

Footnotes...

FOURTH QUARTER 2005

Latest Forum research

Forum raises concerns about future workforce

In its annual schooling report, released on November 21, the Forum sounded a warning about the competency of the region's future workforce. The report said that because the region's schools underachieve compared to those in the rest of the state, southeastern Wisconsin's future economic performance could be adversely affected.

"Lower levels of achievement in the Milwaukee, Kenosha, and Racine school districts could leave employers unable to find enough skilled workers to fill vacancies created by retiring baby boomers," says Ryan Horton, M.U.P., the Forum researcher who wrote the report. He added that cooperative regional efforts are perhaps the only practical ways of improving academic performance.

"We cannot be content to simply point to excelling school districts, like Cedarburg or Arrowhead Union or Germantown, as the stars that will make the entire region shine," says Horton. "To simply write off the Milwaukee, Kenosha, and Racine districts, which combined account for 45% of the region's students, would be detrimental."

Beginning in 2011, the state predicts that more workers will leave Wisconsin's workforce than enter it. According to the US Census Bureau, the region ranks last among 12 Midwestern peers in percentage of the population with high school diplomas and ninth in the percentage with a bachelor's degree.

Horton suggests the following might help to improve the situation:

- Urging school districts – through the Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA #1) – to think regionally in terms of performance;
- Greater collaboration among public schools, technical schools, labor and area businesses;
- Greater emphasis on the transition from public school to the workplace, where technical skills increasingly are vital to the area's prosperity.

Schooling report and poster can be downloaded from www.publicpolicyforum.org.

Helen Bader grants on their way

The Forum has received two grants from the Helen Bader Foundation. One for economic development will assess how public money is being spent to grow the economy of the city of Milwaukee. The study will be a comprehensive look at Milwaukee's economic development expenditures and priorities and how they incorporate the city's development mission, which is "to create jobs, build wealth, and strengthen the urban environment."

The other – a challenge grant – will be used to conduct research on race relations in Milwaukee. According to Jeff Browne, Forum president, the project is intended to generate long overdue community dialog on race. An initial survey will track changes in attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors about race. Other funding sources will be needed before the study can begin.

Welcome new members

BDO Seidman (represented by Lori Stortz)
Public Financial Management (David Anderson)
Quad/Graphics, Inc. (Andy Schiesl)

Footnotes

published quarterly for members

President:	Jeffrey C. Browne
Research Director:	Anneliese M. Dickman, J.D.
Researchers:	Jeffrey K. Schmidt, Ryan J. Horton, M.U.P. Deborah A. Curtis
Research Associates:	Laura Million James Robinson
Communications Director:	Jerry Slaske
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Forum highlights alternatives to GAMP

Milwaukee County's General Assistance Medical Program (GAMP) cannot survive in its present form even if policymakers decide to continue serving the uninsured poor, according to a recently released Forum report.



Anneliese Dickman, J.D.

GAMP, which has existed since 1997, blends local, state, federal, and private dollars to provide health care for the indigent uninsured in community clinics. The problem, according to Anneliese Dickman, J.D., Forum research director and the report's author, is reconciling GAMP's purpose with its funding mechanism.

"The program's purpose is to provide community-based primary health care, but its funding mechanism relies on large hospitals," she says. "Even if the county wasn't facing a long-term structural deficit, and taxes and other spending priorities were not an issue, there is this inherent dilemma that must be addressed."

Elements from other programs around the country that the report says could be considered in Milwaukee include:

- Contracting with specialty providers to share the risk of high-cost treatments;
- Paying primary care providers based on established per-patient rates;
- Providing coverage through employers who would contribute to a monthly premium;
- Forming a non-profit corporation to oversee the program;
- Contracting with a third-party to administer the program as managed care;
- Requiring hospitals to spend a percentage of federal funds on primary care. ❏

GAMP report can be downloaded from www.publicpolicyforum.org

Katrina's effect on Milwaukee

Forum Researcher Ryan Horton, M.U.P. spoke to the North Shore Milwaukee branch of the American Association of University Women in October about the effects



Ryan Horton, M.U.P.

