

Breakthrough News
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Breakthrough Solutions is a program of the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service, with partners in the public, private and non-profit sectors

The purpose of Breakthrough News is to help communities and regions become vibrant, sustainable and resilient in the 21st century economy

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Introduction

Welcome to the latest issue of Breakthrough News. In this issue, you will learn about best practices for communities in the new economy, gold nuggets from our recent conference, fiber coming to Magnolia, and a 24/7 preparedness plan. You won't want to miss it!

Best regards,

Mark Peterson
Professor – Community and Economic Development

Coming Events

March 4-6: 38th Annual Arkansas Governor's Conference on Tourism at West Memphis; for more information, go to <http://www.arkansas.com/governors-conference/>.

March 13: Intelligent Cities lecture at the U of A Clinton School of Public Service, Little Rock. For more information, go to <http://www.clintonschool.uasys.edu/>.

March 26-29: 2012 Mid-South Basic Economic Development Course; for more details, go to <http://www.iea.ualr.edu/econdev>.

March 29-30: Arkansas Economic Developers Spring Conference on Workforce Development at the UALR College of Business; for more information, go to <http://www.aed-arkansas.org/calendar-of-events/icalrepeat.detail/2012/03/29/52/1%7C2/MmNhMzAwZDVIZDU2ZDVkZmRhYzcxYjZkYTNhODRiNGY=.html>.

April 12: Little Rock Sustainability Summit at the Clinton Library Great Hall; for more information, go to <http://www.sustainar.org/content/little-rock-sustainability-summit>.

April 26-27: The Summit – a two-day conference for nonprofits, volunteers and philanthropic organizations; for more information, go to: <http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dcsns/Pages/default.aspx>.

April 24-26: Broadband Communities Summit 12, Dallas, Texas; for more information, go to <http://www.bbcmag.com/2012s/>.

May 3-4: 2012 Delta Conference at the Clinton Library Great Hall; for more information, go to <http://www.mdgc.us/>.

May 22-24: 2012 Rural Development Conference at Eureka Springs; for more information, go to <http://www.arkansas.gov/drs/news.html>.

Best Practices for Communities in the New Economy

Here are some highlight quotes from Michigan State University Community Development Specialist Dave Ivan's keynote presentation at our recent Breakthrough Solutions Conference:

- We in rural areas have to recognize that change is going to happen and that growth is increasingly happening elsewhere. We have new competitors who really don't care about your community and its future.
- We cannot use old strategies to solve new problems. Our success now is based on our ability to learn, and to do things differently.
- A new approach to development is needed in this new economy: "it is what it is", and communities are going to have to adapt to the change that is inevitable!
- Communities will need to look at their assets and work to connect the dots on how they can be used. Oftentimes the leaders that are the "drivers of change" in community development hold no official title; it's not about your position, it's about your passion.
- The next five years will define the next 50.

Pillars to community success:

1) Commitment to support entrepreneurship and innovation:

- Fairfield, Iowa (pop. 6,500) is the poster child for entrepreneurial development, creating over 3,000 jobs through entrepreneurship over the past 10 years.
- Westphalia, Mich. (pop. 500) – a faith-based organization leased a vacant store front in downtown and turned it over to their youth, who created a youth center.

2) Human capital investments drive community success:

- Sparta, Mich. (pop. 4,000) developed a training program for advanced materials cluster in their community college, and are changing the culture among residents relative education and training.
- Houston, Minn. (pop. 1,200) created an online learning curriculum and the Minnesota Virtual Academy. They teach five languages, including Chinese.

3) Strong social capital:

- Pella, Iowa (pop. 6,000) created a "Positively Pella" campaign, three places where young people can hang out and a young professional organization.
- Youngstown, Ohio created a "Thinkers and Drinkers" young persons group, where they put ideas into a hat, pull out one and discuss it.
- Sometimes a community has a poverty of spirit. Connect youth with arts, culture and heritage, and create positive memories for 5th graders and junior high students.
- Communities should have a heavy focus on the development and engagement of youth and young adults.

- Communities should work at modeling not who they are as a community, but who they want to be.
- “Changing the narrative” is important because people move in the direction of their conversations.

4) Commitment to quality of place:

- “The next generation of talent is the first generation to identify more with their community than with their employer.” Rebecca Ryan
- Place-making is important: communities should focus on doing projects that foster community pride.

