

TGIF Taking Great Ideas Forward

Improving Northern Capital - Sustainable Development in the Northern Tier

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author and do not reflect positions of organizations with which he is affiliated.

Herbster, WI, April 27th, 2007 – Volume 3: Number 17 [Back Issues](#)

“A man's errors are his portals of discovery.”

-James Joyce-

MEETINGS and EVENTS:

Links will provide additional information. Dates for recent additions are in **bold**.

<i>What</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Where</i>
Wisconsin Lakes Convention	April 26-28	All Day	Green Bay
Green Roof Conference	April 28 - May 3	All Day	Minneapolis - Hyatt Regency Hotel
UW Founders Day 2007	April 30 th	5:30 PM	Elks Club - Ashland
WIB Business Development Conference	May 3 & 4	All Day	Lakewoods Resort, Cable
Stream Monitor Training**	May 5 th	All Day	NGLVC
Living Green Expo	May 5-6	All Day	St. Paul, MN
Lake Superior Binational Forum	May 11-12	All Day	Thunder Bay ON
BCEDC Board Meeting	May 14 th	10 AM - noon	TBA
Future of Farming Statewide Conference	May 14 & 15	All Day	Madison, Monona Terrace
Chequamegon Bay Birding & Nature Festival	May 18-20	All Day	Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center-Ashland
Stream Monitor Training**	May 19 th	All Day	Duluth – Lester Park
2007 Entrepreneur's Conference	June. 12-13	All day	Milwaukee
Inland Sea Kayak Symposium	June 14-17	All Day	Washburn WI
Northwest Wisconsin Lakes Conference & Workshops	June 21 & 22	All Day	Telemark Lodge, Cable
Pie & Politics	June 28 th	Evening	Big Top Chautauqua

** For Information call: **Sue O'Halloran** UW-Superior Extension 715-394-8525

CLEAN TECHNOLOGY

Writing TGIF last week I said, "Sets me thinking about a CleanTech Center of Excellence. If not here; Where?"

What did I mean by "Here?"

Ashland? Why?

Ashland is a commercial hub with a mix of already established environmentally focused individuals and organizations. A potentially outstanding location. Unfortunately for me Ashland is a 80 mile, 90 minute (with good weather and visibility) round trip ride. At \$2.84 per gallon, a daily commute is not sustainable for me or many others. If a CleanTech Center is to be established in Ashland, somebody else will have to be an effective champion.

Washburn? Why?

Iron River? Why?

Superior? Why?

Cable? Hayward? Why?

Herbster? Why not? (Oh, let me count the ways! But I'm encouraged since **Lissa Radke** recognized Herbster for what it is: the *Center of the Known Universe!* Billy would be so proud.)

I've been thinking long and hard about what the ____ to do with the investment of time, talent, and treasure Patti and I have made in this little wide spot along Highway 13. Our ROI has been as negative as the community's response to something different. A fine art gallery providing gifts, beautiful bedding plants in hanging baskets didn't cut it. Landscaping without a local labor pool was loves labor lost.

A focus on Clean Technology Development would open opportunity for global markets and may make investment in technology pay off. Herbster could become a virtual Center of Excellence. Since there is no more treasure to invest, my thoughts demand critical consideration of how to recruit time and talent to the task of moving forward productively and profitably.

If not now; when?

Over the next four months I have a commitment to support the Duluth/Superior Eco-Industrial Development initiative and will be spending a lot of time in the Twin Ports with trips to the Twin Cities and Madison mixed in. (\$2.84 twists my gut. I need a Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle assembled locally from recycled auto parts.) Fortunately a great deal of the EID work, research and writing, can be done much closer to home. The result will be a non-profit organization that will support a network of specialists who will make Eco-Industrial Development happen in the northern tier.

Clean Technology development should be joined at the Herbster-hip with Eco-Industrial Development. September 10th would be a perfect time for **BCEDC's Board** to meet in Herbster! **Marian Vaughn**, Executive Director and **Bill DeVries**, President, should mark that down. I'll

invite my Ashland friends to “drive out” and join a day-long celebration with folks from Duluth, Superior and points South. That way we will be ready to absorb the hand-winging about September 11th that will certainly be a part of the national morning news.

