

**Black Hawk Futures Forum
8:30 am, November 30, 2007**

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Facilitators LaDene Bowen, Don Chaplain and Bill Wood of the Institute for Decision Making (IDM), UNI; Co-chairs Frank Magsamen and David McCalley, citizen members Floyd Winter, Janice Hanish, Ann Olsson, Sharon Juon, Patricia Sass, Kathy Flynn, Richard McAlister, Bob Schaeffer for Donna Harvey, Kathy Young, Mike Young, Jeff Danielson, Tom Jennings, Shaffer Ridgeway, Eileen Daley, Billie Bailey, Aric Schroeder and County Attorney Tom Ferguson, County Auditor Grant Veeder

Also attending: Geraldine Thornsberry

Magsamen said that forums would be held on January 17, 2008 and on February 20, 2008, both at 8:30 am, to concentrate on county departments and agencies.

Bowen explained that the short presentations at this and the November 27 meetings were meant just to lightly brush on areas that affect the county, but when the county department heads are brought in, they will help the Planning Team to identify areas that require focus groups that could monitor ongoing development. She said team members should make note of areas, like telecommunications, that require greater explanation.

HOUSING: ETHEL WASHINGTON, WATERLOO HOUSING AUTHORITY DIRECTOR, AND RUDY JONES, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR.

Ms. Washington said the WHA focuses on home ownership in addition to rentals. WHA programs include the Homeownership Voucher Program, the Family Self-Sufficiency Program, and the Eastside Down Payment Program. Waterloo lags behind the declining housing market, but it will lag in its rebound as well, so the WHA programs will continue to be needed. Mr. Jones said funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has decreased \$500,000 over the last five years, although there is hope for future increases. Waterloo has some of the nation's oldest housing stock. Deferred maintenance will always be a challenge. National disasters affect housing material costs here. The city offers training courses on owner-occupied rehabilitation to minimize energy costs. Demolition and Site Clearance can cost \$5000 to \$7000, which are costs that average citizens don't put aside for a rainy day. A consortium meets monthly to address the homeless population.

RECREATION: PAUL HUTING, WATERLOO LEISURE SERVICES

DIRECTOR. Mr. Huting said the city is working with the University of Northern Iowa to build a master plan to meet current recreation needs. Aging baby boomers are seeking less active pursuits, some of which may be addressed by the Iowa Veterans Museum and the renovation of the baseball stadium. There is currently a downturn in golf, but it appears to have bottomed out. Generation Y is the largest consumer and recreation group in the nation, and they're into geo-caching, tubing, snowboarding, skateparks, disc golf, ATV/off-highway motorcycle parks, etc., which will have an impact on county parks.

There is a need to connect kids and nature, as they are now obsessed with videogames. Hartman Nature Preserve and the Imaginarium have nature programs that should be supported for this purpose. Immigrant populations fuel a growing demand for large open areas used in big family gatherings. Trilingual signage can help communicate accepted behavior. Minority participation in city leisure programs is at an all-time low. Kayaking and other water activities are a big draw. Bicycling has flattened nationally but is on the rise here because of the growing trail network. Even with fuel prices up, high-tech recreational vehicles are favored by the current generation, which likes to haul its ATVs and kayaks in RVs. Museum and nature center visits are on the rise nationally. We need to fund ongoing maintenance and improvement of facilities. The emerald ash borer is coming and will affect all parks, and will require a significant effort to clean up lost trees and plant new ones. Waterloo doesn't have a recreation center, and relies on schools, with which it cooperates in the Echoes program.

HEALTHCARE AND WELLNESS: RICK SEIDLER, CEO, ALLEN HOSPITAL.

