

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 incredible stories and strategic opportunities, gold nuggets picked up at a conference, hot tips on cluster development, a new twist on community gardens, and a story that will send chills down your back. You won't want to miss it!

Best regards,

Mark Peterson
Professor – Community and Economic Development

Coming Events

June 19-22: Community Development Week, Little Rock, sponsored by the Arkansas Coalition of Housing and Neighborhood Growth for Empowerment: <http://www.achange.org/>

June 20: Economic Development Summit, Monticello, sponsored by the Southeast Arkansas Cornerstone Coalition, the Arkansas Economic Development Commission, and the Arkansas Capital Corporation; for more information, go to www.searkcornerstone.org/edsummit.html.

June 27: Arkansas Community Development Society (ACDS) Regional Meeting, featuring “Let’s Paint Stuttgart”, Stuttgart. For more information, contact Renee Doty, ACDS Secretary, rdoty@arkansasedc.com, W 501-682-7681, C 501-837-8231

July 20: Rural Health Retreat – The State of Rural Health in Arkansas, Little Rock, sponsored by the UAMS Center for Rural Health: https://secure.uams.edu/rhpconference/archive/00000009/conference_register.aspx?ID=9

August 6-10: Community Development Institute Central, Conway. This is the 26th year for CDI! Go to www.uca.edu/cdi.

Partners for the Future Initiative Launched by the Arkansas Regional Coalition for the Ouachitas, RMCC, and Division of Agriculture



Community Leaders from Montgomery, Polk, and Montgomery Counties pose after a meeting of the Arkansas Coalition for the Ouachitas in Mena

The Arkansas Coalition for the Ouachitas, Rich Mountain Community College, and the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture's Cooperative Extension Service are launching a regional economic development initiative that will take place in Montgomery, Polk, and Scott counties.

"Partners for Creating a Vibrant, Sustainable Future" will implement the Breakthrough Solutions Program in the three counties. Breakthrough Solutions is a program of the extension service with 17 partners in the public, private and non-profit sectors. The community of Harrison was the pilot community for Breakthrough Solutions. Since working with the program, Harrison has attracted more than 20 new businesses into its downtown.

"We are excited about the opportunity to partner with the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service and their Breakthrough Solutions Program to work together in the three counties," said Gar Eisele, ARCO chair. "They have a successful track record and valuable experience we can draw from here in the ARCO region."

The Breakthrough Solutions Program has five elements:

- a community engagement and planning process,
- an economic opportunities study which would identify the most promising economic development strategies for the ARCO region,
- a fiscal study that analyzes the economic impact of U.S. Forest Service funds and their potential loss on the county governments and school districts,
- a three-day design charrette led by an architectural team from Cromwell Architects Engineers, and
- a road trip to visit and learn from other successful communities in Arkansas or adjoining states.

To learn more about ARCO, go to: <http://www.arcostrong.org/>. To learn more about Breakthrough Solutions go to www.vworks.org. For more information about community development, contact your county extension office, or visit www.uaex.edu.

Incredible Stories, Strategic Opportunities

I recently returned from the 8th Annual National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP) conference in Park City, Utah.

It was a wonderful conference, and I heard incredible stories and learned about new strategic opportunities.

How Good Ideas Become Great

The adventure started with a conversation on a plane with an executive of a multi-national marketing and information services. He lives in Silicon Valley in California, but has a Ph.D. in computer services from M.I.T. He made these key points:

- Many people have good ideas. But good ideas only become great when they are shared, tested, taken apart, and put together.
- One of primary reasons that Silicon Valley in California has been so much more successful as an economic engine than the MIT corridor in Massachusetts is that in the Silicon Valley, **ideas are shared widely, and tested**. There are well developed communication networks and a culture that encourages sharing ideas, collaboration, and entrepreneurship.
- In contrast, the culture of the M.I.T. corridor is much less trusting, with institutional barriers to safeguard ideas from others.

Strategic Questions:

1. Is your community, region, or organization more like the MIT corridor with its many silos, or like Silicon Valley, with its active communication networks?
2. You have a really good idea, but are you willing to put it out there and share it across your community or region so it can become great?