of Katrina on federal funding in the area. Horton told the 40 women in Fox Point that there's a budget reconciliation bill before Congress that could result in cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, and the US Department of Commerce's economic development agency (the agency that helped fund the Milwaukee Public Market). If that happens, he said, there could be a significant impact in the Milwaukee region because of the area's heavy reliance on "formula" payments. ❏

Pitching in

Jeff Browne recently was a featured speaker – along with Virginia Carlson, Ph.D., a UWM associate professor of urban planning – at the Donor Forum Roundtable on what it takes to get people working together in Milwaukee's neighborhoods. The presentation was billed as, "Regional Economic Development and Philanthropy: What's the Connection?" It followed an October 31 presentation by the Greater Milwaukee Committee on the creation of the Regional Economic Development Council. Jeff's and Virginia's task was to analyze current efforts to revitalize Milwaukee through regional collaboration in light of the new organization's creation. ❏



Jeffrey C. Browne

Ready, set, speak

The Forum is prepared - and eager - to travel the speaker's circuit. If you know of any speaking opportunities at organizations you're involved in that might benefit from having a Forum researcher as a speaker or panel member, give us a call at 414-276-8240. We'll take it from there. ❏

Good research isn't cheap, but it is deductible

Don't forget about the Forum's year-end appeal. A recent Forum study says that 99.99999999% of those in the seven counties of southeastern Wisconsin who make a year-end pledge, feel good afterwards. Contributions to the Forum are 100% tax deductible. ❏

Big draw for the arts

“**R**egional support for the arts” was the title of the viewpoint luncheon in October that drew about 130 attendees. Miller Brewing Company and the Argosy Foundation were sponsors of the event, featuring Bruce Seaman, Ph.D., from

Georgia State University in Atlanta, who has written extensively about the impact of the arts on communities; Floyd Ciruli, whose consulting firm developed and managed the start-up of Denver’s arts district; and Bill Holahan, UWM professor. ❏



Left: *Almost 130 attendees to the Public Policy Forum’s viewpoint luncheon, Regional Funding for the Arts, heard about Denver’s success in creating a regional authority – the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District – for its more than 300 arts and cultural groups in seven counties.*



Left: *Forum Chairman Rick White (at podium) warms up the audience before introducing the panel of speakers: (l to r) Bill Holahan, UWM professor and associate director of its Center of Economic Education; Floyd Ciruli, who helped create Denver’s arts and cultural district; and Bruce Seaman, associate professor of economics at Georgia State University, who also holds a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Chicago.*

Above & right: Most audience questions were about the specifics of how Denver’s arts and cultural district was created and operates.



Above: Floyd Ciruli is passionate when telling the story about Denver’s success.



Left: Bruce Seaman makes a point about the inflated and overrated impact of cultural and arts organizations on any community. He said the importance of such groups is the image they create rather than the revenue they generate.

On the rebound?

In *The Wall Street Journal*, 12/7/2005, Milwaukee was featured in a story headlined, “A Midwestern City Makes a Comeback.” The article said the region’s real estate market lagged behind much of the country; its population growth was below the nation’s average; its job growth rate was well below the national average; and its office market is among the weakest in the country, based on office rental rates, which were just above Oklahoma City’s, the nation’s weakest. The story did say Milwaukee was a strong warehouse market and that office buildings here are selling for more than they are in Cincinnati. ☞

Coming soon...

- *Voucher school poster* •
- *“Vision” viewpoint luncheon* •
- *Shared services survey* •

10, 9, 8, 7, 6 . . . take-off

According to a recent The Brookings Institution report, “Who Lives Downtown,” in its “LivingCitiesCensusSeries,” Milwaukee’s downtown is in the “on the edge of takeoff” category. The institution bases its optimism on the following data about Milwaukee:

- Big comeback in downtown households in the 1990s (13.1% growth)
- High rate of downtown homeownership (10.6%)
- High educational attainment (46.2% with bachelor’s degree or higher)
- Affluent downtown residents (\$53,125 median income – highest tract; \$11,202 median income – lowest tract)

Included in the “on the edge of takeoff” category are the downtowns of Washington, D.C., Chattanooga, Dallas, and Miami. ☞

Happy Holidays to all of our loyal members!