

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 how we need to think, act, and do community economic development differently in this time, how to navigate the rapids of change, exploring new opportunities for the Delta Technology Education Center, and insights from a vibrant communities road trip, and an incredible story about transforming assets into assets. You won't want to miss it!

Best regards,

Mark Peterson
Professor – Community and Economic Development

Gold Nuggets from the 2013 Breakthrough Solutions Conference



Thanks to all who were involved in our conference on May 8. Here are some gold nuggets from the conference:

“We Don’t Have a Lack of Jobs; We Have a Drug Problem. In Russellville, 7 out of 10 job applicants can’t pass a drug test.”

*Jeff Pipkin, President/CEO,
Russellville Area Chamber of Commerce*

NOTE: Gary Morgan, a Licensed Professional Counselor, presented an eight step process to develop a coalition for development for drug free work force at the conference. You can see it [here](#). He also shared some background information on the drug issue, which you can see [here](#). This is a great example of how economic and community development are dependent on each other, and require the talents and skills of many people to be most effective.

“Instead of saying no, or raising obstacles, we need to say yes, how can we do that?”

*Patty Methvin, President and CEO,
Harrison Regional Chamber of Commerce*

“A single grantwriter isn’t a sustainable approach; if you are taking a community approach [with a local funding team], a number of grantwriters

and others working together can be more competitive for external funding opportunities.”

*John Gulick, Community Capacity Builders
LLC, Nevada MO*

“There is a spark in Clarksville now. There was opposition for years, but the momentum is growing.”

*Sue Kinsey, Clarksville – Johnson County
Regional Chamber of Commerce*

“Our most important priority is the creation of jobs. If we fail in this task, we will be toast. If we take charge of our future, we can change this back into an American century. On-sourcing is an enormous opportunity. We are on the verge of being energy independent in the U.S. because of oil and natural gas development. We need to add value to these resources.”

*Randy Zook, President / CEO,
Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce*

“When the internet goes down, everything stops.”

Jeff Jones, CenturyLink

“We have to invest in education and workforce preparation – we have to pay it forward.”

*Dr. Ed Franklin, Executive Director, Arkansas
Association of Two Year Colleges*

“I have absolute certainty – we have to do this to survive.”

*Dr. David Rainey, Superintendent, DumasPublic Schools, New Tech High
School,
and President, Delta Technology Education Center Board*

“Thanks so much for inviting us to the BTS conference. I came away feeling inspired and absolutely amped to get into the serious Breakthrough Communities work. The two sessions I attended were incredible learning experiences, and I hope to be able to apply some of my new knowledge in the near future.”

Community Economic Development Today: Thinking, Acting, and Doing Differently

“What were the assets of our community 100 years ago? What will be the assets of our community 100 years from now? Our grandchildren will inherit a very different set of circumstances,” stated Sharon Gulick, Director of University of Missouri Extension’s Community Economic and Entrepreneurial Development Program and our conference keynote speaker. “We need to move from hierarchies to networks, connections, and collaboration.”



Gulick continued: “Have you heard of secret shoppers? While a group from an industry comes into your town to discuss opportunities for industry, another group is in town in secret, going into shops and asking people about your community.

What makes your community valuable to young people? In Brookfield MO, at high school graduation, every student gets a full size mailbox, with a letter from the community, telling them that they have a place for them back in the community.

We move in the direction of our conversations. When we focus on the positive, it moves us toward success. Tell us about a time that was really successful. Every community has CAVE people – Citizens against Virtually Everything. You need to move forward anyway.” See her presentation [here](#).

Navigating the Rapids of Change – Building Innovative, Sustainable, Communities and Regions in a Rapidly Changing World

In my presentation at the conference, I shared a story of when I went white-water rafting on the Green River in



Utah. In spite of our expert guide, we landed in the water.

Key Point #1: In a rapidly changing world, even experts get it wrong sometimes.

