

Beyond the Borders

COMMUNITY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT and LEADERSHIP NEWSLETTER

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Building Communities

"Practical Tools and Information"

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This newsletter is meant to share with you practical tools and information to assist you in your important role in community and economic development work. We welcome comments on current letters plus encourage your advice for future articles. Kathy.

Newsletter Topics

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Trends Don't Have to Predict the Future

Editorial

You'll ve probably seen the numerous news articles on the new census data. Dr. Richard Rathge, director or the State Data Center at NDSU has written several reviews of the data. The center has a great web site that provides much of the new data plus links to other articles and data web sites. One of those links took me to an article in the March 2001 issue of USA TODAY by Patrick O' Driscoll. Mr. O' Driscoll talks about the continuing rural to urban population shift in North Dakota. He called it the emptying out of rural North Dakota farm communities. Dr. Rathge has also talked about this trend and the challenges that this brings to rural communities to maintain services and infrastructure. Only six out of our 53 counties gained population according to the new census data. Half of the counties lost at least 10% of their population. There was an

overall increase of population for the state but it was very small compared to the rest of the nation. For more information on the new census data go to the State Data Center web site at <http://www.ndsu.edu/sdc/>. It's direct link to the 2000 data is located at <http://www.ndsu.edu/sdc> and for specific state and national data go to the U.S. Census Factfinder site at <http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/BasicFactsServlet>

It's true that the trends for our state are not encouraging, but if you read the title of this piece again you'll notice that I am not a fan of trends. Some may say that I am a little optimistic, but I happen to prefer that option, as do most of the people that I meet as I travel the state. There are many exciting things happening in the state. For example: The Greater North Dakota Association is actively engaged in assisting interested citizens to develop action groups to assess North Dakota strengths and to design action plans for developing those strengths into initiatives for the state. The Department of Tourism is in the process of identifying research options to profile our tourists so that we can better market the state. Tourism and the NDSU Extension Service are discussing ways in which we can collaborate to provide marketing training to individual business owners and operators plus we are planning to offer state wide hospitality training to frontline workers. There are several area groups who are working together to market our state to tourists. Plus we have several rural farm and ranch families who are creating recreation businesses. I believe that these creative and innovative people of North Dakota will make a positive impact on the future of this state.

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Facilitation 101

Part 5-Ground Rules and Listening

Ground rules are important for many reasons. They are the rules under which the group will work for communicating, decision-making and organizing the process. Participants are more comfortable when there are well established ground rules.

Establishing ground rules may be done in different ways but just remember to include participant input.

Facilitators must use two important skills; active listening and summarizing. Active Listening – you must do more than hear what is being said; you must understand and interpret the meaning.

Ask yourself, “Is this correct information?” “Is there more information?”

Mentally summarize the points made.

Notice nonverbal communication or body language such as tone of voice, gestures, and facial expressions.

Listen to what is not being said.

Summarizing ¶ condensing what a speaker said into a few words or sentences. Do not paraphrase. In paraphrasing, the facilitator would use his/her words to summarize what was said by the speaker. Use the speaker¶ s key words.

What to Avoid:

- Daydreaming
- Listening to only one part of the message
- Poor posture
- Prejudice ¶ don¶ t condemn a speaker based on looks, voice, etc.
- Faking attention
- Obsessive note-taking
- Talking too much!!!

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We're Number One

North Dakota ranked #1 in a national survey of American states in the Social Capital Index. The survey was conducted by the Roper Social and Political Trends group from 1974-1997. The index is composed of fourteen indicators of social capital. Social capital refers to the collective value of all ¶ social networks¶ and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other.

Dr. Robert Putnam, author of the Book *Bowling alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000) used this data and other national surveys to analyze Americans¶ changing behavior over the past twenty-five years. He shows that we have become increasingly disconnected from family, friends, neighbors, and social structures, whether the PTA, church, recreation clubs, political parties, or bowling leagues. He states that our shrinking access to the ¶ social capital¶ that is the reward of communal activity and community sharing is a serious threat to our civic and personal health.