5) Regional development:

- Communities should consider coming together regionally to have “civic conversations” to explore new opportunities and their potential.
- Communities should have the conviction that “they have to do it themselves”**and that they can do it themselves!**

Gold Nuggets from the Breakthrough Solutions Conference

“People need to be involved from the outset – in the planning”, *Judy Riley, Ignite presentation on Bank Renovation Project, El Paso*

“How do you reach community and chamber members who are always on the go? By creating an iPhone app. Almost every business is getting geared up for mobile strategies.” *Tammy Thurow, Bentonville/Belle Vista Chamber of Commerce*

“Farmers can now stay at home and market their products by buying and selling online.” *Ed Martsolf, Petit Jean Farm, Morrilton, describing online farmers’ markets*

“If you wait for someone to step forward to lead, you will be waiting for quite a while. A lot of people are just waiting to be asked to help. Sometimes an event like this is what is required for new leaders to emerge.” *Susan Holman, county extension agent – Family and Consumer Sciences, Ozark*

“Partnerships are key; we wouldn’t be able to do anything with our partners,” *Michael Jones, chairman, Delta Technology and Education Center, Dumas*

“There is no silver bullet; every community has its challenges and assets,” *Nita Cooper, county extension agent – staff chair, Harrison*

“We all agreed that the downtown core was critical to the future of Harrison and Boone County. We start our meetings with asking what is good that is happening in the C.O.R.E. district,” *Layne Ragsdale, Harrison C.O.R.E.*

“If you haven’t visited any of these Arkansas communities: Anderson Flat, Bolding, Daleville, Rush, Bruno, Crossroads, Fort Douglas or Sneed, it is because they no longer exist. They are the ghost towns of Arkansas that did not change with the times.” *Mark Peterson*

NOTE: The conference included breakout sessions to identify breakthrough strategies for Mena, Mansfield and Stuttgart. You can see all of the conference presentations and breakout session reports at <http://www.vworks.org/conference/default.htm>.

SOAR Awards Presented to Dr. Roby Robertson and Chris Meux

The Breakthrough Solutions SOAR Award is given to communities, regions or individuals who best exemplify the Breakthrough Solutions SOAR process in their community development work. At the 2011-2012 Winter Breakthrough Solutions Conference, SOAR Awards were presented to Dr. Roby Robertson, UALR Institute of Government, and Chris Meux with the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service.

Dr. Roby Robertson



Roby has been a tireless advocate and champion for Breakthrough Solutions as a partnership committed to helping move Arkansas communities forward. He

exemplifies the term “partner”, and walks the walk as well as talks the talk. One of the greatest challenges facing all of us is understanding the major forces impacting communities and regions in Arkansas, and the threats and opportunities that lie before us. Roby’s quick grasp of the major issues confronting Arkansas communities and regions, and his insights and humor have been invaluable in our discussions.

Chris Meux



Chris Meux is a design specialist with the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service. A key element of Breakthrough Solutions is being able to communicate insights and opportunities to community leaders, citizens and community developers across the state. The Breakthrough Solutions Model emerged from discussions with and contributions from Ed Levy, Jeff Jones, Tom Riley, Aly Signorelli, Wayne Miller and several other partners. But it was Chris Meux’s graphic design creativity that made it come alive in a way that compelling and attractive. A common response to Chris’s work is “Wow!” — an indication of the quality of his work.

Congratulations to Dr. Roby Robertson and Chris Meux. Previous recipients of the Breakthrough Solutions SOAR Award include Harrison C.O.R.E. and Ed Levy, Cromwell Architects Engineers in 2010.

Fiber is Coming to Magnolia, and Columbia County is Moving Forward

“Even though all of our rural areas do not have broadband, we are making huge strides,” stated Cammie Hambrice, executive director of the Magnolia Columbia County Chamber of Commerce, and a key leader in Columbia County Forward,

the organization formed to engage Columbia County leaders and citizens in Connect Arkansas's e-Community Program.

Hambrice stated that fiber optic cable is coming in to the community because ARE-ON (Arkansas Education and Optical Network –<http://areon.net>) is connecting Southern Arkansas University into a nationwide high-speed Internet network of colleges and universities. The fiber network offers speeds of 25 megabytes per second, and will connect SAU, all of the schools in Magnolia and the Magnolia business park. In addition, a local entrepreneur is building a fixed wireless network to reach more rural parts of the county. Congratulations to ARE-ON and to Cammie and the Columbia County Forward steering committee for their progress and for persevering in their effort to ensure that Columbia County is becoming fully integrated into the global, digital economy.

