

## **Breakthrough Solutions Testimonials**

I would like to offer a testimony to the community leaders with whom we have worked, to our Breakthrough Solutions Partners, and Extension colleagues whose vision, creativity and hard work have made a real difference in their communities and the state of Arkansas. It has been a privilege and blessing to work with them.

**Mark Peterson, Professor – Community and Economic Development  
U of A Cooperative Extension Service**

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“You are to be congratulated for your recognition to the CD Practice. Breakthrough Solutions has quickly gained national attention as an approach towards achieving greater community vitality.”

**Dave Ivan, Michigan State University Extension Community Development Specialist and Co-Chair  
National Innovative Community Development Program Initiative**

“Breakthrough Solutions is considered one of the most cutting-edge programs in the field because it extends beyond the usual visioning process and stimulates fresh thought to get communities out of comfortable ruts. Breakthrough Solutions incorporates asset-based work and innovative tools to break beyond boundaries.”

**Gisele Hamm, Awards Committee Chairperson  
Community Development Society**

"This (the Breakthrough Solutions Program) is necessary. It is absolutely necessary. The work – I draw a parallel to the work of Peter Senge at MIT at the Sloan School of Management. What Peter Senge has done in his creating learning organizations is to bring together the best ideas from all kinds of corporations and share them and exchange them. And that's what you are doing. You are bringing these things to these communities. They have got to have these things. They have to have these raw materials. They don't have the time to read and study on their own. It's just not possible. So this is an invaluable source – this is just terrific for these places. Thank you for all the work you do here in Arkansas. As you know, I call on you to help us in Mississippi on a regular basis."

**Dr. Vaughn Grisham, Director, McLean Center for Community Development  
University of Mississippi, and author of four books on community development**

“One of the biggest advantages is that people are sitting down and talking. It has got people talking and planning for the future. The thing that comes to mind – I think the downtown business association has been wonderful, because since Main Street is no longer active, there has been no group to guide their effort.

That has been a huge, huge effort that came from the Breakthrough solutions program. There is increased excitement about the downtown area. That is a result of C.O.R.E. and the Breakthrough Solutions Program. It is more of an attitude. The momentum in a football game – you can feel the momentum change.”

**Nita Cooper, County Extension Agent – Staff Chairperson  
Boone County Cooperative Extension Service, Harrison, Ark.**

“For the past 20 years, the University of Memphis has hosted the Mid-South Planning and Zoning Institute that is designed to introduce local citizen leaders, professional planners and elected officials with “best practices” in a wide range of policy areas related to local economic and community development. This past spring we had the good fortune of having Dr. Mark Peterson from the University of Arkansas as the keynote speaker for our conference. Dr. Peterson’s address which was entitled, “Strategic Planning for Economic Success – The Breakthrough Solutions Model” offered a compelling critique of mainstream economic development models and presented an elegant system for pursuing a strategic planning-based approach to sustainable development.

Dr. Peterson’s 45-minute presentation offered conference participants a clear analysis of global economic trends affecting small-, medium- and large-sized cities; a critique of various single-pronged development strategies; and a powerful argument for a holistic approach to economic development based upon local assets. Dr. Peterson’s keynote address helped conference attendees place their local economic development efforts within a larger regional, national and global context enabling participants to identify and discuss innovating policy and program development options they had previously not identified. I strongly recommend Dr. Peterson as a speaker, facilitator and resource person for any local community seeking to explore empirically-driven innovative policies to sustainable growth. His contribution to the 2009 Mid-South Planning and Zoning institute was, in short, invaluable!”

**Kenneth M. Reardon, Ph.D.  
Professor and Director of the Graduate Program in City and Regional Planning  
University of Memphis**

"This [Breakthrough Solutions] would be very helpful to communities. Community leaders understand the challenges; this would catch their attention and move

them forward. It would get them thinking about how they can position themselves in an increasingly competitive environment. At the same time, [Breakthrough Solutions] addresses the soft side of leadership skills that are necessary for collaboration within and across community boundaries.”

**Manoj Juneja, Director, Office of Programs, Budget and Evaluation,  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations**

"The insights you have provided [from Breakthrough Solutions] for marketing the UAF Genesis Technology Incubator are awesome."

**Bootsie Ackerman, Executive Director,  
Downtown Fayetteville Partnership and Chairperson,  
Genesis Technology Incubator Marketing Committee**

“Our communities are facing real challenges with this economic downturn and community leaders need programs like Breakthrough Solutions to challenge us, open our minds, and help us reinvent ourselves to succeed in this tough environment.”

**Jeff Pipkin, Director of the Arkansas Valley Alliance for Economic Development  
President and CEO of the Russellville Area Chamber of Commerce**

“It [Breakthrough Solutions] is an eye-opening experience. You have opened our eyes to the potential. It would have a tremendous impact to anyone who is interested in growing their business.”

