of the *Lexington Herald-Leader*, who writes a column that appears three days a week on the opinion page. Bill, I suppose, I'm not talking out of school by also saying you once worked with Tom Gish.

Mr. Bishop:

For Tom Gish.

Mr. Graves:

For Tom Gish. I know Tom Gish isn't that big on hierarchy. First of all, when we speak about the media, I want you to realize that we have quite a bit of breadth here. We have folks who work for and may choose to be representing small papers in various parts of the state; who used to work for small or medium papers, and are now working for big papers; who may own a paper and edit and publish; or who may have owned a paper in the past. You'll find all that information in your packets and I encourage you to take a look at it. In a variety of ways this panel has been involved in journalism. I think we bring a fairly broad perspective.

Our topic today is "How and to what extent should the media become involved in community development?" I take that to mean development of a sense of community, not specifically about economic development. I also think we should take a cue from Carolyn Lukensmeyer who brought up the question about the extent to which you all can influence the media. A corollary is to what extent should the media be listening to you as you try to influence the media, to get the full, complete, accurate story told about whatever it is you think the media should be writing and talking about. We don't want to confine our discussion to the print media, although we, for the most part, are representing print media; but some of what we have to say should apply to other media. I am going to turn it over to Judith Clabes first and the other panelists to talk about how they have gotten involved in their communities, beyond their newspapers. We'll also be talking about coverage because I know coverage irks a lot of folks: why newspapers decide to cover what they decide to cover and how they decide to cover it.

Ms. Clabes:

I'm not a recovered journalist; I'm an unrepentant journalist. I want to explain to you where I'm coming from, which is several perspectives here today. I was a long-time newspaper editor in northern Kentucky at a time when that region was experiencing tremendous economic growth and development. We sponsored community meetings before it was fashionable to do so, because we saw a need there. I'd like to think that part of what we did contributed to the progress that northern Kentucky has experienced.

I presently serve on the board of a small foundation based in New York City that is specifically aimed at community development and funding community development initiatives, so I have a national perspective. I am a founding member of a board of a wonderful organization in northern Kentucky called Forward Quest. We are in Phase Two of our visioning process; that is, we've done the visioning process and now we are in a phase to move that process forward. We've identified 43 goals from our broad-range grassroots visioning effort, and

those 43 goals have become concrete objectives for us. We are in the process of making that happen. It was a 2020 visioning and we are on our way there.

I am now head of a corporate foundation, which allows me to put real money where my mouth has been. I've had this wonderful career progression. Recently I was privileged to be privy to a wonderful speech about community development. The speaker traced the history of community development initiatives from their roots in the 1970s. In the beginning, he said, the concept of community development was limited, focusing primarily on community infrastructure projects such as street improvements, water and sewer projects, and recreational facilities. They were large and nationally driven and financed housing programs and some housing rehabilitation. Some communities used public funds for downtown malls or traditional industrial development projects. Policy was dictated from Washington, the font of big money, with little attention to local needs and little ability to respond to the diverse needs of neighborhoods.

Today, the speaker said, community development encompasses community building with, by, and for the people, not just development of bricks and mortar. Community development now requires community leadership and participation, right down to and perhaps especially the neighborhood level. It is not about finding public dollars, but about leveraging those funds with significant private sector investment and expertise. In short, the concept of community development now encompasses much more comprehensive strategies. It includes the fundamental notion that rebuilding neighborhoods and communities by necessity entails helping create economic value and economic opportunity through job creation, training, and services for those of limited means.

Now, who is this speaker: a 1960s holdover and unrepentant do-gooder? Maybe he is, but I do know he is a central banker: Lawrence Meyer, a Governor of the Federal Reserve. He went on to point out that there has been an explosive growth in the number, diversity, and sophistication of community development organizations, and all players today recognize they must work together in local partnerships. There's increased emphasis on economic development and jobs as part of a more comprehensive approach and there are more and more public-private partnerships in the making.

Lawrence Meyer said, "As an economist, I subscribe to the principle that free markets work best when information about economic performance of participants including their problems and opportunities is readily available. The more and better the information about market opportunities or unmet needs, the more likely it is that someone will find a way to fill them, at least if there are no external barriers preventing action." Now as a journalist, I like that idea, that more and better information is the key to making things work best. In fact, that is our first obligation as journalists to provide balanced, fair, accurate coverage of our whole community and to provide a forum for comment and criticism open to all. As a citizen and a journalist, I really like the idea of removing barriers to progress that work for the common good.

I also like the idea espoused by your own Michael Childress who said, "Citizen involvement may be the single most important factor in our efforts to improve quality of life throughout the Commonwealth." Any journalist worth her ink simply must believe that citizen involvement is not just a good thing, but a necessary thing. It's what democracy is and our special kind of journalism in America is the embodiment of that very ideal, and that journalist is absolutely right to do whatever is within the enormous power of the press to do, to ensure, encourage, cajole, or shame every citizen to be involved. So I define a journalist not just as a purveyor of information, but as a citizen who cannot hide from duty.

Isn't it a bit specious as an editorial voice to tell everybody else what to do and how to do it all day long, while sitting back comfortably on our own laurels and refusing to do any of the heavy lifting ourselves? If we do, we deserve what they say about editorial writers: they come

from the hill after the battle is over and shoot the wounded. Are editors part of the community development partnership? Of course we are. As journalists, we have a very special place at the table of democracy, a constitutionally defined role in the community of citizens.

Our first obligation is balanced and fair coverage information delivery. Our second is strong editorial voice that advocates, leads, persuades, exposes, encourages; it's a voice with many cadences, tones, and inflections. But underlying all that is citizenship, and that's an obligation we cannot escape—not as journalists, teachers, truck drivers, or farmers. As good journalists and good citizens, do we want jobs for our neighbors? Of course, we do. Do we want opportunities for our children? Sure. Do we want safe and clean streets? Yes. Do we want to see our communities grow and prosper? Certainly. Do we want good schools, safe neighborhoods, affordable housing, clean water, and recreational facilities? Yes, all that. Do we want to help create the atmosphere for good government, good citizenship, and good works? We must. Are these things that only everyone else should do? Absolutely not.

Whether we want to admit it or not, there is power inherent in what we do. Power can be abused in many ways, and one of those ways is not understanding it or, worse, pretending we don't have it. Today, as more and more communities are one-newspaper places, I think we have an even greater obligation than ever before to be involved in our communities. There is indeed a great debate in our industry as to whether, or if, editors should be involved and to what extent. We are conflicted over a notion called civic journalism, and every editor in America falls on a very different place along the line that is drawn. I'm not afraid of civic activism. I think objectivity as a journalistic concept is highly overrated, if not downright circumspect. There are some things we simply can't be objective about: democracy, and all those other good things related to kids, schools, neighborhoods and jobs. Given our special power, and our increasing monopolies, we have special obligations to be strong proponents for the things we believe are for the common good in our communities. Thank you.

Mr. Graves:

I have asked each of our panelists to talk a little about how they are involved outside of their newspapers, and we want to get around to talking about to what extent they should be involved, what line they feel they should not cross in terms of personal involvement. I think Judy gave us several things to think about there. A citizen cannot hide from duty. Some other members of the panel may be thinking they can't get involved in some specific project because it might become newsworthy and, therefore, their paper might write about it. Then people in the community might think that particular activity or project is getting favorable treatment because they are involved. You might also want to explore some sort of working definition of civic or public journalism because I know, even among news people, it is a widely misunderstood or variously interpreted term.

We want also to move quickly into your questions, so hang on just a few minutes. Tom, since you are working for a small newspaper in a community that is not necessarily served by other media outlets regularly, you may feel perhaps a greater temptation, or obligation, to be involved in your community than someone who is in Louisville might.

Mr. Gish:

I went from Frankfort where I was a reporter for a decade to Whitesburg in 1957, and I arrived and took over *The Mountain Eagle* the week of the huge 1957 flood, which came close to wiping out most of our county seat towns throughout eastern Kentucky. Letcher County was very hard hit by it, as were Perry and Harlan Counties. There was such a disaster that it more or less halted all kinds of activity for a very long time and there was no apparent way to put eastern Kentucky back together again. It took several months for the shock to wear

off, and for people to resume anything like a normal community life. One thing that showed, though, was that Kentucky as a state was not prepared to deal with disaster situations. There was no effective federal help, and eastern Kentucky more or less drifted.

I gradually realized that one of the reasons we were not bouncing back was that at the same time the coal industry had more or less fallen apart and we had something like half our coal miners unemployed. Our economic situation got to be extremely bad. We entered into a period in the late 1950s and early 1960s in which we had a lot of really hungry people, actual starvation, where people starved to death. We had people freeze to death in their homes in wintertime because there was no coal or wood to burn. We got involved because we had to; there was no choice. What the paper and I tried to do was put the situation before the state and the nation and to ask them to come to eastern Kentucky's rescue.

One thing after another led to a gradual awakening of interest in Washington. President Kennedy got involved in the early 1960s in response to the formation of what came to be known as the roving pickets, the automobile caravans of 600 or 700 cars filled with unemployed coal miners who would move from county seat to county seat to demonstrate and protest the fact that they had been jobless for some years and that their children were starving.

Out of all that came early emergency relief put together by President Kennedy, who initiated an effort that led ultimately to the formation of the Appalachian Regional Commission and the establishment of the "War on Poverty" and specifically, the Office of Economic Opportunity. The eastern Kentucky plight was central to both of those developments. My paper, I think, played a significant role in helping create an awareness of the severity of the problem.

While all this was going on, we also were going about the business of routinely covering local government. We found that our city and county governments and our school systems were not accustomed to reporters and they did not believe that reporters had a right to attend meetings of fiscal court, city council, or their school boards. One by one our city governments, fiscal court, and two school system boards all passed resolutions banning *The Mountain Eagle* and its staff from attending those meetings. So for about a decade we fought an ongoing battle simply to have the right to attend and report on, and quote public officials at public functions on public issues. We stuck at it and the general outcome of that is that today if *The Mountain Eagle* fails to attend a fiscal court meeting and write about what took place, we get immediate and severe criticism from subscribers and readers, so we are expected to do today what we were barred from doing early in our career.

Just by the nature of our very deep and complex economic and social conditions, we got involved and you can hardly name a problem the paper has not tackled in some form or another. Usually, we have proceeded out of ignorance; I hope always out of concern. We have fumbled and failed on far more issues than we have succeeded on. Since this is a group concerned with long-term planning and development, I want to make a couple of observations.

I think the biggest barrier to progress in eastern Kentucky in many ways is the absence of any continuity of effort. Our county governments change frequently as we have elections and new officers are put in place. Our city governments change much the same way. There are no long-term, private citizen-based organizations dealing with social or economic issues in the mountains. I have taken part in probably a dozen efforts to create some kind of area-wide citizens group to pursue various social and economic issues, but always the groups fall apart. Most things fall together by accident, I think. Most organizations that are effective come to deal with one issue and once that issue is out of the way, they fall apart.

Strip-mining protests evolved in eastern Kentucky this way. You lived in a hollow with maybe 25 or 30 other families. You were immune to strip mining for two or three years and then the day came when the bulldozer arrived on the hilltop near your home. You and your neighbors got all excited about it and wanted to get something done. Typically you would

come to *The Mountain Eagle* and demand that we do some photographs and write a story, which we always did.

You can never really get people to organize as a group. It took 30 years for mountain people to come together on the issue of strip mining and to develop the savvy and know-how to persuade the legislature to do something about the broad-form deed. It took a major effort to get the state legislature to enact strip-mine legislation. It took a really major effort to persuade Congress to enact strip-mine legislation, but all those things have progressed only as people have become informed and have recognized both the severity of the problem and that, in combining their efforts and in mutual self-support, things can be accomplished.

The role that we played has been one of trying to disseminate a maximum amount of information on whatever the issue of the moment may be. Right now, for instance, I have been involved in trying to look at what is happening with Medicaid in nursing homes. There is really no effective citizen group in eastern Kentucky to deal with that issue, yet people are deeply concerned about it. Almost no information is available to them, so we just have to muddle through it as best we can.

That's the way those things happen. The issues change week to week, but the circumstances don't change all that much. My judgment at the moment is that eastern Kentucky has about a 50 percent unemployment rate. We are extremely vulnerable to federal cutbacks. I really hate to think what will happen as cutbacks in various aid programs develop over the next year or so. Any big cutback in food stamps will be absolute disaster. There is no doubt about that. I'll be happy when we get a little further along to try to answer any questions.

Mr. Graves:

Thanks, Tom. Next, Rita Mitchell will explain what she and her newspaper in Fulton are involved in.

Ms. Mitchell:

First of all, I'd like to explain I feel like I have a two-fold purpose. I would like to tell you why our local newspaper is involved in community development; then I would also like to step aside and explain a unique process that we used a year ago to gain a great deal of broad-based citizen input for several projects we wanted to complete. It might be something that some of you in small communities could use if you are preparing to launch a similar type of community initiative. First I would like to tell you just a little about Fulton. Fulton County is the westernmost county in the state, bordered by the Mississippi, five hours from this Center.

We really wanted to be here. That's why we spent five hours in a car to come be with you. Our community of Fulton is part of a twin-city community. We have an artificial boundary—the Kentucky-Tennessee state line—that often joins us, but sometimes divides us as we start to undertake any number of projects. It causes me headaches from time to time being in the newspaper business.

It also provides duplicates of a number of agencies—city, county, and state government. We have dual economic boards, industrial boards, even retail merchants associations, so we are very conscious that we are dealing with one community, but at times they seem quite far apart. Besides the duplicates in our community, there is only one newspaper, *The Fulton Leader*, celebrating its 100th year this year, and my husband and I make the third generation of the family publishing this newspaper. So we're not in Fulton for a 10- or 15-year career span.

Our family has a lot of heart and interest invested in the community. We also know that small newspapers in small towns are the lifeblood of those towns. Our people obviously get their national and international news from other media sources, but they depend heavily on us

to provide them with that immediate direct news that they need so that they can make informed decisions about the future for their families and, hopefully, for the community as a whole. We want to, by virtue of the very business we're in, provide them with the most accurate, fair, and balanced information that we can and we are kept on our toes because we are on a state line.

I get much more feedback from both sides of the line than I care to have at some points. We are involved in a number of community development efforts, but, because of the state lines, we fall under great scrutiny. So we take that involvement very seriously. We choose what we lend the *Fulton Leader* name to, and also our time as individuals.

We are generally eager to have all types of community news. I can't imagine a small newspaper that does not. We know our niche, to provide the most localized news. We are not going to write about international stories unless there is a local tie. We know where we are and what we are supposed to be doing. We also are involved personally on several boards. I know there are differences of opinion about that because of the public's perception of what you might do as a member of the various boards. We would not presume to run for city commission, school board, or the site-based decisionmaking councils, but we have in the past served on chamber boards and leadership alumnae boards that sponsor our leadership class each year. We would undertake those types of things.

As Nancy Stone said, as you are embarking on any type of community development project, it is wise to meet and involve the local media early on. If you've already started a process, it might be wise to stop and do that involvement right now and then get back to the process that you have begun.

I'm a prime example of what she suggested. I was not involved in civic activities at all, other than providing the local coverage for a myriad of events and projects that are being undertaken in the community. I became involved in a broad-based citizen group that was later known as the Blue Ribbon Committee, which decided to pursue the TVA Quality Committee Initiatives. I could echo everything Nancy said in terms of support that TVA has given our community, particularly Phil Scharre and Tom Forsythe taking us through the process.

Sometimes because of our state line, when we meet in groups, residents have a lot of baggage with them, depending on which side of the state line they reside. And, so often, we need someone to guide us through and get us beyond that, and show us that we have more things in common than we do things that separate us. So Tom and Phil provided us with that, helped us with our vision for the community and some strategic planning.

We initiated that process in November of 1995, and I'm happy to tell you that it is sustained today as recently as a meeting that we had on Monday night. One thing that has sustained us is what I alluded to in the beginning. We used a unique forum to gain public opinion because we realized people typically would not get out at night and voice an opinion at a town meeting. So we took those town meetings to their living rooms via our cable access channel. We did a live broadcast, which now, thinking back, is a scary prospect. I think we probably did not think that through or we might not have done it. It turned out all right, but we did a great deal of promotion, using various forms of media: radio, television, the cable access, and then, of course, our newspaper because that was a newsworthy item, a legitimate news story. It covered the fact that we were going to have electronic town meetings.

We also formed a speakers' bureau. We made ourselves available to all the civic clubs. We would be the program for the Rotary or Lions Club, explaining what we were going to do. We involved the schools with poster contests, wanting children to show what their visions of the community were.

The town meetings were conducted in a makeshift studio in a public building in our community on four consecutive Tuesday nights in May 1996. We did these live, with a phone bank that accepted viewers' calls. Each program was designated for a certain topic: commu-

nity leadership, education, citizen involvement, or city government. During those specific nights we would have people with expertise in those fields, often from other communities. Phil moderated the first effort of our broadcast.

We would take the public's calls and would not immediately put them on the air, but have them recorded by the people who were manning the phones. We actually wrote them up on easels, so that when the camera panned, people could see their ideas were being given consideration. Then we would have the experts discuss it and have a dialogue about why a person's idea was important or how it might fit into other schemes or plans that we might have.

We drew in our viewing audience because we involved a number of children. With the children and their posters, we would interview them, ask them why they drew a particular vision of the community in the future and had some insightful responses. That was guaranteed viewership of parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends for our broadcast. We tried to do that at every broadcast for that reason. When we got through with the community involvement broadcast on the fourth week, we solicited volunteers. Fifty people agreed to sign up for various subcommittees of the Blue Ribbon Committee and carry out a number of projects that we would later identify.

Two years later, we are still moving on. One of the main outgrowths of our town meetings was that people were very upset about the appearance of our community, which was having an effect on industrial recruitment and on physician recruitment for our hospital. So our city now has a Code Enforcement Board that is very determined to get dilapidated and poorly kept structures cleaned up or torn down to make the appearance of the community look like somebody who lives there cares. We identified early on about 10 projects. As of Monday using 40 junior high students we completed the last project. We were planting 500 bulbs in a downtown landscaping area, but we did want to involve the children.

We have met again and identified some other areas that we would like to work on. Our motto is that we know we cannot do everything, or cure some ills, but we certainly can make a start and we have some people who are very excited about carrying out these types of initiatives and programs. Thank you.

Mr. Graves:

Thank you, Rita Mitchell. I think what you describe can be accurately described as at least one version of public or civic journalism, in which a news organization sets up an organization to accomplish a goal. I know that, even in its most benign form, such as what you describe, that can be controversial in newspapers because it seems to some eyes to blur the line between doing and covering. Again, it raises the issue of to what extent can a news organization cover itself and do so while sustaining public confidence that you are not promoting something that you are doing, even if it is a terrific project.

Ms. Mitchell:

Our newspaper did not initiate the process. It was our economic development group and our local school board that were brainstorming initially. Our newspaper did not get involved until they drew us in and wanted us to help.

Mr. Graves:

Thanks for clarifying that. Bill Bishop, you're next.

Mr. Bishop:

What I would like to do quickly before we get to questions is set out two general propositions on this area, and then I want to give you the one model I know where a newspaper made material difference in a town over a long period of time. Proposition No. 1 is that I don't think there's much of a relationship between the quality of a newspaper and the quality of a town. We don't control your self-image and because something happens on the front page of the newspaper doesn't make your life more real. I don't think you believe that, either. There are good newspapers with bad towns, dysfunctional towns, like Washington, DC. Austin, Texas, is a great town that had a terrible newspaper until just recently.

