

Tri-State Development Summit Task Force Reports

April 4, 2007

Transportation Task Force (Est. 1997)

The Transportation Task Force evaluates all transportation issues within the Tri-State region, but originally focused on identifying priority highway corridors that would best serve the region AND give us strategic economic advantages.

In 1998, the task force identified 1,519 miles of four-lane or proposed four-lane Tri-State Priority Highways, including 60 miles of an entirely new route from Macomb to Peoria. Today 75% , or 1,149 miles, of that

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total are completed, under construction or pending construction.

By state, the number of miles of priority highways to be completed is:

- Iowa - 101
- Illinois - 205
- Missouri - 64

Please refer to the maps included in your registration packet for complete highway information.

Rivers Issues Task Force (Est. 1997)

The upper Mississippi, Illinois and Missouri waterways are critical to our region and the nation. Millions of tons of cargo, thousands of boaters, multitudes of fishermen, and untold gallons of excess waters are handled annually by this waterway system. Most citizens, many politicians and planners are either not aware of its importance or choose apathy or avoidance when considering the needs for maintenance, modernization or development of this invaluable resource and its adjacent river valley.

We are no better equipped to manage an event of the magnitude of "The Great Flood of '93" than we were in '93. An exception would be areas along the Missouri River in the suburbs of St. Louis and the Des Moines, Iowa area. There is limited engagement by Congress, the States, or Counties in pushing or promoting the improvement of the river system. Federal executive orders favor stagnation and decay.

How do we change this? By action and not indifference. Issues that the Summit supports and monitors regarding our Midwestern navigable river systems are flood control, navigation, economic development, recreation and environmental stewardship.

We support the authorization of the "Comprehensive Plan" to develop a systemic flood control system for the Mississippi and Illinois rivers. The basic goal of this

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effort is to develop a system of flood control that will pass a flood event similar to, or greater than, the Great Flood of 1993 with the minimum amount of damage. In evaluating the merit of this system, regional future economic benefits must be considered. Reliance on the current standard of a national economic benefit analysis will prevent Middle America from efficiently utilizing the inland waterway system and its adjacent land areas. To integrate this vision with appropriate environmental concerns we support the effort for appropriate organizations to define the environmental problems, set goals for success, and adopt action programs that are not detrimental to the other goals of flood control, economic development or recreation.

The Summit has supported the State of Missouri in opposing a spring rise plan for the Missouri River. This debate also involves flow rates, navigation and long term flood control issues. We must remember that policies and decisions made for the Missouri River also affect the Upper Mississippi River.

Our goal is a better region through a proper and balanced development of our waterway system. This will take action - not apathy, involvement - not indifference. Remember, we have a system that is, or was, the envy of the world. Let us not let either indifference or apathy destroy this great resource or the region's potential. Thanks again for your continued support.

Tourism Task Force (Est. 1997)

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The Tri-State area is rich in tourism opportunities including recreation, history and culture such as Hannibal, Missouri, boyhood home of Mark Twain; Nauvoo, Illinois, a restored Mormon settlement and home of a new LDS temple; and southeastern Iowa which features quaint communities and covered bridges. These opportunities are located at the heart of a tourism triangle with Iowa's Amana Colonies to the north, Abe Lincoln's Springfield, Illinois to the east and the Missouri Ozarks to the south.

The goal of the Tourism Task force is to combine efforts and resources to market as a region by using electronic media as well as print publications.

The Tourism Task Force was formed in 1997 and has been successful in conducting "fam" tours to familiarize the group with one another's communities, and producing regional marketing pieces. In 2007, the group plans to publish a regional tourism brochure, similar to ones produced in 1999 and 2003.

The task force has identified several goals:

- To brand the entire region as a unified tourism destination.
- Develop a marketing approach that includes a print and electronic campaign.
- Create regional themed itineraries such as historical tours, art trails and wine tours
- Make sure information distributed is accurate and easily accessible
- Create an awareness of events in other communities to avoid competition in event dates
- Expand the current www.tristateofmind website to include web-site links to each community and a listing of special events.
- Extend local advertising dollars thru a regional and cooperative marketing approach.

The group realizes the importance of cross-promoting each others' events and attractions to encourage visitors from outside our Tri-State of Mind to extend their stays and bring additional dollars into our economies.

Workforce Development Task Force (Est. 1997)

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Since the last Summit meeting in 2003, the Task Force has met a number of times. The following bullet points summarize the results of those meetings as well as our focus for the next year:

- The Business and Industry Directors from John Wood Community College, Moberly Area Community College and Southeastern Community College met in an attempt to leverage training dollars for use across state lines. They concluded that between the various funding restrictions and associated political barriers, this effort was not worth pursuing.
- Work with the Media Task Force in an effort to better publicize the work of our Task Force as well as assistance we can provide to the tri-state businesses and industries.
- Work on capturing and reporting relevant workforce data from the tri-state area, focusing particularly on employment trends, wages, etc.
- Meet with the Entrepreneurship Task Force to discuss ways we might support and enhance their efforts.
- Expand the membership of the Task Force by including more business and industry representatives.
- Continue to attempt to meet the workforce needs of employers, particularly in the area of healthcare and manufacturing.
- Identify emerging and existing young professional groups within the 35 counties and work with them to expand their recruitment and retention efforts for 22-40 year old professionals.
- Since it's inception in the fall of 2000, TriStateOnline enrollment has grown in each year of operation.
- This year was the first year that the TriStateOnline colleges generated more than one million dollars in tuition revenue.
- Since the summer of 2001, 90% of course-completing students indicated overall satisfaction with their online learning experience.