Breakthrough Solutions Funding Sponsors

Just a note to thank our funding sponsors for their support of the Breakthrough Solutions Conference and Program. We appreciate their investment in the future of Arkansas:

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A special thanks to:

* the Little Rock Convention and Visitors' Bureau, for sponsoring our Early Arrival Reception before our 2011-2012 Breakthrough Solutions Conference, and

* the University of Central Arkansas Center for Community and Economic Development, for sponsoring our keynote speaker

County Profiles Now Available Online

The Southern Rural Development Center has updated their county profiles for all counties in the southern region. If you are interested in county demographic and economic information, go to the following website: <http://srdc.msstate.edu/data/center/>.

Breakthrough Solutions Partners

We appreciate the continued support of our Breakthrough Solutions Partners:

- Arkansas Assoc. of Two-Year Colleges
- Arkansas Geographic Information Office
- AR Science and Technology Authority
- Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce
- CenturyLink
- Delta Center for Econ. Dev., ASU
- Entergy Teamwork Arkansas
- Federal Reserve Bank, Little Rock Branch
- UALR Institute for Econ. Advancement
- UALR Small Business Development Technology and Development Center
- Arkansas Community Foundation
- AR Human Development Corporation
- AT&T Arkansas
- Center for Community & Econ. Dev., UCA
- Cromwell Architects Engineers
- Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas
- Ken Hubbell and Associates
- U of A Cooperative Extension Service
- UALR Institute of Government

Tip of the Month – The 24/7 Preparedness Plan

The news these days is filled with all sorts of threats to our nation, our economy and our way of life. Here is a 24 Day/7 Hour Preparedness Plan that will give you (more) peace of mind. It is straightforward, but requires action on your part.

24 Day Preparation:

Step No. 1: Become informed about the disasters most likely to impact you in your location – natural disasters, high inflation, social unrest, electromagnetic pulse attacks (an atomic bomb exploded at a high altitude that fries our electric grid), etc., and you will find that what we need

for most of them is the same – food, water, heat, light, safety, communication and especially good neighbors.

Step No. 2: Decide how long you will prepare for. FEMA calls for a minimum of three days of supplies. But if you think the above-mentioned crises will be over in three days, you are not paying attention to what is happening in the world. For example, several major oil and natural gas pipelines go through the New Madrid fault zone en route to the northeast U.S. If the New Madrid earthquake shakes during wintertime, it could get very chilly up north. Thinking in months is better than days.

Step No. 3: Prepare for sheltering at home and for evacuating your home. These websites may be helpful: www.ready.gov, <http://www.arcommunities.org/> (Be Aware and Prepare Series at the bottom of the page), and <http://www.chrismartenson.com/page/what-should-i-do>.

Step No. 4: Identify what you need to do and plan to do it in the next 24 days. Once you complete your plan, the 24 days begins. Tick, tick, tick...

7 Hour Preparation:

True Story – a friend who used to live in Indonesia had this experience: in a matter of weeks, the currency of Indonesia became worthless through hyperinflation (the government ran the printing presses to cover the great debts it had incurred). Stores were cleaned out in hours, the banks were closed and mobs took to the streets, looking for food, water and anything of value. He had five hours to get his family out, which he was able to do.

Step No. 5: Now assume that a crisis hits your community and you have SEVEN HOURS to leave your home (it could be a lot less). What do you have to do be ready?

By the way, the reason that many people are caught flat-footed when disasters strike is that they are not students of history. Based on their own (limited) experience, they cannot conceive of disasters happening to them.

Website of the Month – Pack Your Bags – On Our Way to West Texas

The power of stories, visual images, and music to touch our hearts (and our pocketbooks) is demonstrated in this gorgeous presentation about West Texas. Photos are by Wyman Meinzer and the music is by Doug Smith: <http://www.wymanmeinzer.com/west-texas-2/>.

Strategic Question: What could your community do online that would motivate people to share it with all their friends and relatives?

Visit Our Community and Economic Development Unit at:

<http://www.arcommunities.org/>

<http://www.facebook.com/UACommunityDevelopment>

How to Strategically Impact Your Community:

If you want to impact your community in a powerful way, forward this email newsletter to other individuals in your community or organization, so they can benefit from the resources, insights, and strategies covered in Breakthrough News.

More About Breakthrough Solutions:

Recipient of the Outstanding Program Award and Innovative Program Award by the international Community Development Society, Breakthrough Solutions is a program of the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service, with partners in the public, private and non-profit sectors. For more information: www.vworks.org, vworks@uaex.edu, 501-671-2253.

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