

## **Press News Journal, Canton, Missouri**

### **Tenth anniversary Development Summit was well attended**

**Dan Steinbeck**

**PNJ Editor**

A lot of activity took place in a few short hours at the 10th Tri-State Development Summit held April 4.

The conference drew some 430 people to the campus of Culver-Stockton College, including Missouri Lieutenant Governor Peter Kinder, U.S. Senator Christopher “Kit” Bond, U.S. Representative Kenny Hulshof, an aide to presidential candidate Barrack Obama, Illinois State senator John Sullivan, and an aide to Illinois congressman Ray LaHood.

Transportation directors from all three of the Tri-States were present, and received plaques for their work on highway progress from Transportation task chairman Tom Boland.

Numerous city and county officials, as well as a variety of business and educational leaders attended.

Kinder, a Cape Girardeau native said “I’m sure there are other (groups) like this in the country, but it’s the first such I’ve attended.

“As a Missouri boy who grew up in a river town (The Cape), where we also have a conjunction of states in a region not unlike this...we should model ourselves with a regional tri- or quad-states effort like you have pioneered here. It is most impressive.”

Jack Schultz, author of the book *Boomtown U.S.A.* gave a motivational encouragement of areas seeking development, and listed a many towns featured in his book who found a niche.

“I’ve seen a number of trends. People are looking at areas like the tri-states, be cause of their quality of life, because of the recreational land, because of the rivers, and the topography of land.

“They are also looking at regions, and this idea of regionalism...Communities and areas that can work more on a regional basis, are putting themselves at a tremendous advantage of attracting these people out of the large cities when they are looking at these quality of life issues,” Schultz said.

Reports were given from the eight task forces, and two others were announced. Joining the task forces of transportation (specifically, highways), river issues, tourism, workforce development, agriculture, media, housing and entrepreneurship are connectivity (high speed internet, for example) and emergency response.

Summit Coordinator Shelby Crow said no immediate plans have begun for the next summit. It will be held in Iowa in 18 months, to two years from now.

Paul Rohde , vice-president of the Midwest Area waterways council, told of progress on upgrading the locks on the upper Mississippi River, which includes Lock 20 in Canton.

Bond, the first sitting senator to attend a summit, was critical of Democrat-led plans.

“(With the) budget, they are making sure we will not continue lower tax rates.

“The current majority eschews fair trade. I’m pushing for open doors for (U.S.) exporters.”

Bond told of pushing Missouri from a donor to a donee state for return on transportation tax dollars. Missouri now gets \$1.01 for each dollar spent for transportation, a situation that didn’t always exist.

“River Transportation is also extremely important. I’ve been working on the water resources development bill since 2002, which allows for \$1.95 billion for lock improvements, and \$1.7 for environmental restoration.”

“Some locks qualify for the Registry of National Historic Places,” Bond joked, of them being

70 plus years old without major improvements.

“Brazil, Argentina, and others are making waterways impressive. We’re exporting barges and towboats that we can’t use on our rivers. Friends of the paddle sturgeon (fish) are making travel on the Missouri River impossible.

“Rivers are the most economic, most efficient way to ship goods. It’s good for the environment and good for energy.”

Bond said there is some effort to make ethanol from cellulosis, like wood products and suggests some landowners in conservation reserve program consider the switch grasses.

He said The U.S. should use more of the coal resource, adding America has a 250 year supply.

“There is a process to turn it into gas or liquids.

“There is a tremendous opportunity to see this part of the country grow. We must have adequate infrastructure.”

Hulshof praised the “stick-to-it-ness” of the summit participants.

“It’s more basic than the quality of life. It’s life,” Hulshof said.

Hulshof praised again the work of SMART (students of Missouri Assisting Rural Transportation), which began seven years ago in response to the death of a classmate on U.S. 61.” Who could envision high school kids doing something like this. Kids just don’t do that. They took an event that roiled them and built on it.”