Proposition No. 2 is that when papers do cover development, they mostly do a very poor job of it because we look for all the wrong things. We overcover plant openings and closings and we don't cover at all the underlying factors that create real wealth in a region. So, as a result, we fly into a frenzy when Fruit of the Loom closes some apparel plants in this neck of the woods, but we don't do anything ahead of time to let people know they are living and working in an economy that has a very limited future. Nor do we write about what people could be doing to help themselves over the long run. The next set of stories out of the Fruit of the Loom territory will be about Thanksgiving without a job. What we won't be doing is talking about the kinds of things that communities do that make themselves rich. In fact, we don't even know where to begin to write those stories, about how to make communities, businesses, and workers more competitive. We only know how to cover ribbon cuttings and groundbreakings.

Southern politicians for the past 60 years have sold out everything in our region. Low taxes, lax environmental laws, low wages for jobs, and newspapers share the blame for this frankly failed policy. We all demand that governors and county judges "get us a factory" and we want it right now, and development doesn't happen right now. That gets us to the one great example of where a newspaper made a lasting material difference in a community.

George McLean came to Tupelo, Mississippi, in the late 1930s and bought the town's bankrupt newspaper. At that time, Tupelo was the poorest town in the poorest state in this country. It also had been leveled by the nation's deadliest tornado. Over 200 people were killed in the town in one blow. McLean tried to use the tools of the newspaper to change his community. He supported strikers in a labor dispute, and it left the town utterly divided.

He then began to talk to people in town about raising income. He appealed to their self-interest. I don't think we've talked enough about how community organizations should and can be built around self-interest today. His approach was to organize every community in the region. Every town had a development council. The councils cleaned out graveyards and painted houses and schools. With McLean and the paper leading, Tupelo invested in people. In the 1940s, when the rest of the rural south was lowering taxes and offering low wages to northern industry, Tupelo invested in a day-care center.

We had a discussion this morning about Dr. Demming and his notions of total quality management. Before Dr. Demming went to Japan after the war, he was in Tupelo talking to them about how to do development and Tupelo followed his advice. McLean convinced the town that development was a do-it-yourself job. So Tupelo has always paid its own way. We've had discussions about universities today. There's only one branch of the University of Mississippi outside Oxford. It's in Tupelo, and Tupelo paid for it. There is a technical school in Tupelo. Tupelo didn't go to Jackson, Mississippi, to get that branch built; they built it themselves.

So 60 years after George McLean came to Tupelo, this is a town that today has 2 percent unemployment. It's the 10th largest town in Mississippi, but it has the second largest bank deposits and the largest rural hospital in the United States. It's the smallest town in the coun-

try to support a symphony orchestra; it passed the largest school bond issue in the state's history, with 90 percent of the people voting for that bond, and the reaction in Tupelo was, how can we have such a sorry community that 10 percent of our people wouldn't vote for our kids? Eighty percent of the kids that enter kindergarten in Tupelo go to college. A newspaper publisher led all this. His paper supported these efforts on the news pages, but the real work was done in the community because McLean knew that community development is something that happens on the streets and not on the front pages of the newspaper.

Questions, Answers, and Comments

Mr. Graves:

Thanks, Bill. I actually would like to start off our questions with one for you. How did George McLean do it on the streets of Tupelo?

Mr. Bishop:

The Tupelo story is Grisham's, who is a cousin of John, the author. All the merchants in town were mad at McLean, and he went into hardware stores, drug stores, and began to talk to the merchants. He showed them the census report from 1940. It showed that the per capita income in Tupelo was $600 a year. He talked to the merchants and told them their income was not going to rise until the incomes of the people that shop at their stores rises, and he appealed directly to their self-interest, the one way he found to organize people.

Mr. Graves:

Person to person, and not necessarily making the case on the editorial page.

Mr. Bishop:

And it wasn't some lofty goal about how we'll all feel better if we work together, that the community will be happier; it was "you're going to make more money in your store if the people around you make more money."

Mr. Graves:

Thank you. Carolyn Lukensmeyer challenged all of us to be part of every story told. Let me refashion that a bit. I think it's realistic for us to be part of any story in which we feel we have a stake, about which we think something. So as you fashion your questions, think about newspaper stories that have given you the impression that the full story wasn't told and think about how you reacted, what you did, if you picked up the phone, called an editor, or called an ombudsman if there is an ombudsman at that particular newspaper. How did you respond? How did you engage the newspaper—because I hope you are getting the impression that newspeople, editors, people who own and operate newspapers, whether they are in big communities or small communities, are open to suggestions. They are trying to anticipate your concerns. They are trying to act on your concerns, perhaps even before you express them. Questions? And, please identity yourselves and whatever organization you may be associated with, so we can get to know you a little better.

Jim Holt:

My name is Jim Holt. I have been a reporter for 11 years and I've been doing community and economic development for 14 years.

Mr. Graves:

And, where is that?

Mr. Holt:

I've worked with three communities in the state of Kentucky. Currently, I'm here in Somerset and Lexington, and I appreciate many of the comments that the panelists made: things like balanced, fair, and accurate. I really appreciate that. All those are important. I really like what Bill had to say about Tupelo and it is a great success story. It takes community involvement for that to happen. But, my question is: how do we have a uniform system as it relates to journalism? How do we compare with radio and television stations and raise the same types of standards which these folks are telling us about today, so that there truly is a balanced, fair, and accurate assimilation of information that can effectively deal with helping move our communities toward a reality of the future?

Mr. Graves:

Now when you say standards, are you thinking about the way newspapers gather information and present it, or about levels of involvement?

Mr. Holt:

The Kentucky Press Association or any other group, so that they'll say what is balanced, fair, and accurate.

Mr. Graves:

It's a very important question. I think it goes to the very heart of what news organizations are and what in this country we think of as a right to publish, the First Amendment. Let me start by saying that some years ago I had a conversation with a governor whom I was covering, and he said he thought it was odd that there were regulations governing people in virtually every occupation, whether it's folks who are giving dogs baths or trimming hair, but newspapers and other organizations could do whatever they wanted. They could just run amok, publishing unfair, biased stories. Someone reminded him that there's this First Amendment and Jefferson said you sort of have to put up with a variety of approaches to gathering and presenting news and not all of it is very defensible, but whenever you start trying to impose standards, you get into some problems.

Now, certainly, government cannot impose standards in this country and go very far because we do have the First Amendment and most folks seem to think the First Amendment is still a good idea. But news organizations, and I want each panelist to take a shot at this as they wish, through the Kentucky Press Association or other groups can voluntarily set standards and hope that their members subscribe to them. Let me start with Judy Clabes because I know she has been involved in various organizations and we'll just spread this around. It is an excellent question because I think it gets at the frustrations that many people outside the media have and also the frustrations that many inside the media have about what they think is a misunderstanding of the way they operate.

Ms. Clabes:

There's a real simple answer to your first question: the "can we do." Can we impose standards? No. That's the simple answer, and that's because literally anybody in this country can do journalism and you can really define journalism in a very personal way. We aren't licensed to do what we do. We can buy ink or paper or we can print it out of the basement of our homes and call it a newspaper. There aren't any standards that everybody must adhere to or some definition of news, fairness, or balance. This is America, and each editor, each journalist, each newspaper has a view, a personality, a way of conducting its business.

Mr. Graves:

I would like the other panelists to take a shot at this, and for all of us to think again about what Carolyn Lukensmeyer said. When you have a problem or frustration with a news organization, how do you go about influencing that organization for the better? Not because you perhaps have a skewed view of things and you know it and are simply trying to peddle that, but out of a sense of unfairness done to you, how do you go about changing what a newspaper, radio station, or television station does?

Ms. Mitchell:

I don't think there is a way to form a standard, but what I wish newspapers of all sizes would do is at least let the public know the rules by which we are playing. I think there is a certain mystery at all levels of journalism, in all sizes of newspapers. About 10 years ago we published an entire series about our policies, so it would clear up some confusion if at least you knew what to expect. You could challenge those things that you would like to see changed or see if you could not have some effect on the policies of the newspaper where you are located. But I know there is a mystery about it and there are people who just can't figure out why we do cover some things and why we cover them the way we do. I wish we would be more specific about the policies that we do have on a variety of issues.

Mr. Graves:

Gentlemen, any reaction? Thoughts? Suggestions?

Mr. Gish:

Well, I'll just make the observation that fairness, accuracy, completeness, and words like that are very, very subjective, and I don't think there is any way to judge fairness. My view and your view of what is fair in a given story probably are completely different. I don't apologize for my view. My job is to edit and to make choices. I make choices and I stand behind them and if you don't like them, you don't have to buy my paper.

Mr. Graves:

Tom, let me ask you this. What opportunities do you give disgruntled readers, readers who may have a legitimate gripe even in your view, to respond in the newspaper?

Mr. Gish:

You can always respond through a letter to the editor. We also have a telephone column in which anybody and everybody can phone the paper and express a viewpoint on any and every subject and we print it every week, a couple of hundred every week. Many of them are outrageous. Many of them are very frivolous. Many of them are a total waste of time, but every

now and then you get some real jewels, and it is a true open forum in which anybody who wants to can say anything they want to short of pure libel which we do cut out.

Mr. Bishop:

There are a lot of bad newspapers out there. But I used to run a weekly and no one brought a piece of paper with a bit of news into *The Mountain Eagle* office that didn't go into the paper. And we followed the same policy at our paper and most weeklies are looking for people to write about things going on. Take over the local newspaper; write for it; bring in the photos. You know, get to work.

Mr. Graves:

I think it's important for us to discuss ways to engage local news organizations.

Audience Member:

He was talking about the assets of continuity related to community involvement efforts and I think part of the reason he is saying that is because he has been continuously in operation within his community for so long that he has an historical perspective and has some cynicism no doubt. I'm wondering from the other side we see an absence of continuity on the side of newspapers in terms of turnover of reporters and people without any history of an issue and so may very naively be reporting on things. I'm wondering if there is a balance there that you can reach between the cynicism that comes with having been in business in the same community for a long period of time and the optimism that might come with naiveté in coverage of community issues.

Mr. Gish:

I don't like the word "cynicism;" I would accept the word "skepticism." I hope I'm skeptical about just about everything that comes in our mail or into the paper. I think everything needs a healthy examining and questioning attitude. But I get what you are saying. Partly, I realize every now and then that there is a new generation of newspaper readers in effect every 10 years and issues that we would have covered in great depth 10 years or so ago may be totally new to many of our readers today. I'm not always as aware of that as I ought to be and sometimes when you do about the 15th version of the same development you do get a little bit weary. That happens because subjects have a way of forever reappearing and we seem to be stuck in certain channels. I sometimes think that if we write another story about garbage collection we'll bore the readers, yet we go on doing it because we think we should.

Mr. Graves:

Questions? Yes, Judy, go ahead.

Ms. Clabes:

I think you have identified one of the single biggest challenges we have in the newspaper industry and that is a revolving door. We do not keep people long enough in one place. The idea is that if you are a young journalist who wants to move you have to move around, and I wish we could do something to change that. I think the creative turnover that you talked about is necessary in a newsroom so that you don't get too comfortable. I don't think it's cynicism that you develop when you've been some place a long time, I think it's the level of comfort that you have that you know everything. Nothing new can happen to surprise you or interest you in any way. I think that's the problem, not cynicism. And the problem with the turnover is that you do not have people in newsrooms long enough so that they do have the institutional

memory and that's where most of the mistakes we make come from. I wish I knew how to solve that.

John Cannon:

I'm Editorial Page Editor of *The Daily Independent* in Ashland. I'm interested in this because civic journalism and how much we should be involved very much splits our newsroom. We have a current Editor who very much encourages editors to become involved in the community. He is currently Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and our News Editor last year was Head of the United Way campaign. Both those organizations are generally thought to be good things but they are controversial. Not everybody loves the United Way because they hate some of the organizations they give money to. I'm on a number of boards and I have always thought that when I became a journalist I didn't give up my citizenship. I've heard journalists say you shouldn't even belong to the political parties, belong to church...

Ms. Clabes:

Or, who say you shouldn't even vote.

Mr. Cannon:

Yes, shouldn't even vote, I've heard that, too.

Mr. Graves:

Or not register with a party.

Mr. Cannon:

I'm a registered Democrat, and I've actually voted for people that we didn't even endorse.

Ms. Clabes:

Good for you. That's great.

Mr. Cannon:

But, I think the newspaper must always remember it's a corporate citizen and as the community improves in income, so does the newspaper. I would hope that the people always think that we are always pro-Ashland and pro-northeastern Kentucky because we are. We may disagree on what's good for that community, but we are all for the community.

Ms. Clabes:

Well, as Bill Bishop says, there's some self-interest in that, too. And there's nothing wrong with that. A newspaper does rise and fall with its community. Absolutely. I like your approach.

Mr. Graves:

Go ahead, Lindsay.

Lindsay Campbell:

I'm with the Commission on Women and I have a journalism degree, so I am interested in what's going on professionally. I have two concerns. One is the consolidation of mass communications and how that is affecting downsizing of reporting staffs in it. As time goes on, issues get more and more complicated and complex, and it is my observation that there are

fewer and fewer people covering those issues that have time to do the research to give us all the information that we need to make important decisions.

Related to that question is another very, very big concern of mine that two of our major daily newspapers in the state have an overrepresentation of sports on the front page. I have friends, and my husband in particular, who happen to be sports fans and they still are very critical of the fact that we see too much above the fold on the front page of sports. What is that all about?

Mr. Graves (joking):

Bill Bishop, don't talk about this now. Two questions; two observations.

Audience Member:

Bill should talk about it.

Mr. Graves:

Bill should talk about it. Yes. Well, let's talk about sports for a moment.

Audience Member:

We go crazy with sports but they look at the circulation figures and they get circulation gains the days after the Derby and the days after a big UK win, so it sells newspapers. It's that marginal difference in street sales. But I think the earlier question relates to Jeanne's question, too. We don't pay people very well so they move around and we demand productivity out of them. We don't give them time to learn their issues so we cover things superficially which gets me back to why we cover development superficially.

Ms. Campbell:

One observation: our office is right between *The Herald* and *The Courier* bureaus in Frankfort. One of those bureaus has lost two people and only replaced one, and there's no diversity now. I am really concerned about that because we have people that call our office asking why an issue wasn't covered. I tell them to call the paper and ask.

Mr. Bishop:

She's talking about *The Courier*.

Audience Member:

You can go ahead and say it, it's *The Courier*.

Ms. Campbell:

Well, it's a real concern to me. I think the Frankfort bureau is the most important bureau, and they are losing reporters and not replacing them.

Mr. Graves:

Let me ask you, what response do you feel would be the most constructive if you could write John Curley a letter at Gannett in Arlington, Virginia? You could call up Ed Manassah at *The Courier-Journal*—and we certainly aren't trying to pick on *The Courier-Journal*—but I think it's important that we think in terms of taking that next step. If I were to ask how many in this room has had a complaint about a news story, whether it was on radio, TV, or newspapers, I suspect everyone, if you knew anything about the issue, might raise your hand.

Then I'd ask, what did you do? Having worked for newspapers, I know there are effective ways to complain and get newspapers' attention and other ways you come off sounding as though you are a crank. I think newspapers, as Rita indicated, have an obligation to explain how to get their attention, whom to contact. I see more of this happening with newspapers all over the state. I'm not sure many newspapers are willing to invest in an ombudsman, which was a great idea 15 or 20 years ago, when newspapers seemed to have more money to spend on such things. That is an advocate for the public, for whoever is calling in, someone who can go browbeat reporters and writers and tell them they really should correct this, but even in the absence of ombudsmen or ombudswomen, I think you need to think in terms of how to get past the complaint to make something happen. More questions.

Cary Willis:

I'm a recovering journalist myself, having worked for four newspapers in Kentucky and four or five radio stations and a TV station as well, most recently, *The Courier*. I left after 12 years and one of the reasons was I was starting to feel that cynicism overtake me that I often hear complained about. I really believe some of it's true. Carolyn Lukensmeyer made a really good point about the negative coverage that the Cleveland paper has perpetuated and how some people have dealt with that.

I don't know how you get around that, but I know that there are people who have just given up on the media. My next door neighbors, for instance, don't take the newspaper because they say there is nothing in there but bad news. I think there's some; I don't necessarily buy exactly what they say that there is nothing but negative news in there, but I do think there is this cynicism that is rampant in this country today. And, although I don't often agree with him, Bill Bennett wrote a column recently where he talked about the cynicism and the lack of involvement that people feel.

They don't feel like they want to get involved with government. I work in government now and I get frustrated with this almost attack mode, a presumption that government is screwing something, instead of taking a deep thoughtful look at some of the things we work on. What do you guys think is the media's role in trying to convey properly what should be the mood of the country? I think people have a general tendency to want to be optimistic about things. But sometimes the media just breaks down that optimism.

Audience Member:

For example, the *Bowling Green Daily News*, the week after the Promise Keepers event in Washington, DC, one of the largest mass movements of men on the face of North America, the front page of the newspaper had a picture of a deadbeat dad with a T-shirt. I didn't do anything because I'm a man, but a lady I know went in and asked why they did this. The guy said, "It wasn't me, it was one of the guys who works for me." She challenged him to write at another time on the same place the seven principles that make a man a Promise Keeper. I don't think that he's done that yet, but this is the kind of stuff that I think is part of the cynicism that he's talking about.

Mr. Gish:

I want to say one thing. I realize that almost no one in the room would ever have seen a copy of *The Mountain Eagle*. I brought a dozen or so along with me and our County Judge is willing to pass them out if anybody will raise their hand.

Mr. Graves:

Thank you. Thanks to our panel.

CHOOSING INDICATORS

Panel Members

Moderator:

Daniel Hall, Assistant to the President for University Relations, oversees governmental and public relations for the University of Louisville. He is an attorney with experience in private practice specializing in corporate law and has seven years of legislative and political experience working in Washington as top assistant to former Congressman Ron Mazzoli. Mr. Hall currently serves on the Boards of Directors of the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center, the Kentucky Center for Public Issues, and the Public Radio Partnership. Dan has a keen interest in the areas of education, law, and civil rights. He is an alumnus of Dartmouth College and Harvard Law School.

Panelists:

Dr. Tom Forsythe has spent 19 of his 23 years with the Tennessee Valley Authority working in Kentucky. His primary interest is in helping promote sustainable development. Dr. Forsythe has worked in natural resources management and research, environmental education, and economic development. He played a key role in the United Nations establishing the Mammoth Cave Area and Land Between The Lakes Area Biosphere Reserves in 1990 and 1991. After serving in Southeast Asia with the Air Force, Dr. Forsythe received his bachelors from St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud, Minnesota, in 1972. Upon receiving an EPA Fellowship, he went on to receive his Masters in Fisheries Science in 1973 and his doctorate in environmental science in 1978, both from Michigan State University. Dr. Forsythe enjoys cooking and visiting his lake retreat in northern Minnesota with his wife Nancy.

Dr. Betty S. King is part of the Pulaski County Visioning Steering Team and is serving as principal investigator for the Kettering Foundation field research project on the Pulaski County Visioning process. She is wrapping up her 15 years as a Pulaski County Extension Agent for Home Economics. Starting in January, she will be assuming responsibilities as Extension Specialist in Rural Economic Development with the University of Kentucky.

