

**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

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

Editor: Mark Peterson, Professor – Community and Economic Development

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**Introduction**

Welcome to the November 2011 issue of Breakthrough News. The New Normal of economic and political uncertainty is still infused by these key drivers of change: broadband connectivity, the global economy and innovation. This issue describes fresh insights and opportunities for communities to move forward in this new environment.

Best regards,  
Mark

Mark Peterson  
Professor – Community and Economic Development

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## Coming Events

### **December 8: Winter 2011 Economic Development Forum: “Packaging the Deal”**,

presented by the Center for Economic Development Education, UALR Institute for Economic Advancement in Little Rock. For more information, go to [www.iea.ualr.edu/econdev/registrations](http://www.iea.ualr.edu/econdev/registrations).

**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 will come soon.

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## **Creating Vibrant, Sustainable, Resilient Communities Conference Set for January 25**

Community and regional leaders:

- **Are you concerned about the future of your community and its economy?**
- **Do you worry that your children won't have employment opportunities in your community?**
- **Do you know how to leverage your assets to create new economic opportunities in this environment?**

If you are not satisfied with your answers to these questions, then the 2011-2012 Winter Breakthrough Solutions Conference is for you.

**How do communities survive and sustain their vibrancy over time in a rapidly changing environment? They reassess their strategies and refocus their assets** by adapting to the current and emerging environment. And that is what we will address at the conference, with the theme: **“Creating Vibrant, Sustainable, Resilient Communities – Reassess and Refocus”**. The conference will be held at the Airport Holiday Inn in Little Rock on Wednesday, January 25.

At last year's conference, we shared the Breakthrough Solutions Model and Asset Map. This year we are taking it a step further – we are going to apply that model to three Arkansas communities, yet to be chosen. And you are invited to be on the design team! As you may know, the paradigm for community and economic development changed in the 1990s, when John McKnight and Jodie Kretzmann at Northwestern University created asset-based development. They did us all a big favor by helping us realize that building on assets is more

effective than trying to fill deficits. But once you have developed an asset map of your community, county or region, what do you next?

Breakthrough Solutions takes asset-based development to the next level by leveraging, connecting and transforming assets to create breakthroughs with the potential to transform your community. At this conference, the assets and situation of three communities will be presented, and after some coaching on breakthrough thinking, you will be invited to develop breakthrough solutions for those three communities. This is an expert model, and everyone is an expert.

In addition to the Breakthrough Solutions training and application to the three communities, we have these exciting events at the conference:

- A keynote speaker who will give the big picture of what is going on in the world and nation, and the opportunities in this environment,
- An IGNITE session, with several communities sharing their breakthrough projects,
- An AHA Awards Luncheon that will generate new insights about community and economic development in this current environment, and
- Exciting news and lessons from Harrison, our Breakthrough Solutions pilot community.

So draw a big red circle around January 25 on your calendar, forward this to your friends and colleagues, and if you have a terrific project or initiative you would like to showcase at the conference, please let me know ([mpeterson@uaex.edu](mailto:mpeterson@uaex.edu), 501-671-2253). To learn more about Breakthrough Solutions, go to [www.vworks.org](http://www.vworks.org).

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## Two Fresh Opportunities for Arkansas Communities

We have two new opportunities connected with our 2011-2012 Breakthrough Solutions Conference on January 25:

1. **IGNITE PROJECTS:** We are seeking great projects or initiatives that you have completed or nearly completed that involved the community and have made a real difference in your community, county or region. These would be featured in our IGNITE session at the conference. It would be a terrific opportunity to showcase your project, raise visibility for your community and enjoy the conference. Community projects chosen will also receive two complementary registrations to the conference, and be featured on our Breakthrough Solutions webpage, [www.vworks.org](http://www.vworks.org). So let us know if you are interested, or nominate a project from another community that you know of.
2. **FOCUS COMMUNITIES:** We are seeking three communities (or counties) to serve as Focus Communities for the conference. We would work with these communities ahead of time and develop an asset map that would be presented at the conference. On January 25, conference participants will receive training on breakthrough thinking and strategies – how to leverage, connect and transform community assets to realize your

desired vision, and apply those breakthrough strategies to your community and its assets to create breakthrough solutions. **If you seem stuck in a rut and would like community leaders and community and economic development professionals to take a look at your community and make breakthrough recommendations, this is for you. This is not just an academic exercise, so preference will be given to communities who are motivated to consider these and take action.**

If you are interested in either of these unique and special opportunities, please let me know: [mpeterson@uaex.edu](mailto:mpeterson@uaex.edu), 501-671-2253. I realize that time is short, but **one of the characteristics of very successful communities is the ability to respond quickly to opportunities.**

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## **New Blog to Feature Breakthrough Solutions Implementation Manual**

When we study very successful community initiatives, we discover that the community or region almost always moves through five phases of action. This is described in our five-step Breakthrough Action Process. They also leverage their assets to create solutions that are often breakthroughs and move the community forward. This is incorporated into our Breakthrough Solutions Model.

