

Footnotes...

FOURTH QUARTER 2007

Rob Henken named Forum president

The Forum's selection committee has tapped Rob Henken as the next president to replace Jeff Browne, who is stepping down in March. Rob currently is director of Milwaukee County's Department of Administrative Services. He will be the Forum's ninth president in the organization's 95 years.

Rob will begin work with the Forum in late January. He says he plans to use his five-week transition period to gain insight into the Forum's internal workings and brainstorm with Jeff and the staff before considering new priorities. Among interests he has shared with the Forum board, however, are benchmarking the performance of local governmental bodies and analyzing potential overlap between local governmental roles. He also says he would like to use his knowledge of local government to enhance the visibility and relevance of the Forum and its research among government decisionmakers.

Before becoming the County's top administrative official, Rob, 44, was director of its Health and Human Services Department for almost three years. Prior to that, he was the county board's research director.

Rob came to Milwaukee in 1994 as executive director of the Alliance for Future Transit and later became executive director of Milwaukee Jobs Initiative, both nonprofits. From 1987 to 1994, he was in Washington, D.C., as a staff director for the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs, and legislative aide to U.S. Reps. Chester Atkins (Mass.) and Robert Torricelli (N.J.).



In addition to his interests in public policy, Rob is a sports enthusiast and a baseball fanatic. Hailing from Newton, Massachusetts, a Boston suburb, his favorite baseball team is not surprisingly, the Red Sox. In fact, he attended a World Series game this year at Fenway. His other favorites – also not surprising – are the New England Patriots and the Boston Celtics, though he does cite the Brewers, Packers and Bucks as his “second favorite teams.”

Rob has a bachelor's degree in history from Brown University (Providence, R.I.) and a master's in journalism and public affairs from American University (Washington, D.C.).

Rob's wife, Barrie, a Bayside native, also has journalism degrees (bachelor's from the University of Wisconsin-Madison; master's from American). She worked on the assignment desk at WTMJ-TV4. Also, she was press secretary for U.S. Rep. Bill Green (N.Y.) and a legislative aide to U.S. Rep. Tom Petri (Wis.). Currently, she's a stay-at-home mom.

Rob enjoys coaching his son's little league team in Glendale. And he still likes to run for exercise, having completed the 1983 and 1984 Boston Marathons.

The things he likes most about Milwaukee are its family-friendly atmosphere, convenience, and lack of congestion. “Once you've lived in Boston and Washington, D.C., you appreciate these qualities,” he says. Nevertheless, he still misses Cape Cod in the summer and the political action in D.C., but “not enough to ever want to live there again.”

Rob; his wife; two children, Danny, 16, and Ben, 13; and Buddy, a 10-year-old bichon, reside in Bayside.

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Footnotes (published quarterly)

President: Jeffrey C. Browne
Research Director: Anneliese M. Dickman, J.D.
Senior Researcher: Ryan J. Horton, M.U.P.
Researchers: Jeffrey K. Schmidt
Melissa Kovach
Communications & Development Director: Jerry Slaske
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Global wooing

Milwaukee region is in the fight of its economic life

CEOs, representing three of the state's largest companies in the service, financial, and manufacturing sectors, will give their perspectives on what the region needs to attract global talent and business. Also, learn what factors affect their decisions to stay in Milwaukee rather than go elsewhere.

Thursday, Jan. 10 - 11:45 to 1:30 - Italian Conference Center

Closer ties to Chicago could soften income drain

The Forum's latest study on personal income migration found that households moving out of southeastern Wisconsin took with them \$1.3 billion more in income than newcomers to the region brought in during 2001-2006.

The study also showed that the region benefits from income coming from the Chicago region. In fact, Chicago is by far the largest net contributor to southeastern Wisconsin's personal income. Moreover, Chicagoans brought with them higher annual incomes (\$47,880) than Wisconsinites who moved into the region (\$34,124).

The six counties that make up the Chicago region represented almost \$400 million in income coming to the region from 2001-2006.

Only Kenosha and Walworth counties in southeastern Wisconsin – the two counties closest to Chicago – had net personal income gains last year. Kenosha was \$30 million to the good; Walworth, \$3.2 million.

"It's obvious that the more Chicagoans know about our region, in terms of lower housing costs, better schools, fewer traffic hassles, the greater the chance we have of attracting even more personal income," says Forum Senior Researcher Ryan Horton, M.U.P., the study's principal author.

Small-city schools showing pressures of big-city schools

Schools in southeastern Wisconsin's smaller cities, like Delavan, Cudahy, and Whitewater, are beginning to experience the same kinds of stress that schools in larger cities have felt for many years, according to the Forum's 2007 schooling report.

"The data indicate that large, urban school districts are not alone in their problems," says Anneliese Dickman, J.D., Forum research director. "The entire region faces similar issues and must tackle them together."

For example, Delavan-Darien, Lake Geneva-Genoa City, Williams Bay, Cudahy, and Mequon-Thiensville are among those showing declines in enrollment. Student engagement – based on attendance, truancy, and dropout rates – appears to be eroding in Burlington, Delavan-Darien, and Cudahy. And Delavan-Darien, Lake Geneva-Genoa City, and Whitewater are showing greater incidence of poverty based on the percentage of student enrollment receiving free or reduced-price lunches.

As part of the report, a poster was developed ranking all 50 school districts in the region on a variety of measurements.

The report and poster were sponsored by Cardinal Stritch University, Multiple Listing Service (MLS), Northwestern Mutual Foundation, Stifel Nicolaus, and Waukesha County Technical College.

