

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.

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“There is nothing so useless as doing efficiently that which should not be done at all.”

-Peter Drucker-

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>
Sustainable Business Conference	April 24-25	All Day	Ashland
Insight and Innovation for Technology Leaders	April 25	All Day	Chicago
Living Green Expo	May 3-4	All Day	St.Paul – Minnesota State Fair Grounds
Business Development Conference	May 7 & 8	All Day	Cable, Lakewoods
Digital Healthcare Conference	May 7 & 8	All Day	Madison
BCEDC Annual Meeting	May 12 th	10:00 – noon	TBA
Green Communities Conference	May 20th	All Day	UW-River Falls
Manufacturing Advantage 2008	May 21	All Day	UW-Stout
Green By Design Conference	June 12-13	All Day	Washington DC area
Northern Aquaculture Demonstration Facility Field Days	June 12–13	All Day	Red Cliff / Bayfield
Northwest Wisconsin Lakes Conference	June 19 & 20	All Day	Cable, Telemark

Sustainable Business Conference

An excellent assembly of talent characterized the first day of the first Sustainable Business Conference in Ashland. The Conference recognizes the impact of the sustainability revolution on businesses. A planning team from the **Alliance for Sustainability** is to be commended for their initiative and a lot of hard, smart work to bring off this first ever conference. I know from my previous affiliation with the Alliance that this was not an effort of a single person (or even a small group) but a joint effort of the community of committed people residing on the rim of Chequamegon Bay. That said, **Steve** and **Nancy Sandstrom**, **Jennifer Fanucci**, **Brandon Boys** and **Mary Rewald**, as is usual, likely rolled up their sleeves whenever the going got tough. Even **Walmart** weighed in with a big sponsoring donation and a presentation that, although mildly self aggrandizing, provided some new insights about how this giant corporation is responding to the sustainability revolution that is sweeping our world.

Dr. Karen Halbersleben, President of Northland College, while introducing the afternoon keynote speaker, expressed her enthusiasm for the beginning of an exciting series to look annually at business development in a new world of widely shared environmental values.

The afternoon keynote speaker, Dr. **John Ikerd**, commented that the late Harvard management professor, **Peter Drucker**, through a brilliant career launched on his popular dictum “*Management by Objectives*,” published multiple titles trying to explain: What has gone wrong? Why has corporate culture missed a social opportunity? Ikerd, an economist, raised additional questions and observations about the consequence of deregulation and why the private sector fails to serve the interest of the public. Airline mergers, **Northwest** and **Delta** is just the latest example, have failed to provide the public with the promised greater choice, better service and lower fares. Ikerd's over-riding assertion is that government's essential role is to protect the common good. That, he argued, will be served by restoration of competition with a new approach to rules and regulations.

Maybe.

By interesting contrast and in a breakout session on “Certification,” **Laurel Sukup**, of Wisconsin's DNR, explained that the DNR's **Green Tier** program is a non-regulatory approach that empowers businesses to go beyond compliance. This program for industry leaders is based on the notion that being in compliance is *good* business and that going beyond compliance can be *great* business. The key is commitment of companies to continuous improvements through adoption of an environmental management system. Participation in the program, she emphasized, is entirely voluntary.

Going beyond compliance is increasingly a source of business opportunity.

Carol Lindsey, CEO of **Ashland Industries**, announced that her company would pursue Green Tier designation. This local manufacturer of earth-moving equipment is actively installing a new environmental management system similar to ISO 14000. A strong motivation for Ashland Industries is opportunity to pursue a highly lucrative partnership with the Swedish firm **Volvo Construction Equipment**. Ms Lindsey was very clear that the Volvo opportunity would not be an option without environmental compliance. Their commitment to environmental values merges with their vested self-interests. What does it matter which comes first? Volvo, as a matter of routine business practice, requires their suppliers and partners to document that an environmental management system is in place and functioning.

Perhaps government regulation is a necessary but insufficient route to environmental stewardship. A critical mass of international Volvo-like companies may be a good substitute for government rule making. Which government would regulate the fat and fully flattened Walmart?

LIGHTER SIDE:

As with most jokes the original author is unknown. Whoever you are; "Thanks!" Names, when added, are intended to tease the innocent.

Science experiment

Little Johnny watched the science teacher start the experiment with the worms. Four worms were placed into four separate jars. The first worm was put into a jar of alcohol. The second worm was put into a jar of cigarette smoke. The third worm was put into a jar of seminal fluid. The fourth worm was put into a jar of soil.

After one day, these were the results:

The first worm in alcohol - dead.

Second worm in cigarette smoke - dead.

Third worm in sperm - dead.

Fourth worm in soil - alive.

So the Science teacher asked the class - "What can you learn from this experiment."

Little Johnny quickly raised his hand and said "As long as you drink, smoke and have sex, you won't have worms."

Take care and enjoy a great weekend!

/BRUCE

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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*

[Bayfield CountyLakes Forum](#), *Board Secretary*

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

[Coalition for Eco-Industrial Development](#), (CEID) *Acting President & CEO*

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

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

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

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

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

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 role of education in Industrial Ecology, Sustainable Development and the Sustainability Revolution.