

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 thrive in the 21st century economy

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Introduction

This issue will address sustainability – particularly what communities and regions need to do *now* to be around for the long term. The following topics will be examined in this edition: how rural economies can be transformed through entrepreneurship, how new opportunities can be created by soaring with the winds of change, and what we can learn about sustainability from a community with 1,050 years of history and from the story of the month which exposes the identity of “the most unsustainable nation on earth”..You won’t want to miss it!

Dec. 2 Breakthrough Solutions Conference to Focus on Tomorrow’s Communities – Innovative, Global, Local

Questions for 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 2010 Breakthrough Solutions Conference is for you.** Conference speakers will **share great stories** which demonstrate that the communities that will be around tomorrow and in the future long-term are innovative, are connected to the global economy, and are leveraging local assets.

Globalization, outsourcing, and demographic changes have all had a negative impact on many rural communities and regions. At the conference, we will take a fresh look at how communities and regions can harness these key drivers of change and create vibrant, sustainable economies. The conference will take place at the Wyndham Hotel in North Little Rock on Dec. 2, 2010.

In his presentation, “Transforming a Rural Economy Through Entrepreneurship”, Dr. Ron Hustedde, keynote speaker and director of the Kentucky Entrepreneurship Coaches Institute, will explore “**how to think of your community or region as an entrepreneurial venture, using broadband and building supportive environments for entrepreneurs to emerge who transform ideas into something of value that people want or need.**” He will be sharing with us some great stories, including one about a project that trained 55 middle school teachers about entrepreneurship. Seed money of \$15 was given to each student to start a business, and **the students created 500 new businesses!**

SOARING with the Winds of Change – Creating New Opportunities in Tough Times

When we visit really successful communities or regions (as we did on our Great Places Road Trip earlier this year), we always find leaders who have leveraged, connected, and transformed their assets. They can also identify the breakthroughs they have experienced (usually an “aha” moment), and the breakthrough solutions that really moved their community or region forward. Our new *Breakthrough Solutions Model and Road Map*, which will be unveiled at the Dec. 2 conference, (and shared in our next *Breakthrough News edition*), moves from SWOT to SOAR:

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) – devotes half of your time to the negative. So many community leaders are SWOTTED out.

SOAR* – (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results) -- emphasizes the positive and new opportunities; It is fresh and powerful.

Strengths and assets
Opportunities for breakthroughs
Aspirations and visions
Results you can measure

** Adapted from the SOAR Thin Book*

The second dimension that we always find in successful communities and regions is that their actions are in tune with the times. **They harness the winds of change rather than trying to fight against them.** When you see an individual, business, or community fighting against the world and the key drivers of change that are taking place, you should **bet on the world.** Understanding these key drivers of change is a critical component of being able to “SOAR with the winds of change”, which, by the way, is the title of my presentation at the conference.

Clues to Sustainability – Breakout Sessions Focus on Critical Issues and Fresh Opportunities

If you want some clues about how your community or region can be vibrant and sustainable – still going strong in the next 100 years – take a look at these breakout sessions for our conference:

Preparing a Balanced 21st Century Workforce – How can we develop a workforce with

the knowledge, skills, and work ethic to fill current jobs and create and fill future jobs?

Moving Toward Sustainability: Energy, Environment, and the Economy – *What strategies can communities and regions employ to become more sustainable over the long term? What opportunities and resources are available to get started?*

Local Foods Movement: An Economic Development Opportunity for Arkansas – *What food assets do you have in your community and how can you better leverage them for health and economic purposes?*

Entrepreneurial Communities and Entrepreneurship – *Learn more about how entrepreneurship can create your community's future.*

Build a Team for Success – *Effective implementation of strategic plans requires engaging political champions, key stakeholders, organizations and citizens across the community so the plan is OWNED by the community. How do we do this and avoid having the plan collect dust?*

Collaborate or Die: Learning to Work Across Boundaries in Your Community and Region for Strategic Reasons – *Your community and region are competing against communities and regions that already work well together. How can you join them and harness the power of economic clusters?*

Hispanic Entrepreneurship in Arkansas: Another Economic Opportunity in Arkansas – *What if you thought of the Hispanic population of your community as a living business incubator? Discover how to nurture and support economic development in the Hispanic population of your community.*

Growing Your Community From Within – *Discover multiple strategies that leverage your community's assets for economic development, independent of your ability to attract industry.*

Creating Communities to Fall in Love With – *Is your community positioned to attract that "huge number of people who can live anywhere"? Learn key elements of a high quality of place and walkable communities.*

Two-Way Globalization: Recruiting Ideas, Products, and Entrepreneurs from the World – *Globalization has led to the outsourcing of many rural jobs; learn strategies to take advantage of it for your community.*

You are right – it is frustrating that you won't be able to attend more than two of these (we will have two rounds). That's why you need to bring friends and colleagues from your community!

