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Sustainability Roundtables ~ Wrap-Up Report

Jeff. Co. Chamber of Commerce lunch meeting

Monday, Nov. 21, 2011

From Teresa Verraes, Chamber Director: There are so many solutions to today's problems embodied in the Chamber membership, and taking time to brainstorm with our peers is so valuable. I stretched my boundaries and sat at the Transportation roundtable and learned a lot. It was also gratifying to see so many of our electeds and appointeds in attendance (see which tables they sat at, below). This was a fantastic event, and one we hope to repeat—perhaps quarterly. Thanks to Local 20/20 for facilitating!

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Healthcare – Jenifer Taylor, table host

Guests: Mike Glenn, Jefferson Healthcare CEO

Kristin Manwaring, KMi Insurance

Did you know healthcare insurance is expected to cost more than many salaries by 2019? Or that 30 cents of every healthcare dollar now goes to administration and profit? Why should healthcare dollars go to profit?

In our discussion of single-payer healthcare, we discussed:

- Healthy people can work and contribute more to society. PEOPLE WHO NEED MEDICAL CARE OFTEN DON'T SEEK IT BECAUSE IT WOULD COST THEM TOO MUCH AND THE DEBT THEY WOULD INCUR IS SCARY.
- Individuals' responsibility to get screenings and live a healthy life. EXERCISE WAS TAGGED AS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE.
- The hospital CEO shared how an alliance with Swedish in Seattle will provide improved services.
- Kristin Manwaring (of KMi insurance) shared that doctors and hospitals say they can't survive on Medicare reimbursements.

WE HAD A WIDE RANGE OF PARTICIPANTS, FROM A YOUNG MAN WHO HAD JUST GOTTEN HEALTHCARE INSURANCE FROM DSHS TO A GENTLEMAN WHO FELT HEALTHCARE SHOULD BE BASED ON ENTREPRENEURIAL EFFORTS.

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Transportation – Scott Walker, table host

Guests: PT Councilor-Elect Robert Gray
Chimacum School District Superintendent Craig Downs
PT Leader Managing Editor Fred Obee
Tribal transportation representative to the PRTPO Gordon Neilson
Chamber Director Teresa Verraes

We can build community through transportation choice! Shared the vision of the Transportation Lab, a sub-committee of Local 20/20, which wants sustainable transportation for E. Jefferson Co. and the Olympic Peninsula based on walking, biking, and a first-class transit system.

Details followed of the significant issues resulting from our current transportation system bearing down on our culture and our community, none of which the federal or state government are addressing due to being hostage to entrenched interests of the oil industry, from climate change to unaffordable car driving. Jefferson Transit's annual budget is \$4 million, and that around \$30 million annually is going to the oil companies from gasoline purchases.

The table then explored the merits of several possibilities.

1. We discussed ways in which we could capture some of that \$30 million for our businesses and community if people had options for transportation other than a personal car.
2. We discussed developing a direct transit connection to the Bainbridge ferry, and what an acceptable fare would be compared to driving costs. There was enthusiasm for this idea.
3. We discussed the merits of joining with the ORCA card's seamless fare system on transit around Puget Sound. This was deemed a doable idea.
4. We discussed how one can park for free D/T and U/T, where there is a shortage of parking, yet it costs to park at the P&R and ride the bus D/T. There was support for re-instituting free transit from the D/T Park and Ride to D/T and U/T commercial areas.
5. We also discussed the merits and drawbacks of free and paid parking in the commercial area and the possibility of developing a parking facility. (Note: A parking facility does not move the community towards more sustainability when 40% of JeffCo Green House Gas emissions come from our current transportation system. Additionally, it is important to note that financing a parking facility is unfeasible if there is free parking on the street.)

