

Breakthrough News

*Volume VI, No. 4
October 2008*

Breakthrough Solutions is a program of the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service with partners in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

The purpose of Breakthrough News (formerly VisionWorks News) is to help communities and regions thrive in the 21st century economy.
Editor: Mark Peterson, Professor – Community Development

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21st Century Communities Conference Registration Still Open

Every day we see evidence that **Arkansas communities are directly impacted by major forces and trends that are national and global in scope.** Is your community positioned to succeed in this 21st century economy? On October 30, we will have a tremendous opportunity to learn what it takes for a community or region to be successful at the Arkansas Community Development Society Conference in Conway. The Arkansas Task Force for the 21st Century Economy will be sharing the results of their work, which has included hearings around the state and considerable expert testimony.

Appointed by Governor Beebe and Arkansas legislative leaders, the charge to the task force included making recommendations regarding:

- a) Economic development in Arkansas in the 21st century and
- b) Programs and services needed for the state and its communities to be globally competitive in the 21st century.

Their report will be a valuable contribution to our understanding of what it takes for communities and regions to be successful in this new century.

The program also includes these top-notch presentations:

- Partners in Economic Development – new directions at AEDC - by Denisa Pennington, Director of Community Development, Arkansas Economic Development Commission
- Bridges Out of Poverty – a terrific approach to empowering people in your community - by Monieca West, Arkansas Department of Higher Education, and two exemplary workforce education initiatives:
- Adult Career Pathways Program – Dr. Karen Rosa, Arkansas Department of Higher Education, and
- Arkansas Delta Training and Education Consortium (ADTEC), Dr. Steven Murray, Chancellor, Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas

The conference will include announcements of the ACDS Awards and our first ACDS grant. In addition, the Professional Community Developer (PCED) exam for certification will be offered immediately following the Arkansas Community Development Society annual meeting. To see the conference agenda and register, go to <http://www.arkansascds.org/conference/2008>, or call Mary Ellen Klotz at the University of Central Arkansas, (501) 450-5372, mklotz@uca.edu.

Coming Events

October 28: Quality of Place Workshop, Mather Lodge, Petit Jean State Park, Morrilton. For more information, contact Maureen Rose, mrrose@uaex.edu, (501) 671-2066.

October 28: Arkansas Broadband Advisory Council Policy Input Meeting, Arkansas Capital Corporation, Little Rock. For more information, contact James Winningham at (501) 371-2664, james.winningham@arkansas.gov.

October 30: Arkansas Community Development Society Annual Conference, University of Central Arkansas, Conway. See lead article for more information.

November 5: UALR Economic Forecast Conference, Doubletree Hotel, Little Rock. For more information, go to <http://www.iea.ualr.edu/> or call 569-8551, nfwayman@ualr.edu.

November 7: Water Overdrawn – A Forum on Water Policy, Law, Science, and Technology - Biennial Water Conference, 4-H Center in Ferndale. Go to http://ppc.uaex.edu/water_forum/default.htm, (501) 671-2299, dhenry@uaex.edu.

November 12: Business Forum on the Banking Crisis, sponsored by UALR College of Business, 5:00 p.m., Doubletree Hotel, Little Rock. A panel of experts will address the banking crisis; a wine and cheese reception will follow. R.S.V.P. to Patrice Sims at (501) 569-3356 or e-mail psims@ualr.edu.

November 11-12: Art and Craft in the Creative Economy Workshop, Mountain View. Go to www.laffing-horse.com/arkansascraftschool/, (870) 269-8397, twpillow@mvtel.net.

November 14: Agritourism Workshop, Winthrop Rockefeller Institute, Morrilton. For more information, go to 222.uawri.org or call (501) 727-6219.

November 18-19: Arkansas Venture Forum Conference, Little Rock. Go to www.Innovate.Arkansas.org.

December 3-4: Connected Communities: Making the Net Work for Minnesota, Eden Prairie, Minn. Go to www.blandinfoundation.org/BBConf08/index.html.

Breakthrough Solutions Funding Sponsors

Just a note to thank our funding sponsors for their support of the Breakthrough Solutions Conference and Program. We appreciate their investment in the future of Arkansas.

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Globalization, Technology, Energy, and Small Towns

This summer, I attended a family reunion in southwest Iowa, and it was a great trip. (I am a Southerner – I was raised in southern Iowa...) It is always good to see family, see how things have changed (or stayed the same), and eat some of my brother Max's incredible sweet corn. **The signs of globalization, technology, and energy – and how they impact rural communities – were popping up all over the place**, so I would like to share them with you. I leave to you to determine if these changes are good or not.