Jeanette Rogers is a native of Eastern Kentucky and has spent several years working in rural community development, both as a volunteer and as staff. She is currently a MACED employee in the Sustainable Communities Initiative, serving as Director of Community Development for the Owsley County Action Team. She has a BA from Lincoln Memorial University and in the past has worked as a paralegal, literacy coordinator, and also as regional coordinator for the Prichard Committee. She and her son, Sam, live in Booneville, Kentucky.

René F. True was appointed the Director of the Division of Research in the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development in September 1995. Mr. True served three and one half years as Deputy Secretary of the Kentucky Revenue Cabinet. He was twice elected Fayette

County Property Valuation Administrator. Mr. True has owned and managed rental property, been a partner in a commercial real estate firm, operated his own seminar business, and currently represents a Lexington real estate firm as principal auctioneer. Mr. True graduated from the University of Kentucky with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree and received his MBA degree from the University of Kentucky in December 1995. He is a Kentucky licensed real estate broker and principal auctioneer. He received the Certified Kentucky Assessor (CKA) and Senior Kentucky Assessor (SKA) designations from the Kentucky Revenue Cabinet. Mr. True has presented real estate, appraisal, property tax and management seminars and courses for the International Association of Assessing Officers, Illinois Property Assessment Institute, Lexington Community College, North Carolina Institute of Government, Kentucky Revenue Cabinet, realtors, appraisers, private real estate schools, and others. He has authored several professional articles and given numerous presentations to state and national conferences. He is married to Renee True and they have two sons: Brandon, 14, and Bradley, 9.

Panel Discussion

Why measuring progress is key and how to choose indicators.

Moderator, Daniel Hall:

I'm Assistant to the President at the University of Louisville . . . welcome to this session. It is entitled, "Why measuring progress is key and how to choose indicators." As one of the most recently appointed members of the Long-Term Policy Research Center Board, I'm delighted and indeed honored to be a participant in this important conference.

As the new millennium approaches, many of us are involved, have been involved, or will become involved in strategic planning for our organizations, businesses, or governmental entities, attempting to chart a course for survival or prosperity in the 20th century. Thanks to the distinguished presenters we have on our panel today, you will come to understand, I hope, more astutely the importance of having measures of progress which is perhaps the most important element of any strategic plan. As was emphasized in the book *Reinventing Government* by Osborne and Gabler, if you don't measure results, you can't distinguish success from failure. But, perhaps more importantly, measuring something or keeping count has the intrinsic value of prompting people to respond, ideally, to react to a charge by working toward a specific goal.

That generally happens to us as human beings when we keep count of anything. So, having measures of progress really facilitates human action and human involvement. Unless we effectively measure the results of our efforts, we rarely achieve our goals, which raises the second part of the question presented to our panelists today. How do we choose the most appropriate and useful indicators as measures of progress? Real measures of progress must focus on outcomes as opposed to outputs or amounts of efforts or resources invested toward achieving goals. So there is a clear distinction between outcomes and outputs and hopefully we'll get a sense of that today.

Fourteen months ago I was asked by Jefferson County Commissioner Darrell Owens to lead a citizens' grassroots effort to develop a strategic plan for the African-American community in Jefferson County. We have been working on this plan to develop a comprehensive strategic plan, which will advance our community in three specific areas: educational attainment, economic development, and health and wellness. And, after months of conducting research, consulting with experts, establishing goals, and holding public

hearings, we are now at the stage in our strategic planning process of choosing measures of progress, selecting quantifiable benchmarks which will mark our progress towards achieving some admittedly ambitious goals.

So it is with great interest that I look forward to hearing and learning from our distinguished presenters here today. Since you have the bios of each of the presenters in your packets, I won't take valuable time to introduce them. Suffice it to say that each has been involved in some community or organizational strategic planning process, and each has a different degree of experience or perspective in developing measures of progress for their respective planning efforts. I will introduce each panelist in the order each will present. Each will speak for approximately 10 minutes and hopefully that will leave sufficient time for some meaningful questions and answers at the end of this session.

The first to speak will be Dr. Tom Forsythe. He works as an economic development specialist for TVA. His area of responsibility includes 26 counties in western and south central Kentucky. He works with Chambers of Commerce, mayors, and county judges in these areas to help with strategic planning, leadership development, and team building. He lives in Marshall County and has an office in a paradise known as Land Between the Lakes. We also learned this morning that he makes a hell of a gumbo. Dr. Betty King works with the Pulaski County visioning steering team. She serves as Principle Investigator for the Kettering Foundation Field Research Project in Pulaski County and she serves as the Pulaski County Extension Agent for Home Economics. Jeanette Rogers works as Director of Community Development for the Owsley County Action Team. She is involved in the Sustainable Community Initiative and lives in Booneville, Kentucky. And last, René True serves as the Director of the Division of Research in the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development. He lives in Lexington and has day-to-day operation responsibility for the Kentucky Strategic Plan for Economic Development. So with that, I will turn over the discussion to our first presenter, Dr. Forsythe.

Dr. Forsythe:

Thank you . . . I'm the person that made the gumbo that made me famous in Simpson County, and that's my only claim to fame, probably. As I won a state cooking contest in 1986, I was going to go for the gusto and try to win a national cooking contest in Nebraska the next August, about eight months later. I experimented all winter long and found out that if you use fresh okra, garlic, parsley, thyme, and oregano, plus freshly caught crappie out of Kentucky Lake and not frozen, it tasted a whole lot better. So I decided, if I'm going to win this $10,000 first prize, I'm going to grow all my own tomatoes, okra, thyme, and even my garlic. Then I went up to Nebraska a week early and had all these fresh vegetables out of my garden air expressed up there. I vacationed a week in Minnesota; the only cheating I did was I caught the crappie in Minnesota and I called the recipe Kentucky Lake Crappie Gumbo.

I went to the convention center in Nebraska. The contest was supposed to be a big thing and nobody was there; the national contest was canceled and I was the only state representative that didn't get the message because I left a week early. It was on my answering machine when I got home. I'd gone to all this trouble to get all these things flown up there and apparently it was a scam. It was supposed to bring so many thousands of people to the community and when the Chamber checked the motel bookings and found there was nobody coming to it, they backed out of their $10,000 first prize and it fell through. But I am the state champion cook in Kentucky.

I work for the Tennessee Valley Authority. It's a federal agency broadly defined with a mission to uplift the economy of the Tennessee Valley Region. TVA is also a large producer of electricity, and its original mission has in reality been replaced by the new corporate

business of primarily producing electricity. It has kind of forgotten about some of its original charges for business reasons. With deregulation of the electric utilities coming and competition, it seems—and this is my only joke today—that TVA doesn't know whether it has found a rope or lost a horse.

I'm an ecologist by training, and I know there are two other ecologists in the room, believe it or not: Dr. Bill Martin, who is now a politician with state government, more or less, and Steve Bourne who is a City Planner in Hopkinsville, an ecologist by training in wildlife ecology from Murray State University. So, I don't know how many others here are ecologists but I'll bet probably none. Ecologists are the ones who study and track the health of ecosystems, and I presently work in the area of economic and community development, which is a far cry from the 16 years of studying Kentucky Lake and Lake Barkley while I worked at Land Between the Lakes.

I still work at Land Between the Lakes, but I work in the area of economic and community development in the counties surrounding Land Between the Lakes. I know of many similarities between the functioning of towns as systems and the functioning of a lake as a system. I find working with communities as human ecosystems is by far more challenging than working with the Kentucky Lake ecosystem. For lakes, ecologists have many management goals for maintaining long-term health and well-being. The goals all point towards maintaining the integrity of the ecosystem. Ecologists know that healthy ecosystems are those that are resilient to change, which means when perturbed they can bounce back from catastrophes such as a pollution causing a fish kill.

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Ecologists know that a healthy ecosystem has a diversity of plant and animal populations and that it has many different species to fill a variety of niches or habitats. Yet, there must be no overcrowding by any one particular species. We ecologists hold sacred the notion that diversity begets stability of the ecosystem at large and that population monopolies by any single species cause the ecosystem to crash.

You can see where I'm going with all this. If I had more time, I'd try to build a case that a biological ecosystem such as Kentucky Lake is very similar to a human ecosystem such as Somerset, Kentucky. Kentucky Lake, though, is different from Lake Cumberland and therefore it must be managed differently. Somerset is different from Hopkinsville; therefore it must be managed differently, also. Or, does it really matter that there are differences? Maybe there are certain indicators of healthy ecosystems that apply to all ecosystems, whether it's a tiny quarter-acre pond or 170,000-acre lake. Maybe for Somerset, for Hopkinsville, for Danville, and for Lexington, there are common indicators of healthy, vibrant, resilient communities.

Back to Kentucky Lake for a minute, take the problem caused by nutrient enrichment from fertilizers or sewage, nutrification. The indicators of nutrient enrichment are many; one could measure phosphorous and nitrogen concentrations to get an indicator of the degree of runoff coming from lawns, fertilizers, or fertilizers off fields. You could measure the quantity of plankton in the water in the form of algae cells, which can multiply, overcrowd, and cause lots of problems when you have high concentrations of phosphorous or nitrogen. Both these require lengthy laboratory procedures so they're indicators that cost money. More simply you

could just take a water sample and look at it under the microscope for certain types of species that are indicators of problems such as blue-green algae species that only occur when you have excess nutrient loading in the form of human sewage or animal feces. Ecologists use indicators all the time to try to assess the health of the ecosystem.

And, just as there are a multitude of indicators for measuring the health of an ecosystem, there are a number of indicators that can be used to indicate the health of a community or the status of its quality of life. That's what this conference is about: how you determine where you are going in a community and what progress you're making. Many cities and towns today are now trying to get a handle on measuring the status of the quality of life, to develop indicators to track communities over time. The first successful venture of this that I ran across was in 1992 when the *Sustainable Seattle Initiative* was published. They got about 30 people together and came up with 20 indicators that could be tracked to look at the long-term health and vitality of Seattle in cultural, economic, environmental, and social contexts. These 20 indicators were later expanded to 40 indicators. Some states have done this.

Kentucky is one of them to come up with a set of indicators for the health of the state at large. *Minnesota Milestones* and *Oregon Benchmarks* have done it. The more I tried to get a handle on indicators, benchmarks, and measures, I got confused because there are some people that say there's a difference. I started looking at social capital, civic participation, citizen involvement, and capacity building, and read Robert Putnam who distinguishes between social capital and citizen engagement and I thought they were all the same; it was all just another word for volunteerism to me. I got confused.

From the left, moderator Daniel Hall and panelist Dr. Betty King listen as Dr. Tom Forsythe discusses lessons learned from TVA's Quality Communities Initiative.

I haven't been doing this capacity building thing all that long. I do work with some TVA Quality Community Initiatives, so I've spent 20 years doing ecology and two years doing community development. I'm kind of confused about how it is all supposed to work. I've seen it work in Simpson County—Nancy Stone talked about it—and I've seen it work in Fulton County, but I've seen it fail in my own county, Marshall County. I can't tell you for sure what causes it to fail; I do know that the media needs to be involved. Nancy Stone came from a media background and she knew the importance of media. She had all types of media—radio, TV, newspaper—plugged into the process and there were media that served on the quality council. In Fulton it's working and Rita Mitchell, editor of the newspaper, is talking right now next door. It's working there because the media was involved. I'm not sure why it works and why it doesn't work, but it's not working in the county that I thought I could get it to work in the easiest because I was most enthused about seeing it work there. There's apathy and complacency, and we held several town meetings. You've heard people say they get 300-400; we got maybe 15 people to come to four different meetings—an average of four or five each meeting.

I'm still interested in how an ecosystem functions as related to communities and when I went to the Economic Development Institute in Oklahoma, I borrowed an overhead from Dr.

Leo Presley who spoke at the graduation. He talked about ecosystems and economics and I never got to talk to him afterwards. He just brought it up and I want to explore that further… Ecologists deal in pyramids, food webs, and chains, and they have a predator at the top and primary herbivores going up. Well, here's an economic ecosystem that has at the base workforce blocks, infrastructure, and leadership development, and then at the top is industrial development.

In some places, that seems to be the most important. At least in TVA it is because we are about to drop this quality community program probably because it cannot clearly show that it leads to jobs and selling electricity. It's unfortunate that a capacity-building program like this is getting some national recognition and is very likely to be scrapped by TVA within the year, but other people will be using it in other agencies and other organizations, I guess. After using it for 15 years, we did not have the indicators in place and we could not show clearly that it has led to things like jobs that economic developers and government agencies seem to be more interested in than civic engagement and capacity building.

I maintain that the base of that pyramid is more important than the top; it is what the whole visioning capacity building effort is. It needs to be integrated into all those blocks. At the bottom is the first step and then the next step and then you jump up to the vision and then the gap in between is the volunteerism, the capacity building, the action, and everything to fill in where things need to be done. I am from Minnesota and Garrison Keeler says, "Powder milk biscuits give shy people the strength to do what needs to be done" and I'm a shy person and I've seen this quality community program give communities the strength, the energy, and the want to fill in the gap between that space. Thank you.

Dr. King:

I'm located here in Somerset with the Pulaski County Extension Service. I'd like to share with you a little bit of the Pulaski County visioning experience and some of the lessons learned. Maybe instead of answering the question "Why should we have indicators of success?" I guess I would ask more questions because I have some real concerns about how we frame those indicators of success. A few weeks ago, at this very Center, we had a program on community issues and a panel from Somerset who had been leading the forums and are part of the steering committee. During the forum someone asked me where we were in the visioning process, and I said, "I really don't know" and I'd say that jokingly. But I was serious in one way in that, as many of you have been involved in this process know, it is a journey; sometimes you really don't know where you are going, but we have a sense of where we are going in Pulaski County.

A lot of people have been involved in the visioning process; Lori Garkovich and many people from UK and locally helped us design the program once we initially decided we wanted to do it. We started in 1995, training group moderators who then went out and led forums. We had over 400 people involved in the community. If you've been involved in visioning processes and you're like I was when this came about, you'll understand that I was really reluctant to be involved because I think I had served on every visioning committee in existence and was getting kind of tired. I was beginning to think I was hallucinating rather than visioning about where things needed to go. In talking with Lori and Tom Ilvento at the time they needed an extension person to be involved, I said, "I really don't want to do it unless we do it right." To me, doing it right meant not doing another plan that went back on the shelf and collected dust.

As circumstances would have it, we had a wonderful opportunity to follow up our visioning forum with a series of forums, partly supported by local government as well as the Kettering Foundation, bringing back the information people said to the moderators. We have

learned a tremendous amount of information about a community and how the process can work in communities. After we did the training, Lori compiled the information and we presented it back to the original group which was our Economic Development Council. We had city government, county government, our economic group, the Chamber, and Extension Office involved and the Chamber has really been the lead group to really drive the force. I've been a partner in that in terms of connecting some of the university resources.

So, after we did the training and Lori compiled the information, we brought the moderators back together for a second round asking people if they would be willing to go back to their same group and share the information. And we developed a booklet of information that had the visioning results as well as a document that had everybody's comments. It was really fascinating to me in that I wasn't sure people would come back and most people did. One person even said, "This whole process gave us permission to talk about what's important in our community," and I thought that was very interesting that we have to give ourselves permission to talk about what's important to us in our community. Several of us worked together on the booklet. I'm very pleased and I do have a limited number of copies for you.

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We tried to reframe the issues in terms of a similar model, the National Issues Forum model, which presents information from more than one perspective. When people came back to have the discussion, they could present the information but also ask challenging questions. We ended up with three overall issues which seem to be pretty typical of most visioning processes. The major themes dealt with broad areas: land use, better cooperation between city and county government, and community services. We framed the question under each of those. We encouraged groups to take at least one of those three themes and talk about them in depth and we wrote some consequences of not acting and consequences of acting to get people talking about the issues.

One of the fascinating things I learned from this process is how we talked for years about land use being a problem, zoning and so forth, but going through the process people actually name the problem in terms. The vocabulary made it safe to start talking about the real issue of land use in Pulaski County, and for years that has been a very debatable issue. It made it safe for citizens, the mayors, the county judge—key people in the community—to come together and have an in-depth study of land use, which Lori led, looking at what the law was and the different approaches to land use. I think that would be one successful indicator that came out of that. People then had their discussions and a lot of things have spun off from that. I'll go over what I think some of the successes were.

I have a real good group of friends that keep me grounded. I was telling about what we were going to do and I asked, "What would be a good indicator of community success?" A friend jokes, "Have people look at front porches and fences to see how well your community is doing." We laughed at that but maybe there are different levels of indicators for success and visioning, and maybe the first level of indication is just people involvement. Look at the front porches in our community to see if people are engaged and are they waving at each other as they walk down the street? How are the fences? Are they strong or broken or high or low between different communities?

One thing we started looking at to figure out if we were being successful, and which we think is an indicator of success for our project in Somerset, has been local action projects. We have a large county. Pulaski is one of the largest counties, and we had local groups that started projects. One group in the far eastern part of the county, Mount Victory, has started

some tourism efforts based on a park there. One part of the county has formed a concerned citizen's group and they are starting a park and renovating the old school. They are spinning off some other projects. We are now doing a "community that plays together, stays together" project looking at planning parks across the county in a more unified way. We are also looking at better governmental cooperation, and I know there are a lot of definitions of what that really means. But for the first time in the history of the county, the mayors of all the little local communities came together and looked at land use as a broad community.

We've formed a futures committee, trying to pull together all the smaller communities together with our project. Some other projects have been more awareness of what's going on and a sense of pride in our community, just to name two. So part of it is the different levels of what community really means to you in terms of what's happening. One of the things about the visioning process that we forget is the people who are involved and the impact that it has on people in our community. Just so you can see these are real people, we had 27 forums that ranged from volunteer fire departments—we have 14 volunteer fire departments in Pulaski County—to interagency groups. It has been really interesting for me to see how this model could actually encourage institutional change in our communities because one of the things we found is that people really are searching for a model or a pattern to talk about things that are important to them.

One community is 18 miles out, but they have a festival and have one of the oldest historical educational systems. A lot of the forums were held in homes. One was an extension club program that was particularly interested in going to see how the fiscal court operates. So we have not only had some of the successes with the land use and local action projects, but also increased use of community networks. We listed in the back of the book community resources, so we find a lot of people are just not aware of what resources they have in the community. We felt like that has been a resource that we connected different groups together. So, maybe in the first level of indicators, just getting a way for people to be involved in a community to look at a new way of having conversations about important issues in our community has really opened the door for some future indicators of success. We are really looking beyond a one- or two-year project and we are technically in our second year. I'll be glad to entertain some questions.

Ms. Rogers:

I work with the Owsley County Action Team. We actually formed in 1992 and the first thing we did was develop a diversion study. As part of that study we decided on things we thought would help our county grow. At the same time, we developed our mission statement, which is "To provide the leadership to enable the citizens of Owsley County to achieve self-empowerment, sustainable community development, and an enriched quality of life." We've been working on this for a long time, and because of the phrase "sustainable community development," we have joined with MACED and its Sustainable Communities Initiative to become a sustainable community. As part of that, last year we started working on indicators and we were very fortunate in that Maureen Hart, who's quite an expert on indicators, came to one of our meetings and did a whole workshop on helping us develop indicators.

I brought a handout, which I'll hand out after the panel has finished. One of the things we worked on was effective sustainable indicators. Effective indicators are relevant to sustainable development. They are understandable to the community at large, developed by local people, and understood by local people. They link the economy, society, and environment, and focus on the long-range view. They consider impact on other communities, and they are based on reliable and timely information.