Park City, Utah – Transforming Its Economy, Several Times

How could a community that was nearly a ghost town in the 1950s become a vibrant, lively tourist mecca that now attracts over 3 million visitors each year?

This is an incredible story of economic transformation – of a community and region that leveraged their assets to create breakthroughs, and the process is still underway. When the transcontinental railroad was completed on May 10, 1869m at Promontory Point, Utah, it immediately threw hundreds of railroad construction workers out of work. Fortunately, that same year, a claim for a silver mine was filed in Park City, Utah, approximately 100 miles away. So many railroad workers became silver miners, and in the late 1800s, the Park City area boasted of the greatest silver mines in the world. The town flourished with crowds of miners and wealth.

The mountainous terrain surrounding Park City lent itself to skiing, and the mining companies encouraged their miners to ski in the winter time when it was too cold to operate the mines. It kept them from leaving town, and out of trouble. The miners would attach ropes to the ore trains and let the trains pull them up the mountains so they could ski back down.

Shift #1 – From Mining to Skiing

By the end of the 1950s, the city nearly became a ghost town because of dropping silver prices and the negative impact of the world wars and Great Depression. The transformation of the community into a ski resort was a breakthrough that came out of desperation. The town was hanging by a thread when miners started a ski resort called Treasure Mountain which ended up saving the town. This ski resort opened in 1963 on 10,000 acres of land the miners owned, and was a catalyst for tourists first coming to Park City in significant numbers.

A key event that led to this economic transformation was the recognition that the mining industry was fading away, that action was needed, and that they could leverage their natural beauty and topography to create a new economic base.

Shift #2 – From Skiing to a Year-Around Resort Community

Today, Park City (pop. 7,558), is one of the most affluent and lively resort towns in the U.S., and draws more than 3 million tourists per year. Isn't that incredible? How did they do it?

Key events contributing to this transformation:

- Effective promotion of Park City as a mountain getaway, and of Utah as “The Greatest Snow on Earth”;
- Extending the ski season with snow-making machines;
- Attracting the 2002 Winter Olympic games was a huge breakthrough, as it led to:
 - the construction of world class skiing facilities,
 - global visibility as a top skiing destination,
 - becoming the home base for the United States Ski Team, and
 - a training center for members of the Australian Freestyle Ski team;
- Developing other winter activities: ice climbing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, and the Sundance Film Festival in January;
- Creating new events for the summer off-season: the Park City Arts Festival, Park City Marathon, cycling festival, hot air balloon rides, concert series', International Jazz Festival, summer motorcycle weekend, regional sports tournaments, summer hiking, mountain biking, summer golf, a Park City museum and year-round historical district.



Downtown Park City, Utah
Photo courtesy of the Park City
Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau

Shift #3: The Quest for Sustainability

Park City is an excellent example of a community and region with a tourism economic base that has prospered and continues to grow. The next challenge is sustainability, and the process is now underway.

Speaking at the conference, Park City Mayor Dana Williams stated: “After the Olympics in 2002, we had a unique opportunity to redefine ourselves. We went to the community to create a vision. It took 2½ years, and we involved 500 people. We asked them:

- Why are you here?
- What keeps you here?
- What would make you leave?
- What should we improve?

They want us to preserve our natural environment, so we bought 7,000 acres to preserve. **Our economic future depends on what we don’t build.**

I told our department heads that we need to move toward sustainability. They said it couldn’t be done, so I fired them and created an office of sustainability. We now have a 14,000 square foot city hall that costs \$280/month for utilities. We have 400 miles of trails here, and we are creating a year-round community.”

Additional sources: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Park_City, Utah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Park_City,_Utah)
http://historytogo.utah.gov/places/olympic_locations/historyofparkcity.html

Gold Nuggets Picked Up at the Conference

“We look at technology [social media in particular] as a way to get the word out rather than as a way to interact with our clientele.”

Jerold Thomas, Ohio State University

“One issue - economic development - is our greatest opportunity and our greatest challenge.”