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Local Investing – Earll Murman, table host

Guest: PT Mayor Michelle Sandoval

In addition to the mayor (who is also a LION member), we had two community bank managers at our table. We discussed:

- Need for additional basic education about investment modalities.
- Partnerships between Local 20/20, Local Investment Opportunities Network (LION), local financial institutions, and EDC Team Jefferson.
- Economic incubators.
- Option of a self-directed IRA.

Energy – Crispin Hollinshead, table host

Guest: Barney Burke, PUD Commissioner

Much of the first half of the conversation was general discussion of why people were there. The rest of the time we talked about residential housing energy upgrades, problems and existing programs. There was nothing resolved, but general information was shared. This is a difficult issue, with funding being an important challenge.

Emergency Preparedness – Deb Stinson, table host

Guests: Keppie Keplinger, Jeff. Co. Dept. of Emer. Mngmt PIO

Nate Holmes and Kevin Short, PEAK Leadership Disaster Prep Mitigation Assessments

We discussed how resilient businesses will play a key role in our community's well-being in the aftermath of a disaster and that truly resilient businesses are those who prepare for the unexpected. We also acknowledged that we each need to take responsibility for our own well-being during and after an emergency of any scope.

Preparing for the worst automatically prepares us for the more likely smaller events, such as prolonged power outages, impassable roads or breaks in the water main.

Preparedness for businesses happens at many levels that overlap with personal preparedness.

Start by preparing yourself and your employees. This will allow you to focus on your business knowing your family and home are safe.

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There are many local resources to help you get started. See the following websites:

www.L2020.org/EP

www.jeffcoecoc.org

www.getemergencyprepared.com

Your family and your employees' families will be most secure if your neighborhood has organized for disaster response. Local 20/20 and the Department of Emergency Management (DEM) can provide the support and tools to simplify this task:

--See above websites and click on the MYN link to see neighborhood details.

Note that the Main Street Building Owners Committee is considering use of this tool to prepare that business districts.

Businesses have an extra layer of preparedness to consider. We ran out of time before we dove too deep into the details, but the DEM has several tools they can bring to bear to help you build robust 'Continuity of Operations Plans'.

Next steps: Several at the table took information to start their personal preparedness and signed up to learn more about mapping their neighborhoods. The Peak Leadership team (Nate and Kevin) will meet with the DEM and Local 20/20 to strategize on creating a Disaster Preparedness Mitigation Assessment Toolkit for businesses.

Local Food Resiliency – Judy Alexander, table host

We heard about the new Citizens for Local Food group, which has spun off of the Local Food Resiliency action group of Local 20/20. Citizens for Local Food has several ongoing projects:

- Survey every local farmer and find out what they need to expand and grow their businesses. (This field effort needs volunteers! If interested in volunteering, e-mail citizensforlocalfood@yahoo.com)
- Inform local regulators (thru local planning commissions) from survey results how they can help farms succeed with more farm-friendly regulatory shifts.
- Crunch the numbers to determine whether Jefferson County can "feed itself" (similar to Methow Valley study, which concluded YES).
- Engage residents to find out their thoughts/feelings/habits about local food, perhaps using the "neighborhood desserts model" as a method of inquiry.

We talked about community gardens and the model of working together and sharing the harvest that has developed in Jeff. Co. (as opposed to the "pea patch" model of each family having its own garden plot). Two at the table are part of community gardens and

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two others really want to be! Now (fall) is the time to be prepping the ground for new gardens. There is Community Garden info under Local 20/20's website's Food Resiliency pages and a Yahoo group for local community gardeners at ptcommunitygardens@yahoo.com.

We discussed the interface between emergency preparedness and food growing. "You're only as secure as your neighbors are." Those with food supplies will have to share. So inspire your neighbors to stock up and grow food! And remember, the food in the ground IS an emergency food supply.

