

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 January 2012 issue of Breakthrough News. In this issue, you will learn more about our Jan. 25 conference, see the Breakthrough Solutions model, learn about the Peanut Butter Approach to community development, hear insights from the president of Connect Arkansas about broadband, and learn about green burglars.

Best regards,
Mark

Mark Peterson
Professor – Community and Economic Development

Coming Events

January 25: 2011-2012 Winter Breakthrough Solutions Conference with the theme: “Creating Vibrant, Sustainable, Resilient Communities – Reassess and Refocus”. Airport Holiday Inn in Little Rock. More information is in this newsletter.

January 26: Political Candidate Training Seminar – Learn How to Wage an Effective Campaign, a public service sponsored by the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas and the AR Broadcasters Association. Call 501-570-2271 or go to <http://www.aecc.com/governmental-affairs/political-candidate-training>.

February 9: Senior Officials Workshop for All Hazards Preparedness, sponsored by the UALR Institute for Economic Advancement. For more information, go to <http://www.iea.ualr.edu/cedenews/772-senior-officials-workshop.html> or contact Tonya Hass at tghass@ualr.edu, 501-683-7407.

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

2011-2012 Breakthrough Solutions Conference is Just Around the Corner

What do regional development, iPhone apps, youth entrepreneurship, vibrant communities, revitalizing downtowns, surviving a devastating tornado, transforming a vacant building into a community library, creating a community education technology center, key drivers of change, and leveraging assets to create new economic opportunities all have in common?

- a) They represent valuable knowledge and skills that communities and regions need today,
- b) They will all addressed at the 2011-2012 Winter Breakthrough Solutions Conference in Little Rock on Jan. 25.
- c) Other: _____

If you guessed a and b and c, you are correct. The Other includes:

- **An early arrival reception and networking session** to meet our keynote speaker and network with other conference participants, from 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. the evening before the conference,
- **The opportunity for conference participants to PARTICIPATE** in an AHA session over lunch and a working session to devise breakthrough strategies for three Arkansas communities,
- **An opportunity to win the 2011-2012 Breakthrough Solutions Grand Prize** – a weekend at historic Harrison, Ark., Ozark Mountain Gateway to the Buffalo River National Park Region.

The Breakthrough Solutions partners invite you to join us for a great learning experience as we learn how to create vibrant, sustainable, resilient communities and regions. A participant from our last conference states:

“The U of A 2010 Breakthrough Solutions Conference, ‘Tomorrow’s Communities—Innovative, Global and Local’, ranks as one of the best conferences I have ever attended. The conference organization, topics, speakers, activities and stories addressed common issues facing many rural communities, as well as solutions that have helped transform and sustain those communities into the future.”

Maureen Keese
Director of Lifelong Learning and Program Development
Rich Mountain Community College, Mena, Ark.

Conference registration, which includes an early arrival reception, lunch, refreshments and conference materials, is only \$70. The registration form is available online; just select the links (**PDF** or **MSWord**). If you have questions, contact Aly Signorelli at 501-671-2072 or email asignorelli@uaex.edu. You won't want to miss it!

Best Practices for Communities in the New Economy – Meet Our Keynote Speaker – Dave Ivan

Our world has changed, and new strategies are needed to add vitality in our cities and communities in the global economy. One person who has a handle on these new strategies, and his name is Dave Ivan, a state specialist in Community and Economic Development with the Michigan State University Cooperative Extension Service.



Ivan conducts community and economic development programs statewide for Michigan State University Extension. He has conducted previous research on community sustainability, including a 2002 federally-funded project entitled “Small Town Success Strategies, and a 2004 project entitled “Can Small Towns Be Cool.” His current research topics examine small community approaches to compete in the new economy and the use of social media to engage new players in economic development. He has spoken at more than 50 state, regional and national, municipal and Main Street conferences.