Hulshof said he sees a renaissance in rural communities, in part, but not totally from ethanol.

He encouraged America to “make the most of your opportunities given to no other nation. We’re not just rich in goods, we’re rich in goodness, to be an inspiration to the world.”

## **Housing task force releases tri-state survey results**

**Dan Steinbeck**  
**PNJ Editor**

A survey of regional housing needs has been conducted.

Housing was added to the Tri-State Development Summit task forces in 2005, and the information was available after last week’s Summit.

The survey shows an apparent shortage of private housing units in Missouri. There were 73 percent of those surveyed who felt there were inadequate numbers of private housing, compared to 19 percent of Iowa respondents and 33 percent of Illinois respondents.

All three states felt there was a need for additional housing - Missouri with 90 percent saying yes; Iowa with 69 percent saying yes; and Illinois with 67 percent saying yes.

As for the types of housing needed 80 percent in Missouri said single-family housing; 47 percent said multi-family units; and 23 percent said senior complexes.

The respective totals for Iowa were 44 percent, 31 percent; and 44 percent.

For Illinois, the respective percentages were 67 percent; 33 percent; and 67 percent.

The range seen for single-family housing was from \$45,000 to \$150,000 in Missouri; \$50,000 to \$125,000 in Iowa and also Illinois.

More workforce housing to attract business was needed, said 67 percent of Missouri respondents; 44 percent of Iowa respondents; and 34 percent of Illinois respondents.

As for the kinds of housing needed, 83 percent of Missourians said individual homes; 27 percent said apartments; and 17 percent said modular homes. For Iowa, the respective percentages were 94 percent; 19 percent; and six percent. For Illinois, the respective figures were 67 percent, 33 percent; and 67 percent.

All Illinois people surveyed consider housing as community infrastructure; while 80 percent of Missourians felt that way and 56 percent of the Iowa respondents.

Here is what Missourians felt were the needed resources to improve housing stock - 30 percent said better paying jobs; 23 percent said loans; 17 percent said grants; seven percent said self-help housing; and three percent each said land, schools, and rentals.

For Iowa, 19 percent of the people felt each of these were the needed resources – low-interest loans, jobs, help with money, and different financial help; and six percent felt each of these were needed – grants, infrastructure, and engineering.

For Illinois, 33 percent each favored low interest loans, building lots, and funding.

## **Task forces show local benefits from regional concept**

**Dan Steinbeck**

**PNJ Editor**

Lest anyone may doubt, the regionalism of the Tri-State Development Summit has had a direct local effect.

The Summit came as a follow-up of the devastating flood of 1993. Former Quincy Mayor Chuck Scholz told the crowd Wednesday morning, April 4, the flood closed all bridges in the 183 stretch between Burlington, Iowa, and St. Louis, Missouri.

Canton has been privileged to host two summits – the one last week, and the first one in 1996.

Until two more were added last week, there have been eight task forces with the summit.

Transportation has been a key to the task force, with a regional push to get 1,500-plus miles of four-lane road constructed or improved. Less than 400 of that remains.

While the SMART (Students of Missouri Assisting Rural Transportation) spearheaded efforts to get U.S. 61 four-lanes north of Canton – from the catalyst of a classmate’s death in a traffic crash – the push has continued from throughout the region, and the region has benefitted from the completed roads.

The river, which borders Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri, is where there is much discussion in Congress of lengthening and modernizing locks, now three-quarters of a century old. Lock 20 in Canton is one of seven locks on the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers under consideration for the improvements. The push to get Congress to fund it has come from all three states.

Tourism is a task force and Lewis County sites – the Mark Twain Casino, riverfront, Wakonda State Park, are among the places highlighted by regional efforts.

Workforce development is of interest to all of the region, and the task force is working with area colleges and community colleges to help provide needed workers.

Agriculture is another task force. Some local products are now marketed nationally. Also, some local farmers participate in area ethanol plants.

The media task force helped spur local spending habits after the 9/11 attacks on the country, when some people initially feared venturing out to spend anything.