Corollary: That is one reason why it is important to gain insights from “off” (from out of your community or region) - by taking real or virtual road trips, attending conferences, or inviting resource people to your community.

Key Point #2: If you want to make significant change in your community or region over time, it is critical that you meet regularly and often to share, discuss, and take action. Do you do this?

- The Little Rock River Market is a terrific success story, and has attracted over \$2 billion investment from public, private, and non-profit sources. This is a tribute to the visionary leadership of Little Rock leaders, but also to the fact that a group of those leaders meet every Thursday from 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m., and have done so for THIRTEEN YEARS.
- If you have a vital development initiative underway in your community, do you meet on a regular basis and often? If not, why not?

Key Point #3: When the environment changes, we have to adapt or we are toast.

- If you have never heard of Anderson flat, Bruno, Bolding, Crossroads, Daleville, Ft. Douglas, Rush, or Sneed, Arkansas, it is because they are GHOST TOWNS. Everybody left, and the last one out turned out the lights.
- Why do towns disappear?
- Do you see some of these signs in your community or region?
- How could a community (Park City, UT) that was nearly a ghost town in the 1950s become a vibrant tourist mecca that now attracts over 3 million visitors each year?
- Answer: They reinvented themselves (three times): from mining to skiing, from skiing to year-around resort community, and from year-around resort community to sustainability.

Key Point #4: An organization is strongest and most sustainable when it is woven into the fabric of the community.

- North Carolina has more experience with business and technology telecenters than any other state in the nation.
- Their most successful ones were vitally connected with the community, acts as catalysts in community and economic development and leveraging local assets to address high priority issues and opportunities.

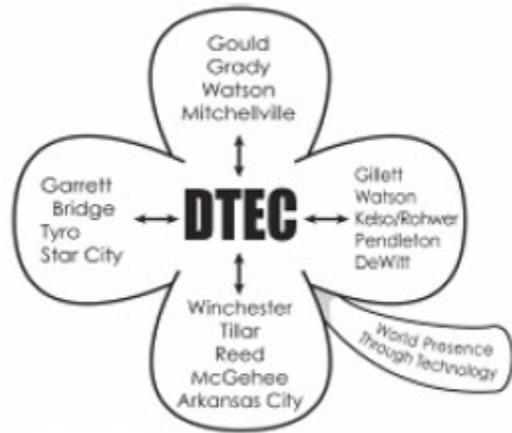
Quote of the Day: The difference between a successful person [or community] and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, [nor lack of money], but rather a lack of will. *Coach Vince Lombardi*

NOTE: You can see my powerpoint presentation [here](#).

Exploring New Potentials for DTEC

DTEC, the Delta Technology Education Center, provides a valuable vehicle for education, workforce development, and internet access for citizens in parts of four counties in southeast Arkansas surrounding Dumas. DTEC in Action is an initiative to move DTEC toward sustainability over the long term.

On March 21, Terre McLendon, Director of Community and Industrial Studies at the UALR Institute for Economic Advancement, and Dr. Roby Robertson, Professor at the UALR Institute of Government, received a tour of DTEC from Dr. David Rainey, Chairman of the DTEC Board and Shaluanda Jones, DTEC Executive Director. They then met with the DTEC in Action Steering Committee.



They complimented the DTEC board and community leaders for establishing such a vital facility, and encouraged them to explore how DTEC can become a vehicle for the whole community to connect with and learn from resources from elsewhere in the state or nation.

As a direct result of this meeting, DTEC:

- Used telecommunications to connect with the North Carolina Department of Commerce to learn about their business and technology telecenters, (highlights will be reported in the next issue) and
- hosted a webinar featuring Roger Brooks, Destination Development International on how developing a critical mass for retail, restaurants, and activities, is critical to develop a vibrant, sustainable downtown.

“I can’t tell you how much we enjoyed the webinar on downtown revitalization,” stated. “It was full of good ideas, and I want our board to see it. It takes a group to implement those ideas.”

