

# 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 January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2009 – Volume 5: Number 4 [Back Issues](#)

***“If you're walking down the right path and you're willing to keep walking, eventually you'll make progress.”***

**-Barak Obama-**

## 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>
<b>B CEDC Board Meetings are now the first Tuesday of each month and will begin at 9:30 AM. Locations will vary but most meetings are at the Washburn Library. The January meeting was last Tuesday, January 6<sup>th</sup>. Check the <a href="#">BCEDC Web site</a> for more information about BCEDC.</b>			
<a href="#">Green Building Conference</a>	Jan 19-24 <sup>th</sup>	Schedule by day	Ashland
<a href="#">Engineering Professional Development</a>	Jan. 21 – 22	All Day	Madison
Alternative Transportation Seminar	Jan. 28 <sup>th</sup>	11:30 – 12:30	Northland College Alvord Theatre
<a href="#">Lake Superior Binational Forum</a>	Jan. 30-31	All Day	Superior, WI
Lake Superior Binational Forum <b>Public Input Session</b>	<b>Jan 30<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>1:00 – 5:00 PM</b>	<b>Barkers Island Inn Superior</b>
<a href="#">Inventors &amp; Entrepreneur's Club</a>	Feb. 5 <sup>th</sup>	6:00 pm	Cassablanca Coffee House – Ashland Hwy 2 & 63
<b>Living Green Conference</b>	Feb. 7 <sup>th</sup>	12:00 – 4:30 PM	Lake Superior College, Duluth
<b>BCEDC Board Meeting</b>	Feb. 3 <sup>rd</sup>	9:30 – noon	Washburn Library
<a href="#">Focus on Midwest Energy</a>	Feb. 23 <sup>rd</sup>	8:00am-1:00pm	Madison's Monona Terrace
<a href="#">Great Lakes Days</a>	Feb. 23 – 25	All Day	Washington DC
<a href="#">Superior Days</a>	Feb. 24 – 25	All Day	Madison
<a href="#">Conservation Lobby Day</a>	Feb. 25 <sup>th</sup>	All Day	Madison
<a href="#">Building Green Conference</a>	<b>Feb. 26<sup>th</sup></b>	8:00am-5:30pm	Duluth
<a href="#">Leadership from the Bottom Up</a>	<b>Feb. 27, 28, 29</b>	Times vary	Three different locations
<a href="#">Business Development Conference</a>	<b>May 6 &amp; 7</b>	All Day	Cable, Lakewoods Resort and Conference Center

# A Path Ahead

The inauguration on Tuesday had not only a huge local Washington DC audience but also a global audience. Anticipation for what lies ahead locally, nationally and globally was mind filling. A vision laced with optimism may have been expected. What spilled out from President **Barak Obama's** inaugural address was a dose of reality that signaled some rough terrain on the path ahead.

**Tom Still** [wrote](#) in his *Inside Wisconsin* column January 21 that anticipated cooperation between Minnesota and Wisconsin can yield immediately helpful and potentially great future dividends. Apparently the two Governors, Democrat **Jim Doyle** and Republican **Tim Pawlenty** have committed to looking at collaborating through interstate purchasing and servicing. Buying larger quantities of road salt may not add up to a significant budget saving measure but dealing in even small ways with a looming mountain of economic hardship may foster a new view for future relationships. The new President made a strong call for commitment: *“Starting today, we must pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and begin again the work of remaking America.”* Cooperation should be an important part of the work ahead.

Old rivalries continue to keep separate what should be together. Tom Still comments that our state rivalries take the form of Packers VS Vikings or Gophers VS Badgers. Our local communities have managed to muster multiple monsters hidden in the dark places of old mental models that keep cooperation at bay. Wednesday evening a group of South Shore business owners gathered at **Woody's** restaurant in Herbster to consider mutual interests. Cooperation has not been an historical hallmark among Port Wing, Herbster and Cornucopia businesses. Past efforts have too quickly scattered and dissipated initial enthusiasm along State Highway 13. This meeting was a new shovel in the ground. I must say that progress was refreshing, but along the conversational way a few parochial paroxysms from the past popped out. **Marian Vaughn**, BCEDC Executive Director, provided supportive leadership for what may become a vision to invent a new reality for these South Shore communities.