Ideas we discussed for local food resiliency:

- There are business opportunities for skilled food gardeners to install starter gardens in other people's yards.
- Community gardening is a social experiment in communicating, sharing and alleviating feelings of scarcity by planting abundantly.
- Cooperative chicken coop model: seven families, each take care of chickens one day a week and collect the eggs that day.
- There is a dedicated food bank garden in the works, and both home and community gardeners are encouraged to donate excess or even plant an extra row designated for food bank.
- There is a local gleaning group that will harvest unutilized fruit trees and other crops. Gleaners get to take a portion; rest is donated to food banks, schools, senior homes.
- By shopping at the Food Co-op, you can practice buying (and eating) "in season." Every September, the Co-op sponsors an Emergency Preparedness no-mark-up sale on bulk orders -- a great time to stock up while saving money, too.
- Consider fasting. Learn to reduce desire. Consider foraging for wild foods.
- What would it take to utilize the PT deer herds as a sustainable food source? First, it would take a regulatory shift, so the city council would need to be approached (and perhaps state wildlife agencies). Action is more likely to happen (in this case and others) if volunteers do the research and present solutions to decision-makers.
- There is interest in relearning the domestic arts of preserving food, sewing, etc. These are social activities and they can save money and increase self-reliance and empowerment. There are business opportunities here. Sustainable NE Seattle put on a Reskilling Fair in Feb. of this year. Could we offer a similar fair or festival here? The local granges are already offering "reskilling" classes.

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- How do we reach the majority of residents who are not yet involved in the local food movement? And are vulnerable to food disruptions if they rely solely on grocery stores?
- More food education! Two great discussion courses through the Northwest Earth Institute—Menu for the Future, and Hungry for Change: Food Ethics and Sustainability—are available. See www.nwei.org

Water – Linda Smith, table host

Water use in business

Setting sustainability goals for business: energy, water, recycling, chemical usage

Water use is now coming to the top of the list – in the past the issue was *water quality*; now *water quantity* is becoming important.

- **Idea:** ask businesses to start settings goals – save the environment, reduce costs and improve the bottom line.

Watersheds

Interconnectedness

- Salmon, then city, then the mill – prioritization of use of Big Quilcene waters
- Mill has now formalized production to align with water seasonality

Forest Shomer shared an example. He has a load of berries that will earn the “pickers” about \$200. These berries are being taken to Finnriver Farm for pressing – the juice will be used to create a high-margin crop (for fine ciders) and the mash will be used by Forest to yield a high-margin harvest of seeds for packaging and distribution to nurseries and seed companies. “And all just using rainwater!”

So... this is an example of aligning the farmer, with their lands and its available water with the right crops for better margins, higher profits, better paying jobs, plus being easier on the environment.

- We have about 5,000 arable acres of land in East Jefferson County
- Vegetables yield about \$6,000 per acre – seeds can yield about \$17,000 per acre

- **Idea:** align the farmer and their land and available water with the optimal crops – improve profitability, keep the money “in-county” – use native crops – grains, seeds – higher margins, better utilization of lands and water.

Use water smarter

Discussion about community water use

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- **Idea:** educate residents. Through education (where does our water come from, where does it go, how do we impact it) we can gain support to take the best actions– gain appreciation for this valuable resource through personal actions like installing low-flow toilets, reducing the need for sprinkler and irrigation systems and from personal actions then understand the larger water use issues around agriculture and industry.

Waste Reduction – Val Johnstone & Richard Dandridge, table hosts Guest: Pinky Feria Mingo, new county environmental health specialist

Businesses represented at our table were a foundry, a printing company, and a bed and breakfast. We were impressed by their existing commitments to waste reduction, and their shared tips, including:

- Use recycled-content paper
- Use filtered water from sink instead of single-purpose plastic bottles.
- Reduce use of single-use containers.
- Keep an OOPS box. (??)
- Offer pallets to people for use as firewood.
- Recycle all paper or reuse for packaging.

For more information on these topics and related action groups, contact Local 20/20 at www.l2020.org, local2020@l2020.org, or (360) 379-1406.

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