



The PARTNERSHIP for REGIONAL SOLUTIONS Center

“Your Bridge to Innovative Outcomes”



Transformative Times

A Monthly E-News Focusing on Economic Transformation

Regional Leaders Discuss What Economic Transformation Means to Our Region

What is economic transformation and why is it important to our region? The PRSC asked some of our regional leaders this very questions, here is what they have to say:

Jim Gartin, President & CEO Lenawee Economic Development Corporation

The bottom line is this, we as a Community/Region need to perform a self analysis and determine our weak and strong points and redefine who we are and what we want to become to sear in the New Economy. The new region will have many components of the old but even those sectors will need to be transitioned into a new way of doing things. The real challenge will be to define what are the next steps, what will be the new industry sectors and establishing collaboration between many public/private sectors. Schools will have to collaborate, merge and totally refocus to Math, Science curriculum to provide the workforce of today and tomorrow.

Governments at all levels will have to collaborate and break out of the current political

dead-lock and start caring about their constituents versus political ideology.

Businesses will need to redefine who they are and get out of their comfort zones, take risks and diversify. The global markets of the future will be transforming at an alarming rate and only those industries and businesses capable of moving with them will survive.

“A thorough or dramatic change in form or appearance: it’s landscape has undergone a radical transformation”. To accomplish this we will all need to be thoughtful, collaborative and most importantly, unwavering in our commitment to see it to it’s ultimate conclusion. If the transformation does not occur our communities, the region and state will sink deeper into the financial morass that has gripped us for the last three years, ultimately leading to increased population flight, lower property values, reduced quality of living/services and the deterioration of the overall fabric of our community.

The PRSC will collaboratively develop and advance the transformation agenda for the region.

Adopted February 2010 by regional leadership representing education, workforce development, economic development, local government and the private sector as members of the PRSC's Oversight Committee.

The Partnership for Regional Solutions Center (PRSC) exists to provide solutions to the economic challenges of the region. It does so by providing a venue to which individuals, organizations or businesses can bring their issues and concerns. The PRSC then draws upon the expertise and resources of its partners to deliver solutions. As more and more challenges are resolved, obstacles to growth are diminished and the region will benefit. The PRSC and its partners are invested, engaged, accountable and committed to the region.

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Mindy Bradish-Orta, President & CEO, Jackson Chamber of Commerce

When I was a kid, I went on a school bus trip to Canada. As we crossed into Canada, my friend remarked with no little surprise, “It’s not pink. It’s pink on the map.”


Obviously, as adults, we understand that lines and color shading on maps does not mean that the topography and atmosphere change when one enters a different municipality. So, why is that we still use those lines to dictate how and where we do business and who we work with?

In order for there to be true economic transformation of our region, we must act as a region, ignoring borders and boundaries. We must engage all entities within the larger area we wish to improve. In order to that, we cannot limit our actions to a specific municipality, organization or industry. We need to stop saying “that’s not my job” and just get the job done. If we pull together the experts in all economic development areas, from education and workforce

development to community development and quality of life, the collective wisdom and energy will move us all forward.

Also, we must realize that what benefits our neighboring community will most likely benefit us. We need to look at the picture as a whole if we want to see real economic growth and improvement because we live in a “global” world. The people we are trying to attract as our future business owners, workforce and visitors don’t care, and sometimes don’t even know, when they cross a border. They only know when they’ve found a place that meets their needs and desires.

By working together, we can provide our current and future residents and businesses with a business-friendly environment that has a great quality of life and a memorable and wonderful experience.



Daniel J. Phelan, President, Jackson Community College

Economic transformation is vital for our region to keep in step with the workplace of the future, to provide jobs for our population and not only maintain but improve the standard of living Michigan expects.

Transformation is a big word that means, basically, change. Education will be at the forefront of the transformation. Education is all about change, and it is essential to transforming one’s opportunities and earning potential. We need to continue to stress the importance of higher education to prepare students for the careers of tomorrow, ones that will provide a living wage. Young people today need to realize that a high school diploma most likely won’t lead to the job opportunities and lifestyle they may expect, and that some higher education – community college, four-year college or university, or a trade program – is necessary.