Dave’s research and presentation at the Breakthrough Solutions conference is based on real stories in real communities(from 500 to 125,000 population), including struggling communities that are using innovative approaches. The communities he studied were recommended by the National League of Cities, National Chamber of Commerce finalists and state municipal leagues.**They are the most successful communities of in the nation, and we will learn from their experiences on Jan. 25!** By the way, three of the five key elements that Dave has identified (and will give examples of) are quality of place, regional development and entrepreneurship.

Creating Opportunities for Your Community – the Breakthrough Solutions Model

Exercise

I. Which do you think is most effective at addressing the challenges facing your community:

- a) Find a quick fix
- b) Ask the government to rescue us
- c) Invite an outside expert to tell us what to do
- d) Do it ourselves
- e) Other: _____

Response: Breakthrough Solutions is a new approach that

- embraces quick-fixes and short-term wins as they come along,
- does not depend on government resources but utilizes them as available,
- taps expertise of people in and out of the community,
- is driven by local leaders and citizens and equips them to leverage their assets to realize their desired future.

The Breakthrough Action process (presented in the December 2011 issue) shows us how to organize for action. But how do we create breakthroughs that can transform our community? The key is to understand that breakthroughs come from leveraging, connecting and transforming assets in a community. That's why deficit-based models are not very effective – they try to start with a deficit. How can you leverage something that is not there?

A second key point is that breakthroughs come from focusing resources on those breakthrough solutions that will be a catalyst for much greater development, rather than spreading resources thinly all across the community, which often merely perpetuates the status quo. A real breakthrough solution will serve as a magnet to attract resources and investment from the public, private and non-profit sectors.

Which is More Effective?

The Peanut Butter Approach – Spread Your Resources Thinly



Focused, Strategic Investments – Breakthroughs



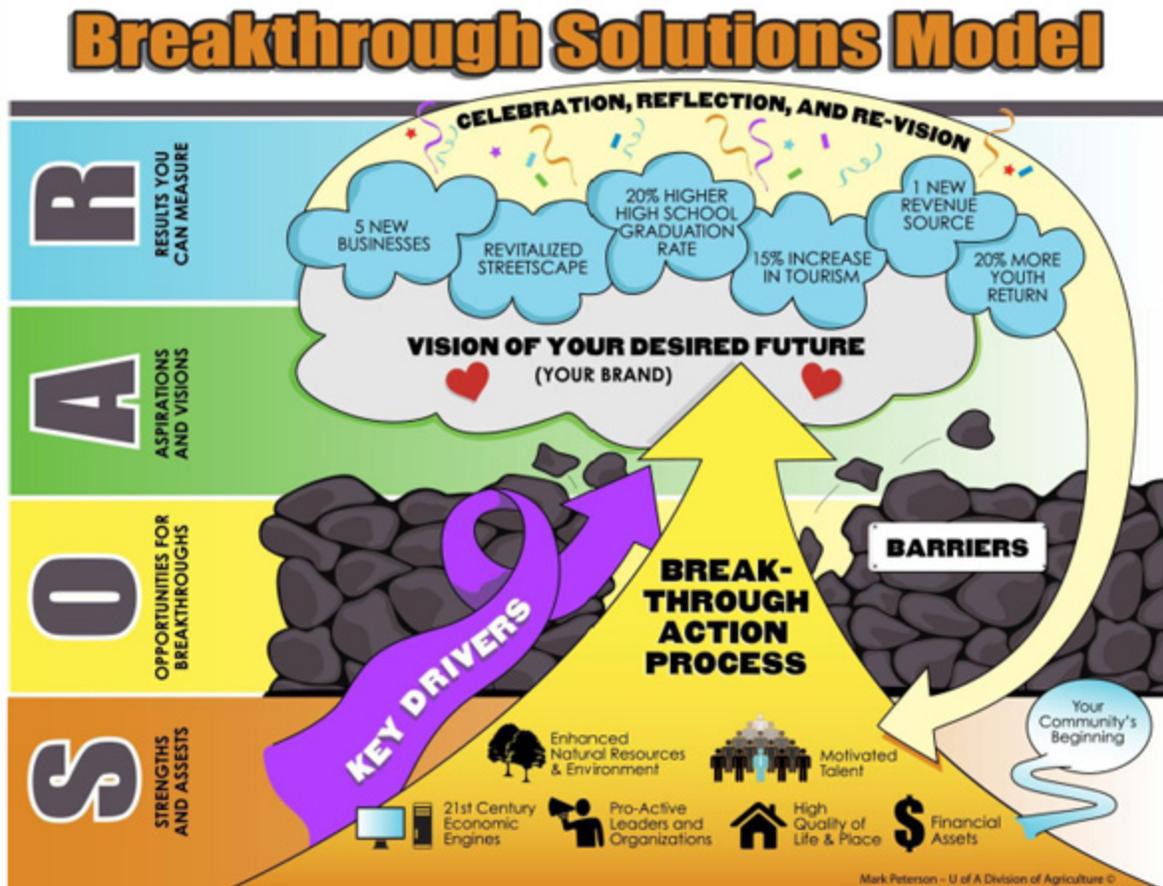
This focus on discovering and creating new opportunities (breakthroughs) from assets, leads us to consider a new approach to community analysis – SOAR, developed by J.M. Stavros and G. Hinrichs*.