The media task force has helped educate on other issues – Proposition B in 2002, and the highway 36 proposal to unite four counties in 2004-05.

The Housing task force addresses needs. Before it became an official Tri-State Summit task force, officials from the three states held three housing summits at Culver-Stockton College in recent years.

In 2006, the entrepreneurship task force was formed and plans to develop a network for entrepreneurs.

The two new task forces are for connectivity, with a new push for region wide high-speed broadband internet service, and emergency response. The latter has already used in major fires.

It's not just Canton or Lewis County. Many other communities could tout tangible benefits from a regional concept.

## **Fox: Bachelor degrees can spur economic development**

**Dan Steinbeck**

**PNJ Editor**

Higher education has a role in economic development.

This is the gist of a message from Culver-Stockton College President Dr. William Fox before the Tri-State Development Summit April 4.

“Your presence here today signals more than an anniversary or geographical convenience.

“I am not sure there will or can be a future summit without higher resolve in the bonds of coalition between the regions and its colleges. We have a major precious asset in these institutions, and the strain on them is not getting lighter.

“I am prepared to argue that the future of regional expansion...will be determined by how well the roots of higher education hold in this ground formed by the three-dozen counties in this portion of the Mississippi Valley.”

Dr. Fox said a bachelor's degree may be a driving force for economic development.

“A significant body of new research suggests that regional economies expand and stabilize in direct proportion to the number of college graduates they have added to the population.”

But Fox said U.S. Census statistics show the area number of people over age 25 with bachelor degrees is below state averages. He said The figure for Lewis County is 13 percent, but for Missouri is 22 percent. This is a comparable figure for Lee County and Iowa respectively. For Illinois, Fox said about 17.6 percent of those over age 25 have a bachelor's degree, but it is still

nine points less than the state average.

He said one third of C-S students are first generation college students. He said community college can help accelerate bachelor degrees.

Fox quoted a source saying the median weekly earnings for college graduates was 38 percent greater than those with no college experience.

## Speaker tells of successes of small towns

**Dan Steinbeck**  
**PNJ Editor**

Jack Schultz has become somewhat of an expert about small towns and what makes some thrive and some die.

Schultz, the author of *Boomtown, U.S.A.*, was the keynote speaker at the Tri-State Development Summit in Canton.

He considered thousands of towns, before focusing on less than 400 in his book. He outlined “7 1/2 keys to big success in small towns.”

“Tremendous things are happening in small town America.”

One example is Leavenworth, Washington, which over the years dropped from 6,000 to 1,000 population. Then an 11-member women’s club got a consultant to come and the city refurbished a Bavarian Community “even though there were no Bavarians in the community.”

Schultz said population has since grown to 2,000, including 40 Bavarian families.

He said the first key for small towns is to adopt a “Can-do” attitude. The second key is shaping the vision. The third key is leveraging the resources of the town.

For examples of the their key, he used Hannibal’s ties to Mark Twain, and Keokuk’s postcard effort to draw young people back to town.

The fourth key is to raise up strong local leaders. The fifth is to encourage an entrepreneurial approach.

The sixth key is to maintain local control. The seventh is to build the town’s own brand, such as what Branson, Missouri has done.

The half-key is to embrace the teeter totter factor, where ordinary citizens can determine to support an effort or be curmudgeons.

“Watch out for the CAVE people – Citizens against virtually everything.”

He told of some “bed room communities” taking a bed down main street and burning it, refusing to have that label as the sole town identification.

He said a surprising number of presidents and famous people have hailed from small towns.

He has registered a word he devised Agurbs – people moving from big cities to rural areas and closed his talk with the poem of Spirit of the Agurbs®:

*If you think you are beaten you are. If you think you dare not, you don’t. If you would like to win, but think you can’t, it’s almost a cinch you won’t. Because life’s battles don’t always go to the stronger or faster man. Sooner or later the person that wins is the one who says I can.”*