Wal-Mart is Turning Green

As you may know, Wal-Mart has embarked on a major effort to become a greener corporation. On the flight to Omaha, I happened to sit by Tara Raddohl with Wal-Mart Corporate Communications. She told me how a few years ago Lee Scott announced that Wal-Mart was going to put forth major efforts toward becoming a more sustainable company. Tara explained that this includes incorporating energy conservation into everything from store design to transportation. The company also works with suppliers and its own merchants to reduce product packaging and waste, and commits to setting aside land in conservation to offset store footprints. "Energy conservation is good for the environment and helps us keep prices down for our customers because it saves us money," stated Raddohl. **Strategic Questions: How green is your business or organization? Over the next few years, which do you think will have the competitive advantage – green ones or brown ones?**

Supply Chains go on an Energy Diet

Wal-Mart and most large corporations have a worldwide supply chain which enables them to buy goodies and widgets at low prices, taking advantage of lower wages of workers in other countries. **When energy prices increase, what makes sense economically changes.** This gives a strategic advantage to producers of goods and services who are located close to their consumers. One response has been Wal-Mart's Locally Grown program, in which they seek to sell products like fruits and vegetables from local producers. "Locally Grown is a big focus for us," says Raddohl. "Fruits and vegetables grown locally can be a business opportunity. It is great for our communities, for our stores, and for our customers." **Strategic Question: Has your community taken a strategic approach to growing fruits and vegetables as an economic development opportunity?**

High Quality of Place Attracts People

While visiting my home town of Stanton, Iowa (pop. 714), we walked all around the community on their new walking trail, and stopped to see the Swedish Cultural Center. This

center, plus the attractiveness of the community, excellent school, and community spirit, have all contributed to Stanton's increase in population. My colleague, Maureen Rose, and I have developed a terrific workshop on Quality of Place, which is defined as "quality of life plus extraordinary personal experiences." (The workshop will be held Tuesday, October 28). With more and more businesses and workers able to live anywhere there is broadband, quality of place becomes a key differentiator. ***Strategic Questions: In what ways is your community special? What special things about your community do most people not know about? What opportunities are there to make your community special that have not been done?***

Broadband is Picking Up Speed - FTTH

In an earlier issue, we discussed how the Stanton Telephone Company began providing DSL broadband service to all of their customers 6 years ago. They are now looking into providing voice, data, and video over their copper phone lines with a new technology. In addition, they are planning to provide an Internet connection to Lennox, Iowa (pop. 1,401) to **light up their Fiber to the Home (FTTH) service**. The community decided to install fiber optic cable because it believes ultra-high speed broadband will be needed in the future, and that the connection will give them a competitive advantage for attracting industry. ***Strategic Question: Do you know where broadband is and is not available in your community or county? What are you doing about it? (See Connect Arkansas: <http://www.connect-arkansas.org/>)***

High Gas Prices, Telecommunications, and Telework

I visited with Lee Shields, a nursing home administrative intern at a nursing home in Schuyler, Neb. She explained: "With the high gas prices, some of our employees quit their jobs because they were driving 20-30 miles one way to work for a low-wage job. They just can't afford it." She mentioned she would be looking into **providing a computer with a camera, so nursing home residents can interact with their family who may be in another state**. This would save energy and enable the family to stay in touch. While high gas prices will force many people to move closer to their jobs, others will use broadband telecommunications to enable them to live where they choose.

My newly married niece, Sheila, is planning to work as a medical transcriptionist from central Nebraska, using broadband. She is one smart cookie – a knowledge worker who chooses where she wants to live, using broadband to connect to the world. ***Strategic Question: Has your community explored opportunities to attract businesses and individuals who can use broadband?***

High Tech Agriculture – Precision Agriculture

While in Stanton, we visited a farmer who uses GIS (geographic information systems) and GPS (global positioning systems) to apply only the amount of fertilizer that is needed in each part of his fields. As input costs go up, investments in technology that can increase yields and/or reduce costs become more feasible.

Community Development Society Seeking Workshops and Paper Presentations

The Community Development Society invites you to submit an abstract to the 41st Annual International Conference, July 26-29, 2009 in Memphis, Tenn., "Celebrating Community:

Finding Hope in Uncertain Times." A detailed call for abstracts is available at www.comm-dev.org. Don't delay - the deadline to submit a presentation is October 31, 2008. This year's conference theme is an invitation to explore the ways in which an individual's well being and social well being are: (1) being realized through their social experiences, and (2) how their community has responded and is responding to these uncertain times in rural and urban centers. Online submissions are encouraged – they are currently being accepted online at www.comm-dev.org. The Arkansas Community Development Society is a co-sponsor of the conference, so put it on your calendar!