Early childhood education research starting to talk

The following are initial results of the "parents" survey of the Forum's early childhood education initiative:

- 25% of respondents had some difficulty finding information about child care options
- Respondents had little knowledge about Wisconsin Shares, the state's child care subsidy program
- 71% said their current child care arrangement was the best they've ever had
- 29% said their child's primary caregiver didn't have a degree in education or early childhood development
- 25% said their child care provider was not state certified, licensed, or accredited
- 87% said they did not receive help in paying for child care
- Lower-income respondents were less likely to get help paying for child care from employers, and more likely to receive government help
- More than half said they found out about their child care provider through someone they knew

When the research project ends in two years, there will have been at least nine reports issued.

Racine schools show little improvement

The 10th annual comparative analysis of Racine public schooling showed that the Racine Unified School District (RUSD), the fourth largest district in the state, improved in several areas during 2006, but that overall, the district still languishes compared to nine peer districts.

The positives include an improvement in 8th grade reading for the third straight year; a 2.1% increase in reading scores as students moved from 5th to 6th grade; an improving habitual truancy rate since 2003-04; a dropout rate that's less than half what it was 10 years ago, and a stabilizing district enrollment after three years of decline.

Nevertheless, reading and math test scores still are a problem across all grades; reading scores among students moving from the 4th to 5th grade decreased 2.8%, worst among peers; and RUSD's graduation rate declined for the second year in a row.

"The improvements over last year offer some hope that things are turning for the better, but there will have to be continued improvement and on a much broader scale to say that a turnaround is indeed taking place," says Jeff Schmidt, Forum researcher.

Forum President Jeff Browne and Schmidt presented the report's findings to an audience of about 75 at The Johnson Foundation's Wingspread Conference Center in Racine. The report was sponsored by Education Racine, Inc. and The Johnson Foundation.

Election events put on ballot

With election season – both nationally and locally – upon us, the Forum will be involved in several events to educate and elucidate:

- The Forum is urging its members to attend a Downtown Milwaukee Rotary presentation by Project Vote Smart founder, Richard Kimball, on Tuesday, January 8. Project Vote Smart is a national organization, based in Montana, to inform voters on local and national candidates for office.
- Immediately after the primary for Milwaukee County executive, the Forum hopes to bring candidates together for a debate. The tentative date is Thursday, February 21.
- Lastly, at its annual meeting on Thursday, March 6, the Forum hopes to hold a debate among candidates for Milwaukee mayor.

New members since October 1

Aon Corporation
Deloitte & Touche LLP
YWCA of Greater Milwaukee

Viewpoint luncheon

Investing in the region's human capital

On October 31, the Forum hosted a Viewpoint luncheon on the region's effort at workforce development. Donald Sykes, president of the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board, laid out his vision for providing trained and capable workers to propel southeastern Wisconsin through and beyond the 21st century. John Stilp, P.E., dean of technology and applied sciences at Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC), spoke about the current situation, saying that investing in skills training now is less expensive than paying for crime fighting and social services later.



Don Sykes, president of the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board, laid out his strategy for making the nascent organization an effective force in assuring an adequate pool of workers for the region. "The expectations are great, and the problems large," he said.

Goodwill Industries of Southeastern Wisconsin, Inc.

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Forum speaks out about lack of transit progress

Senior Researcher Ryan Horton was a guest speaker at the Milwaukee Forum's annual alumni meeting in October at Potawatomi Bingo and Casino. Ryan, whose focus at the Forum has been economic development, spoke about the region's public transportation travails and what's needed to reform transit. He emphasized the importance of a solid governance structure before any meaningful progress could be made in transit.



Ryan Horton

Also speaking was Ken Yunker, deputy director of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, and Alan Horowitz, director of the Center for Urban Transportation Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Joe Caruso, a transportation consultant, was the moderator. A crowd of 75 peppered the speakers with questions showing their frustration with the lack of progress on transit issues in the region. As the meeting's promotional brochure said, "...the greater Milwaukee area continues to be stuck in the slow lane when it comes to mass transit."

The Milwaukee Forum bills itself as an organization of the area's "emerging leaders" to enhance greater racial and ethnic understanding as a way of improving the community's well being.

Researcher joins Forum

Melissa Kovach recently joined the Forum as a researcher, focusing on early childhood education. Melissa has a master's in public policy from the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota (Minneapolis). She also has a bachelor's in English from Marquette University.



Melissa Kovach

While obtaining her degree at Minnesota, Melissa was director of grants and research for the Division of Indian Work and the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches. Prior to that, she was a research assistant in the Community Vitality Department at the University of Minnesota Extension in Minneapolis.

Year-end appeal goes for record

Every Forum member has received – or should have received – a letter requesting a year-end contribution. Often, it's the money collected during the appeal that spells the difference between a good and bad year financially for the Forum. Please give whatever you can. *It's tax deductible.* Last year, the Forum set a record.

Goodbye, Mr. Ryan

The community lost a statesman and gentleman. Jim Ryan died on November 6. It also was a terrific loss for the Forum. Jim was an active Forum member, board trustee, and advisor to the staff.

“We were extremely fortunate to have Jim involved with the Forum,” said Jeff Browne, Forum president. “He was thoughtful, a real consensus builder, and always willing to lend a hand, an ear, and, if need be, a shoulder. No matter what the issue or how intractable the two sides, Jim found the common ground. And people



James R. Ryan

**True friend of the Forum and the Milwaukee regional community
1943-2007**

walked away feeling good about what happened even if they were on the other side. That’s statesmanship and that’s a gentleman.”

Jim was a Forum board trustee since 1995. He also was on the board’s executive committee, the “Salute” committee, the Water Policy Advisory Panel, the search committee (to replace Jeff Browne), among others.

“We will miss the wisdom and cooperation which Jim brought to every meeting and event he attended,” said Browne.