North Dakota is number one but that doesn¶ t mean that we do not have a problem. Social capital has declined here as well. Dr. Putnam has analyzed various factors for the decline but his most recent work points at television as the biggest culprit. His studies show that the decline began with the onset of television and has continued to grow as the number of hours watched per person continues increases.

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Telecommunications Technology Conference

Senator Byron Dorgan and the Chamber of Commerce of Fargo Moorhead invite you to participate in North Dakota Telecommunications Technology in a North Dakota Conference and Trade Show, Wednesday and Thursday, May 30 and 31 at the Ramada Plaza Suites and Convention Center in Fargo, North Dakota.

This conference will look at the changing and ever-growing telecommunications and information technology industries and their potential impact on rural America. Specifically, it will examine the benefits and opportunities these technologies bring to business entrepreneurs, community leaders, educators and others.

The two-day conference will include:

Steve Ballmer, President & Chief Executive Officer with Microsoft Corporation where he is responsible for the company's day-to-day management as well as its vision for the future.

A Regional Trade Show with an elaborate display of new technologies from top IT companies.

Gary Shapiro, President and CEO with Consumer Electronics Association. Mr. Shapiro will discuss new developments in the consumer technology industry, the effect these technologies will have on rural America, and will showcase the technologies of the future.

Jeffrey Bezos, President and CEO, Amazon.com. Mr. Bezos created the idea of Amazon.com in 1994 after seeing the amazing selling potential of the internet. He will tell the story and share his insights into the future of e-commerce.

Concurrent workshops on technology related topics such as e-business, education online, e-commerce, telecommuting and more.

For information on reserving a booth contact Bryan at the Chamber of Commerce of Fargo Moorhead at 701-237-5678 or email byran@fmchamber.com.

To register for the conference go to: <http://www.ttnd.org/>. The tradeshow and breakout sessions are free of charge but there is an overall fee of \$55 if you wish to participate in all meals, keynote speakers and the TTND Business After Hours social. To attend Steve Ballmer there is a fee of \$15.00 (includes lunch), Jeffrey Bezos is \$30.00 (includes dinner) and Gary Shapiro is \$15.00 (includes lunch). Other fees include \$7.00 for the continental breakfast and \$12 for the TTND business after hours social. (\$18 at the door.)

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Electronic Surveys

Electronic surveys can come in handy if you need to do a quick survey of local business or other community leaders. They can be one question, such as would you support a new recreation center for _____ or a series of questions to determine the use of technology in businesses. To use electronic surveys you will need the email addresses of the participants. The drawback to electronic surveys is that you are eliminating those who do not have access to the technology. For broad based surveys you will need to provide access or alternative forms for input. The University of Virginia has online electronic survey software (free) call Survey Suite that will assist you in surveying your community. The software automates the entire process of running an online survey from creation and administration to tallying the results. Visit the site at: <http://intercom.virginia.edu/SurveySite> (case sensitive).

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Enhancing Local/Regional Food Systems for Sustainable Development

A training session focusing on local food systems as a method of stabilizing farm profitability and stabilizing rural communities will be held on May 22 at the Carrington Research Extension Center and on May 23 at the North Campus of Dickinson State University. A draft agenda appears below. If you are interested in attending please pre-register before May 17 by emailing Tom Hanson, NDSU Extension Service at thanson@ndsuxext.nodak.edu.

The agenda for the training is:

- 9:00 Registration and coffee
- 9:30 Welcome and introductions
- 9:45 Go through training materials
- 10:00 The Changing Fit of Agriculture to the Food System (Rudy Radke, NDSU Extension Service) 11:00
- 1. The Changing Food System (Curt Stofferahn, UND)
- 2. Sustainable Community Food Systems
- 3. Components of Sustainable Community Food Systems and their Relationship to Local Development
- 12:15 Lunch
- 1:00 Case Examples of Alternative Components in a Community Food System (Kathy Tweeten, NDSU Extension Service)

2:00 How to Examine a Community: Community-wide "Study Circles" (Tom Hanson, NDSU Extension Service)
3:00 Break
3:15 1. Assessing Community Food Systems (Kathy Tweeten)
2. Evaluating the Impact of Alternative Components of a Community's Food System
4:30 Adjourn

Again, please pre-register for these sessions before May 17.

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