

TGIF Taking Great Ideas Forward



Improving Northern Capital - Sustainable Development in the Northern Tier

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“The happiest heart that ever beat / Was in some quiet breast / That found the common daylight sweet, / And left to Heaven the rest.”

-John V. Cheney-

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 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. Check the BCEDC Web site for more information about BCEDC.			
National Entrepreneur Week	Feb. 21-28	All Day	Nationwide
Focus on Midwest Energy	Feb. 23 rd	8:00am-1:00pm	Madison's Monona Terrace
Great Lakes Days	Feb. 23 – 25	All Day	Washington DC
Superior Days	Feb. 24 – 25	All Day	Madison
Conservation Lobby Day	Feb. 25 th	All Day	Madison
Building Green Conference	Feb. 26 th	8:00am-5:30pm	Duluth
Leadership from the Bottom Up	Feb. 27, 28, 29	Times vary	Three different locations
BCEDC Board Meeting	Mar. 3 rd	9:30 – Noon	Washburn Library
Inventors & Entrepreneur Club	Mar. 5 th	6:00 – 8:00 PM	Casablanca Coffee House
Superior Visions	Mar. 10th	7:15-8:30 AM	UW – Superior
BCEDC Board Meeting	April 7 th	9:30 – Noon	TBA
Inventors & Entrepreneur Club	Apr. 9 th	6:00 – 8:00 PM	Casablanca Coffee House
Web Marketing Workshop	April 21 st	1:00-4:00 PM	Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center
BCEDC Board Meeting	May 5 th	9:30 – Noon	TBA
Inventors & Entrepreneur Club	May 7 th	6:00 – 8:00 PM	Casablanca Coffee House
Business Development Conference	May 6 & 7	All Day	Cable, Lakewoods Resort and Conference Center
Lake Superior Binational Forum	May 8 & 9	All Day	Terrace Bay, Ontario
Eco-Municipality – Natural Step Training	May 29 - June 2	All Day	Tufts University - Boston
Northwest Wisconsin Lake Conference	June 19 th	All Day	Telemanr Lodge, Cable

<i>What</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Where</i>
Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center(NGLVC) Schedules of Events and Meetings			

SIMPLE INNOVATION

“Our life is frittered away by detail ... Simplify, simplify, simplify!” **Henry David Thoreau** also said; “Most of the luxuries , and many of the so-called comforts of life, are not only not indispensable, but positive hindrances to the elevation of mankind. With respect to luxuries and comforts, the wisest have even lived a more simple and meager life than the poor.”

Sometimes it is helpful to step back and examine the anatomy or landscape of a situation to discover what futures need to be created to find a way through a barrier, bottleneck or challenge. Innovation can be aimed at whole new capabilities or simply to make an improvement. If a new product, service or whole new industry is not a result you are looking for, why go looking for it? An incremental change or improvement may make a difference well worthy of the situation.

Small businesses, for example, add so many jobs to the economy in aggregate each month because each business may add just one or two employees that improve the efficiency or service spread in part of their operation. An assistant can give a manager just a bit more time to look at a slightly bigger picture and think about still additional improvements. Reducing costs, saving time, improving quality, engaging a larger community may be enabled or facilitated with noticeable improvements to the social, environmental and economic bottom lines. Mostly the incremental improvements in the economic bottom line will make social and environmental improvements possible. However, corporations large and small, partnerships and proprietorships are all recognizing that social responsibility and ecological stewardship are increasingly valued by a firm's stakeholders.

Looking to third parties can simplify internal operations for a business owner. Doing some of your own legal and accounting is possible but at this time of year most business owners realize that their lives are going to become much more complex unless they make a phone call for an appointment with their accountant. Leveraging the knowledge or special talents of people outside your organization can be a positive benefit and justify additional costs. Organizations, for profit and not-for-profit, can benefit from an outsiders assessment. A critical review after outside observations through another porthole may uncover a potential opportunity where a bottleneck was particularly vexing.

Did you ever ask; “Why didn't I think of that?” A different sense of place and a telephoto or wide-angle perspective can make a big difference for seeing and thinking.

Simplification is not without its dangers. Trade-offs are not always straight forward. Training may be required before tasks can be safely transferred to another employee. Outsourcing requires analysis of upsides and downsides. Sometimes it is just quicker to do it yourself. Standardization may take away flexibility. What seems like a 'no brainer' may have unintended consequences. Simplification as a strategy for innovation does not obviate thought. However, a strategy for simplification may focus thoughts toward innovative solutions.

Albert Einstein remarked; “Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler.”

LIGHTER SIDE:

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

Analyzing and Simplifying Milk Production

Milk production at a dairy farm was low so the farmer wrote to the local university, asking help from academia. A multidisciplinary team of professors was assembled, headed by a theoretical physicist, and two weeks of intensive on-site investigation took place. The scholars then returned to the university, notebooks crammed with data, where the task of writing the report was left to the team leader. Shortly thereafter the farmer received the write-up, and opened it to read on the first line: "Consider a spherical cow. . . ."

Bonus Joke: for those who prefer to keep math simple.

One day during math class, the professor was demonstrating how to simplify a fraction. "Take the fraction $16/64$. Now, canceling the six in both the denominator and numerator, we get that $16/64 = 1/4$."

"Wait a second!" piped up one student. "You can't just cancel the six!"

At this the professor turned around and stared at him incredulously, saying, "Oh, so you're telling us $16/64$ is not equal to $1/4$, are you?"

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 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.