That opportunities in Clean Technology are compelling was articulated in [Tom Friedman's piece](#) in the New York Times Magazine. **Barry Hanson** (politely) and **James Howard Kunstler** ([not politely](#)) reminded me that there is a lot about the Friedman article that is to be questioned; in particular the notion that nuclear power is an answer. I agree that nuclear is not an answer, although it is not a bad idea to generate discussion about nuclear power. Discussion, not diatribe, may help some politically influential people understand why nuclear power is a nasty option.

Barry Hanson, author of “*Energy Power Shift*” and a promising newsletter “*Breakthroughs: Renewable Energy Solutions for Economic Development*”, continues to make the case for distributed energy generation rather than distributing energy via pipelines, transmission lines and trucks. His theme and thesis is that a growing list of technologies enable communities to keep a good part of their energy money for local investments in economic development. Kunstler, author of “*The Long Emergency*” argues that we are past peak oil and fundamental changes in lifestyle are inevitable. Hanson is more optimistic. I'm still thinking about it but I like to think like Hanson.

Now a Herbster Center for Clean Technology could be

SCHOOL BUS IDEA

It must have been about two years ago that **Bill Maki**, Washburn and Herbster, replied to my rip, rant or rationalization in TGIF about rural Bayfield County schools. He suggested that if kids in the northland have to ride a school bus for long miles and hours each day, make the bus comfortable and make the bus ride a great learning experience. Bill's idea was ahead of the curve or inflection point. Cellular technologies may have arrived to take a great idea forward.

Now, a Vanderbilt University professor has drawn on his own past experience as a school bus rider in rural Arkansas and found a solution in satellite Internet services for school children riding the bus.

An article in [eSchool News](#) describes a project to turn long rides into expanded learning experiences:

... a Vanderbilt University professor is helping rural students with long commutes to school by turning their buses into mobile classrooms. Students will be able to download lessons from the internet via cell-phone towers.

Billy Hudson, a professor of medicine and biochemistry, got inspiration for the project from his own childhood in rural Arkansas.

He said he never took a science or math class in high school and dropped out after 11th grade, planning to work on a cotton plantation until he was old enough to join the Army. But his life changed when a teacher intervened, arranging for him to take summer classes at a small college in a distant town.

Children in his hometown of Grapevine, Ark., still are so isolated that, for some, the bus ride between their homes and school lasts 90 minutes each way. But Hudson plans to turn those long hours to the students' advantage by using technology to give them science and math instruction while they ride.

Providing a top-shelf education for our northland young people may force consideration for consolidation of school districts. Transportation would be a huge challenge to solve. A bus ride to Hayward, Superior or Ashland could easily consume up to two hours. Making that time productive is certainly possible if we value the time enough.

How much less valued (*or valuable*) is a rural kid's time than the time of your favored corporate executive riding in a chauffeured limousine while being tutored by lawyers and accountants in \$1,500 suits?

Take care and have a great weekend!

/BRUCE

© Bruce Lindgren 2007.

TGIF is distributed as both HTML and TEXT versions. To receive the HTML version, your e-mail client must be set to accept HTML. [PDF versions are now available.](#)

TGIF is distributed each Friday. Subscriptions for TGIF are free and may be obtained by contacting Bruce Lindgren at bflind@cheqnet.net. You may UNSUBSCRIBE by sending an email to bflind@cheqnet.net with "UNSUBSCRIBE" in the subject line.

Bruce Lindgren is Principal of [B.Lindgren CONSULTING](#). The consulting practice serves small business, local government, school districts and non-profits providing support for research, grant development, technical writing, marketing support and project management. Bruce brings his background in biological sciences, education, small business and media technology to generate and implement ideas contributing solutions to mission critical challenges.

In addition Bruce maintains the following affiliations:

[Bayfield County Economic Development Corporation](#), (BCEDC) *Director*

[Inland Sea Society](#), (ISS) *Director*

[Lake Superior Binational Forum](#), (LSBF) *US Delegation Co-Chair*

[Raindrop Garden Gallery](#), (RGG) *Co-owner*

[IDEA Consortium LLC](#), *Owner*

[Chequamegon Institute, Inc.](#) *Initial Registered Agent*

[Coalition for Eco-Industrial Development](#), (CEID) *Work Group Member*

[Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board](#), (WIB) Member

The encircled fractal triangle represents an integrated cluster of seven ideas – economics, ecology, equity, ethics, experience, education and energy – that may be considered a core for sustainability studies. Bruce is available to present illustrated lectures and facilitate discussions about Industrial Ecology, Sustainable Development and the Sustainability Revolution.