

Footnotes...

FOURTH QUARTER 2006

Economic development report cites lack of plan, accountability

Common council committee asks for resumption of annual report

No sooner did “*Growing Up*”, a comprehensive report on the city of Milwaukee’s economic development efforts, appear in the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* than an intense discussion among leaders in the community sprang up about the report’s findings.

Those findings included:

- The city of Milwaukee doesn’t have an economic development plan to guide its investment, which totaled \$413 million between 2002 and 2005, putting the city “out of step with 80% of peer cities around the country and into a select group of rust-belt cities without plans that includes Pittsburgh, Detroit, and Cleveland”;
- Little taxpayer money is spent on economic development;
- The city lacks the reporting, tracking, and accountability to guide its investment;
- Only 1% of economic development funds go for workforce development.

“Our intent was to create a constructive discussion about the state of the city’s development efforts,” says Forum President Jeff Browne. “Over nine months, we gathered the facts and then presented them in this report in the hope of starting a conversation about what next steps – if any - should be taken.”

Policy options in the report, authored by Senior Researcher Ryan Horton, included:

- Draft a citywide economic development plan;
- Become more involved in workforce development;
- Assemble a business development team;
- Bring Community Development Block Grant expenditures in line with program goals;
- Streamline the city’s economic development organization;
- Submit an annual report on economic development to the common council, the mayor, and the public.

Since the report first appeared, follow-up stories, letters, and opinion pieces have appeared in the media. In addition, radio

interviews were done. The Forum also has made presentations to “Competitive Wisconsin”, the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago Roundtable, and the Community & Economic Development Committee of Milwaukee’s Common Council, which has since asked the city’s development department to resurrect an annual report on economic development.

Report funding came from the **Helen Bader Foundation**.

(see related story on back page)

Taking the region to school

A late October Viewpoint luncheon in Waukesha County brought together higher education and Forum members to explore the role higher education could play in making southeastern Wisconsin more competitive economically, culturally, and socially with other regions. Luncheon sponsors were **Cardinal Stritch University, Marquette University, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and Waukesha County Technical College**.



The Viewpoint panel on higher education included (left to right): Dr. David L. Shrock, dean of Marquette University’s College of Business Administration; Doug Hastad, president of Carroll College and former chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse; Tom Hefty, attorney at Reinhart Boerner & Van Deuren; Gerard Randall, president & CEO of the Private Industry Council of Milwaukee County and a University of Wisconsin regent; and Dr. Sammis White, professor of urban planning at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and director of the Center for Workforce Development.

Footnotes (published quarterly)

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Survey says parents want more non-traditional services from MPS

According to a Forum survey, the public wants Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) to carry out a laundry list of non-traditional services to improve safety and discipline.

More than 80% of the 900 survey respondents to “*Public Education in Milwaukee: A Survey of Public Opinion*” said they think it’s “extremely important” that MPS provide violence prevention services, such as scanning for weapons, assigning police officers to schools, using dogs to search lockers, and drug and alcohol prevention programs.

More than 60% also said it’s “extremely important” for MPS to provide adult mentors for children, before- and after-school programs, and employment counseling. In addition, the vast majority said schools should make nursing and social work services, like mental health counseling, available. And more than half said that to help reduce poverty, MPS should offer housing assistance to poor families.

While respondents across the board gave a resounding “no”* when asked if MPS has enough funding to do a good job, only 43% said it was using its current resources as efficiently as possible.

The survey was funded by MPS and The Joyce Foundation.

* More than 50% of white respondents and non-MPS parents; more than 70% of black respondents and MPS parents.

Area’s generosity explodes with largest one-year increase in giving

In the 10 years of the Forum collecting data on philanthropy in the Milwaukee area, 2005 was the best for more than 60 million reasons.

According to the *Report Card on Charitable Giving*, which is funded by the **Greater Milwaukee Foundation**, the 64 bellwether organizations in Milwaukee, Waukesha, Ozaukee, and Washington counties received \$265.5 million in contributions in 2005, up from \$205 million the previous year.

Thirty-nine of the 64 organizations saw giving go up. Health organizations showed the greatest increases, with the sector almost doubling to \$31.9 million. Next largest was giving to arts and culture, an increase of 57.4%. Environment was the only sector of the six with a decrease from 2004.

From 2004 to 2005, individual giving to the bellwethers increased more than \$30 million. Business giving increased 64% and foundation giving rose 17%.

School posters available

All 50 school districts throughout southeastern Wisconsin are ranked on everything from “operations expenditures” to “minority enrollment” to various test scores on the latest poster created and distributed by the Forum.

School boards, legislators, media, chambers of commerce, and foundations received the poster. If you would like copies, contact the Forum at 414-276-8240 or jschmidt@publicpolicyforum.org.

Sponsors of the project were **GE Healthcare; Griffin, Kubik, Stephens & Thompson, Inc.; Marquette University; Multiple Listing Service;** and **Northwestern Mutual Foundation.**

Milwaukee knocks Phoenix cold

The Arizona Republic (the Phoenix equivalent of the *Journal Sentinel*) columnist Jon Talton visited several Midwestern cities recently to check out where all the snowbirds were coming from. He flew into Milwaukee and, in part, here’s what he wrote about the city:

“My most recent trip began in Milwaukee, which should emblemize so much of the Midwest’s decline.