Broadband Connectivity is Not the Infrastructure of the Future.

It is the infrastructure of the present! Does everyone in your community, county, and region

have access to broadband and take full advantage of it? If not, you will want to hear Sam Walls, president of *Connect Arkansas*, and Dr. Curtis Lowery, chair of the UAMS Department of OB/GYN describe their **major new initiatives (\$109M total) that will impact broadband and life in Arkansas**. You need to learn how to take advantage of these new assets.

Bonuses and Registration

We are offering these bonuses at the conference:

- Two new documents yet to be released to the public: “**14 Strategies for Funding and Financing Your Community and Economic Development Projects**” and “**82 Community and Economic Development Resources Serving Arkansas**”
- **A Post- Conference Reception and Networking Session**
- **Door Prizes, including the 2010 Breakthrough Solutions Grand Prize – a weekend in Historic Harrison Arkansas, the Ozark Mountain gateway to the Buffalo River National Park region:** Two nights lodging at the 1929 Hotel Seville – a Magnuson Grand Hotel – a \$50 gift certificate for dinner at John Paul’s Restaurant and Gathering Place, two admissions to a theatrical production at the historic Lyric Theater, dinner for two at DeVito’s Italian Restaurant, two admissions to the Ozark Medieval Fortress, and access to the driving tours, hiking trails, and the Historic Harrison Walking Tour. (It is called a door prize because if you walk out the door, you can’t win the prize...)

Conference registration, which includes lunch and conference materials, is \$55 before Nov. 19 and \$70 after that date. To see the conference agenda and registration form, click here: <http://www.vworks.org/conference/default.htm>. If you have questions, call 501-671-2072 or e-mail assignorelli@uaex.edu. You won’t want to miss it!

1,050 Years of History: This Community Knows about Sustainability!

What would it be like to live in a community that celebrated its 1,050th year of existence with a festival? A few weeks ago, my wife and I had the pleasure of hosting Jorg Roglin, Lord Mayor of Wurzen, Germany (formerly East Germany), in our home, and he described this 1,050- year-festival to us. Mayor Roglin is optimistic about the future, and he is also proactive about what his community needs to do to prosper. He served in the East German army (a part of Soviet Bloc) before the reunification of Germany. You can both see and read about him here:

Wurzen is a community of 15,233 some 15 miles from Leipzig, a city of approximately 519,000. Earlier in their histories, **both cities had the same population**. So how could one of them grow to be 34 times as large? Talk about change! However, those thousand years included some very rough times:

- The famine of 1315-17
- The Black Plague of 1360-70, which **killed 75% of the population of Wurzen**

- The “[Thirty Years' War](#)” (1637). Wurzen was sacked by the [Swedish](#) army and almost burned down completely.
- WWI and WWII also greatly impacted Wurzen.

“Sometimes it almost died, but it almost came back,” stated Mayor Roglin.

Mayor Roglin described one of the challenges facing Wurzen: “Demographic changes – we are having a slight population loss. A lot of older people die off, and after our younger people leave for college, they go to Leipzig, West Germany, or Switzerland for better jobs.” Another challenge he mentioned for Wurzen was that of having a poor reputation – of nothing going on there. Apparently, Wurzen is known as a sleepy town, with no action. It is a very old town, with a population of mostly elderly people. He indicated that they were “We are not getting many young people, and have a low birth rate.”

Doesn't this sound like many, if not the majority, of rural communities in Arkansas?

The mayor listed these strategic assets of Wurzen:

- Close proximity to Leipzig – “Being just 15 miles from Leipzig works both ways,” stated Mayor Roglin. “People can work in Leipzig, but find it easy to go to Leipzig for shopping, restaurants, etc.”
- Several famous people, including a famous poet, are from Wurzen.
- History and architecture [here is a live webcam of their marketplace:
- Manufacturing firms
- Located on a small river, the Mulde River, which offers the opportunity for romantic retreats
- Mayor Roglin and other community leaders are using technology, with a web page: <http://www.wurzen.de>, a web cam of their marketplace: www.rick-software.de/webcam-wurzen/], and a facebook page:

We wish Mayor Roglin well in his community revitalization efforts and we hope the next 1,000 years for Wurzen will be even better than the last 1,000 years.