**Theodis Duckworth, D and R Catering, Forrest City**

“**WOW**, that's what I feel like now; thank you so much for your friendship and taking 3 hours out of your time. That was such a blessing!!! WOW, BIG BIG help!! Your step-by-step planned presentation that you use helps individuals like myself to think and to react and know what can be done with my business, that thinking by yourself sometimes never develops. This process is one-on-one and very helpful. I look forward to the next step.”

**Keith Petersen, President and CEO, CL Creative Lines**

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### **Breakthrough Solutions Workshop at the Community Development Institute**

"The most meaningful aspect was meeting [and] interacting with such a great group of individuals and sharing experiences. Mark, Darlene, Jeff and Maureen did a fantastic job of going through a lot of material in a very short time. Using the make-believe town and characters was a clever way to get everyone thinking

"out of the box". I have already begun applying much of what I learned within my work – especially the "fish market" philosophy. The results are all positive and we are trying some of the "exercises" to help us with our own "Breakthrough Solutions". I appreciated the opportunity to participate in this pilot effort and look forward to the CD."

**Susan Henderson, Owner – Petit Jean Realty, Morrilton, Ark.**

"Breakthrough Solutions provide me with the tools to approach my community about information technology and the global economy, which I didn't have before. It was a wonderful refresher course; it was awesome."

**James Crider, President and CEO,  
Jefferson County Economic Development Alliance,  
Pine Bluff, Ark.**

"You have saved me a year in researching how to create a consortium of colleges and universities in the nation."

**Dr. Henry Morris, Executive Director of the Institute for Creation Research in North Santee, Calif.,  
after a three-hour work session on Breakthrough Solutions.**

Focus Garland County: "Ten principles should be integrated into every high school. Too often, we're exposed to the process of change too late. Make a video! Put it on a downloadable CD! Let me bear the flag!"

**Rebecca McCormick,  
Independent Business Writer, Hot Springs, Ark.**

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### **Pre-Conference Workshop Community Development Society Workshop – Ithaca, N.Y.**

"The value of the seminar, in my view, is that the 10 principles for strategic leadership offer an integrated framework in organizing CD ideas. I will use this to help organize my community development course; it is a rich framework. I will say that Peterson, Rose, and Garrett are doing some innovative stuff! This is an outstanding learning opportunity for beginners and experienced people in community development."

**John J. Gruidl, Director– Peace Corps Fellows Program in C.D.,  
Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Ill.**

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## **VISION 2010**

"The most important impact of VISION 2010 on our community has been a sense of taking control of our future. After reeling from the blow of 700 jobs lost from the Brown Shoe plant closing in 1996, our Randolph County community needed a structure to pull us together and develop a sense of concerted planning for a positive future. VISION 2010 has helped enormously in achieving a focus that all have input and that an emerging consensus for an exciting 21st century is attainable."

**Harmon Seawel, Former Majority Leader,  
Arkansas House of Representatives,  
Former Superintendent of Maynard Public Schools,  
and Randolph County VISION 2010 Leadership Team Member**

"VISION 2010 is an absolutely invaluable opportunity for any city that is short on staff, short on strategic type of thinking. People come to grips with the future in a very organized way."

**Former Mayor Dean Fladager, Gravette, Ark.**

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## **Testimonials from County Extension Agents**

"I never realized the impact of these projects would be so great. We began to track down the value of the projects completed in the last five years, and it really impressed me."

**Berni Kurz, Washington County Extension Agent – Staff Chair  
(reflecting on his experience with VISION 2010 in Crawford County)**

"VISION 2010 has made a huge impact on Mena. I can't say enough good about VISION 2010."

**Terrie James, Sevier County Extension Agent –  
Family and Consumer Science**

"VISION 2010 did a tremendous job of bringing the whole county and community [Hot Springs] together, where usually the county has one set of goals and the community has another. They were all working together.

The county-city split is a major hurdle in many counties because they normally have different goals. But VISION 2010/Focus Garland County bridged the gap. A lot of rural people don't want change, and cities want tremendous change. This came about because they came together to understand it was all one picture."

**Jimmy Driggers, Garland County Extension Agent –  
Staff Chair**

"It (VISION 2010) was a very worthwhile planning process for our community. It helped us look into the future and see what is needed and what we could do. The things that came from the vision fair – many of them are being worked on now. The city is working on some, the county is working on some, and a new group is working on some.

A lot came from it, and will continue to come from it. I have shared a lot of the material from the VISION 2010 notebook with the new economic development group, and they have used it – it is a solid process. Foremost on the list was concern for the courthouse. There are now several groups working on grants. They got \$210,000 from the state legislature for it.

It is so important to get the people involved. There was discussion about passing a 1-cent sales tax to hire an economic developer. The newspaper editor said, "There is no need to do this – you [the VISION 2010 group] have already done it."

**Sheila Brandt, Logan County Extension Agent –  
Staff Chair**

"A lot of things have been done as a result of VISION 2010. A lot of new people have become involved. The biggest thing that VISION 2010 did for the community was to bring a lot of groups together. The result has been the youth complex, teamwork started happening, and people took notice and became involved. It made out city government realize how important the youth complex was, so they bought the land."

**Carla Vaught, Polk County Extension Agent –  
Staff Chair**

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