The Breakthrough Action Process and Breakthrough Solutions Model are incorporated into a brand-new Breakthrough Solutions Implementation Manual. In addition to a peer review process soon underway, we invite you to review and comment on the manual chapters, which are being posted on a new blog. This first blog features:

- Creating Vibrant, Sustainable, Resilient Communities
- How Does Change (Really) Happen
- Three Perspectives on Change (and which is most effective)
- Key Points About Breakthroughs and Breakthrough Solutions
- Breakthrough Solutions Core Principles

This entry is loaded with graphics, exercises and stories, so skimming should work well. Our goal is that after you review this manual, you won't see the world in the same way, but will see a world of assets and opportunities. To see the blog, go to <http://www.vworks.org/> and click on the hotlink to the blog on the right side of the screen.

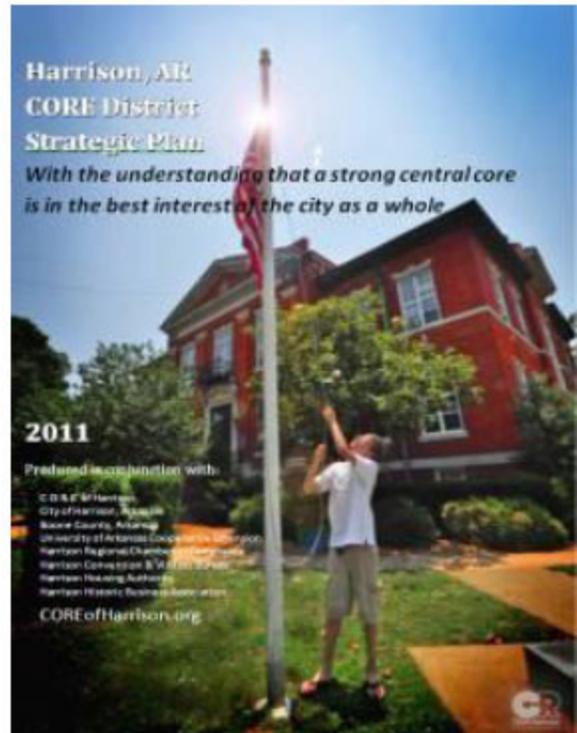
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## **Harrison C.O.R.E. Rolls Out Its Strategic Plan**

Congratulations to Harrison C.O.R.E. (Central Organization for the Revitalization and Enhancement of Harrison), for the completion and rollout of its strategic plan on October 14. Founded in 2009 by Congressman John Paul Hammerschmidt and interested community leaders, the Central Organization for Revitalization and Enhancement (C.O.R.E.) of Harrison is a volunteer organization built around the shared belief that a vibrant downtown can lead to a vibrant, healthy community and county; can draw people to Harrison and Boone County to visit, live and work; and can become a catalyst for jobs and economic development.

Following the 2009 Breakthrough Solutions Conference, C.O.R.E. was assistance to revitalize the core area of their community. The conference piqued their interest, leading to Harrison C.O.R.E. being selected as the first pilot community for the new Breakthrough Solutions Program. Harrison C.O.R.E. has completed a strategic plan for the C.O.R.E. district, and has already:

- attracted over 20 new retailers to the CORE district,
- formed the Historic Harrison Business Association,
- worked with the city of Harrison to install a road diet (transformed a four-lane highway to a two-lane highway with a center turning lane and 2 bike lanes,
- beautified Main Street,
- initiated a partnership with the Harrison Convention and the Visitor's Bureau to explore a new visitor location featuring Harrison as the "Gateway to the Buffalo River National Park",
- established a Self-Guided Historic Walking Tour and produced and distributed over 10,000 brochures in over 80 locations,
- secured and installed historic plaques for the majority of the tour stops,
- secured a grant for 38 trees that have been planted in Lake Harrison Park,
- conducted community assessment surveys (300+ completed),
- conducted 15 meetings, open to all in the community for their participation,
- organized and conducted 12 Entrepreneur Workshops,
- opened a SCORE Entrepreneur office in the Durand Center,
- participated in a two-day road trip to solicit additional input to Little Rock, North Little Rock, Conway and Russellville,
- participated in an international Community Development Society Conference in New Orleans to report on progress and also to solicit input from attendees,
- participated in two design charrettes with Cromwell Architects Engineers,



- coordinated a cleanup of the newly expanded walking trail, and
- were selected for the 2010 Breakthrough Solutions SOAR Award and a 2011 Arkansas Community Development Society Innovative Program Award.