Mr. Seidler gave a list of high priority needs:

1. The first crisis is patients. When baby boomers hit Medicare age, it's a big impact on them. Demand exceeds capacity. People get sick more as they age. With advanced procedures, hospital stays are shortened. They turn over their patient group every two to three days.
2. Technology is exploding for them, which is very costly.
3. The health industry is behind other industries as regards information technology, largely because most physicians are not hospital employees, and their systems can't communicate. It would simplify things if the government mandated IT protocols.
4. Genetic procedures will create a big change, and will replace surgery in some areas.
5. Funding is a big issue. Medicare reimburses 9% of their costs, and 8% is paid by Medicaid. Wellmark insures 1.8 million of 3 million Iowans, so Wellmark can make the rules.
6. The 2008 presidential election will have a huge effect on the health industry.
7. The government will have to address access, because everyone gets sick.
8. The industry needs to be more transparent on cost and quality.
9. Iowa is second in the country on quality, but is undersupplied in physicians. However, when there are too many physicians, they often end up doing too many procedures.
10. Mental health treatment has mostly moved from mental health institutions to hospitals. Allen has 21 beds, Covenant 23, and they have 95% occupancy. The metro area is lucky that it has a good supply of psychiatrists. Hospitals need to partner with the county on mental health issues, particularly in the area of law enforcement.

Certification doesn't guarantee quality, but Allen will continue to be accredited. Allen is involved in the free clinic to help address the gap in health care for the disadvantaged. The certificate of need process needs to be strengthened. With no population growth in the community, hospitals will compete to increase their patient share.

COURTS: LINDA NILGES, DISTRICT COURT ADMINISTRATOR. Ms. Nilges said the courts are converting (when allowed by on-again, off-again state funding) to the Electronic Data Management System (EDMS) which will be completely paperless. It is web-based, and attorneys will be required to file remotely, and scanners and kiosks will be provided to facilitate this. It will start with the appellate courts and two pilot counties and then be rolled out in each subdistrict, probably in five to six years. It will mean less foot traffic in courthouses and a need for less storage by the courts. Jurors will also be able to register online. Simple misdemeanor fines may already be paid online, and eventually all fines will be accepted this way. Funding is always a problem, with the state not providing the funding necessary for the proper number of judicial officers. Regionalization was scrapped a few years ago due to strong public opposition, but it could come back. The Children's Justice Initiative will provide more resources for the juvenile area.

SOCIAL AND FAITH-BASED SERVICES: SHEILA BAIRD, UNITED WAY PRESIDENT. Ms. Baird said that United Way funds local organizations that have about 3,000 employees, but unemployment is low and the business sector competes for employees. Turnover costs money in training and lost productivity. There is a need for a human services campus so that people don't have to travel all over the area for available services, and so that ever-increasing infrastructure costs can be shared. Organization directors tend to move on, leaving a serious gap. We lead the state in people with bachelor's degrees and higher, but 14-15% of Black Hawk County's population has no high school diploma. Unstable public funding, affected by political will, makes philanthropic funding more important. Our aging population affects transportation, living arrangements, and much more. United Way is involved in a human needs assessment. The family is a big issue. When they break down, kids are less successful in school, costs multiply, employees miss more work, etc. There is a widening gap between rich and poor. There hasn't been growth in real wages since 1970.

WORKFORCE: STATE SENATOR BILL DOTZLER. Senator Dotzler said the war for talent has a large effect on our economy. Our working age population will decrease. Iowa's 2006 labor force participation rate is the highest in the nation. Decreasing unemployment is causing tighter labor markets. The state will probably add 2,000 new jobs per month for the next several years. Wages have increased by 10% since 2001, which is not real wage growth. The labor force is aging. The immigration rate is the highest since 1940. An increase in jobs doesn't mean that productivity will increase. What really occurs is that we have a smaller skill set. We're moving toward a knowledge-based economy.

3 strategies (see handout):

1. Connecting young people to the world of work.
2. Training and retraining workers in Iowa.
3. Recruitment of workers. There are fewer kids in school, so we need to recruit people to Iowa. Expanded capacity in our community college could be used in recruitment. Classes need to tie directly to local jobs. Out-of-state tuition rates at UNI need to stay stable while those at other colleges in the nation rise. Our community needs to be

exciting and dynamic to keep our very mobile youth here. In-state tuition needs to be restrained to facilitate a lower debt load for graduates.