“If population growth is destiny, Milwaukee should be in trouble. From a high of 741,000 in 1960, the city now has a population that is about a third of the city of Phoenix.

“Yet the downtown is surprisingly vibrant and beautiful. There’s a sense of prosperity, of commerce going on. Some 2,500 condos in 40 buildings have been built the past three years. Downtown Phoenix is a joke by comparison.

“It makes a difference that Milwaukee itself is home to six Fortune 500 headquarters (Arizona has only four). Well-regarded Marquette University also is located downtown.”

Captions for pictures on facing page

1) Forum chairman Bill Haberman opens the “Race to be competitive” Viewpoint luncheon; 2) Mark Sabljak, publisher of *The Business Journal*, which was a partner with the Forum in developing the race relations survey, introduces representatives of organizations who were asked to respond to the survey’s findings; 3) Ritu Sharma (US Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce); 4) Paula Penebaker (YWCA of Greater Milwaukee); 5) Reuben Harpole (Helen Bader Foundation); 6) Maria Monreal-Cameron (Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Wisconsin); 7) Margaret Crawford (Rotary Club of Milwaukee); 8) Research Associate James Robinson (right) is interviewed by Fox 6 News after presenting the survey’s findings.

Survey finds improvement in race relations

Clear signs show blacks, whites, and Latinos more accepting of one another

There are clear signs of improvement in race relations throughout the seven counties of southeastern Wisconsin, according to the results of a provocative and evocative Forum survey of 1,000 residents in the region.

“No question that the region still has problems, but our comprehensive survey shows things aren’t as bad as many people perceive them to be, especially when compared to 15 years ago,” says Forum President Jeff Browne. “And that bodes well for the region’s future because poor or deteriorating race relations can be a barrier to prosperity and impede progress.”

For example, 24% of the respondents said race relations are getting worse, compared to 54% in 1991. Also, 15 years ago, 33% of whites and 43% of blacks approved of interracial marriage. Today, almost 80% of both groups are comfortable with it.

The following findings pointed to improved race relations:

- Families, particularly those of color, are far more likely

to report that their lives are improving rather than getting worse;

- Younger people report more positive attitudes about people of other races than older people do;
- Improved race relations are almost universally recognized as very important to the region’s future;
- Both whites and blacks report being comfortable conversing with each other, working together, and being close friends;
- More than 80% of whites said they trust blacks and Latinos, while smaller percentages – but still a majority – of blacks and Latinos said they trust whites.

Research funders were **Argosy Foundation, Assurant Health Foundation, Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Greater Milwaukee Foundation (Donald and Barbara Abert Fund), Helen Bader Foundation, Helfaer Foundation, Jane Bradley Pettit Foundation, Rockwell Foundation, and Steigleder Foundation.**

“Elephant” makes tracks with race relations survey

Blizzard doesn’t prevent excellent turnout to discuss survey findings

Even though Forum President Jeff Browne likes to say that race relations is “the elephant in the room” that everyone shies away from talking about, it certainly took center stage at a Viewpoint luncheon to unveil the results of a region-wide survey on the topic. In an attempt to make sure the “elephant in the room” continues to make tracks, the Forum asked luncheon attendees either to make a commitment to schedule a presentation on the survey’s results or to get involved in the discussion themselves. Luncheon sponsors were *The Business Journal Serving Greater Milwaukee, Quarles & Brady LLP, M&I Corporation, Miller Brewing Company, and Robert W. Baird & Co.*



Elevating the quality of public discussion

Civic leaders make good decisions when they have good information. While that may sound a bit naïve, it goes to the heart of what the Public Policy Forum does. We help leaders make decisions by providing accurate and objective information. In the process, we aspire to create a foundation for discussion.

Sometimes our efforts to do so are controversial. When everyone agrees with our conclusions, we wonder if there was a need to do the study in the first place.

Our analysis of the city of Milwaukee's economic development efforts generated a lot of attention. We got heat from city leaders. The media, mainstream and otherwise, weighed in with multiple columns, letters, op-ed pieces, broadcast commentary, and blog entries. Some suggested our work was not in keeping with the high standards of past Forum endeavors.

None of this surprised us. What sometimes got lost, unfortunately, is that the report focused strictly on the city's efforts – not on what other organizations are doing - and on a fixed period in time, 2002-2005. Our intent was not to blindside the city, or snub promising regional initiatives like the "Milwaukee 7".

As you know, we have been focusing on the region for more than three years. So far we have issued 22 studies aimed at helping answer the question: What has to happen for our region to be competitive in the 21st century global economy?

Of course, the region is only as strong as its components. So the economic development study turned the spotlight on the city, and the Forum stands firmly behind the report.

One point needs clarification, though. Rocky Marcoux, head of the city's development department, challenged our assertion that his department has experienced a 42% staffing reduction. While the city's figures show that to be correct, what isn't evident in the city's spreadsheet is that many of those positions have been shifted to other departments. So Rocky's right: The report overstated the personnel reduction.

I thank you for your support and much appreciate your feedback about our work. – *Jeff Browne*

New members during the 4th quarter:

School District of Brown Deer
J. P. Cullen & Sons, Inc.
4th Street Forum

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www.publicpolicyforum.org.**