**Harrison C.O.R.E. shows its new strategic plan.** Row No. 1, left to right: Elizabeth Locke, Sherri Henricks, Jeanette Fitton, Susan Sangren, Layne Ragsdale, Mark Peterson, Ed Levy; Row No. 2, left to right: Dave Fitton, Jack Moyer, George Holcomb, Cloyd Baltimore, Terry Cook.

### **Story of the Month – Cities as Vegetable Farms – How a Nation Survived Peak Oil**

How would our lives change if our oil imports were cut in half, trade declines by 85 percent, and food imports were reduced by 80 percent? That is what happened to Cuba in 1989, when the Soviet Union collapsed, along with its support of Cuba, and the U.S. embargoed the nation. Transportation ground to a halt, agricultural production plummeted without fossil fuels, blackouts became the norm, refrigeration didn't work, and the average Cuban lost 30 pounds.

So people adapted. They:

- grew local organic produce, planting food crops on porches, balconies, backyards, and empty city lots; an estimated 50 percent of Havana's vegetables come from within the city, while other Cuban communities grow 80-100 percent of their food,
- developed biopesticides and biofertilizers, and
- walked, biked, rode buses and carpooled.

While Cuba still has many problems, its life expectancy, infant mortality rate and literacy rate are the same as the U.S. This story gives a glimpse of how life could change if an oil shortage develops (for whatever reason), and how people can learn to adapt. This is also an example a breakthrough strategy – to see the world in new ways and leverage available assets.

Source: <http://sustainablecities.dk/en/city-projects/cases/havana-feeding-the-city-on-urban-agriculture>

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## **New Initiative Launched by the Delta Technology Education Center**



Pictured (left to right): Dr. Mark Peterson, Melanie Berry, Shalaunda Jones, Sammye Owen, Bruce Clark, Charlotte Schexnayder, Dr. David Rainey, Rev. Timothy Jones, Michael Jones

On Monday, November 7, the Delta Technology Education Center (DTEC) board met with representatives of the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service and agreed to launch a new initiative: “DTEC in Action”. The new initiative will involve the Breakthrough Solutions program in helping DTEC become a catalyst for community and economic development in the DTEC service area, which includes parts of four counties. “The people in the area want action and jobs,” said Charlotte Schexnayder, DTEC board member. “That’s why we called it DTEC in Action – to make things happen.”

After destructive tornadoes hit Dumas and Desha County in 2007, FEMA denied assistance to the community. This motivated leaders of the Dumas Chamber of

Commerce and Main Street Dumas to consider how to revamp the area economy, which led to the creation of the Delta Technology Education Center. In the former downtown location of the Merchants and Farmers Bank, the center houses a bank teller operation, a one-stop center for Arkansas Workforce Services, a 24-station public computer lab with additional Wi-Fi services provided by CenturyLink, classrooms for college classes and a youth services agency.

Breakthrough Solutions, a program of the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service, has partners in the public, private and non-profit sectors. It is a strategic planning process that involves the community in leveraging its assets to create breakthroughs that will really move the community forward. "We are delighted to be working with the Delta Technology Education Center," said Mark Peterson. "The DTEC board has already shown great progress and we appreciate the opportunity to see how DTEC can have even greater impact in the area." A steering committee to guide the process will be formed after the first of the year.

Dr. John Ahlen, President of Arkansas Science and Technology Authority (ASTA), has been involved in the development of DTEC, and is a Breakthrough Solutions Partner. DTEC in Action is funded by ASTA, the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation and the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service, and we appreciate the opportunity to assist DTEC as they move toward their desired future.

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## **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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## Honorable Mention – Arkansas Community Development Society

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### Website of the Month – The City That Outsourced Everything

Local communities and counties are facing increasing pressure due to the economy and rising costs, and are looking for innovative ways to deliver services without increasing taxes or cutting services. Sandy Springs (pop. 30,328) is a community in Georgia that outsources almost all of its services. Take a look, and don't miss the comments under the video:[http://www.businessinsider.com/the-city-that-outsourced-everything-2011-4?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=BI\\_Select\\_042211&utm\\_source=Triggermail&utm\\_term=Business Insider Select](http://www.businessinsider.com/the-city-that-outsourced-everything-2011-4?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=BI_Select_042211&utm_source=Triggermail&utm_term=Business+Insider+Select).

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### 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](http://www.vworks.org), [vworks@uaex.edu](mailto:vworks@uaex.edu), 501-671-2253.

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