The action team is very diverse. We try to include every segment of the community. Our meetings are always open and we feel that it is very important when you are working on indicators that you have the whole community involved. That it is not just a select group of people who decide on everything for the community. We listed the things we care about: education, housing, jobs, health, recreation, safety, culture, clean environment and water, conserving resources, trust, social relationships and neighborliness, honest elected officials, good government, and equal access to all the above.

Examples of poor indicators are net job growth, per capita state or local public expenditures for grades K-12, bags of highway litter collected per mile, number of permits for septic tanks, number of registered voters, percent of population who smoke, median value of houses in a community, amount of hazardous waste generated, number of people living within 50 miles of daily air passenger service. The reason these are bad indicators is that they are one-dimensional. When you count the success of your community by net job growth, are you really measuring whether the quality of life has improved in that community? Of course, you would count job growth, but you would also count things like: are they jobs that pay a living wage, is there health care attached to the jobs, is the industry that provides these jobs damaging the environment? So, you would go down a checklist to see if it assesses more than one thing.

Effective indicators are relevant to sustainable development. They are understandable to the community at large, developed by local people, and understood by local people. They link the economy, society, and environment, and focus on the long-range view. They consider impact on other communities, and they are based on reliable and timely information.

Another example, per capita state or local public expenditures for grades K-12, measures whether you've spent more money on education in the past seven years since 1990, but if you only measure the money spent, have you actually measured an improvement in the quality of life or the quality of education? The number of registered voters is always really funny to me since in Kentucky we seem to have a way of keeping voters registered that are under a tombstone, but a better indicator would be the number of registered voters who actually vote in both local and national elections.

I also have a list of examples of better sustainable community indicators: employer payroll dedicated to training and education, adult literacy rate, and percent of residents actively involved in civic affairs. Betty's example, what's on the porch, would be a good indicator of pride in the community and without a good quality of life in the community, you are lacking in other areas of the community. Without the quality of life, you don't have people showing the pride. Other examples of better sustainable community indicators include the percent of streets with adequate pedestrian and bicycle facilities, the percent of the population that exercise regularly, and progress toward the goal of 20 percent reduction in the use of potable water.

In the past, we have often used indicators of a problem rather than a solution or progress. The number of bags of litter picked up on the side of the highway is not an indicator of success in an antilitter program. It's an indicator of a problem with litter. If you collected all the garbage in 1996 off the highway and you had 300 bags and in 1997 you did the same thing and you had 150 bags, then you would possibly have an indicator of success, so the indicator would be the percent reduction in the number of bags, not the actual number of bags.

I also have a checklist for sustainable community indicators. They are:

- ✓ Is it relevant to sustainable development?
- ✓ Is it understandable to the community at large?
- ✓ Was it developed and accepted by local people?
- ✓ Does it link at least two of the three "e's" of ecology, economy, and equity?
- ✓ Does it focus on the long-range view?
- ✓ Does it consider impact on other communities?
- ✓ Is it based on reliable and timely information?
- ✓ Does it measure potential solutions or preventive steps, instead of problems?
- ✓ Does it measure underlying problems that cause other problems?
- ✓ Does it measure quality instead of quantity?
- ✓ Does it emphasize development over growth?
- ✓ And, does it measure diversity?

Finally, I want to hawk this book since I have some copies and you're welcome to purchase them. The handout tells you Maureen Hart's website, and there's a lot of good stuff there if you are interested in developing indicators for your community.

Mr. True:

Good afternoon. I'm the Director of Research for the Cabinet for Economic Development and we are responsible for Kentucky's strategic plan for economic development. It was a citizen-wide, statewide initiative several years ago. It resulted out of some legislation passed in 1992 by the General Assembly and from that we'll get to today's discussion on benchmarks because we have established some benchmarks for the strategic plan.

René True details experiences of the Cabinet for Economic Development with selecting measures of economic progress.

But I want to digress just a minute because we talked a little bit today about citizen activism and engaging the citizenry in discussion. Ten years of my life I spent in the tax business and some of my colleagues are here. You don't know what citizen engagement is until you go into a county and you tell them you're going to raise their assessment on their property by 20 percent across the board. You get citizen engagement so they'll let you know where you stand.

Why have measures of progress? If you don't have measures of progress, then your goals in your strategic plan or your objectives, the goals that you are trying to obtain, are just dreams. How are your dreams going to become reality if you don't know whether you are making progress toward them and you don't have some kind of measure for them? We measure progress to see if it works. It's a pretty basic question. Is what we're doing working?

An accountability measure is critical. Most of you represent a governmental or a nonprofit type of agency. In the private sector, we have an easy way of measuring progress and success—the bottom line. We don't always have that in government and that's why these benchmarks are so important, to have an accountability measure. Are we making a difference with what we're doing when we go through visioning, strategic planning, setting goals, and all these things that we've been taught to do over the last 10 years, and that many of our organizations have done? That's the bottom line. Will Rogers once said, "Even if you're on

the right track, if you sit there, you're going to get run over." So we've got to know if we're making progress or not.

How do we choose indicators? A lot of the presentations today have talked about engaging the citizenry in the process, but I'm going to discuss some of the characteristics of indicators that we looked for in establishing the benchmarks for our strategic plan. One of them is pretty basic. Most of this seems to be common sense. Do the benchmarks that you've established reflect your goals and your mission? For example, one of the goals in the strategic plan for economic development is to reduce unemployment and increase per capita income. Well, guess what two of our benchmarks are? We have six. One of them is a reflection of the unemployment levels and one of them is per capita income.

My favorite of the characteristics that we look for and try to focus on—and some of these things were stolen from the publications of the Long-Term Policy Research Center—is results versus efforts. What does that mean? For instance, the per capita income of the citizenry gives you an example of whether wealth is being created in the community. Of course, the Economic Development Cabinet and the strategic plan for economic development is concerned with economic development. How are our efforts affecting the per capita income in the state? Kentucky right now is at 81 percent of the national average and has been stuck there for several years. We were about 60 percent 30 or 40 years ago, so we've made progress, but we've flattened out over the last couple of years. Measuring that is the result of all the collective efforts that are being made in economic development in the state of Kentucky. So we looked for broad results-oriented measures when we chose the benchmarks that we ended up with.

In our benchmark process, we were real fortunate. Some of the community-level benchmarks that the other speakers have talked about, they've had to go out and create surveys or create ways of digging information up. We tried to concentrate on reliable, credible, third-party indicators, and by that I mean U.S. government statistics, things that were collected for other states and the nation so that we can compare ourselves to see what kind of progress we were making. That's not always going to work with some of your organizations and some of the nonprofit groups according to what you're trying to measure, but that's what we try to focus on for a variety of reasons. We didn't want to be criticized for picking benchmarks we could easily obtain or that were somewhat wishy-washy. We tried to look at indicators that were going to be there every year, that were collected by some other party other than ourselves.

> *We picked benchmarks for the years 2000, 2005, 2010, and 2015. The University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville by statute are to measure our progress each year, and give a report on how we are making progress . . .*

What are you going to compare yourselves to? We tried to pick indicators where we could compare ourselves to our competitor states or the nation. For instance, we talk about our per capita income being $20,000 in the state of Kentucky. What does that mean? If it grew 10 percent from last year, is that good or bad? If it didn't grow 10 percent from last year, but rather at about 5 percent, is that good or bad? I don't know. Compared to what? What happened in the nation? If the nation grew at 10 percent and we grew at 5 percent, we didn't make any progress; we lost. Flip that over, and if we grow at 10 percent and the nation grew at 5 percent, then we've made progress. That's what we tried to do with our benchmarks.

There are multiple ways of looking at the same thing. Are we making progress in Kentucky's economy? Before we pick a measure, is it something that we can measure? We called the report that the Economic Development Partnership adopted this fall *Benchmarks to Measure Progress*. We adopted per capita gross state product, per capita income, and average

annual pay. There's a difference between average annual pay and per capita income: per capita income measures all sources of income, earnings, dividends, as well as wages; average annual pay measures the type of jobs you are getting, and what the wages pay. We wanted to measure that, too. You can have an increase relative to per capita income of the nation that's good, but are we catching that lower segment of society? What's happening to our poverty level? So, we established some benchmarks on poverty levels as well. We also adopted unemployment and one other one, manufacturing share of employment, because generally manufacturing jobs pay higher than other types of jobs. That's one of the focuses that we have in our economic development strategy.

We picked benchmarks for the years 2000, 2005, 2010, and 2015. The University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville by statute are to measure our progress each year, and give a report on how we are making progress, which is another concept of establishing benchmarks. I assume we'll get that report in the Fall of next year. We established benchmarks at the state and subregions of the state that were manageable. We tried not to go down to the county level. We felt that was cumbersome. We picked some divisions of the state such as an east Kentucky corporation area, a west Kentucky corporation area, and that famous area of the state called the "rest of the state." I have a handout that gives an overview of the *Benchmarks to Measure Progress* report and it tells you how to get a copy of it. I will give them to the people who want to e-mail or call me and we'll get you a copy. That's all. Thank you.

Questions, Answers, and Comments

Mr. Hall:

Thanks to the brevity and conciseness of our presenters, we have a significant amount of time for questions and answers, so I encourage you to engage in some discussion. And, as moderator, I'll take the liberty of asking the first question. It was stated that an elementary tenet of measures of progress is that they be measurable and quantifiable. My question is can all goals and objectives be reduced to measurable and quantifiable measures or are there some goals or objectives that don't lend necessarily to quantifiable, measurable goals? There are certain things that pertain to qualitative measures as opposed to quantitative measures and I was wondering if any member of our panel could respond to that?

Dr. King:

I will because you stomped one of my contrary buttons. As Mr. True said, working at the grassroots is very cumbersome. That's what I joke about. It is cumbersome, and I think sometimes we forget who our audience is when we are setting benchmarks. Obviously, the Economic Development Cabinet's is much easier to define because in some ways their audience is elected officials, whereas our audience in the vision process is the people in the community. You can have an indicator that says people are making more money today than they were a year ago, but what about the quality of life? Are they really enjoying life?

As Dan mentioned, there are some qualitative things that sometimes we don't want to recognize, so I think sometimes our values are really the prisms that we set those benchmarks from because we look at things differently depending on our audience and where our context is. Sometimes it's scary for me to even talk about indicators even though I know we need them; we need to be accountable. I think we just need to recognize that there is no such thing as value free, or maybe the most reliable indicators are the context that they are in.

Mr. True:

Dan, I can address that. If you have a goal and you can't measure it, you need to look at your goal again.

Ms. Rogers:

Actually, quality of life goals can be measured. Whether we have more money now than we did 20 years ago, is our quality of life better or the same? I think that you can very easily say what percentage of your income are you spending on housing, or what percentage of your income are you spending to educate your child? There are all kinds of benchmarks that you can set for quality of life. It doesn't have to be limited to how much or how many jobs.

Dr. King:

I think sometimes it's when we don't accept certain indicators. Maybe some groups, depending on your audience, might not accept that as a reliable indicator, and I think that's sometimes more the question: what do we call reliable indicators. That was the question I was raising.

Dr. Forsythe:

I think you can also have goals that you're measuring and your measurements may not really reflect whether you're gaining or losing. For example, I was working with an environmental education program where we were trying to, through 16 Centers for Environmental Education at 16 different universities, increase the environmental awareness of students in secondary and elementary schools. Our measures were the number of teacher workshops we were conducting on environmental education. We were producing curriculum, so we were measuring a number of these workbooks that were being placed in the schools and then we were also buying other curriculums, Project Wild and Project Learning Tree, placing them in the schools and measuring all these things. We went before the TVA guru in TQM and he said, "All these measures aren't worth a darn. How do you know that you're increasing the environmental awareness of the students in the school? What measures are you doing to see that environmental awareness is increasing?" We had this nice little measuring system of increases in everything and we walked away from the whole program because we couldn't show that the money we were putting into it was actually increasing the environmental awareness of students. We were measuring but we were measuring things that we couldn't tie to progress.

Ms. Rogers:

Actually, you can measure those things and tie them to progress. One way to measure instead of measuring the number of books you distribute to students, you could measure the number of students who participated in recycling programs before and after you distributed the books and had the programs. So, even those things can be measured. Sometimes it just takes a little thinking and delving.

Dr. Forsythe:

I'm not saying they can't be measured, I'm just saying sometimes we don't measure.

Ms. Rogers:

I agree.

Dr. Forsythe:

We started off measuring and we could be measuring some things that would be more true indicators of our goal, like you just said.

Ms. Roberts:

OK. I agree.

Audience Member:

To take the role of skeptic for a minute, I worked with indicators a lot and I think that it is possible to find ways of measuring things although sometimes what you need to measure is difficult to measure. I am basically a mathematician turned social scientist turned bureaucrat. In 1974, I joined an evaluation branch of the Cabinet for Human Resources. We had five people. We were in charge of implementing program status reports. That lasted for about seven years. In 1974 we had indicators of success for every program in the Cabinet for Human Resources. We turned in progress reports to the legislature every six months, on how we were doing on those indicators. That lasted until the law changed, but I was successful for a while in convincing people to improve their indicators, and I cajoled the people and threatened them with LRC.

LRC did nothing. Time passed. LRC did nothing. Another year passed; LRC did nothing. People quit paying attention. LRC changed the law, and stopped requiring program status reports. People stopped keeping their indicators and they have gone by the wayside. Now, we are going back to indicators. My skepticism comes because indicators are great if decisionmakers make decisions based on those indicators, and, over time you've got to keep collecting them, chart your progress, measure your success, and make decisions based on them. That was a comment more than a question. I think we have a question back here.

Audience Member:

Thank you. I've often heard the statement that you get what you measure, and in negative terms, people look at measurements of how kids are doing in schools and they discover that the teachers are teaching the kids how to take the tests. I just wonder, first of all, if you agree it is true that you get what you measure and then, secondly, is it good or bad in a community context?

Dr. King:

I think it's good. You are what you measure. I think the trick comes in involving the whole community so that you decide what is important for your community to measure. An indicator is worthless if you don't have buy-in from the community or from the group that you are developing the indicators with.

Ms. Rogers:

To me, it seems like indicators are part of the vision. It's like you were saying. If you don't know where you are going, how do you know when you're going to be getting close. On the flip side of that, sometimes I think it's good that we don't really know what the indicators are because sometimes some of the best things surprise us. I think that's part of the beauty of working in a community, that some of the best things are things that don't fit those nice, neat little hierarchies or levels of indicators. I think there's room for both. I think one of the nice things about having the conference here today is that we're trying to hash out a broader definition of what indicators of success are, whether it is a community or working with the legislature. I think maybe you do need some, but at the same time maybe sometimes

it's not to have them too structured because our communities are not that structured. If everything were that black and white, we would be in a totally different context. That's why we're still having things like today.

Audience Member:

I think that also relates to the issue of making sure that we measure the right thing; we're measuring the desired outcomes and not necessarily the input or the output or the amount of effort that you hope will produce the end result. Measuring the proper thing is important. If you measure the wrong thing, then the issue you raise becomes very troublesome. I think it also relates to what René said in terms of interrelationships between your objectives or your measures of progress. If you have an interrelationship, if something gets out of whack, or if you're measuring the wrong thing, and if you have something that is singularly focused and not part of a broader picture, it may throw some other things out of whack. But if you have a strategic plan that's valid, that has some interrelationship between the objectives, it serves as a check and balance in that process, but I understand your caveat.

Audience Member:

Just an observation based on what Penny was saying: maybe we need an indicator for unintended consequences, things that happen along the way that our indicators don't pick up.

Audience Member:

That's called taking advantage of opportunities.

Audience Member:

I'd like to ask a little bit about how the indicators you are asking us to comment on were arrived at. Or at least, I'd like to say something about some of them. One specifically that I've been living for the last 10 years, is number 17, and I think this is key because if we don't get our language and our definitions straight, and if we don't know what we're talking about, we're going to go in directions that we may not intend to go.

This morning, Ms. Miller said something about having 80 percent of the people getting garbage service. This is something I'm working with daily. The "number of dumps eliminated in 1995" is information from the EQC, which of course came from each county's annual report, but there's no definition of what a dump is yet at the state level. Some people consider it two bags of garbage on the road, and others of us consider it several truckloads. I clean up some dumps every year four or five times, but it's counted four or five times if I report it separately. I'm telling the state that I'm doing this, but they don't reflect that, they count it five times, as five dumps because I cleaned five dumps. But it's really the same dump continuing.

This is the kind of detail that can really change the indicator or whatever we're measuring and it changes what we really are saying about our state and our communities. It's one example of several that I have tried to change because I make comments like this, at the state level, on my annual reports, and at meetings, and nothing ever seems to get done. I'm really curious about how we evaluate the information we get, and how we describe it. Does "households connected to a sewer system" mean a package treatment plant, a functioning sewer system, a bad one as well as a good one, or does it even mean a septic system? I don't know; I don't even know how anybody knows these things. And, that's basically it. Next.

Mr. Hall:

Would anybody want to comment on this? I see Mike Childress in the audience.

Mr. Childress:

There are a lot of questions there. Where did these come from? The short answer is a lot of different places. Many of you may be familiar with *Minnesota Milestones* and *Oregon Benchmarks*. There are a handful of other states that have done similar projects like this and when we first got started, two or three years ago, we collected them all and it was remarkable the amount of convergence about what people want for the future of their states. The goals all look similar and the indicators look very similar as well. So we borrowed a lot of indicators that seem to match the goals, but we didn't stop there. We sponsored a conference similar to this two years ago. We solicited input from people who came to that conference in Lexington. We had posters on the wall and were trying to identify indicators. We had some basic ones and asked for input and/or additional ones. We then put out that report and mailed it to 3,000 or 4,000 on our mailing list free and to anybody who wants it.

We tried to get the media involved so that we could get the word out to a broader base of folks and we were inviting input. No data were included, but we listed the goals and some indicators of progress that we think are good ones and asked for input. We also recognize this is a work in progress and that there are a lot of caveats to it. What we haven't provided here is the detailed information and caveats. When we publish this, we're going to have an extensive appendix where we can capture a lot of nuances to the data collection that you talked about because that may really be five dumps, or it may be one dump.

Finally, let me say this. I think that your point about the nuances, the subtleties, the problems with these data is well taken and that's why on this assessment sheet, we've asked people to consider the goal. That's the bottom line, really, these individual goals. We recognize that some of the indicators are good, some of them are lacking, and we ask folks to also include their own individual assessment, their perception of what's going on in their own local community and their own personal experience with regard to these goals and whether they think we're making progress toward them.

So, that's where the data come from. We recognize that there are problems with it and it's a work in progress. So let us know. If you have problems with this stuff, let us know, and if you like it, let us know. We like to hear good stuff, too. I'll let Dr. Data, Ron Langley talk.

Dr. Ron Langley:

I just wanted to add one thing. We're talking about benchmarks and things like this. It's cheaper to use third party data and some people think it's more unbiased to use third party data as opposed to collecting your own. We've heard comments to that effect, but the thing is, the point is well taken about where the data comes from. Is it really useful for measuring what you want it to measure? You can surf the web and find any numbers of data out there to measure virtually anything that you'd like, but what you need to consider is the people that collected that data, their purpose in collecting the data, and what they were collecting that data for. If it doesn't have anything to do with the goal you are trying to measure with that data, then perhaps you need to do what the Center has done on some occasions and just go about getting their own. I know they worked very carefully to make sure they were measuring exactly what they thought they were trying to measure and get information that would be useful. So, I just think that over all caveat needs to be stated; for reasons of economy, you may be forced to use secondary sources of data to measure progress toward your goals. But you have to realize that sometimes you are going to run into these problems.