The Breakthrough Solutions Model adapts SOAR in the following manner:

- **S**trengths and assets
- **O**pportunities for breakthroughs
- **A**spirations and visions
- **R**esults you can measure.

SOAR is now being embraced by major corporations such as Deere and Company, as they see how effectively it involves and motivates its employees.

The Breakthrough Solutions model shows us how to create breakthroughs that can transform your community. The model identifies and leverages assets to create breakthroughs and breakthrough solutions that lead to concrete, measurable results.



To learn more about the Breakthrough Solutions model, an asset map, and how to create a Breakthrough Solutions roadmap, go to the latest Breakthrough Solutions blog entry: <http://breakthroughsolutionsforcommunities.wordpress.com/>

* Stavros, J. M. & Hinrichs, G. (2009). The thin book of SOAR – building strength-based strategy. Bend, Ore.: Thin Book Publishing.

Breakthrough Solutions Partners

We appreciate the continued support of our Breakthrough Solutions Partners:

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Arkansas Broadband 2.0 – an Interview with C. Sam Walls, President of Connect Arkansas

Since its inception, Connect Arkansas has been on the forefront of broadband development, helping citizens and communities and businesses take advantage of broadband in the state. It has now been in existence for three years, and seen significant changes take place in broadband availability and utilization. C. Sam Walls, CEO of Arkansas Capital Group and president of Connect Arkansas, has been leading the charge, and has great insight into where we have been and where we are going. To see this interview, [go here](#).

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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Silver Sponsors – AEP Swepco, Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas, Entergy Teamwork Arkansas

Bronze Sponsors – Arkansas Cable Telecommunications Association, Arkansas Community Development Society, Bank of the Ozarks, Flake and Kelley City Solutions

Website of the Month – An Interactive Map Shows the Economy Where You Live

The fallout from the recession has cut deeply into the housing security, employment and income of many Americans. But some parts of the country are faring better than others. This website has three interactive maps show foreclosure rates, unemployment rates, and median household income by county, and enables you to compare your county with the nation: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=111494514>.

Story of the Month – Who Stole My Grease? Even Burglars Are Recycling

We have all seen stories of copper being stolen from houses being built, because of high copper prices. The latest target for thieves is fryer grease from restaurants, used to make biofuel. **“Grease is no different from diamonds,”** Christopher Griffin, director of legal affairs for Cold Spring, Ky.-based Griffin Industries Inc., which collects raw grease, told a reporter. “They both have value, they’re both a commodity.”

See <http://www.minyanville.com/dailyfeed/2011/04/27/as-price-of-crude-rises/>. By the way, green communities even have their own smell. A colleague reported that a friend of his son uses used fryer oil from a Chinese restaurant in his vehicle, and **every time he drives by, it smells like a Chinese restaurant!**

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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