STATE GOVERNMENT: STATE SENATOR JEFF DANIELSON. Senator Danielson said there are good, bad and ugly attributes to the future of state-county relations. The Good: There is good collaboration in government, both horizontally and vertically, and state government is starting to favor the carrot over the stick in dealing with local government. There will be an idea pool on ways we can work together. Regionalization needs to be a functional concept more than a geographical concept. We have to work together more over a larger area. Transportation is a leader in regional planning, and we should follow that model. Counties will have a greater role in economic development because they have more unused bonding capacity than cities. The Bad: Public demand continues to increase. Demand is both political and practical, and we must understand the political and focus on the practical. We have to maintain the existing infrastructure while dealing with future issues. Workforce issues and the new economy require a different infrastructure. The Ugly: It's hard to make progress with a war on because of the drain on resources. Federal spending in most areas is staying flat. Programming and money are on the decline. Interest rates have been very favorable but that's becoming a thing of the past. Counties rely on property taxes, which are stable in the traditional ag/manufacturing economy, but the economy is shifting away to sales and services, which support sales and income taxes, meaning more fiscal stress on property taxing bodies.

ENVIRONMENT/CONSERVATION: KAMYAR ENSHAYAN, UNI, CEDAR FALLS CITY COUNCIL. Mr. Enshayan said the National Association of Counties has a report on planning for local food. In Black Hawk County, residents spend \$400 million every year on food, most of the money leaving our area, and while we don't think of food as economic development, we should try to think of how to capture just 10% of that, and such planning requires an investment. Fulltime staff working on it could improve on his efforts, where every dollar he has raised has resulted in \$7 to \$8 being spent locally. We are blessed with the two key factors of good land and skilled farmers, but our food economy ignores both. We should plan for limited and very expensive energy more than we plan for pandemic flu. Even big-business CEOs realize this now. His students studied the trolleys and trains that used to run in Iowa and ought to run again in some fashion. We should start now to think about what sort of collaboration is needed to provide a transit system that people will regard as an acceptable option. We need to plan for the enhancement and protection of the county's natural areas, which provide free ecological services, by absorbing storm water, in addition to aesthetic beauty. Cedar Falls has completed an inventory of all the natural areas in the city, and development shouldn't occur there. Linn County has digitized maps with priority areas and sensitive areas so that Planning and Zoning can be advised where to be careful. The physical reality of energy sources will compel us to make changes, and we need to plan now to explore new avenues or we won't be able to maintain our vast and costly infrastructure. This also means cultural changes.

HOUSING: BOB REISINGER, VICE PRESIDENT, BOARD OF REALTORS.

Mr. Reisinger reviewed the ebbs and flows of the real estate market in the last 40 years. He said sales will probably decline in the near future because of press reports on foreclosure rates elsewhere, but since the Iowa Legislature kept the state out of the subprime market the related foreclosures shouldn't occur here. Real estate values are expected to increase 6% a year here and nationally. Single family dwellings will continue to be the favorites here, and condos and double homes will increase, because younger buyers don't want to tend lawns and gardens. There will be an increase in assisted-living style houses. Young people are buying them to prepare for old age. Accessibility features are being built in so owners can stay in their homes longer. There is scant demand for loft-style living in the inner city. Growth in the county will largely occur in Waterloo, Cedar Falls, Evansdale and Hudson. Evansdale and Hudson will concentrate on infill and existing homes. Waterloo will grow south and Cedar Falls will grow west. There will be little growth outside of city limits due to lack of infrastructure and urban sprawl.

TOURISM: CANDY STREED, PROGRAMMING AND MARKETING

DIRECTOR, SILOS AND SMOKESTACKS. Ms. Streed said Black Hawk County tourism took in \$225 million in 2006, creating local tax receipts of \$3 million. Tourism employment in the county is 2,430. People planning travel now tend to use blogs to get their information about different areas, with two-thirds of planners saying they only use the Web. Vacations tend to be shorter now since people have busier schedules: 75% of vacations are four days or fewer, mostly weekend stays. Family and friends are big determinants of travel destinations. Travelers are seeking authenticity. If we build on ours, we'll get visitors. They value sites that respect the integrity of place. Geotourism is popular – sustainability is a big factor. The quality of visitors is as important as the quantity. There is a National Heritage Area headquartered in Waterloo, and the county has a great opportunity to take advantage of it.