Job creation will help to put people to work, and assessing where the region is and what those jobs are forecast to be will be a continuing process. We know that alternative energy and clean energy will be important fields of the future, and JCC is preparing programs in sustainability and alternative energy currently to help meet those needs. As the population ages, careers in health care will increase to

meet the demand. JCC has and continues to expand its facilities to meet the growing demand for health, with renovations and expansion of Justin Whiting Hall continuing on campus.

JCC is working together with Jackson County’s other institutions of higher education – Baker College and Spring Arbor University – to promote the value of a college education in the community. The Jackson County Higher Education Alliance hosted a math summit last summer and is planning another this summer to discuss the growing challenges of high school graduates coming unprepared for college-level work. These efforts will continue with future summits, examining reading and writing as well as mathematics.

Navigating the economic transformation ultimately calls for this cooperation from all segments of our society. We must work together to bring about changes for the good of all.

K. Scott Fleming, CEcD, The Enterprise Group

Our region/communities need to do a self-analysis and determine what our new economy portfolio needs to have in order to sustain our future economic prosperity. Our government body also needs to go through the same metamorphosis to change the way they work with local businesses.

We are currently seeing this transformation in our current economy as businesses diversify from the auto industry to other industries, such as medical devices, bio-mass, alternative energy, and other types of advanced manufacturing. Government is also showing change, as well, by downsizing departments and embracing shared services with other governments (i.e. Police, fire, planning, and IT services).

In summary, economic transformation needs to occur in order for our communities, region, and state to survive and prosper in the current

Christine Quinn, President, South Central Michigan Works!

Our focus is on ensuring that the South Central Michigan region develops and sustains prosperity based on strong employers with a supply of competent and skilled workers.

We are convinced that the era of traditional economic cycles in Michigan is a thing of the past. Mapping our assets sets us upon a road of understanding what we have, what we don't have and what we will need for the future in service to our people.

We believe that building a strong workforce and helping retain and grow our employer base serves all the people of our region by building a sustainable economic base.

We have created a **Partnership for Regional Solutions** (PRS), a think tank that is focusing on creating solutions for our region. The goal is to provide our business, education, economic development, and nonprofit sectors a place to bring problems or opportunities that cannot be solved by one segment within our region, but that can be solved by interdisciplinary teamwork. No other rural community has developed an organizational resource that parallels this effort. We believe that our region must be able to forecast what challenges and opportunities are coming, and then design our future instead of reacting to economic and social change. We believe our region was unprepared for the economic tsunami that we have faced recently, and that we must be proactive in our regional strategies, asset sharing, policies and programs.

recession. And also be prepared to weather another economic storm. Marshalling our resources and directing them toward re-structuring the way business is being done in the new knowledge-based economy is essential to fostering growth.



Through the PRS we are now building a regional capability to take regional, state, and national forecasts and meld this information into meaningful data to predict our economic future. While accomplishing this goal we are also developing a repository of data for our region so that information, data, and ideas can be captured and shared with people and organizations in our region. We believe this repository will be one factor in reducing duplication of feasibility studies, grant requests, and nonprofit start ups where the work has already been started and achievement is already being realized.

Organizations have traditionally met with their own boards, constituents, and stakeholders to strategically plan their future. We are now fully enmeshed in an economy that requires multiple organizations within a sector, be that profit or nonprofit, to engage in joint strategic planning. We believe mapping the asset base of our region is vital to that innovative but necessary planning. Those agencies planning on serving our zero to eight years old community are no different than companies in a specific manufacturing sector. While maintaining their own initiatives, their own goals, and their own sense of necessary outcomes, there is now an imperative need to understand how to plan together, using local data, to sustain the local economic and well-being of our people. For competitive manufacturers that might mean coming together to fill a class at the local educational service center so each company gains, when no course could have been held because it lacked sufficient attendance from any single company. For the human service sector this might mean developing co-strategies and the sharing of resources to fill a need that did not exist before the latest economic downturn.

