



4TH QUARTER, 2004

On the move . . .



Jeff Browne

In November, Forum President Jeff Browne spent an entire day visiting the following Waukesha County leaders, updating them on the Forum's current initiatives and future direction related to regional cooperation:

- **Bill Mitchell**
President
Waukesha County Economic Development Corporation
 - **Bronson Haase**
President
Pabst Farms
 - **Patti Wallner**
President
Waukesha County Chamber of Commerce
- In December, Browne met with the following leaders in Racine County:
- **Roger Caron**
President
Racine Area Manufacturers and Commerce
 - **Gordie Kacala**
Executive director
Racine County Economic Development Corporation
 - **Randolph Brandt**
Editor
The Journal Times
 - **Bonnie Prochaska**
Executive director
Sustainable Racine
 - **Gary Becker**
Racine mayor

Each month, the Forum will spend an entire day meeting with leaders in one of the seven counties of southeastern Wisconsin.

Forum digs into economic development

The Helen Bader Foundation has awarded the Forum a \$50,000 grant to study economic development in metro Milwaukee. The research will look at how much the region receives in federal funds for such development, how those funds are spent, and how the region's record compares with other metro areas.

"There is an information gap in how our region fares in federal funding for economic development and how effectively the funds are used," says Forum President Jeff Browne. "Without a comprehensive foundation of information, it will be difficult to guide the region's future."

Browne sees at least three major reports coming from the study:

- Longitudinal comparison of metro regions according to total federal revenue per capita from 1993-2003;
- Federal economic development funding within the city of Milwaukee, including how the money is spent and to what effect;
- How successful the region has been in obtaining federal project grants and procurement contracts compared to other metro regions.

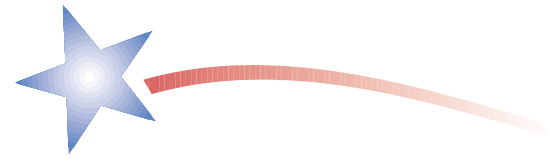
According to Dan Bader, the Foundation's president, "This is a potentially groundbreaking endeavor to help bring focus to regional cooperation in southeastern Wisconsin."

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President: Jeffrey C. Browne
Senior Researcher: Anneliese M. Dickman, J.D. • Senior Research Analyst: Kate Ksobiech, Ph.D. • Researchers: Jeffrey K. Schmidt, Ryan J. Horton, Deborah A. Curtis • Research Intern: Daniel C. Nedset

Communications Director: Jerry Slaske
Office Manager: Catherine A. Crother

Contacts: 633 W. Wisconsin Ave, Suite # 406 Milwaukee, WI 53203
Phone: 414-276-8240 • Fax: 414-276-9962 • Web: www.publicpolicyforum.org



What's the latest . . .

Since its 3rd quarter newsletter, the Forum has released the following reports or studies:

- *State Shared Revenue and the Future of Regional Cooperation*
- *8th annual report card on giving for metro Milwaukee* (data provided to Greater Milwaukee Foundation)
- *2004 edition of Public Schooling in Southeastern Wisconsin*
- *Comparative analysis of schools in the Racine Unified School District*
- *Comparative analysis of schools in the Kenosha County school system*
- *Four MPS Schools Taking Corrective Action under No Child Left Behind Act**

*** Please note that since the printing of the research brief, "Four MPS Schools Taking Corrective Action under No Child Left Behind Act," Milwaukee's Bell Middle School has successfully appealed its status as a school identified for improvement and will not be required to plan for restructuring next year. Consequently, only three schools are in need of corrective action. In addition, because of a data error by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Waukesha's White Rock Elementary School and the Harvey Philip Alternative Charter School were classified mistakenly as not having met adequate yearly progress.**

Forum Web site is new and improved

Most of the Forum's research and reports are available to anyone who visits the new Web site, which is up and running. It's also improved. The site now includes a searchable database; an "In the news" page (that is bursting at the seams with news clips mentioning the Forum); and links to government officials in the seven counties of southeastern Wisconsin, to all 94 school districts, to major print media, and to selected state government departments. Take a look at www.publicpolicyforum.org and see how easy it is to navigate and find the information you need.

Japan taps into Forum's school choice expertise

In November, Ms. Makiko Okamoto of the Tokyo-based "think tank," Japan Research Institute, Ltd., spent two days in Milwaukee talking with Forum researchers and private and public school advocates about school choice. The Forum also arranged visits to several choice schools. Okamoto was conducting an international comparison of choice programs for the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology. Her findings will help the government determine whether to fund tuition vouchers for Japan's elite private schools. After Milwaukee, Okamoto visited Cleveland and its choice program.

Browne helps define government reporting standards

Forum President Jeff Browne is assisting in the long-term strategic planning efforts for the board that sets financial reporting standards for local, county, and state governments. In November, he spent two days in planning meetings at the headquarters of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board.

It was one of three annual gatherings that Browne attends as a member of the Governmental Accounting Standards Advisory Council. Browne is vice president of the Governmental Research Association, a national group of organizations that are similar to the Forum. He serves as the association's representative to the council.

"The subject is arcane and can be very tedious, but I can't over-emphasize the importance of consistent and transparent financial accounting," says Browne. "It can pave the way for accountable and efficient government here in southeastern Wisconsin."

Book on school choice up for award

The book, "School Choice and the Question of Accountability," written by the Forum's Anneliese Dickman and Emily Van Dunk, formerly of the Forum, has been nominated for the American Educational Research Association's *Outstanding Book Award*.

Dickman and Van Dunk wrote the book over a five-year span, conducting



Anneliese Dickman

hundreds of interviews, sifting through and analyzing reams of data, and visiting many choice schools to determine the effectiveness of Milwaukee's school choice program, now the largest and oldest publicly funded school

voucher system in the U.S. The book's theme is that it's hard to know whether the school choice is working or not

because there are no objective standards to which choice schools must adhere.

The Washington Post editorialized that school choice programs should heed the book's advice; John Witte, author of "The Market Approach to Education," wrote that "there is not a more timely book available on education reform in America"; and the book's research was cited in a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that upheld Cleveland's choice program.