Audience Member:

This brings us back to your question full circle, but I want to put a plea in for another perspective on measurement and indicators and it links to the question, to who are we accountable? At one time someone told me that if you couldn't count it, it didn't exist. I know that there is a tendency to that perspective, especially at funding agency level and government level. But, at the community level or the human level, what's important to us, we are storytelling people. And, I think another kind of measure that we need to think about collecting as we are doing community visioning, community planning, community action, is the stories of the people who are involved and how people are affected. I'm a demographer and I believe in the reality of numbers, but the truth of the matter is that when I work with communities they don't want to know how many, what percentage of the population has this or that characteristic. They want to know about the people next door and about their lives. They want to know how what's been done affects them or has improved the quality of their life. I'm not saying go one or the other, but I think that to ignore the importance of the story is to ignore a kind of indicator that has a very powerful effect on our understanding of what's happening.

Audience Member:

I'd like to call attention to the fact that the subtitle of this conference is charting our path to prosperity. To me that means that a major consideration of this group ought to be economics. There are noneconomic factors to be sure, but economics is a discipline in which there are both incentives and disincentives. I was glad to hear some of the economic matters discussed by Mr. True, for example, the average family income or the per capita income. I assume he meant adjusted for inflation.

There was a study done at Western Kentucky University. Professor Liles was co-author of a paper which showed that among pairs of adjacent states, those with the lower taxes were the ones with the higher per capita incomes, so I would like to suggest something which may be quite unpopular in this group and that is that all of you work to lower the taxes in your community and statewide. There is not much you can do about the national tax situation on your own, but you certainly can do something about local taxes and you can prevail on your legislators to work on a lower tax base for the state of Kentucky. That means increasing efficiency, adhering to those activities which are specifically mandated by the Commonwealth's constitution.

There are many other things such as garbage dumps, garbage collection, what have you, which have economic aspects that I think have not been advantageously explored by local governments and local citizen groups. Privatization comes to mind, for example, and the tendency as I judge from my own community, Lexington, is that bureaucrats do not like privatization, but the advantage of privatization is that private companies must meet competition which municipalities do not have to meet. So, I would like to respectfully offer the proposition that here are indicators, economic indicators, which can very clearly tell us whether or not we are making progress in our community and our Commonwealth if we will concentrate on those which are economic in nature.

Mr. Hall:

Again, I would like to thank our panelists for participating and thank you for attending.

STAYING POWER

Panel Members

Moderator:

Sylvia Lovely has served as the Executive Director/CEO of the Kentucky League of Cities since 1990. Prior to that, Ms. Lovely served as Director of Intergovernmental Services, staff attorney and lobbyist for KLC for two years. Ms. Lovely directs the activities of 42 staff members at the KLC headquarters in Lexington in a variety of service areas: insurance for cities in liability, property, unemployment, workers' compensation and health; bond and investment pools; information services; legal assistance; training and education, and many other services. The Kentucky League of Cities is a statewide association consisting of 347 member cities. In her capacity as KLC Executive Director/CEO, Ms. Lovely serves on a variety of boards and commissions, in an effort to enhance and maintain the leadership role of Kentucky cities and makes numerous appearances throughout the state on behalf of cities speaking on topics such as civic involvement and entrepreneurship in cities. She has been appointed to several positions across the state and currently serves as Chair of the Kentucky Health Purchasing Alliance Board re-established by the 1996 General Assembly Session in Senate Bill 343, and as Chair of the Kentucky Center for Public Issues, a nonprofit group established to foster public discussion on a variety of vital topics. Ms. Lovely served on the Kentucky Tax Policy Commission formed by former Governor Brereton Jones, established to review and recommend change to Kentucky tax policy. She is excited about a new program to revitalize Kentucky downtowns, Renaissance Kentucky, which Governor Paul Patton has as a joint venture with Kentucky League of Cities, Kentucky Housing Corporation, and the Kentucky Heritage Council. She also serves as a member of the Board of the Greater Lexington Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Lovely is a graduate of the University of Kentucky College of Law and is licensed to practice in Florida and Kentucky. She resides in Lexington with her husband, Bernie, and two sons, Ross and David.

Panelists:

Steven Beshear is a native of Hopkins County, Kentucky, and graduated from Dawson Springs High School in 1962. He attended the University of Kentucky, from which he graduated in 1966, and the University of Kentucky Law School, from which he graduated in 1968. After working at White and Case in New York, New York, from 1968 to 1970, Mr. Beshear returned to Kentucky in 1970 and joined a local law firm. In 1973, he won a seat in the House of Representatives in the Kentucky General Assembly and served three terms. He was elected to the office of Attorney General and served from 1979 to 1983. Mr. Beshear served as Lieutenant Governor from 1983 to 1987. He currently is a partner in the law firm of Stites and Harbison in Lexington.

John Bowling has been a successful private businessman for 30 years. He has been Mayor of the City of Danville since 1986 and is a present board member and past chair of the following

organizations: Kentucky League of Cities, Bluegrass Area Development District, Southern Municipal Conference, and Bluegrass Regional Recycling Corporation (Founding member). Mayor Bowling presently serves as Secretary of the Kentucky Council of Area Development Districts and is currently a candidate for the office of State Representative for the 54th District.

Mary Helen Miller, during 20 years in state government, served as Secretary of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet, Chief Executive Assistant for Internal Affairs for Governor Martha Layne Collins, Legislative Liaison and Chief Administrative Officer for Governor Brereton C. Jones, Governor's Alternate for the Appalachian Regional Commission, and Assistant Director for Committee and Staff Coordination at the Legislative Research Commission. She is a retired schoolteacher. Ms. Miller has served on the boards of directors for the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center, the Louisville-Jefferson County Airport Authority, the Waterfront Development Corporation, the Shelby Development Corporation, the Western Kentucky University Alumni, the Shelby County Community Foundation, and the Shelby County Community Theatre. She holds a BA from Western Kentucky University and is a graduate of Leadership Kentucky. She and her husband have two children.

Stephen H. Miller is a native of Hardin, Kentucky, in Western Kentucky. He, his wife, and two children have resided in Fleming County, Kentucky, for the past 20 years. Mr. Miller attended Western Kentucky University and Murray State University. He received his BS in Urban Planning from Murray State University. He is a graduate of the Economic Development Institute at the University of Oklahoma. Mr. Miller is the Executive Director of the Buffalo Trace Area Development District in Maysville, Kentucky, where he has been employed for 20 years. Before being named Executive Director in 1986, he held the positions of Transportation Planner, Economic Development Specialist, and Assistant Director. Mr. Miller is the immediate past chair of the Kentucky Area Development District Director's Association, and has served as a member of the Kentucky Workforce Partnership Council, the Kentucky Municipal Law Center Board of Overseers, Maysville-Mason County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, and Kentucky Advisory Council on the Homeless.

Panel Discussion

How to invest community initiatives with staying power.

Moderator, Sylvia Lovely:

We have a good small group, so I expect a lot of questions and discussion. What we've had here today has been tremendous. Mike, I commend you and the Board for putting on a tremendous program and as you can see I have a spectacular panel, people who have that kind of hands-on experience that you all need to hear about. You can share with us at the end some of your thoughts and ideas. I particularly enjoyed hearing the luncheon speaker, Carolyn Lukensmeyer. She made some excellent points. What we're talking about here today with community engagement isn't just an exercise, something that we should just talk about. All of us know that what we're really trying to do is change. We're trying to bring change to our communities and eventually to the world. We need to think about it as being that serious.

When people are talking about making change and changing the world, I always think about the recent news story of the woman in Vermont who won the Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts

in getting land mines banned across the world. She lived down a dirt road in Vermont and didn't even have a television. She did have a telephone. But here was a woman on a country dirt road in Vermont who truly did change the world.

So I think it is within our grasp and that's our responsibility. What we've heard here today is a lot, a nibble around the edges of our topic. We're going to focus on something that is particularly important and again I hope you'll get engaged in this discussion because this is so critical. It's investing these community initiatives with staying power. You've heard the word "sustainability," a buzzword today, but it means a whole lot. It's keeping it fresh and alive, day after day, month after month, and year after year, so that you can keep building on that community initiative.

At the Kentucky League of Cities this is something that we're vitally interested in. I've seen these things done in our 347 member cities throughout the state. I see them put on the shelf and not accomplish anything over time and that is the tragedy sometimes of civic engagement projects. The bad thing about that is that sometimes you can turn off the public. And we certainly have a public that is disengaged. I think that is already a failure and we need to find a way to re-engage the public. People are voting less, engaging less. There are lots of reasons for that, but one of those certainly can be that we ask for input and then we don't do anything with it, either as community leaders, state leaders, local leaders, elected or appointed, or otherwise.

We have a tremendous panel here today and they all have hands-on experience in these areas in civic engagement projects. I will tell you just a little bit about each one and some of the things they have done and you have their bios in your materials. I'm going to start with Mayor Bowling and I want them to talk about their involvement in civic engagement projects and their particular roles because each of them has extensive experience in this. I want them to think about keeping their eye on sustainability, what was done right in the projects they were involved in, anything that they would have done differently, and any particular success. And it may be that success will differ. Perhaps we would have different definitions of what success would be with civic engagement projects. And then, finally, just any other observations that they have from a very, very rich history, and I hope that we'll hear a lot of the specifics.

The first person I'm going to call on is very dear to me. He's on my Board. Mayor Bowling is a tremendous individual. He is Mayor of Danville and has really, truly made that into a jewel of a community. If you've been to Danville lately, you will see what a tremendous place it is and that it is in large part owed to Mayor Bowling. Mayor Bowling, will you come forward and please address some of the issues about civic engagement projects you've been involved in?

Mayor Bowling:

Thanks, Sylvia. You're very kind and affirmation will surely get you everywhere. I would like to take the credit for what Sylvia just said, but in all fairness, it is probably in the neighborhood of 15,000 people in a community effort in Danville that's helped us to get where we are today. One day I was talking with the City Manager, Mr. Ed Music, as usual to find out what's going on, what problems they have, who has called, or who we need to go see. I just happened to watch 2020 one evening, and it left an impact on me. I came in that Monday morning and I said quite frankly, "Ed, I wonder what Danville will look like in the year 2020?"

One thing led to another and so I called upon a few of my friends, Mayor Neil Hackworth from Shelbyville; David Adkisson, the Mayor in Owensboro then; and Jerry Abramson, and talked to them about what they had done in their communities and how they got people involved. From that particular conversation with those three people, we introduced Danville Vision 2020. The Vision 2020 citizen survey was an outgrowth of the meeting held on February 17, 1992, at Danville City Hall in which citizens, community leaders, and outside leaders came together to discuss their dreams, their hopes, their visions about what Danville can and would

be in the year 2020. The diversity of the responses was unlimited. Over 300 people participated in that daylong event and the ideas flowed from each of the roundtables we had on economic development, economic renewal, community planning, community facilities, transportation, utilities, and governmental services.

The second phase of this daylong event was compiling the many ideas and major concepts into a citizen survey to gauge the opinions of each household in the community. Some 6,000 surveys were sent out to individual households and hand-delivered to people in apartments. We got some 40 percent returned from people concerned about those topics. We believe that 40 percent was a wonderful response. Out of those returned surveys, there were numerous ideas that people wanted us to implement. One of those was an economic development plan. The people in our community wanted an economic development plan different from an industrial development plan, but they didn't want the city involved to the degree that the city was controlling it and running it.

From that economic development plan came an organization called CDC, the Community Development Committee. In Danville, we had a problem with different agencies that mean well and do wonderful things, but were all going in different directions. We had the Chamber, city government, the industrial foundation, the Heart of Danville, tourism, and Centre College, and we were all moving but moving in different directions. Our goals and our intents were good, but we believed that if we pulled together with our energies, then our results could be wonderful. The CDC met and there was a county magistrate, myself, the city manager, the Chamber, the Industrial Foundation, and a few of the other organizations. We shared this idea with them that we need to walk in unison.

Several of these different organizations didn't want any part of that. They again saw control by the city and control by the county, and it was up to us to remove that distrust, that barrier that was in front of us. It took us three long years to convince all these different agencies that we were on an equal playing ground, and we all mean to move together. Since then, that particular organization has grown to include every facet of the community, including health care, education, agriculture, school systems, both forms of governments, tourism, and industry. Every sector of the community is represented. It took us another four years to get to where we are today.

How do you maintain those people involved? A lot of that has been through the simple equation of people coming and going off boards. There's always a fresh infusion of fresh blood on the different boards of all these agencies.

Seven years later, everybody is on an equal playing ground. The city government has stepped back and the county government is in the background. We support from behind the scenes because trust has to do development if you are going to move a community forward. Now the CDC is in the process of hiring an Economic Development Director who will go out and beat the bushes for doctors, lawyers, retail merchants, whoever, and that individual is basically being funded from the private sector, which is an absolutely wonderful victory in itself.

From that, I want to get into the staying power. Quite frankly we saw the problem in Danville with a lot of different agencies and some individuals that did not want to see government control this organization or the way that community went. Today, the CDC and all these different organizations are taking our community forward. How do you maintain that staying power? How do you maintain those people involved? A lot of that has been through the simple equation of people coming and going off boards. There's always a fresh infusion of fresh blood on the different boards of all these agencies. Those people touch an awful lot of people in our community.

In Danville, Kentucky, today, CDC knows where city government and county government stand, and our community is moving forward. The program is not perfect, but it's farther along the way than it used to be. But to get people involved and into the staying power mode, they have to know that they're on an equal playing field. Until you submit that to the people and they trust you, then it will never happen. It's a long battle, but I think in our community, we're there. I'm very proud of where we are, but it takes people in our community to make it what it is. It doesn't take the Mayor, the County Judge, or any one individual. It takes all of us pulling together in the right direction with the same enthusiasm. And, with that, I simply rest my case and ask for any questions that might come forward later. Thanks, everybody.

Ms. Lovely:

Thank you very much. I was very much involved in that Danville project and it is one of those that has staying power and has sustained itself over time. John, your project was very inclusive of citizens. I remember that very well. The rooms were filled with citizens coming in, and it wasn't necessarily who you would identify as being the community leaders. Everybody was invited to participate and that was made very clear. There was a strong sense of citizen responsibility, which I think is really important. I like to use the analogy of the toy store at We 'R Us. There is almost a "We are not us" mentality out there that we are not responsible as citizens if things aren't going well. We just shut it out and turn it off. We need to see more responsibility on citizens' part and your Danville citizens certainly did that.

We heard a lot about distrust of government. That's something we need to talk more about, because we in government must not be doing something right if we're not addressing that issue. And, then, the external structure that's the tangible piece that came out of this, the CDC, the economic development agency, that actually sustains itself and has a staff and a board is very, very important.

The next speaker is Steve Beshear. What a pedigree; it's too short here. He was Lieutenant Governor, is a very successful lawyer, and he served in the Kentucky General Assembly for a time, but he did happen to run one of the most successful Attorney General's Offices as the Attorney General from 1979 to 1983. I was an Assistant Attorney General under Steve Beshear, and we talked about utility rate cases. I present to you Steve Beshear, who will talk about some private projects he's been involved in. Notably, I hope you'll mention Kentucky Tomorrow, which was done when you were Lieutenant Governor. Steve Beshear.

Mr. Beshear:

Thank you, Sylvia. I knew she would get around to the fact that I hired her when I was Attorney General and that was, she told me, one of the best decisions I had ever made. When I think about futuristic planning in the state of Kentucky, I'm always reminded about that old comment that Mark Twain is credited with when he said, "When the world comes to an end, I want to be in Kentucky because everything in Kentucky happens 20 years later." Well, when you look back at our history, I think old Mark probably had a point. Hopefully, over the last 20 to 30 years, if he were around today, he might try to make that joke about someplace else because we have made on a statewide level some considerable progress in long-range planning for our state's future.

When I became Lieutenant Governor, I had a fellow named Kris Kimel as my Chief of Staff, and, of course, Kris now heads up the Kentucky Science and Technology Council in the state. Kris and others came to me and we sat down and started brainstorming about what a Lieutenant Governor could do besides running for Governor. That's always been a pretty big question. We wanted to do something substantive with that office that we hoped we could leave as a lasting

contribution to the state, whether or not Steve Beshear ever became Governor, and we came up with the idea of a long-term planning project for the state.

At that time, to our knowledge, the only semi long-term planing project that Kentucky had had was back in the 1940s when a group of folks came together and formed what they called the Committee for Kentucky. We actually found their report, which was rather dusty and covered with cobwebs, and it was a fairly impressive report. And, from that point, until 1983 we could find no other effort like that for the whole state. We looked at a sister state that 25 years before that time was very much like Kentucky, North Carolina, and we saw how far they had come developing the research triangle, and all kinds of forward-looking projects for that state. The Governor at that time, who is now Governor again, had a long-term planning project.

So Kris went to North Carolina and met with their folks and the sum and substance of it was that we decided to try to do a long-range planning project for the state. We called it the Kentucky Tomorrow Commission. We funded it entirely with private funds because we couldn't really convince anybody at that time that they ought to give us any state money to do it. We raised a considerable amount of money from companies and individuals around the state who, surprisingly enough, thought that this was a very, very good idea, that we needed to do something like this if we were going to be able to move Kentucky ahead like states like North Carolina had moved. We put together what we thought was a very wide participatory type of group. The Commission itself had 25 or 30 people on it. I look out here and see some faces like Senator Kafoglis who was on it. I have seen many others here. When I first walked in, I thought this was a Kentucky Tomorrow reunion because there were several people here that participated in that project.

It lasted for two years; we divided up into a number of committees looking at a wide range of issues affecting Kentucky. After a two-year period we came up with a report that I think had a lot of very, very good ideas in terms of the future of this state. Mary Helen, you were on there, too. We involved literally thousands of people at one time or another in this project and there was a very enthusiastic involvement by those folks in this project. Once you started talking about the need for long-range planning in Kentucky, it was very evident to almost anybody you talked to that there really was a very pressing need.

We had the report. We've had some successes. You asked us to talk about the successes and what we would do different. The one thing I'd do different is I'd get elected Governor because then I could have gone with it. But that didn't happen, so that was one of the failures. But we had several successes with that report. The Kentucky Chamber of Commerce picked up on that report. Bill Samuels, the head of Makers Mark, was the head of their long-range planning process at the Kentucky Chamber and they've had a project, Project 2000 or something like that. He told me three years ago, which made me feel good, "You know, Steve, I know you've never gotten thanked for this like you should have, but what you all did with that Kentucky Tomorrow Project really served as the basis of the jumping off point for everything we've done at the Kentucky Chamber level in terms of planning for the future." So, to me, that was a success because an important group in this state picked up that work, took all of that time and effort spent, and moved it forward. That's a group that's going to be here from now on. Having those kinds of groups using and building on that kind of work to me was a very real success.

Another success that came out of it I mentioned a few minutes ago in connection with Kris Kimel. Kris, along with some folks that participated in the project, such as Lee Todd, who was on our Commission, formed the Kentucky Science and Technology Council, and they have been working since that time to bring more research dollars into the state to work with our companies in developing higher tech types of things in our state, really looking long range down that road.