Ballot Issues Materials Now Available

The University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture's Public Policy Center has developed educational materials on the ballot issues that will be put before a vote of the public on November 4. The ballot issues include:

- Proposed Constitutional Amendment No. 1 concerns removing obsolete language from the Arkansas Constitution.
- Proposed Constitutional Amendment No. 2 concerns annual legislative sessions.
- Proposed Constitutional Amendment No. 3 concerns creating a state lottery to support higher education scholarships and grants.
- Proposed Initiative Act No. 1 would put restrictions on adoption and foster parenting.
- Referred Question No. 1 would vote on the issuance of bonds for financing water projects.

The ballot issue fact sheets can be found at <http://ppc.uaex.edu>.

APAC Goes On the Road

Are you open to new economic development strategies? Do the businesses in your community see the public sector as a market segment to sell their goods and services? The Arkansas Procurement Assistance Center (APAC), led by Sue Coates, is a unit within the University of Arkansas Cooperative Service that provides excellent information, workshop, and technical assistance to businesses seeking to expand their markets to local, state, and federal government agencies. APAC will be offering free two-hour workshops on "Beginners' Cyberdealing" in Harrison, Fort Smith, Wynne, and Magnolia in the next two months. For more information, go to www.arcommunities.org/APAC/whats_happening.htm, or call (501) 337-5355.

Water Conference Set for November 7

The University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture's Public Policy Center and the UALR Bowen School of Law will present its biennial water conference on November 7, 2008. **H2Overdrawn: A Forum on Water Policy, Law, Science and Technology** will feature a keynote address by Robert Abrams, a professor at Florida A&M University College of Law and one of the nation's leading water law experts.

The one-day event will explore the water challenges facing Arkansas, and how the state is addressing water quantity and quality issues through a combination of policy, law, science and technology. Presenters will discuss a broad array of topics, such as alternative practices for source water protection, advances in water quality analysis, successfully establishing an irrigation district, and the effect of recent court rulings on wetlands jurisdictions. The registration

fee is \$50 with scholarships available for students. CEU credits will be offered. For more information, or to register, contact Debbie Henry at (501) 671-2299 or dhenry@uaex.edu.

Breakthrough Solutions Partners

We appreciate the continued support of our Breakthrough Solutions Partners:

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Story of the Month – China is the New Germany

At the end of the Second World War, Germany was an “emerging market.” It was industrializing rapidly and producing brisk economic growth. Today, Germany is a mature “developed market” that grows slowly – if it grows at all. Now, China is the new Germany. The industrial dynamism that produced Germany’s postwar success is moving to the East... piece by piece.

One of the largest steel mills in Germany was the ThyssenKrupp mill in the Ruhr Valley, the heart of Germany’s industrial area. At the turn of the millennium, mills and factories in Germany began to close, unable to compete with lower wages in the developing world. A Chinese company bought the ThyssenKrupp mill, and soon 1,000 Chinese workers arrived to take it apart. They worked 12 hours a day, 7 days a week, and dismantled the plant in less than a year – two years faster than the Germans anticipated. The Germans complained, so the Chinese took a day off. Over 5,000 miles away, the Chinese then reassembled the 275,000 tons of equipment and material, and the plant alone produces as much steel today as China’s total steel production in 1975.

When the Chinese departed, the makeshift dormitories and kitchens they occupied for a year were left neat and clean. There was, however, a single pair of black boots left in one of the dormitories. It carried the brand name “Phoenix” – the same name of the plant the Chinese just took apart. The boots also carried the label “Made in China.”

Source: Chris Mayer, Whiskey and Gunpowder, 6/3/08

How to Strategically Impact Your Community:

If you want to impact your community in a powerful way, forward this e-mail newsletter to other individuals in your community or organization so they can benefit from the resources, insights, and strategies covered in Breakthrough News.

More About Breakthrough Solutions:

A recipient of the Outstanding Program Award by the international Community Development Society, Breakthrough Solutions is a program of the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service with partners in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. Breakthrough Solutions Program is now available for communities and regions seeking to prosper in the global, knowledge-based economy. For more information about the program, go to www.vworks.org, send an e-mail to vworks@uaex.edu, or call us at (501) 671-2066.

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