Current Work of the PRSC

The PRSC was created to help develop solutions in the region that are inter-disciplinary, and combine the assets of our leading organizations. Bill Rayl, Executive Director of JAMA has accessed the PRSC for just that reason. His vision of building a new economic base in the region includes an initiative we are calling Farm-to-Factory. To help diversify the regional economy we are now looking at our agricultural, chemical, and manufacturing industry to create a new wave of products and jobs. Here is how we are envisioning Farm-to-Factory so far:

Statement: The Farm-to-Factory initiative brings together our local farming, chemical and manufacturing industries to develop environmentally friendly, cost-effective agricultural based products and processes that minimize the use of non-renewable materials. We are not trying to reinvent the wheel, just making it out of better stuff.

This initiative will be lead by our region's economic development organizations; the Lenawee Economic Development Corporation, the Hillsdale Economic Development Partnership, and Jackson's Enterprise Group. The role of the PRSC is to help launch the initiative by convening stakeholders around the issue of bio-manufacturing. Few regions have the rich assets that we possess in our agricultural heritage, chemical industry cluster, and fine manufacturing sector. Once the initiative is launched and the stakeholders are moving ahead the PRSC will step back and focus on other solutions for our region. More will be forthcoming this summer with launch planned for January of 2011.



Frequently Asked Questions:

What is the Partnership for Regional Solutions Center (PRSC)? The Center's goals are to facilitate regional solutions that foster educational transformation, economic sustainability, and workforce preparedness. The Center is organized through South Central Michigan Works!, a regional organization. Our partners include the Hillsdale Economic Development Partnership, The Enterprise Group of Jackson County, The Lenawee County Economic Development Corporation, Jackson Community College, and local area schools and businesses.

Why was it established? The PRSC has been created as a think tank that is focusing on creating solutions for our region. The goal is to provide our business, education, economic development and nonprofit sectors a place to bring problems or opportunities that cannot be solved by one segment within our region but that can be solved by inter-disciplinary teamwork. No other rural community has developed an organizational resource that parallels this effort. We believe that our region must be able to forecast what challenges and opportunities are coming, and then design our future instead of reacting to economic and social change. Solutions in today's economic climate require collaboration, insight, and assets. We also must come together in new ways so that we keep pace with, or even forecast economic change. The PRSC offers a place to convene, dialog, debate, and link with local, regional, statewide and national resources that are focused on innovative but practical solutions to your challenges.

Organizations have traditionally met with their own boards, constituents, and stakeholders to strategically plan their future. We are now fully enmeshed in an economy that requires multiple organizations within a sector, be that for profit or nonprofit, to engage in joint strategic planning. The PRSC is the place for convening that

type of dialog and it has the resources to help move that dialog into dynamic regional solutions.

Are you duplicating the effort of other resources in the local area? No, SCMW! Works from a demand model. We are not in a position, nor do we intend to use the resources of the Center to force reform or redress any of our service sectors. We will not duplicate work being performed by other resources, and through our asset mapping of the region hope to be able to help other resources discover areas of duplication in a variety of service areas. This mapping will also point out where gaps in service exist so SCMW! Can work alongside local resources to fill these gaps by expanding or redefining resource service delivery models.

Who can use the Center? Individuals, local businesses, associations, nonprofit agencies, townships and municipalities, boards of directors, schools or other groups seeking solutions or a renewed opportunity to find missed opportunities and assets that can help them.

Why would I access the Center? For local economic forecasts, networking, grant writing expertise, access to PRSC initiatives and utilization of other assets the Center brings to the region.

How do I access the Center and what happens next? Access to the Center is as easy as calling or emailing. Center staff will meet with you to discuss your challenge at a time most convenient on your calendar, at your site.

What are the costs involved? There is no cost to begin a dialog with the Center. Costs could be incurred if related to contractual or other resources utilized to help find solutions to your challenges.



Members of the PRSC Oversight Committee

Charter: This Committee meets periodically to provide input into the PRSC from the top leadership of the region's business, government, education, and philanthropic domains. The charter of the committee is to discuss and propose solutions for regional issues, opportunities, and challenges. This work helps to focus and support the PRSC's effort to accelerate economic transformation in our region. It is our goal to achieve this acceleration through our partnerships and by serving as a resource to our communities.

Community

Mindy Bradish-Orta, President & CEO, Jackson County Chamber of Commerce
Barbara Marshall, Area Specialist, USDA

County Commissions

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James Videto, Commissioner, Jackson County

Economic Development

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