We worked with the folks in Washington, the National Science Foundation, and others that had research moneys and at that time Kentucky was number 50th, 48th or whatever, in terms of

research dollars that we were getting from the federal government into the state. And so we headed out in that direction also. This Kentucky Science and Technology Council has picked up on that and state government has picked up on that more than ever. I think now we have moved up some degree in terms of the amount of research dollars that we get into Kentucky.

Those kinds of things are good, but this type of thing is hard to sustain and I'm the first to admit it. We had some structural obstacles on a statewide level to long-range planning back in the 1980s, some of which we've resolved now. Our governors could not succeed themselves, and because of that every governor that came into office always wanted his or her name on something, not the last one's name on something, which is understandable. But because of that rapid turnover every four years, you ended up with no real long-term planning for this state. Anybody who's worked in state government, and I see Ron Carson sitting out there, can tell you that in order to make substantial progress in big areas, it takes more than four years. It takes more than two budget cycles. It takes about four years just to get us on the right road, and then it takes more time than that to move the state along that pathway.

A state's a big thing to move and it takes a while to move it. I think one of the good things we did structurally was to change the succession of our governors so that at least we can have governors that can succeed themselves one time. Another forward step was the creation of this Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center and the way it was created. It is not just an animal of the executive branch, or of the legislative branch, or of the public; it's a combination of all three. And, hopefully, that will give it long-term staying power.

I say "hopefully" because even if it's there, if it's not used it doesn't do much good, but I find more and more that our leadership and the public in the state are becoming educated about the need for this kind of process. That's not to say that there's a big clamor out there for this, but I think we have had some success over the last 20 years in educating both the present leadership and the upcoming leadership as to the very real importance of long-range planning on the state level. And, that long term is one of the best things that these projects have done.

A state's a big thing to move and it takes a while to move it. I think one of the good things we did structurally was to change the succession of our governors so that at least we can have governors that can succeed themselves one time.

I think it's one of the best things the Kentucky Tomorrow Project did because we involved a lot of people who are still involved in state, county, or local government. It's not easy but it's absolutely essential that we continue to engage in this process if this state is going to be able to compete in the long term in this world economy of ours. I picked up some of the publications that the Center has put out and I'm very impressed with them because they are picking up obviously on a lot of the same issues we picked up on because a lot of the things we need to do don't change because we still haven't done them. With the existence of this Center now, in terms of long-term planning, that will help us a lot; and hopefully future governors and future legislators will listen, pay attention, and look at the kinds of issues that this Center's going to keep throwing up in front of them.

Look what we've done in education, for instance, in primary and secondary education. With all of its flaws and all of the griping that we do about it, we've come a long way since 1990, when the legislature passed the Reform Act. As I say, you can argue with some of it, but we are a lot better off than we were before. Those kinds of issues we're starting to grapple with and to me that's another signal that our folks are becoming more educated as to the need to look long-range in this state so that our people, our citizens, will have and be able to enjoy the same quality of life as citizens in other parts of the state and of the world. Thank you.

Ms. Lovely:

That's the first time I've heard Steve speak that he didn't tease me about being pregnant the whole time I worked for him. By the way, my boys are 13 and 15. That's how many years ago that was. That was wonderful. I actually learned something new. If any of you are aware of the Kentucky Science and Technology Council, the League is in partnership with them now to grow entrepreneurship in Kentucky communities. Kentucky Tomorrow really set the stage for that whole idea of exercising the ability to do citizen involvement programs and the Chamber has shown the leadership.

I would also note Steve's comment about structural problems. In fact, if you read about civic engagement projects, one of the biggest issues is it lacks the structural components to make it last into the future. And that's certainly something that we should examine and take a look at in our question and answer period. And now, we have the Millers, no relation to one another. First, I'm going to call on Mary Helen Miller, who is truly one of the tall timber of leadership in this state. She served 20 years in state government in various capacities, most recently with Governor Jones as his Chief of Staff and just about everything else. I know she was instrumental in making policy in this state and has been very involved in citizen engagement projects for a long time. Mary Helen, come on up and tell us about it.

Ms. Miller:

Thank you, Sylvia. I've said many times in my life that I enjoy challenges, but I have to say today is a challenge to be on the last program of a full day and third on a four-person panel, but I appreciate the audience, and we have had a good day of discussion and ideas. The previous sessions today have discussed the leading qualifiers for community initiatives and I reaffirm all of those.

It has been my privilege to be involved in a number of strategic planning efforts including the Kentucky Tomorrow Commission which was a wonderful experience. Steve, I really do applaud you for the vision to set that up. It was a good experience for Kentucky. I was involved with the Chamber of Commerce's 21st Century Project. And, then a couple of years ago, there was strategic planning for the Appalachian part of the state, which developed the report, *Communities of Hope*. It's exciting when people come together and the ideas begin to flow and form these visions for an area. The Kentucky Commission on Quality and Efficiency examined state government and provided strategic planning for greater efficiency. As chair of this Long-Term Policy Board a couple of years ago, we did Visioning Kentucky, and this conference is a follow-up to that.

Today, though, I'm going to focus on an effort that I was involved in some seven or eight years ago, called Shelbyville 2000. Neil Hackworth, then Mayor of Shelbyville, now works for the Kentucky League of Cities as General Counsel. I'm focusing on this effort because it illustrates so many of the things that we've talked about today as being important in a community initiative, and since it did involve the community of Shelbyville, it's a more appropriate example to use today. And I'm very proud that I was a part of this effort as well. Neil was Chair and I was Vice Chair and a lot of people in Shelbyville worked very hard through this effort. The results are still coming in and that's why I wanted to focus on this particular effort.

In looking back over all of these efforts and thinking about what made them work, I've come up with a few strengths that I want to mention today. The one I think is the most important is committed leadership from those who are in authority and who can make resources available to the effort. You remember this morning Nancy from Simpson County noted that theirs was a Chamber of Commerce effort, so it was a group of citizens. But they did approach the leadership of the city and county and got their endorsement, so even though the leaders were

not the ones who initiated the project, they endorsed it. In Shelbyville, we were fortunate enough to have the leadership from the elected officials and the people who were in a position to provide some finances. Now obviously those of you who are involved with city government know that finances are very limited, so resources were limited, but with the credibility from the leadership you can tap into other resources, and there will be some follow-up. So vision, energy, and positive reinforcement from officials are needed.

Secondly, organization is necessary. To have a smooth operation of meetings requires some paid staff, which means resources must be available. There is nothing more frustrating than disorganized meetings with no agenda. The structure has got to be there to move things along. I have on occasion been chairman of volunteer efforts and I've been in administrative positions in my job. It's easier to direct staff than it is to direct volunteers. Sometimes working with volunteers is like pushing string. You're never real sure where it's going to go, but if there is staff who will make sure that the meeting room is set up, and the basic things are covered, the volunteers can then work effectively with their time rather than being frustrated and thus become cynical about the whole process.

The meetings themselves have to be open, fully participatory, and meaningful. There has to be a reason to be there, not to just sit around and talk. It has to matter that you're at the meeting in order to sustain interest. People have too many things to do with their time to want to go to meetings just to hear their neighbors complain or give opinions. The agenda needs to be set, but it needs to be flexible enough that changes are made based on public input, so that the people who go to the meetings know that they can effect change. That again goes back to that it has to matter that they're there at the meetings.

The public needs to be kept informed of what's going on at the meetings so that those who don't actually attend still know what's going on. I think this is extremely important.

There has to be a visualization of the plan. The people who are participating have to see it. They have to know what's going to happen with these initiatives. It needs to be based on the community values, not some abstract planning developed by somebody from outside. The community itself, the people themselves, has to do the planning. When we began Shelbyville 2000, we considered hiring a consultant to come look at Shelbyville and tell us what we could be in the year 2000. But as we got into the process, we realized nobody knows the community better than us, so we were the ones who needed to be doing the planning. We did get a facilitator to keep the meetings on track, and I do endorse that. We set time frames and identified funding sources for the plan.

When we began Shelbyville 2000, we considered hiring a consultant to come look at Shelbyville and tell us what we could be in the year 2000. But as we got into the process, we realized nobody knows the community better than us, so we were the ones who needed to be doing the planning.

As the implementation starts, there needs to be room for fresh faces and new ideas. John Bowling made reference to this and I certainly do agree. This plan was made in 1990. Neil is no longer Mayor. I'm no longer on the Board. The person who was Executive Director when this plan was established is no longer there. There is a new Executive Director, but the work is going on, and it's going on beautifully. Some of the people who were on the Board at that time are still involved and on the committees, but a lot of us aren't. I think this prevents burnout. When you get into the public policy arena you hear the same issues and complaints over and over so somebody needs to come in with fresh energy, take up those battles, and move ahead.

You need to recognize what's working as well as what needs to be improved, and we also enjoyed having a fresh perspective. We have a creek that runs around most of downtown Shelbyville, which was perceived as a barrier, something to overcome. There was a lot of trash

in it and it was seen as a problem. The facilitator who looked at our community presented the idea that this is like a green necklace around the city, and we could make a walking path there. So we started looking at it from that perspective and now it's considered an asset. There are now canoe trips, and a cleanup group goes on the creek in the spring and the fall to clean up the trash. A change in perspective can be creative and energizing.

I would also suggest that the plan itself list the items for implementation which would involve not only organizations but also allow individuals or community businesses to participate as well. As an example, one of the parts of the plan was to emphasize some of the historic preservation, not only of downtown, our core area, but of the corridors coming into downtown suggesting landscaping and planting of trees. As the old trees fell or became diseased, other trees should be planted. People who were not formally involved in the planning process could participate.

I have the report which was made in April of 1990 and just indulge me a moment in format here. I want to just point out that the report was divided into several areas and with each area there was a priority or strategy listed. Then there's a column noting who has the responsibility for that strategy. The next column notes the source of finances for that strategy. The next column is the date. Is it an immediate action, is it a long-term action, or is it a short-term action? And, those terms are defined in the time frame. Consequently, it is simple to keep score on the implementation.

This is something I'm proud of because it's the community where I live and have lived for over 30 years and plan to live, hopefully, a long time. When I drive down Main Street and see that the electrical lines in our core business area are now buried, we have new sidewalks, there's a canoe launch for Clear Creek, and Clear Creek has been cleaned up, we have trees planted along Main Street, we have new benches, new trash containers, we have new street lights, we have a defined entry area for both the east and west sections of the city. I'm convinced that none of these things would be in place if we hadn't had Shelbyville 2000. They didn't just happen. We have committees still working. Yes, there have been lots of frustrations. There are lots of things that are in the plan that we haven't done yet. However, I'm confident that many things would not have been done if we hadn't had the plan. So each time I drive down the street it just reaffirms my belief that it's worth the trouble to have a community initiative to involve the broad-based citizen participation and to make the plan for the community. Thank you.

Ms. Lovely:

Thank you for mentioning Neil, too. He is a visionary in the office and it's not bad to have an old mayor around, either, at the Kentucky League of Cities. Our final speaker is Steve Miller, who is the Executive Director of the Buffalo Trace Area Development District and does a tremendous job. He has shown a great deal of leadership in his work at the local level with city and county officials and citizen members of the ADD. It's really the Area Development District level where you can bring people together and be a success story as Steve is in the Maysville area. Steve Miller, tell us a little about some of the projects you've worked on.

Mr. Miller:

Thank you, Sylvia. I may take a little different approach in looking at community initiatives. When first asked to speak on this subject, my first thoughts were to take a look at past initiatives that were successful, and what qualities those successful initiatives had in common. I have tried to define those and arrived at nine points. I would like to use a project-driven community initiative to help illustrate these points. The one I would like to use is the A-A Highway.

Of course, initiatives can be programs, processes, or projects. The A-A Highway was a regional project initiative that was undertaken in a 10- to 15-county area that did result in a success over a long period of time. It did take a lot of staying power to hold that initiative over the approximately 15 years between the time the idea was first being advocated locally and citizen involvement began until the actual project resulted.

First, I would note that a successful community initiative *must be widely accepted*. I think in the case of the A-A Highway, that certainly was a very widely accepted initiative. I think that the whole quadrant of northeastern Kentucky felt there was a need for an east-west connector and that it was not a difficult sale job to get broad-based support of the need.

Secondly, it was a very *inclusive process*. Meetings were held to organize the project. This was an initiative identified from a community process that quickly developed into a region-wide initiative. It was widely publicized, and from our past records I noted that in the initial meeting held in Maysville, 125 people from 10 counties attended. It was basically a pep rally and a stimulus to get this initiative underway.

> *It is very important that all are able to share in the credit that comes from successes. It should not be limited only to one or two that might be the spokespersons.*

Very important to this and other initiatives is the *buy-in of key individuals and organizations*. Local officials, organizations, community and business leaders, legislators, and other interested citizens must be interested and involved. Certainly those individuals on the local level that have influence with decisionmakers at the state and federal level need to be involved to make the local initiative successful.

I would add that *leaders within the organization have to be widely accepted* by the group. It has been mentioned before, but I believe it is very important that there be *identifiable milestones* within the process of the ultimate goal. It gives an opportunity to celebrate successes along the way. One example I recall in the example of the A-A Highway was after the organization first evolved, the state agreed to conduct a feasibility study for the project. That was an initial accomplishment made toward their goal and was widely viewed as a success.

My next point is accomplishments *provide recognition for all*. It is very important that all are able to share in the credit that comes from successes. It should not be limited only to one or two that might be the spokespersons. That was accomplished in the project I am using as an illustration.

Organization for continuing efforts and facilitation is important. I think Mary Helen spoke to that issue very concisely. In the case of the A-A Highway project, it was a multicounty, multiADD, area involving 10 to 15 counties. The Area Development Districts provided logistical support and organization to the group, but there were leaders from each of the subareas that became a steering committee to bring about guidance to the effort.

The two additional points that I believe are overriding factors to the success of any community initiative are that those involved *believe that it can be achieved*. Positive attitudes rub off. Secondly, that *individual and organizational differences be put aside for the common good of the initiative that is underway*.

The example I am using is not the every day small project or program. Of course, the A-A Highway was a massive undertaking and very expensive, but at the same time the project afforded an opportunity to avoid organizational or individual conflicts because it was such a widely accepted initiative. From my personal experience, I do not recall any negative comments voiced against the project. There were some differences as to exact locations when it came to actual construction, but not for the corridor itself.

Thank you for allowing me to share these thoughts.

Questions, Answers, and Comments

Ms. Lovely:

And now, we've been talking a lot. You all are patient to wait out there. Any comments, questions before I call on someone? Yes? Please tell us who you are and speak up. I don't know if we have a microphone here.

Bill Richardson:

There's no reason to reinvent the wheel. Ms. Miller, you know about the report on Shelbyville. Some of these projects are very delicate initiatives easily frustrating and maybe it's a nuts and bolts issue of just taking an earlier report and working it out. We're available at State Archives and we have many of these reports. Local Area Development Districts have copies of community reports and if they don't have them there, they can forward them to the Archives, so I would suggest that what we have is available in records.

Ms. Lovely:

Great. For those who didn't hear, that was Bill Richardson. He is very important in working in State Archives and is encouraging. They have all the transcripts and work that has been done in the State Archives if anybody wants to look at a case study which might be an important thing to pick up. I hope you do pick up on some of the studies that you've heard about today. They'll be helpers for you. Any quick observations, questions?

Bill Wells:

I am Bill Wells from Louisville. I'm also the President of a nonprofit group for individuals who have experienced mental illness and are also trying to develop a business, develop some economies for people with physical or psychiatric disabilities. My question evolves around the comment that was made earlier that the state is a big thing to move. How would you have included people who might be in Welcome House, which is in Shelbyville? How did you get them to participate in your planning process, or have you?

Ms. Lovely:

Mary Helen talked about Shelbyville.

Male Voice:

A lot of times people who have experienced mental illness create these little cities that we know as mental health hospitals and they extracted that group, you've put them outside of a town, but we've never been afforded the bridge back in.

Ms. Miller:

We did not probably seek the input of those people, however, we had a number of public meetings at which they would be welcome, but we didn't actually go to the facility and seek their input during that process.

Ms. Lovely:

Thank you. Any other final comments, questions? I think we are just about out of time, but to just quickly sum up here. Some of the things we heard about included breaking down that wall of citizen apathy, anger, or distrust. How do you keep people engaged and how do you engage them to begin with? And then how do you keep them engaged in the process? How do you make it inclusive of all the people that need, who want to have their voices heard? How do you deal with the issue of lack of resources? Are peoples' expectations being developed in a way? I think this morning of the woman who asked the question about higher education in this part of the state, perhaps as Mary Helen reported on the creek around the city and thinking outside the box. Maybe we need more thinking about the goals that, while every city can't have a state university in it, it can have world class educational facilities and that's a different kind of goal and more attainable than having a university in every community. So, maybe that's part of sustainability.

Steve Beshear mentioned structural issues. You have structural things in place or we have to bring about change to bring down structural barriers at the state level certainly. Mary Helen and John mentioned staff, how important staff are in establishing something, and how important that identifiable structure was, having all of our processes be people-friendly and having good listeners. I think even hearing things sometimes that leaders don't like to hear has to be done. There has to be some good with what they may perceive as also being bad. I think that's important. Or as the woman from Franklin-Simpson County mentioned, you have to feed people sometimes just to get them interested. You'd have to define the scope and maybe redefine the scope of what it is that people are looking for.

Neil, did you want to make a comment? You were mentioned prominently about Shelbyville and I know the downtown revitalization project came out of that, and we're all talking about downtown revitalization a lot these days. You might want to comment on that just a tad and close this up.

Mr. Hackworth:

Nobody's results are going to be the same. So you've got the process of the plan as what you really need to focus on. There are ways. These communities were able to get where they needed to get. In our case, we looked at downtown primarily because this happened in conjunction with our Main Street Program and I think that communities have other ways that they may want to approach these kinds of processes through other groups as John did, through an economic development process. I think another thing is that with these plans, as Mary Helen mentioned, you always have to be adjusting things as you go forward and we've had to do that. With any plan you put in place, things change over time. Technology has changed over time. All these things change and so you can't just put a plan in place, put it on the shelf, and say we're going to follow it exactly. Some of the visions and goals stay the same, but the implementation process has to be changed before you can move forward.

Ms. Lovely:

In addition to making changes in goals, you have to change along the way too and adapt.

Mr. Hackworth:

Identifying those community values Mary Helen talked about is important. Every community has different values that are important to them, so if you set benchmarks you've got to be sure that your community's culture will accept those benchmarks and make them work. Not every benchmark will work in every community.

Ed Yager:

I'm a Professor of Government at Western Kentucky University. I think one area that deserves some exploration is university participation in these visioning efforts. I came across an article in *The Wall Street Journal* not long ago where Colgate University in New York was providing an awful lot of technical assistance to small rural communities there in New York. I recently completed a project in which I surveyed university centers across the country and found that close to half of them provided technical assistance for these visioning efforts within their particular regions and faculty are very much involved in identifying trends, doing demographic analysis, and conducting surveys to get community input. Some were even involved in facilitating group discussion and consensus building. I did find a major deficiency, which is follow-up. Not one of the universities surveyed provided any technical assistance for evaluation and monitoring.

Ms. Lovely:

Excellent point. That may be one of our hidden resources out there, the community involvement that our universities do. I know you are very involved in that. Ed and I talk frequently about these kinds of projects. Any other comments, questions? All right, thank you. Yes, John?

Mr. Bowling:

Sylvia, I would just like to say one other thing. I just mentioned one issue that came out of our visioning process. There's probably another, I could name at least four or five, but I don't want to bore you with those, but they came out of the same process. There were many, many of them.

