

TGIF Taking Great Ideas Forward

Improving Northern Capital - Sustainable Development in the Northern Tier

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“The secret to happiness is to plant trees under whose shade we will never sit.”

-Nelson Henderson-

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 Communities & Farms	Sept 11 & 12	All day	Oconomowoc, WI
Northshore In-line Half Marathon	Sept 13 th	7:30 AM	Two Harbors to Duluth
US AOC Program Conference	Sept 24-25	All Day	Ann Arbor, MI
Ideas To Profits (Conference)	October 1-2	All Day	Appleton WI
BCEDC Board Meeting	October 13th	10:00 AM – Noon	TBA
Bioneers Conference 2008	Oct. 17-19	All Day	San Rafael, California
Wisconsin Biotechnology and Medical Device Association	Oct. 22nd	All Day	Waukesha WI
SOLEC State of the Lakes Ecosystem Conference	Oct. 22-23	All Day	Niagara Falls, ON
Lake Superior Binational Forum	Nov. 7 & 8	All Day Fri. , 8-12 Sat.	Thunder Bay, ON
Synergy 2008	Nov. 11 & 12	All Day	UW River Falls
Northland Bioneers Conference	Nov. 14 - 16	All Day	Twin Cities

Harvesting Future Ideas

Progress is often a product of coordination and cooperation as well as the focused sharing of ideas. My recent experience in Michigan's Upper Peninsula shed light on how ideas should move forward and result in a potential harvest of jobs and wealth.

Someone once said “Innovation is not a solo sport,” a clever phrase just close enough to someone's truth to jar open reflective thinking. Individuals may receive recognition for invention

and innovation but it is indeed rare for great ideas to emerge *de novo* from a hermit's shack. Two giants of scientific innovation, **Isaac Newton** and **Louis Pasteur**, both recognized that they were able to see farther by standing on the shoulders of giants. Companies, Departments, Institutes or Universities that pride themselves on discovery are increasingly turning to larger communities to support the critical intellectual mass – the diverse specializations – needed to foster vibrant research and publication. “Communities of practice” is a phrase that reverberates or resonates frequently in discussions of innovation and development. These communities of practice are frequently built around a central idea or cluster. **Michigan Technological University** (MTU) is making a great step forward by focusing its hiring of faculty to address four research themes; air, energy, materials and water. MTU will be a major player in a Northern Tier stretching from Fargo and Grand Forks to Sault St. Marie and embracing the entire Lake Superior basin. The emerging phenomenon of *massively distributed collaboration* brought about by new tools of digital technology – Web 2.0 – enables huge opportunities to see farther. These tools are an opportunity to foster collaboration across the Northern Tier.

MTU President **Glenn D. Mroz** attended our **Lake Superior Binational Forum** public input session in Houghton, Michigan last Friday. TGIF readers will recall that our LSBF emphasis was on the Area of Concern at and nearby Houghton; the Torch Lake AOC and its collection of superfund sites that are a legacy of copper mining in the Keweenaw Peninsula. Dr. Mroz, a Professor of Forestry and former Dean of the College of Forest Resources and Environmental Science, focused his low-key but eloquent and energizing remarks on the efforts at the University to recognize the importance of sustainability and create a path for future innovation to support the necessary and inevitable revolution in sustainability thinking. His remarks followed closely on an August 26th [press release](#) announcing appoint of faculty to fill three new endowed chairs at MTU. The MTU [Strategic Faculty Hiring Initiative](#) draws concentric circles that will help aim the efforts and resources of the University in a positive and productive direction.

Endowed chairs at MTU will support sustainability in three areas; manufacturing, materials, and environmental management. A generous gift from the Robbins family made these endowed chairs possible. Interestingly, **Richard Robbins'** ability to make such a gift can be traced to his engineering degree from MTU. The Robbins Company pioneered tunnel-boring technology that played a huge part in the successful creation of the “chunnel” between England and France. Another endowment in communications entrepreneurship, from **William and Gloria Jackson**, follows from Mr. Jackson's MTU degree in electrical engineering and his highly successful enterprises in the cable television industry. Both of these “trees” were planted by MTU in the 1950s. Solid growth takes time. These endowments, totaling \$7 million, will certainly plant seeds for future harvests.

As visible as these endowed chairs are and will be, it is perhaps even more significant that MTU is hiring additional faculty, totaling 18 in two years, to align research interests with the research theme for each of these endowed chairs. This multi-disciplinary collaboration will enable the Upper Peninsula to plant seeds for economic growth in the UP.

Planting a tree can provide shade; a presence that renders shelter, comfort and opportunities for relaxation and reflection. The Northern Tier possesses such an abundance of trees that they are a frequent focus of discussion for proponents of economic development. Jobs and wealth have certainly flowed from our forests. Managed for sustainability our forests are a gift that

keeps on giving. Managed for producing and growing ideas, our Universities foster ideas that are essential for creating a future harvest of jobs and wealth.

LIGHTER SIDE:

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

Small World

Two guys are playing golf. The women in front of them are really taking their time and are slowing the men up.

So one man says to his friend, "I'm gonna go ask those ladies if we can play through."

He starts walking, but about halfway there, he turns around. When he gets back, his friend asks what happened.

He replies, "One of those women is my wife, and the other is my mistress. Why don't you go talk to them?"

So the second man starts to walk over. He gets halfway there and turns around.

When he gets back, his friend asks, "Now what happened?"

To this he replies, "Small world."

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

[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.