

# TGIF Taking Great Ideas Forward

Improving Northern Capital - a Sustainable Economy in the Northern Tier

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author and do not reflect positions of organizations with which he is affiliated.

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*“We are told over and over again these days that the economy is the bottom line. But as a biologist this never made any sense to me. It is the biosphere that is the source of everything that matters because it is the health of the biosphere, including the water, soil and air we all breath, that is responsible for survival and our quality of life.”*

-David Suzuki-

## MEETINGS and EVENTS:

Links will provide additional information. Dates for new additions are in **bold**.

<i>What</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Where</i>
Wisconsin Innovation Network	March 28 <sup>th</sup>	5:00 PM	WITC - Ashland
Inventors & Entrepreneurs Club	April 5 <sup>th</sup>	5:30 pm	Iron River Community Center
BCEDC Board Meeting	April 9 <sup>th</sup>	10 AM – noon	TBA
Earth Day	April 22 <sup>nd</sup>	All Day	Everywhere
UW Founders Day Dinner	April 30 <sup>th</sup>	5:30 PM	Elks Club - Ashland
WIB <a href="#">Business Development Conference</a>	May 3 & 4	All Day	Lakewoods Resort, Cable
<a href="#">Future of Farming</a> Statewide Conference	May 14 & 15	All Day	Madison, Monona Terrace
<a href="#">2007 Entrepreneur's Conference</a>	June. 12-13	All day	Milwaukee
Northwest Wisconsin Lakes Conference & Workshops	June 21 & 22	All Day	Telemark Lodge, Cable

## ECHOING GREEN

As a biologist, certainly not of **Dr. David Suzuki's** stature, I couldn't resist using his eloquent quote this week. It accurately and effectively reflects my own view. From a biological perspective he is focused directly at the heart of what matters – survival and what survival requires. Another biologist, **Clifford Grobstein**, once said; when doing biology we inevitably apply the “unambiguous criterion of survival.” Water, soil and air are fundamental to life on planet earth and the quality of these critical elements will ultimately determine the quality of life.

However, our human species too frequently frames phrases such as *quality of life* as OUR quality of life, with the implication that only humans matter or that it is “humans first!”. It is maladaptive when we ignore, or even worse deny, the dependence of the human species on all species with which we share our blue orb. It is, after all, almost exclusively the mass action of other species that keep our air, water and soil fit for human life.

Arrogance is a trait we don't share with another species. My guess is that if other species could think about our arrogance, they would find it particularly unbecoming.

Talk about sustainable development is, after all, talk about survival – economic, ecological and social survival – survival of all species. Survival, of course, is a species thing. Survival of a species is threatened and endangered when sufficient numbers decline from one generation to the next. Endangered species are at risk because the environmental support systems on which they depend have been altered sufficiently to preclude the qualities and quantities of air, water and soil they require for successful reproduction and survival of their offspring.

The agent of alteration is a globally distributed, rapidly growing species self-named *Homo sapiens*. We, perhaps alone in the universe, are blessed with an ability to think and manipulate. We urgently need to think critically about what and how we manipulate the environment that supports us.

The late Senator and founder of Earth Day **Gaylord Nelson** said, “The economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment.”

## COMPETITIVE WISCONSIN

I was joined in Madison on Wednesday by Ashland makers and shakers **Roger Hanson, Fred Tidstrom** and **Clyde Eilo** while participating in the **Summit on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills** sponsored by **Competitive Wisconsin, Inc.** and the **Wisconsin PK-16 Leadership Council**. These sponsors sought involvement of business and commerce leaders to gain perspective on workforce needs and to engage the business community in defining 21<sup>st</sup> century skills that should be prioritized in Wisconsin's PK-16 education. Over 150 participants from across the state addressed two focus questions:

- If you were to advise an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student in preparing him/her to work for your company 5-10 years from now, what are the skills, knowledge, and abilities you believe would be essential to develop?
- What are the strategies and actions on which business and education can collaborate to meet this goal (170,000 more individuals with bachelor's degrees and 170,000 more individuals with graduate degrees by 2020) and be educationally competitive?

The ideas generated are expected to propel Wisconsin's educational competitiveness. A stage-setting white paper prepared by Competitive Wisconsin, Inc., a non-profit think tank, presented both a wake-up call and persuasive arguments to energize new thinking about the spectrum of education across pre-kindergarten, elementary, secondary, post-secondary undergraduate and graduate levels.

I am looking forward to some new responsibilities with the **Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board's Education and Workforce Development Committee**. State Superintendent of Public Instruction, **Elizabeth Burmaster**, will be speaking at the April 30<sup>th</sup> Founders Day Dinner in Ashland. From her perspective as co-chair of Wisconsin's PK-16 Leadership Council, she will likely emphasize education's role in economic development. I am seeing converging opportunities to stimulate important regional discussions to enhance regional cooperation in building a new Northwest Wisconsin environment for education and economic development.

Take care and have a great weekend!

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*In addition Bruce maintains the following affiliations:*

[Bayfield County Economic Development Corporation](#), (BCEDC) *Director*

[Inland Sea Society](#), (ISS) *Director*

[Lake Superior Binational Forum](#), (LSBF) *US Delegation Co-Chair*

[Raindrop Garden Gallery](#), (RGG) *Co-owner*

[IDEA Consortium LLC](#), *Owner*

[Chequamegon Institute, Inc.](#) *Initial Registered Agent*

[Coalition for Eco-Industrial Development](#), (CEID) *Work Group Member*

[Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board](#), (WIB) *Member*

*The encircled fractal triangle represents an integrated cluster of seven ideas – economics, ecology, equity, ethics, education, experience and energy – that may be considered a core for sustainability studies. Bruce is available to present illustrated lectures and facilitate discussions about Industrial Ecology, Sustainable Development and the Sustainability Revolution.*