Ms. Lovely:

And I would say these panelists are available if you want to chat with them about something specific that they talked about. I really urge you if you want to find out what's going on out there, contact people who are doing it and have done it successfully. I think that's a lot of it and it's sometimes a lot easier not to reinvent the wheel. Thank you very much. I appreciate your being here today and staying until the end.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Panel Members

Moderator:

Alayne L. White is the Director of the University of Kentucky Institute on Women and Substance Abuse, which she established in 1993. Previously Ms. White was the director of a women's crisis center. She is a member of the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center Board of Directors, External Welfare Reform Advisory Group, Healthy Start/Healthy Families Task Force, and Substance Abuse and Pregnancy Work Group. Ms. White has served as President of the Kentucky Women's Political Caucus since 1996 and was a candidate for Kentucky's House of Representatives in 1992. She is a graduate of Leadership Kentucky and a founding member of the Kentucky Women's Leadership Network. Ms. White holds a BA from Centre College and an MA from the University of Kentucky. She and her husband, Joe, have two sons.

Panelists:

Michael Bransford is a resident of Fulton, Kentucky, and was born in South Fulton, Tennessee. He is married to Carol Bransford and has two children: LaShaun, 15, and Shameka, 9. Mr. Bransford is presently employed at Excel Manufacturing of Kentucky in Fulton. He is a veteran of the U.S. Army and was formerly a police officer for St. Louis, Missouri. Mr. Bransford serves as a member of the Fulton County Quality Community Council and Fulton City's Code Enforcement Council. He also serves as Assistant Sunday School Superintendent.

Brenda Cockerham holds a BS (1981) and an MS (1994) in Vocational Education, specializing in Home Economics, both from the University of Kentucky. She has 2,000 additional hours in three "Gainful Employment" areas. She has worked for the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service for 11 years, two years in Pike County and nine years in Johnson County. Leadership development is a primary function of her role as an extension agent. Ms. Cockerham works with an average of 300 leaders throughout the community on a monthly basis. She has done extensive field work in the areas of community and economic development. One such project was initiated in 1993 when she served as co-chair to a significant visioning project in Johnson County. She served as a leader in the Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Board, Environmental Task Force, Youth and Families Task Force, and as youth superintendent in her own church.

Ron Payne was selected by the City Commission of Owensboro, Kentucky, to hold the office of City Manager. He served as Director of Finance & Administration for the city from September 1993, until taking office as City Manager on February 1, 1997. Previously, Mr. Payne served 14 years with the City of Tulsa, Oklahoma, first as Controller and Deputy City Auditor and eventually as Director of Finance. He was Owensboro's City Auditor from 1975 to 1979 and also worked for the accounting firm of Coopers & Lybrand. Mr. Payne is a certified public accountant. He holds a Bachelor of Science in accounting from Brescia College and a Masters of

Science in accounting from the University of Tulsa. Mr. Payne is a veteran of the U.S. Navy and served in Vietnam. He is a member of the American Institute of CPAs, the Kentucky City Management Association, the Owensboro Rotary, and serves on the Board of Directors of the Owensboro Riverport Authority.

Rona Roberts is Managing Partner of Roberts & Kay, Inc., a firm committed to fostering democratic practices in workplaces and communities. Rona works with clients in three sectors on issues including managing complex public decisionmaking, developing leadership and management capacity in communities and community organizations, and designing, conducting, and analyzing focus group research on public issues. Before founding RKI, she worked as a management consultant, directed the Office of Kentucky Legal Services Programs, and served in the Philippines with the U.S. Peace Corps. Her community affiliations include Actors' Guild of Lexington, Lexington Citizen Summit Steering Committee, and the Museum of Culture and Diversity.

Bob Whitmer graduated in 1975 from Centre College of Kentucky with a BS Degree in Applied Mathematics. He has served in various public and private sector positions, beginning his career as a schoolteacher and football coach at Owensboro High School. From there, he entered the private sector as a Manager at Green River Steel, then worked as the Human Resources Director for David Hocker & Associates, a major shopping center developer headquartered in Owensboro. His current responsibilities include overseeing all city properties and the public works, transportation, and maintenance departments of the City of Owensboro. Bob served as chairperson of the Decision 2002 Committee.

Panel Discussion

How much citizen participation is enough and how it can be effectively marshaled.

Moderator, Alayne L. White:

We're delighted that you're here this afternoon where our distinguished panelists are going to discuss how we involve citizens in our communities. We've been talking all day about civic engagement, engaging our citizens in community decisionmaking processes but we have not talked at length about how we really facilitate our engagement. Rona Roberts has done lots of work locally in Lexington, statewide, and nationally on trying to engage citizens in their community decisionmaking processes. Ron Payne is the City Manager of Owensboro and with him will be Bob Whitmer who chairs their Decision 2002 Committee. Representing opposite ends of our state are Brenda Cockerham from Johnson County and Michael Bransford from Fulton County. So you'll have a fair amount of geographic diversity in our discussion about engaging citizens in our community decisionmaking.

Mr. Payne:

Thank you. What I'd like to do this afternoon is share with you a program that we implemented in the City of Owensboro that was very successful. The major reason it was successful was because of the extensive involvement of our citizens in this program. What the staff of the city did in the first part of this year is propose a list of capital projects that needed to be done in our city. We had just recently elected a completely new City Commission and we

were about to have a new City Manager, and one of the reasons we had that substantial turnover on our City Commission was the feeling by the community of a lack of trust in the city.

There had been some projects that had been done that were not popular in the city. So we were coming in confronted with that attitude on the part of the community, but we did have some serious capital projects, infrastructure projects that needed to be done and that was our challenge to get those done and get the money necessary in order to implement those projects. That was going to entail a tax increase and I can tell you neither those newly elected officials nor I wanted to come on board and propose a tax increase to the public. So we had to convince citizens to impose the tax increase on themselves, and we were very fortunate in being able to do that. They increased our occupational tax, payroll tax, by one third to fund some of those projects. They did not fund all of the projects and that list was scaled back based upon a lot of the public input we received.

Panelists, from the left, are Rona Roberts, Ron Payne, Moderator Alayne White, Michael Bransford, and Brenda Cockerham.

The media was very supportive of our efforts. In fact, we had a massive media campaign in order to do this, held a lot of town hall meetings, and used the Internet. We have a video that summarizes this program that we'd like to share with you. We've also handed out a supplement that was incorporated in our local newspaper describing the projects and all of the town hall meetings that we had and the other input or media that the community could use to provide that input on those projects. So, with that, I'll stop and we can look at this video.

Video:

"Owensboro, Kentucky's 2002 Campaign was an unprecedented example of public involvement in its local government. The purpose of Decision 2002 was to determine through a mail-in ballot campaign whether the voting public would support a five-year occupational tax increase to fund numerous capital projects. Our community can boast that this program was a prime example of straightforward, effective communication between city government and its residents. City employees spent months identifying and explaining the city's most critical capital needs, then the elected officials and city staff listened attentively to what the citizens determined were the city's greatest needs.

From this interaction with the public, a list of projects was formulated and presented to the citizens for a public vote. The theme of the campaign was 'It's your community, it's your money, it's your decision.' A 20-page brochure explaining the projects and associated costs was delivered to all households. Our government access channel was extremely effective like cable casting over 93 hours of programming related to Decision 2002. *The Owensboro Messenger Inquirer* played a key educational role by publishing 38 articles and editorials addressing Decision 2002.

The public in turn responded overwhelmingly. Through several avenues, the public ultimately decided what projects were most needed. The public became involved by attending the town meetings you are witnessing; 979 surveys were returned, 74 calls were received on a special phone line, 29 messages were sent over the Internet or faxed to special Decision 2002 addresses. The following portion of the video presentation was aired over the local government access channel more than 100 times to explain Decision 2002 and the mail-in ballot process.

'On April 16th, ballots will be mailed to every registered voter living in the city of Owensboro. Your city of Owensboro elected officials wish to hear whether you want to fund projects which city staff recommended and the public generally supported during public meetings conducted during the month of March throughout Owensboro. The mail-in ballot was chosen because it is the simplest way for as many citizens as possible to voice their opinion. Your elected officials encourage you to participate in your local government by returning your ballot.

On this ballot are two questions you must answer. The outcome of this ballot will determine the amount of your occupational tax over the next five years. The increase will begin July 1, 1997, and end on June 30, 2002, as prescribed by law. The tax will end in five years. Question 1 includes the following projects: storm water, police headquarters building, two pumpers, two 100-foot aerial trucks, new East Side Fire Station, Elizabeth Monday Center renovation, move Fire Station 4 southwest, Sharme Road widening, Frederica to South Ripeth, J.R. Miller Boulevard Extension engineering and right-of-way. The total cost for these projects is $13,472,000. By voting yes, you agree to all the projects in this question only. Taxes will be raised from 1 percent to 1.33 percent. On an annual salary of $20,000, the current weekly tax is $3.85; a yes vote on Question 1 will increase your weekly tax to $5.16, an increase of $1.31.

Question 2 includes the following projects: Sports Center Phase Two, Byers Avenue Bridge, local match for eight buses, ice arena. The total cost for these projects is $6,873,640. By voting yes for this question, you agree to the projects in this question only. Your occupational tax will increase from 1 percent to 1.17 percent. On an annual salary of $20,000, your weekly tax will go from $3.85 to $4.50 per week, an increase of $.65 per week for projects in Question 2. If you vote yes to both questions, that means you believe all the projects on this ballot should be accomplished over the next five years. Your occupational tax will increase from 1 percent to 1.5 percent. On an annual salary of $20,000, your tax will increase from $3.85 per week to $5.77 per week, an increase of $1.92 per week.

You can vote no to either question or to both questions, but you must vote if you want your voice heard. If you vote no on both questions, you are voting that none of the projects should be funded. A majority of the ballots returned will determine what projects will be funded and how much of an occupational tax increase there will be. Ballots must be postmarked by April 30th. Please use the prepaid envelope when returning your ballot. The independent auditing firm of York, Neal, and Co. will count the ballots.

If you are not a registered voter, you may register at the Davis County Clerk's Office located at the Courthouse. Bring proof from the County Clerk with you to the front desk at City Hall, showing you as a registered voter, and you will receive a ballot. Your signature on the ballot must match exactly the name on the ballot. The ballot will not be counted if the envelope is not signed. Place your voted ballot in the ballot secrecy envelope and seal the envelope. Place the sealed secrecy envelope in the return envelope and seal the return envelope. Mail the signed and sealed return envelope as soon as possible. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please call 687-2002. Please take advantage of this convenient opportunity to inform the people who represent you. Remember, it is your community, your money, your decision.'"

Mr. Payne:

I might point out to you that first question passed by 53 percent and the second question failed. As we went through the process of holding those town hall meetings and all the input from almost 1,000 surveys that we received at City Hall from the citizens, they indicated that they pretty much wanted us to do the basic infrastructure projects and the park projects and some other things could wait. So the community turned down that Question No. 2 and only approved Question No. 1. But we did have quite a bit of media coverage in regards to this program, as you

saw by all the articles that were included in our local newspaper and that supplement that you have out there. We had a good turnout as far as the ballots go.

I didn't realize when we first got into this that we could not hold a legal ballot in Kentucky in regards to this issue, but we didn't let that stop us. We modeled our mail-in ballot after the state of Oregon. We contacted them and got all the information on how they conducted theirs and it probably turned out for the best because our citizens could sit in their kitchens and go down through that list and talk over those projects. I think it probably worked out to our advantage to be able to do that. But we did have a lot of involvement in our community through those town hall meeting surveys, and it's probably one of the reasons that it passed.

Another was that we had a good list of projects. We were able to take our community to those projects, and I think that was very important that we got inside our police facility and showed them the condition of the building through video. They weren't going to come downtown and look, but by using our cable channel, they were able to see the condition of that facility. And we were overwhelmed by the support we got from the community to replace that building. The same thing applied to a lot of our drainage projects. We took them out into the backyards of various citizens that were having substantial problems, and I think that all worked very well and we were successful in getting $13 million worth of projects funded.

Ms. White:

Thank you, Ron. Bob, as Chair of that, is there anything you would like to add?

Mr. Whitmer:

Not right now.

Ms. White:

All right. I think we'll go over to the other side of the state and hear from Brenda, representing Johnson County and the efforts that they've made in Johnson County in engaging citizens.

Ms. Cockerham:

I guess I would like to be able to ask some questions of Mr. Payne. One thing that I want to compliment you on is this wonderful marketing tool. But I want to get personal for a second and there's a reason for this. What is the population of Owensboro?

Mr. Payne:

54,000.

Ms. Cockerham:

54,000. What would you say the standard income is, your standard income base?

Mr. Payne:

Median income? I would say in the low $20s.

Ms. Cockerham:

You're referring to just the city or is that the county. What's the county population as well?

Mr. Payne:

90.

Ms. Cockerham:

A population of 90,000. This is a personal question. Did you get paid extra to do this, or was it a part of your job to see this through as City Manager?

Mr. Payne:

It was part of my job as City Manager to see this through.

Ms. Cockerham:

Thank you. You did a good job by the way. I wanted to go over some of those demographics to make a point. I'm a county extension agent; I work for the University of Kentucky. You've been hearing from Extension all day long. Every county in the state of Kentucky has this service available to them. In Johnson County several years ago, people came together to serve as the catalyst for community change. Leaders from the Chamber of Commerce, Main Street, and tourism pulled themselves and 60 other active members of the community together and said, "We're tired of having to do all this work ourselves, and we want to know how to branch out and pull in new people and new ideas." They were seeking some solutions.

I was in the audience at the time and shared with them information about the availability of our specialists in Community Development, Dr. Lori Garkovich and Dr. Ron Hustedde, whom you heard speak earlier this morning. They are two out of a team of state specialists that everybody in this room has access to.

The 60 people there said they wanted to do planning and other things, but said they didn't have the money; this process is usually expensive and we don't have a city planner. Our total population is 25,000, and our median income is around $15,000. The community was facing many challenges. Even if they had chosen to levy a tax, they couldn't really access any new dollars.

What do you do in a situation like that? In East Kentucky we're plagued with this sort of thing. On this particular occasion I called the specialists to confer with them as to the possibilities of the group's request. I shared with the group that Extension has these resources available to them, and that I would be glad to contact the specialists to come and talk further about it. I communicated this to the leaders of the community, and we held a second meeting.

At that meeting, after going over all the possibilities and the potential commitments, the specialists laid out a plan. This was not going to be a one-day deal. This was going to be a long-term commitment. They said we were going to have to roll up our sleeves and put some energy into it ourselves. If there were at least 10 people willing to stick with the project to see it through, and be willing to work with the specialists to make that happen, then they would help us. There were 30 willing leaders, if I remember correctly. These 30 people became a core group that were basically a steering committee that led the rest of the activities.

To make a long story short, there were 50 facilitators trained who were laymen from all over the community. These leaders dispersed throughout the community. This was a difference between our program and others. Our topic today is "How do you get them involved" and the answer is "We went to them." We figured out who we wanted to be involved (and we wanted everybody) but the easiest way to get them involved was to target groups that were already there. So that's where the 4-H groups, the homemaker clubs, the Kiwanis and Rotary, school groups, and PTOs came in. We made a list of them, divvied out the work, and everybody went in different directions, holding forums that covered the entire county.

We had a specific time frame and became trained as facilitators. Some think facilitation is not important, but it is. Just last week I was using the skills I learned there. I reflected on several years when I first used these skills. If I want quiet people and very vocal people in the group to be able to participate equally, I have to use facilitation skills. I have to know how to calm those

people who have the axe to grind or who come in with an agenda, and be able to pull and solicit from those who are timid, as well. Sometimes those who are quietest have some of the best ideas. I have to be able to pull all that together and then use the tool of democracy to prioritize and make sense out of it all. I can't do everything, at least not at once, but using these tools helps me accomplish goals. I use them every day.

As an Extension agent I could look at the demographics in any county, scan the county situation as a professional, and within two hours could project things what needed to be done. Anyone can. But that's not what all of this is about. It's about a process, and about ownership, and about people having a voice and getting to choose what happens to them. Somebody said, "It's a journey," and that's more to the point. It's not necessarily the end result. The end result and the indicators and all those things that we've been talking about are important too. But the process is people development. You can call that whatever you want to—human capital development, leadership development, and so forth-–but it is people gaining skills to address emerging issues and solve problems.

But the process is people development. You can call that whatever you want to—human capital development, leadership development, and so forth-–but it is people gaining skills to address emerging issues and solve problems.

Try to think about this. I am a home economist. Think! What is a traditional mode for home economists? You don't have to say it, people think of cookie baking, a Betty Crocker sort of thing in the kitchen, right? Well, I am a home economist, a female in Eastern Kentucky. Now exactly what am I going to do about any of these nontraditional topics such as job creation, environmental issues, preserving heritage? This is a kind of a paradigm, "thinking in the box" that we have to break away from if we are to make progress because anybody can be a problem solver.

All Extension is run by council. We do this sort of thing routinely because it's our mandate to be "grassroots" and to listen to our people. (And if you're not on a council, you need to get on an Extension council, by the way.) Ten years ago I would have looked around at my council meeting and I would have seen a group of wonderful women that I would have used to guide my programming. Last week when I had a council meeting I looked around and there were half male and half female, young, old, wealthy, impoverished, representing different parts of the county, all sitting there voicing their opinion equally. We made a democratic choice about the future, 1998's programming mission. The top three categories were 1) the environment, 2) a teen center, and 3) an incubator for small business developments.

Johnson County Visions helped the Home Economics Program become much more diversified in project planning as well as leadership diversity. Throughout all the "Johnson County Visions Project" we had 500 people participate in this process and we had zero funding to work with. Everything was volunteer. I went through a list of indicators about three years ago, and did an analysis of what we accomplished. It looked good *then*, particularly because we accomplished so many things without financial support. Until I received a call to do this program, I hadn't really thought about current progress because "Johnson County Visions" steering group had disbanded. The team players are still playing, but not in that capacity and not with that title. I took a look at the project again, and was astounded. Why? Because we had completed 95 percent of the goals that were projected in the original vision that was created several years ago. We did not achieve this by working under that same hat. The priorities we set and the vision that we created became so ingrained in all of us that we all continued working on those goals and objectives almost subconsciously. A truly diversified council, it seems by nature to put you on the cutting edge. If we took this group that is here today and had a roundtable discussion about the issues in the state of Kentucky, we would come up with the top issues that

needed to be addressed in this state. It's just a natural sort of thing. In JCV, goals as simple as a Teen Dance to as challenging as the development of the Secondary Wood Industry, were projected and *were achieved*.

(I personally think good councils are what have kept Extension so effective for 85-90 years.) If planning ends up just a plan gathering dust on the shelf, it means nothing. You have to roll up your sleeves and do something about the vision. We had working committees addressing short-term issues and the long-term ones. The long-term ones were the ones that just stayed implanted in many of our minds. I went through the list of that original core group of 30 and contacted 17 of them that are still there in Johnson County, and sent this analysis back to them to celebrate. My cover letter was "look what we did!" That was kind of neat. Approximately 25 major goals were completed!

A depressing phone call that I received after that was, "And it's time to do it again!" It was depressing only because this is a very cumbersome, difficult challenge, and I don't think one needs to do it all the time. You could do it in a smaller scale annually but a large effort every four or five years is probably sufficient. It has taken us six years to accomplish some of those big goals. It is time now to go back into the system and really pull a large group of citizens together to keep some new people at the table, and give them a chance to get involved. One of the most common comments that I heard throughout the JCV project was, "We don't get a chance to participate in any community development or community involvement." The teachers, for example, work every day. They don't have the opportunity to go anywhere. People get into their little niches in their community and can't break out of them. If one works, they know they have little time to do anything but their job and basic home and family maintenance. Reaching the people, consequently, takes work and "know how."