Noelle Crockett, V. P., Utah State University

“We need paradigm shifts:

- From rural as residential to rural as essential:
 - Where will our food come from?
 - Where will we put the windmills – in San Francisco?
- From experts in silos to partners in collaboration.”

Sally Ward Maggard, Retired USDA – NIFA

“Do surveys, to find out how transplants see your community. If they say the community is not friendly and they don’t get assimilated, they will leave.”

Scott Hutcheson, Purdue University

“Take an abstract value and make it personal. If you are not connecting with people in your community about things that are important to them, you are missing a great opportunity.

A successful vision:

- is guided by a large, trusted, and diverse group of stakeholders,
- relies on community values to find common goals, and
- communicates choices that touch hearts and heads, and builds consensus.”

Robert J. Grow, Founder, Envision Utah

“Dreaming New Mexico” shows a very creative visioning process. Go to <http://www.dreamingnewmexico.org/>.

“Look at people who live in your community but work outside of your community as part of your available work force. People who work in your community but live outside of your community are potential residents, with an unmet need for housing.”

Bill Pinkovitz, University of Wisconsin

Hot Tips on Cluster Development – a conversation with Matt Kane, University of Minnesota

An economic cluster is a set of inter-related businesses, organizations, suppliers, and technical experts centered around an economic activity, such as metal-working or growing rice, usually taking place in a multi-county area. The vibrancy of the cluster depends on the interactions between these different players, among other factors. To identify new opportunities, invite a group of stakeholders in your region to come together and go through this exercise:

- On a big sheet of paper, draw a circle for each of the economic clusters that exist in your region, such as Arts and Crafts, Local Foods, Tourism, and Retirees.
 - Now fill in the assets and players you have in each of those clusters.
 - With a different color marker, write in what gaps or opportunities exist to take each cluster to the next level – better, bigger, more robust, harnessing the key drivers of change.
 - Now take a different color marker and draw the interactions between these clusters (Arts and Crafts to Local Foods to Tourism to Retirees), and the opportunities for synergies between them.
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Grazing Gardens - a New Twist on Community Gardens

Community leaders in Hanover AL created a grazing garden across the street from the school. The garden features several kinds of fruits and a few vegetables, and it is all available to the public – free. The only catch is that you cannot carry any produce off of the property – you have to eat it there. This is a valuable educational tool for the school kids, and shows what can be grown in the area.

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

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

Breakthrough Solutions Program Selected for Regional Community Development Award

At this recent conference, the Team Award for Excellence in Community Development Programming for the 13-state Southern Region was awarded to the Breakthrough Solutions Program of the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture. The purpose of the Breakthrough Solutions Program is to equip communities and regions to become vibrant and sustainable in this 21st century economy through a development process that is asset-based, community-driven, and technology-enabled.

Breakthrough Solutions is a partnership initiative, and we are honored to receive this award from this national community development professional organization. A special thanks to our partners, listed below.

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

Story of the Month – Trees Don't Have Skis

The last story of the trip is so incredible, it is our Story of the Month.

As I was sitting in the Dallas Airport waiting to catch a flight back to Little Rock, a blind fellow sat down beside me. He was Dave Wilkinson, a product specialist with NanoPac, Inc., a company that supplies technology products for the disabled. He was on his way to Little Rock from his home base in California. When he learned that I was coming from Park City, Utah, he mentioned that Park City has great skiing.

I just had to ask him if he skis. “Yes,” he replied. After I picked myself off of the floor, I asked him how he does it. “I have someone who skis in front of me. I can just barely see the ends of his skis, and he tells me when we are going to turn.” When I asked him how he avoids hitting trees, he replied: “**Trees don’t have skis**”. Finally, I asked him if there was anything he couldn’t do. He thought for a moment, and then **just shook his head**.

Key Lesson – If you can read this with your natural eyesight, **you and I have no excuse**. Talk about courage! If Dave Wilkinson, who has very limited eyesight, can ski down a mountain, **we should be able to jump out of bed in the**

morning and go change the world, to make it a better place for our children and grandchildren.

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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