

TGIF

Taking Great Ideas into the Future

Building a sustainable economy in Wisconsin's Chequamegon Region



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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“When they discover the center of the universe, a lot of people will be disappointed to discover they are not it.”

-Bernard Bailey-

MEETINGS and EVENTS:

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

<i>What</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>here</i>
Workforce Investment Board	Dec. 21 st	10 AM- 12 PM	Hayward – Famous Dave's
Inventors & Entrepreneur's Club	Jan 4 th	5:30 PM	Iron River Community Center
BCEDC Board Meeting	Jan. 8 th	10 AM – Noon	TBA
2007 Entrepreneur's Conference	Jan. 12-13	All day	Milwaukee
Lake Superior Binational Forum	Jan. 26-27	All Day	Ashland Area, TBD
Inventors & Entrepreneur's Club	Feb. 1 st	5:30 PM	Iron River Community Center
Superior Days	Feb. 27-28 th	All Day	Madison WI
Inventors & Entrepreneur's Club	Mar. 1 st	5:30 PM	Iron River Community Center

RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Steve Terry, NWCEP Executive Director, probably thought I needed something to read on the plane. He gave me an interesting book by **Deborah Markley**, **Don Macke** and **Vicki Luther** entitled *Energizing Entrepreneurs: Charting a Course for Rural Communities*. We were on our way to Florida to attend the annual meeting of the **National Workforce Association**.

“I get a lot of this stuff,” he said, “and I thought you might be able to use it because it fits the efforts of BCEDC”

He continued, “A strategy to encourage economic development through building local businesses makes a lot of sense.”

The book's authors ask rural communities to evaluate whether they are ready to develop entrepreneurs. Readiness for economic development, they say, is a prerequisite for development of entrepreneurs. TGIF Readers know that I don't need to be persuaded about the tight linkage between entrepreneurial innovation and economic development.

Infrastructure capacities are highlighted in the book emphasizing that in addition to the usual attributes of infrastructure like stable governance, energy resources, water, sewer, communication, etc. a community needs to look at both financial infrastructure and human infrastructure.

Human infrastructure is framed as communities willing to accept entrepreneurs with their idiosyncrasies and provide the places where active community members interact. Civic and service clubs along with churches are cited as highly important. These clubs, churches and organizations provide evidence of a willingness within the community to work jointly and supportively for achievement and success.

Another line of evidence, suggesting readiness for economic development and entrepreneurship, is a community's willingness to accept new challenges creatively. These communities, it is suggested, attract resources that fuel attraction of new opportunities. In short, entrepreneurial communities, communities with an entrepreneurial culture, frequently both attract external inventors, innovators and entrepreneurs and encourage innovation from within the community – home grown entrepreneurs.

Markley *et.al.* present an interesting wrinkle on willingness of communities to invest in economic development and entrepreneurship development. They suggest that rural communities should think of themselves as corporations. Dealing with the potential variables embedded in this idea is like nailing ice cream to the wall, but, a community of, let's say 2,000 could conservatively project an economy of \$30 million. The authors ask, regarding a corporation with \$30 million revenue, “How much would you invest annually to ensure your competitiveness?”

Sometime soon I will find time to look up the size of the economy in Bayfield County and its three contiguous neighbors. My guess is that we are not reinvesting enough in building our financial infrastructure for NW Wisconsin entrepreneurs.

SUSTAINABLE BAYFIELD

Wednesday evening a band of supporters celebrated the unanimous action of the Bayfield City Council in adopting a resolution making the City of Bayfield the third Chequamegon Bay City, along with Washburn and Ashland, to designate themselves as an Eco-Municipality.

As an Eco-Municipality, Bayfield will adopt the principles of **The Natural Step** as a foundation for future decision-making. Compliance with The Natural Step principles is not immediate and complete. The resolution does not create an Eco-municipality from whole cloth. Some actions are easy to take, others may take longer; much longer. Advocates of the Eco-municipality movement often refer to “low hanging fruit”; those easy and obvious steps a community can take to reduce the use of materials extracted from the earth such as minerals and fossil fuels, and of human produced materials such as plastics. More difficult challenges such as protecting natural habitats and biodiversity or building enough family supporting jobs (a critical step for social justice) may take longer – sometimes decades.

Bayfield Mayor **Larry MacDonald** was interviewed this morning on WOJB, just a few minutes before this issue of TGIF was sent to cyberspace. He said, “This is a valuable progressive effort.” and added “This will mean a more conspicuous effort than we have had” MacDonald commented that the Bayfield City staff has been employing sustainable measures previously and that the resolution will encourage broad participation by community members.

Providing information about the sustainability movement in the Bayfield region is a mission of **Ros Nelson**. She has been a tireless supporter and reporter of the sustainability movement in the Chequamegon Bay area. Ros set up and manages a blog to provide a communications channel for the movement. Check it out <http://littlebigbay.blogspot.com/>. The **LittleBigBay** title is, it seems, purposefully intended to recognize a greater regional need for sustainable thinking in Towns throughout our NW Wisconsin region. The banner on the LittleBigBay home page invites contributions from “*the South Shore of Lake Superior and nearby towns, farms, hamlets, hunting shacks, ice fishing houses, motorhomes, RVs, villages, townships, boats and treehouses*” (emphasis added)

The **Town of Bayfield** earlier adopted an eco-municipality resolution. We should hope that towns across the South Shore – **Russell, Bell, Clover, Port Wing and Orienta** – will follow soon with their own resolutions.

Take care and have 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*

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

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

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

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

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

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