Finding a new social reality whether it is to be discovered in the local, regional, interregional, state, interstate, national or international spaces will be essential for our civil future and economic prosperity. Continuing with business development as if the ecology of our planet doesn't matter is too clearly a dangerous path. Fully separate from climate considerations, depletion of oil and coal reserves, as well as other resources, deprives generations yet unborn of both resources and choices. Our new social reality will emerge from contemporary realities that include instability of climate fostered by an economy that placed a premium on market forces too little tempered by the cross currents and clumsy considerations for social justice and environmental values.

Fortunately social systems that are almost inextricably linked – education, media and public conversation – can provide a view of the future. Education in all of its traditional and non-traditional forms, communications media embracing printed material, broadcast messages and emerging interactive Internet capacity, and growing public dialog may illuminate our options and foster essential change. Our challenges going forward should embrace potential cooperation, coordination and sharing. Collaboration rather than competition will reveal new relationships,

and opportunities for our local and global communities. The benefits will include enhancements and advancements to education, health, governance, energy, security and, yes, jobs.

To borrow from the late Massachusetts Representative **Tip O'Neil** and meliorate with a paraphrase: *All economic development is local*. Our local Representative, **Gary Sherman**, is now serving as Chair of the Wisconsin Assembly [Committee on Forestry](#). Perhaps our local natural resource can be more effectively used for local economic advancement. BCEDC Board Member **Neil Paulson** has long argued that the **Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest** should provide a revenue base for local economic support. Now may be the right time to drill down and find new frames for retaining local resources to support local economic and community development. Wisconsin and Minnesota share a world of hurt financially, but share important natural resources and world-class talent. Senator **Bob Jauch**, together with northwestern Wisconsin Representatives **Gary Sherman**, **Nick Milroy** and **Mary Hubler** should lead budget reform to assure local communities are supported and regional cooperation is attained. Our powerful research universities are enormous regional resources for creating new futures through innovation. Neil Paulson has urged a conversation to find new thinking and advance local initiatives. Neil is right on! Perhaps this is just the right moment to think globally, interact regionally and build a local learning community. ([Check out my new blog.](#))

President Obama has promised a new era of transparency in government. Opaqueness and ambiguity will linger, and opportunity will be lost, if he doesn't use his enormous talent for communication to articulate how we may break from the past. Corporate media will try to keep him boxed in with old formulas for news (Gotcha' journalism?). The Secret Service, CIA and his staff will try to maintain a cocoon of controlled communication (NO Blackberry?). During the primary season, he frequently paraphrased **Albert Einstein's** words; *"We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them."* As Philosopher in Chief, our new President should use the linked social systems – public education, public media and public conversation – to frame a new kind of thinking to create the future.

The rough terrain of the path ahead won't be paved over easily with hot-mix asphalt. Not even the Alberta tar sands can supply enough of that. New relationships, though, will enable us to find our way forward by embracing emerging opportunity along a bumpy path.

## **LIGHTER SIDE:**

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

### **Cold Winter**

It was October and the Indians on a remote northern Wisconsin reservation asked their new Chief if the coming winter was going to be cold or mild. Since he was a Chief in a modern society he had never been taught the old secrets. When he looked at the sky he couldn't tell what the winter was going to be like.

Nevertheless, to be on the safe side he told his tribe that the winter was indeed going to be cold and that the members of the village should collect firewood to be prepared. But being a practical leader, after several days he got an idea. He went to the phone booth, called the National Weather Service in Duluth and asked, "Is the coming winter going to be cold?"

"It looks like this winter is going to be quite cold," the meteorologist at the Duluth weather service responded.

So the Chief went back to his people and told them to collect even more firewood in order to be prepared. A week later he called the National Weather Service again. "Does it still look like it is going to be a very cold winter?"

"Yes," the man at National Weather Service again replied, "it's going to be a very cold winter."

The Chief again went back to his people and ordered them to collect every scrap of firewood they could find. Two weeks later the Chief called the Duluth Weather Service again. "Are you absolutely sure that the winter is going to be very cold?"

"Absolutely," the man replied. "It's looking more and more like it is going to be one of the coldest winters ever."

"How can you be so sure?" the Chief asked.

The weatherman replied, "The Indians are collecting firewood like crazy."

Take care, stay warm, and enjoy a great weekend!

*/Bruce*

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*In addition Bruce maintains many affiliations including: [Bayfield County Economic Development Corporation](#), (BCEDC) Director, [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.*