So, that's pretty much in a nutshell what happened in Johnson County. I'm very honored to be here and I'm obviously very biased about the thought that people have the right to control their own destinies. Sometimes we need to intervene to help make that happen. The one area we had difficulty in was politics. We had a political area that was identified as a problem. We needed better communication, a better system of political people communicating and working with the local people, and a bridge instead of "We've got the money, the power, you don't, so we'll make the decisions and you just have to live by them" attitude. This issue was addressed, and the current administration was very supportive of the project and plan of action, however, the officials we worked with were replaced by newly elected officials. They weren't tuned into the system that we had established, that we'd worked four years for, and so we lost that; we lost that link and it needed to be generated again. (So, I wanted to go to the other session that's occurring right now about how do you create that sustainability, particularly as it relates to politics because it's so volatile.)

The most important thing is persistence, and it has to come from your heart. I think that's why grassroots projects work. People are coming to the table because they care or they wouldn't take the time to be there. They have to believe coming will really make a difference or they wouldn't participate. Thank you.

Ms. White:

Thank you, Brenda. Michael, why don't you take us to the other side of the state? Over in Fulton County. And I believe you are going to talk to us about your experience as a citizen being involved in your community from a little bit different role. Not that we're not all citizens.

Mr. Bransford:

Well, first of all, I would like to say I just thank God and each individual community citizen that asked me to come because I don't get paid for any of this. But I was coming to say how

much citizen participation is enough and oftentimes you use a phrase that Popeye says, "I stood all I could stands and I can't stands no more." But if we begin to speak up for citizen participation, we can't say that about citizen participation because we'll never have enough help, especially coming from Fulton, which is a small town in southern Kentucky. We just don't have as many people, so many times we find ourselves working in a dual capacity, trying to get everybody involved.

I want Rita Mitchell and Tom Forsythe to know that I'm thankful for how they didn't overlook anybody, because I'm a factory worker; they came and asked me to come. I got involved in community affairs, went through the leadership course in the Twin Cities and the Mayor appointed me to the Code Enforcement Board. I'm saying all this to let you know that it takes everyone working within the community to make the community.

We can't leave anybody out. Many times those sitting at home may feel that they just don't have anything to say, but they are willing and concerned. When you're concerned, concern will bring about action.

Holding this meeting in Somerset, rather than Lexington, Frankfort, or Louisville, is getting everybody involved and I feel if we all would get involved within a community, we'll make it a much better place. We can't leave anybody out. Many times those sitting at home may feel that they just don't have anything to say, but they are willing and concerned. When you're concerned, concern will bring about action.

I had the opportunity to move away from Fulton, but once I moved back from St. Louis I got involved with the community. Commissioner Benny Garden got me involved, going around asking people to vote, doing different things, and once he instilled that in me, it just continues to go on and on. That's how you get people involved because many of us may pass on from the scene. We don't know how long we'll be here, but we've got to instill the ideals and put the action into someone else.

Fulton City went to TVA and TVA was the facilitator of the electronic town meetings. We came together and didn't leave anybody out. We got a factory worker, preachers, doctors, lawyers, and everybody came together to see where we want our city to be 10 years from now. We didn't even leave the children out. Everybody has to be involved. Where do we want to be 10 years from now? Now nobody can say that they weren't told or given the opportunity to get involved because many times people will use that as a scapegoat. The folks at City Hall, and then some African-Americans say "those 'white folks' didn't help me get involved," but as we get everybody involved, it eliminates statements like that. They can't say they didn't get everybody involved but we put it on the cable network, the radio, and spread the news by word of mouth, because we know an individual that maybe someone else does not know who has concerns. So we, individually, went out, because somebody might miss it being televised or on the radio, but they couldn't use that as an excuse since many went to them personally.

So we got everybody involved and then they asked, "When we get the citizens involved in the progress, how do we keep this, how do we keep it going?" Sometimes we have to, because I know, once I got involved, I got to a point where I was before. Rita, Mr. Childress, and Billie Sebastian called me. But I was wondering how was I going to come here because I'm working like 60 hours, 12 hours a day, and it's difficult and tiresome, but, like I said, concern motivates action and they saw fit to call. Sometimes we just have to take time out to call. We may not, we may see a person that's not active, but there may be a good reason. I was tired. But I got a phone call; they were persistent and it takes people like that, to be persistent. Even when Rita came to pick me up at the house, I still wasn't ready; she had to leave and call and come back, but that was persistence and that's telling me that I have to pass on what someone did for me. Now I'm in the place where I'm at and I'm thankful to be here, I have to pass it on. I have to go to those that I

see that may be willing to do the same things that I've done and take the time and just call them and say, "Why don't you just come with me?" I want you to do this, and I want you to do that, and once they get involved, hopefully, it'll spark something within them to continue on. So, once again, I just want to say that I'm thankful to be here.

Ms. White:

We're glad you're here, too. Not too tired. Rona, I'm going to turn this over to you and let you talk about, from your perspective, engaging folks. I know you've done this work for years and years and years.

Ms. Roberts:

I want to talk about democracy for a minute and I couldn't do that with a straight face while I was sitting up on the podium kind of looking down on the floor. Democracy is behind the idea and the question of citizen participation or what I want to talk about really, which I call citizen engagement. Democracy is the ground that we are sitting on here. Did anyone have to get a travel permit to cross municipal boundaries and get here today?

Somebody had to get one from the authorities or from your boss. I'm talking about, did you have to get authorization from authorities to travel. Did we have to get permission to have freedom to assemble? I don't think so. We take for granted that we start in a context of democracy. Vaclav Havel came here a few years ago and made a remarkable speech in which he said to us in the United States that we have the longest running experiment with democracy, more than 200 years now, and yet we too are only approaching democracy, and that we'll be continuing to approach democracy, trying to get closer and closer, because it's an ideal.

I brought with me a little handout that has four examples of kinds of engagement that citizens are doing. That does not relate directly to government; it goes back to the idea that in a democracy we have an inalienable right to be self-governing and we create those apparatuses that we call government as just one little piece of the ways that we do our self governance. But there are many other ways as well.

There are things that people do outside government completely and things that people do where they engage government as partners, for example, our institutions and our schools, where we move ourselves away from that idea that is very popular right now, that it's our job as citizens to be the board. We sit around and figure out what our government ought to do for us and we tell them and they go do those things. So I've brought you examples that are different from that. This is where people have gathered themselves together to work in different ways from that particular way.

Our experiment with democracy is a really important one in the states. I just came back from a week in Colorado where I was a coach to 200 emerging leaders from midsized cities around the country. I got a really different view, a more important view than I'd had before, from looking at a group of people about what it is that we have to do when we engage with each other. These 200 people were carefully selected in competitive processes by their communities. A thumbnail sketch shows that more than half of them were people of color, less than half of them were male; there was a healthy contingent of people under 25, and a healthy contingent of people over 65.

When I looked out on the room, it didn't look like this room. It looked like the future of the United States. The challenge is for us to learn in our engagement practices how we deal with and capitalize on the diverse experiences that people bring to the table when they have not been at the table before.

Democratic practice is the thing that gets me excited. We used to talk about citizen involvement when government would host hearings and task forces and try to involve citizens. Now we talk a little bit about citizen participation and you're sitting here being citizens who are

participating. You are participating in learning more about self-governance and how to do that, but I wanted you to have just a minute to go a step forward into what I think of as citizen engagement, things we can do ourselves. To do that I'd like to ask you to stand up for a minute, look around and see someone you have not shaken hands with yet, shake hands with them, and thank them for being here today and doing this work. Right now, please.

I want to thank you all for doing that. Does engagement feel different from involvement? If you stand up and put yourself out to do something, you feel that you have done something that's a little different from passively receiving or passively participating. The four examples that I've got are engagement examples. They are written up in this handout and there's also contact information so I'm not going to go into great detail. I've participated in some way in all four of them. Two are local examples, local to Lexington; one is a state example; one is a national and international example.

How do we marshal the energy to get started? One of these examples, Speak Out Lexington, was begun by a mayor; one was begun by a group of citizens with no funding; one was begun by a nonprofit organization; and one was begun by an individual. So, wherever you are, whatever you're connected to, or even if you're not connected at the moment, you still are full of potential to create these kinds of opportunities.

> *The challenge is for us to learn in our engagement practices how we deal with and capitalize on the diverse experiences that people bring to the table when they have not been at the table before.*

Speak Out Lexington is the first example. It's an annual public conversation in Lexington. The government spends about $20,000 and some staff helps to make it happen and hundreds and hundreds of citizens pull it off with their volunteer labor. It has facilitated all of the things that Brenda was referring to and it has been going for six years. That's the first example.

The second example is the Lexington Citizens Summit, pulled together by a group of private citizens who wanted to add to the spectrum of citizen engagement in Lexington. It is an annual two-day event and usually about 100 people participate. The purpose of the Lexington Citizens Summit is to convene, connect, and serve as a catalyst for people interested in community building and particularly for healing racial and other divisions in our community. It's a great opportunity to have in-depth, frank conversations. That's its hallmark. It's also been the launch pad for several permanent new features in our community. I'll just mention one. We are in the process of developing in Lexington for the downtown the Museum of Culture and Diversity, which will be regionally known. It may take as many as five or seven years to get the thing actually up and running. Museums have a long start-up, but it will be an attraction that we believe will pull people off interstates and bring them to Kentucky. You're going to want to see it and you're going to send people there, too.

The third example, Parents and Teachers Talking Together, is sponsored by the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence. Cindy is here, the Associate Executive Director, and about 4,000 people in the state have done this now in more than 300 groups. Parents and teachers related to one school system or one school get together for four hours plus some breaks and meals and have a structured, facilitated conversation about the thing they care most about in common, the students in that school.

The fourth example is about study circles. There are study circles that go on annually in Lexington and I imagine there are in other communities. These are small groups of people who gather to talk about a public issue that they care about and usually they do it five times—once a week for five weeks. The idea came from Scandinavia, I think because it's dark and dreary in the winter and people want to hang out together, but they have a statistic from Scandinavia that at any one given time, about 50 percent of the people in that population are engaged in a study

circle. There's now a national backup center for study circle work in our country in Pomfret, Connecticut. It's called Study Circles Resource Center and they are helping all of us cultivate that same habit. It's fun and a good way to spend five nights in the winter for sure. I brought a lot of study circles' material. You can take individual pieces if you're interested in it.

The last thing I would say is I wanted to speak about varieties of ways for citizens to take charge, address things, and fix things. Nine or ten years ago, I had the opportunity to do a study for the Kentucky Center for Public Issues about the condition of democracy in Kentucky, and the places ranged from Paducah to Prestonsburg. What we learned is what everybody learns and has been learning since then: when you ask people how democracy is faring, it's doing pretty well if we're talking about my neighborhood or my community or people I am connected with, people I've shaken hands with, that I can engage with. It seems that our thoughts and our assessments of democracy get worse the further away from us the seat of power is. So, the strategies, or whatever, that I've brought are all about making progress close to home, in your neighborhood, in your community, and in your workplace. Thanks.

Questions, Answers, and Comments

Ms. White:

I think what we have here is a panel rich in experience and, according to my watch, we have 14 minutes before you are officially out of here. I would like to take this opportunity to open the floor for questions to our panelists. Again, there is a wealth of experience represented here and I know many of you have experiences you may want to share. We would welcome that also. So, are there questions or sharing that you would like to participate in?

John Cannon:

My name is John Cannon. I'm Editorial Page Editor of *The Independent* in Ashland and we've not had a lot of formal citizen involvement. But what we have had, a lot of times it seems when citizens get involved in government, it is against something. A few years ago we ran one of my favorite Letters to the Editor from a guy who said he was forming a coalition called CAVE, Citizens Against Virtually Everything. One of the things I was interested in today was how Simpson County changed the negative into a positive and how do you get past the point where citizens tell you what they're against to what they say they're for.

Mr. Bransford:

I would like to attempt to answer that, to shed some light on that. When I came home to Fulton, one of the issues that I was concerned with was a basketball court. It was smooth concrete and every time a little bit of dust would get on there, you would be in danger of slipping and falling and hurting yourself. I was a basketball player, so that's how I made my first City Commission meeting. I wanted to tell them they were going to have to do something about that basketball court. But I didn't know all these people who were on the City Commission. For one, I didn't know Benny Gardner, an elder at our church. The Mayor then was Coach Bill Bondurant, who coached me in high school, and Elaine Foster, who is our Mayor now, was a City Commissioner. I went down there because I had a concern, but those who knew me personally knew I wasn't a negative or one that would always gripe, but I had a reasonable concern. They would channel that in a positive way. They could get me involved and used me as an extra body. We all need numbers and that's what happened. So as we see those that may come with a gripe or

a concern, get them involved in something for the entire community. That one instance may cause them to get involved. Don't turn them away.

Audience Member:

I might share, too, that as we went through our program, one of the things to avoid is an "us-against-them" situation—citizens vs. City Hall. You do see more of what you're referring to—people coming to City Hall usually because they have a problem or they are against something. As we went through our program, our motto was that it's your community, not ours. We have these needs, basically because you've expressed concern. The storm water problem was a major problem in Owensboro and has been for years. In fact, they tried 10-15 years ago to pass a major bond issue to take care of it and it failed. We basically had our engineers go to these Town Hall meetings, point out what the problems and the solutions were, and then sit down. If you want to put up with this as a citizen, that's fine. We're telling you what we think is a solution but we're not going to impose that on you. We saw a lot of interaction among citizens. We tried to stay out of a lot of these issues and let the citizens talk to each other. That worked real well.

Audience Member:

There's a contribution that I could make toward that end as well. Several years ago, when we were setting these objectives, one of the things we didn't have was a recycling center, and so that served as being one of the main objectives they wanted to achieve. We got a recycling center. For various reasons, which I don't fully understand, we have lost our recycling center and it's all cropping up again. I go to homemakers meetings routinely and I get phone calls from people throughout the county who are griping about this. Why aren't they recycling? Why are they encouraging the children to recycle when there is no place to recycle? They levied an increase in payment for trash and garbage pickup and that money was earmarked for recycling, so what's happening to that money? These are very legitimate questions.

There's a way to handle that and that's a teaching process as well. We teach our children when they're angry, don't hit. So to our adults we say when they're angry and have an issue, bring it to the table in the right way. Let's pull everybody together. Right at this moment we are pulling these people together and we're going to go through the same process, brainstorming. What are the problems? What are some potential solutions? What's a plan of action? That will be the next step.

I really take pleasure in handling the gripers. I know we have millions of things that we need to address, millions of problems and millions of solutions, but I cannot stand a griper. So when I'm in a group and that starts, I say, "We're forming a committee on that and would you like to be on it?" Watch them; they drop like flies. "No, I didn't really want to be involved." They need to have the opportunity to be involved. That's our responsibility as leaders in the community. You need to be proactive and bring facts and education to the table. You need to outline the situation and know what you're talking about. Create a situation where you present that information, invite everyone, use the media to alert everyone that this is an opportunity, and put the situation right back on their platter. Agree that we are willing to work together as a team to solve this problem, but it's our problem, not mine, not yours, but ours.

Ms. White:

Any comments?

Audience Member:

In reflecting upon my involvement with grassroots citizen action, and after hearing the panelists, it struck me that when citizens come together for the common good or for common

agendas, there's a spiritual side of that. There's a side that suggests that the human nature of ourselves in terms of connecting with another oftentimes is a disconnect between our involvement in grassroots' organizations and the spiritual side of our communities and ourselves. I have encountered some difficulty in trying to bridge that gap in some of the projects I worked on, specifically in trying to get church and clergy involved. When you talk about rallying someone around certain moral principles and so forth, sometimes that attracts people, but we also know that that repels people.

Often today there's such a great divide between church and state and that doesn't even enter into our dialogue often. It seems to me that there's a power that is not being connected into in terms of the specific and spiritual side of ourselves. My specific question is: have any of the panelists had any experience in terms of trying to involve the religious community or churches in a nondenominational or interdenominational or ecumenical way in helping a community agenda without getting caught up into the separation of church and state type issues?

Ms. Roberts:

You're right on the cutting edge. There's so much going on right now about getting faith organizations more equipped to do the kind of work that, it looks like from the outside, they ought to be able to do. There's a whole lot of leadership going on and some of our cities have networks now building. An experience in Lexington is a group of downtown churches formed the Downtown Christian Unity Task Force. They did a democratic process and met with their congregations and did the connecting piece. They got to know each other and they said what matters most to them was that they work on projects together, which they'd never done before.

They came up with three top priorities. One of those was racial divisions and the group of people from the different churches that took on that charge found out about this National Studies Circle's work that has a guide for facilitating conversation—five sessions called "Can't We All Just Get Along?" They have sponsored probably 30 or 40 of these study circles now in the last three years and are continuing. They're beginning now to see ways to build on that work. The study circles are thinking and talking together—coming to judgment together is what Daniel Yankelovich calls it—instead of having a knee jerk opinion about something. When you talk with other people and you hear what their lives and experiences are, then you become more able to make a really informed judgment. They're getting to that stage where they're thinking about other forms of action.

The job of a man in Indiana on the staff of Purdue University is to work with faith organizations and to help them learn to essentially address social and civic needs in the communities that they serve. I heard him speak fairly recently. One of the things he said was that when a community is getting started, they have the best luck usually in smaller organizations, the smaller churches, temples, synagogues, or mosques, and not the mainline most established ones. They are like ocean liners; it's pretty hard to get them to reorganize and reorient. It takes more commitment and a longer period of advocacy, but his advice was to look for the more flexible, smaller congregations and to build from them and to build connections among them.

Audience Member:

What was the response on that ballot initiative in Owensboro?

Mr. Payne:

It was 53 percent who voted yes; 47 percent voted no.

Audience Member:

Was the population registered voters, households, or all citizens?

Mr. Payne:

We sent the ballot to every registered voter in Owensboro. For those who were not registered, we encouraged them, as you saw on that video, to register at that time and we made that a very easy process and we had a lot of people register.

Audience Member:

So you think it was a better way to get input than through the standard old ballot box type of referendum at a voting booth?

Mr. Payne:

The people in Oregon had a much greater turnout through this ballot process than they did at their polls. They've actually converted to the mail-in ballot for everything, including their national elections. I think probably we saw a greater involvement and more ballots returned that way than we would have if people had gone out to the polls. Oregon has experienced this over a long period of time and their participation has jumped from 28 percent to 56 percent.

Audience Member:

Do you know if there are any demographic groups that were underrepresented through that mechanism?

Mr. Payne:

In the balloting process?

Audience Member:

No more than what would normally be underrepresented.

Mr. Payne:

We mailed a ballot to every registered voter in the city.

Audience Member:

I'm not sure you didn't have a better representation of a lot of different groups in the town because it was so easy.

Ms. White:

I'd like to bring this to a close for the afternoon and Brenda, Michael, Ron, Rona, and Bob, I would like to thank you for being with us today. And, on behalf of the Long-Term Policy Research Center and the Commonwealth, I'd like to thank all of you for being with us today at this wonderful conference. I want to charge you to go forth and do well and engage citizens in your community and renew yourselves in your endeavors. And thank you very much for being with us. Good afternoon.