Jann Farmer, Main Street Director in Dumas

Whitehead, Markham Named to Lead UCA Center of Community and Economic Development



John and Sharon Gulick Receiving the Arkansas Traveler Certificate From Amy Whitehead at Breakthrough Solutions Conference

Congratulations to Amy Whitehead, who was recently named Director for the Center for Community and Economic Development at the University of Central Arkansas. The center's work includes the Community Development Institute, as well as their training and technical assistance work with Arkansas communities. And congratulations also to Josh Markham, who has been named Assistant Director of the Center. Whitehead is a Professional Community and Economic Developer through the national Community Development Council, and is a graduate of the Community Development Institute and UCA's Master of Science in Community and Economic Development, where she now serves as an adjunct faculty member. Markham has significant experience in the non-profit sector, youth leadership development, and community training projects.

The UCA Center for Community and Economic Development is a Breakthrough Solutions Partner, and we salute them for their wise decisions in selecting Amy and Josh for these positions.

Vibrant Communities Road Trip Final Report



Waldron Mayor Don Owens speaking with Leslie Mayor Talitha Hardin

We have two final stories from our road trip last December. They are just too good not to share:

Leslie (pop. 441) – An Interview with Mayor Talitha Hardin

Grants can be a boost: “We have added six new businesses since 2008”, states Leslie Mayor Talitha Hardin. “We have also passed a sales tax and attracted \$637,000 in grants during this same time.”

Be strategic with your marketing: The Leslie merchant association bought a billboard one hour south of Leslie, with LeslieArkansas.org on it. It has paid off; there are now four restaurants in Leslie!

Use technology: Geocaching has merit, with no cost; take a look at aroundme app for iphones.

Rural Community Alliance – An Interview with Renee Carr

Renee Carr, Executive Director of the Rural Community Alliance
(www.thenewrural.org)

- Our vision of regional development is to work with small communities to develop their capacity, then bring them together.
- Our members share a common vision: excellent schools, strong and prosperous communities, and committed and engaged citizens.
- For little towns, what they have that is special is the heritage, the stories, and the people
- We are starting regional events – we held a regional yard sale, and are working on a quilt trail, where each town has its quilts out.
- Ozark Byways – Follow the Winding Road for a genuine Ozark experience: <http://www.ozarkbyways.com/>

Coming Events

June 6: Small City Economic Leadership Empowerment

Summit, Conway:

<http://houseaboutit.org>

June 14, 24, 28: Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention Regional Summits; go

to <http://www.arkansasobesity.org/> for more details.

July 20-24: 2013 Community Development Society Annual Conference, Charleston

SC: www.comm-dev.org

July 29-August 2: 2013 Community Development Institute, sponsored by the UCA

Center for Community and Economic Development: www.ueca.edu/cdi.

NOTE: Several scholarships are available for CDI 2013; for more information,

send an e-mail cdi@uca.edu or call 501.852.2930.

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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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- Rock Branch
- UALR Institute for Econ. Advancement
- UALR Small Business Development Technology and Development Center
- Cooperative Extension Service
- UALR Institute of Government

Story of the Month – Ebrace Your Shake

Communities and regions are often held back by various limitations. What if we learned how to transform those limitations into assets? We can learn from a fellow who did just that – Phil Hansen. In art school, Phil Hansen developed an unruly tremor in his hand that kept him from creating the pointillist drawings he loved. Hansen was devastated, floating without a sense of purpose. Until a neurologist made a simple suggestion: embrace this limitation ... and transcend it.



Taking a cue from his own artistic journey, Phil Hansen challenges us to spark our creativity by thinking inside the box:

http://www.ted.com/talks/phil_hansen_embrace_the_shake.html

Breakthrough Question: What limitations in your community can you transform into an asset?

Thank you Ken Hubbell, for sharing this with us.

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 e-mail 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 Division of Agriculture 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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