Strategic Questions for You:

- **Will your community still be here in 1,000 years?**
- **More to the point, if your community continues along its *current path*, will it still be here in 1,000 years?**
- **Does your community have a web page? Live web cam? A Facebook page?**
- **Do you know how to leverage these assets for high impact community economic development: location in a region, famous former residents, history and architecture, manufacturing firms, and a river? If not, you will want to attend our *2010 Breakthrough Solutions Conference* on Dec. 2.**



Wurzen — A colorful town with culture, architecture, history, and much more.

<http://www.webcamgalore.com/EN/search.php?s=Arkansas>

Arkansas Community Development Society Learns about Community Capitals, Elects New Officers

The Arkansas Community Development Society Conference, held on Oct. 21, was very successful, as Dr. Mary Emery, director of the On-Line Community Development Program at Iowa State and past president of the Community Development Society, shared insights and tools for using community capitals in community development. Dr. Emery also provided an update on the international society, including looking forward to coming to the conference to be held in Little Rock in 2014.

Congratulations to Cary Tyson (*Arkansas Main Street Program*) for his leadership the past two years, and to the following individuals who were elected to the ACDS board of directors:

President – Jean Noble, Arkansas Economic Development Commission
Vice President of Programs – John Spies, Fairfield Bay Community Club

Vice President of Technology – Debra Banks, Consultant
Treasurer – Amy Whitehead, Community Development Institute
Northwest Regional Director – Jeff Jones, CenturyLink
Central Regional Director – Linsley Matteson, Winrock International

We wish the new board much success. You can learn more about the Arkansas Community Development Society at <http://www.arcds.org>.

Economic and Environmental Issues Policy Symposium set for Oct. 26

What does the latest research tell us about economic and environmental issues and sustainability in Arkansas? You now have an opportunity to hear from the researchers themselves as they share their findings about water rights, low impact development, impacts of the Fayetteville Shale development, risk management, branding products with a regional brand, amenity-based economic development, and agri-tourism development. (Yours truly is one of the speakers, reporting on our work on the creative economy).

On Oct. 26, the U of A Division of Agriculture Public Policy Center is bringing together a diverse group of scholars to share original research, to stimulate and encourage educational initiatives, and to promote increased collaboration among private and public organizations. The symposium will be held at the U of A Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service state office, 2301 S. University, in Little Rock.

There is no charge to attend; However, CD's containing each researcher's executive summary, PowerPoint presentations, and other materials will be sold at a cost of \$5 each. Lunch will not be provided, but snacks and other refreshments will be available. To register, download the attached form or go to <http://ppc.uaex.edu> and either mail or fax it to the address/number below. For more information, contact Debbie at dhenry@uaex.edu or call 501-671-2299. To see the agenda and register, go to http://ppc.uaex.edu/symposium_2010.pdf, or contact Debbie at dhenry@uaex.edu or call 501-671-2299.

Breakthrough Solutions Funding Sponsors

Just a note to thank the following 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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Cromwell Architects Engineers
Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas
Federal Reserve, Little Rock branch
U of A Cooperative Extension Service
UALR Institute of Government

Story of the Month – The Most Unsustainable Nation on the Earth

This is an incredible story, and it will break your heart. I recently met a gentleman who visited Haiti with a relief organization. He reported that due to hurricanes, de-forestation, erosion, corruption, and rising food prices, it is **common for people to eat dirt** (mud cookies) in the poorest slums of Haiti (see <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/22902512/#>). Merchants bring yellow clay from central Haiti to Fort Dimanche, a shanty town where women buy the dirt and process it into mud cookies. They carry buckets of clay and water up ladders to the roof of a former prison, where the clay and water are then mixed with shortening and salt, and baked by the sun. In a nation where 80% of the people live on less than \$2/day, the 5-cent cookies are a bargain.

The story raises these strategic questions:

- **What can be done to meet the immediate needs of the people of Haiti?**
- **What can be done to ensure that Haiti becomes sustainable over the long term?**
- **What if they run out of dirt** (the yellow clay they use for mud cookies)?

To make a difference in the lives of many people, go to:

<http://www.endlessimmer.com/2010/01/14/haiti-food-relief/>.

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 too can benefit from the resources, insights, and strategies covered in *Breakthrough News*.

More About Breakthrough Solutions:

Recipient of the *Outstanding 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. The *Breakthrough Solutions Program* is now available for communities and regions seeking to prosper in this global, knowledge-based economy. For more information about the *Breakthrough Solutions Program*, go to www.vworks.org, send an e-mail to vworks@uaex.edu or call us at (501) 671-2066.

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Send an e- mail message to vworks@uaex.edu, asking to be added or removed from the *VisionWorks* mailing list.

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