Agriculture (Est. 2000)

The Agriculture Task Force was formed in 2000 and sponsored a "mini-summit" at Western Illinois University in January of 2001, bringing together producers and processors to discuss "value-added agriculture" across state borders. More than 150 people attended the mini-summit, and the task force continues to further ag-related issues in the tri-state area.

In December 2005, the Task Force hosted a Renewable Energy seminar focusing on current projects and trends. Speakers discussed wind energy, hydro energy and ethanol.

Educating the public on the importance of buying fresh and local food products is becoming an important component of agriculture in the tri-state region. Assisting producers by providing information to

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consumers and creating awareness between producers and consumers creates a more sustainable local food system. Producers and consumers benefit from the sharing information regarding the availability, nutritional aspects, economic and environmental impacts of buying local.

Wineries, pumpkin patches and renewable energy sources such as windmills are examples of how agri-tourism sites are becoming important to the tourism and hospitality industry within the Tri-State of Mind. The Tourism Task Force will include agri-tourism sites in the publication scheduled to be printed in Summer 2007 and will use agri-tourism to develop travel itineraries such as a wine trail in SE Iowa, NE Missouri and Western Illinois.

Media Task Force (Est. 2001)

Beginning as a loose consortium of media outlets in the fall of 2001 in response to the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the Media Task Force has come together for three major projects during the intervening years. The group was initially formed as the Unified Media for the Tri-States to convince people to return to their prior living and buying patterns after 9/11. The group reconvened in the summer of 2002 to support the passage of Proposition B, a transportation tax issue put to Missouri voters.

The group was reconvened in 2004 and 2005 to educate voters on the establishment of a Transportation Development District in five Northeast Missouri counties along Highway 36. The purpose of this district was to impose and collect a half-cent sales tax to support the widening and upgrade of Highway 36 from Hannibal to Macon. The proposition, as originally worded, required the approval of voters in all five counties that contained Highway 36 in order to pass. It passed by significant margins in four counties and failed marginally in the fifth in the election of April, 2005. After reworking the proposal to fit the four primary counties containing Highway 36, the Transportation Development District steering committee again asked the task force to convene and help to educate the voters in a coordinated campaign that included both print and electronic media.

The task force worked diligently through the summer of 2005 to insure that all questions were answered and misinformation corrected. A coordinated advertising campaign and public service announcement campaign

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were carried by virtually all media in the region. Public hearings were held, and leading local personalities spoke in favor of the proposition. The activities of the task force culminated in the passage of the proposition by a wide margin in the election of August, 2005. The sales tax to support the highway's improvement was implemented on January 1, 2006. One year later, construction has begun on the first leg from Hannibal to Monroe City. That will be followed by two additional projects from Monroe City to Shelbina and from Shelbina to Macon. All construction will be finished and the project complete no later than December, 2010.

The task force consists of over 70 media outlets covering the entire Tri-State region. Of those, more than 30 were involved in the education and information campaign that led up to the passage of the Highway 36 proposition.

The three projects in which the Media Task Force has been involved, "Invest in the Tri-States, Invest in America" in 2001, the Proposition B campaign in 2002, and the Highway 36 proposal in 2004 – 2005, demonstrate the power of presenting a unified front to inform and educate the public. We can be proud that our task force has the credibility to go with its voice and that the public can and will relate to what we say. We look forward to additional activities of the Media Task Force in the coming years. We do not take on every project that is proposed, but we do accept the challenge for those which are deemed important to the citizens of the Tri-State region.

Housing Task Force (Est. 2005)

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The Tri-State Regional Workforce Housing Committee is composed of representatives from Northeast Missouri, Southern Iowa and Western Illinois.

The Committee's mission is to provide affordable workforce housing in the tri-state area. Workforce housing is a necessary part of our communities because it allows all people to be able to afford basic housing. Everyone deserves to have a place to call home and where they can meet the basic needs of their families. Workforce housing will help them be able to achieve the dream of owning their own home at a price they can afford. Policemen, Firefighters, Teachers, Social Workers, etc are all a part of the workforce that needs affordable housing.

Adequate housing, just like schools, hospitals and shopping facilities, are important to the desired growth

and economic development of a stable, quality community.

The Tri-State Committee has set the following goals:

- Increase the affordable workforce housing stock by 20% over the next two (2) years;
- Ensure that 80% of new homebuyers receive homeownership counseling;
- Develop new funding sources for housing development throughout the region

The creation of affordable workforce housing:

- Increases Community Pride
- Increases the community tax base;
- Helps attract industry;
- Provides employment opportunities
- Increases retail sales
- Increases property values

Entrepreneurship Task Force (Est. 2006)

Chair: Chuck Betts, cbetts@scciowa.edu

Members: Chuck Betts, Chair; Earl Bricker, Patti Meldrum, Gordon Ipson, Melissa Griswold, Burt Chojnowski, John Wood, Jonathan Tuttle, Norm Walzer

Mission: Promote entrepreneurship and improve quality of life by making entrepreneurial approaches to decision making a part of the regional culture of The Tri-State of Mind.

Strategy Points:

- Adopt and communicate a common understanding of:
 - entrepreneur
 - entrepreneurship
 - entrepreneurial approach
 - entrepreneurial outcomes
- Develop an inventory of existing resources which foster entrepreneurship, and identify their potential contribution.

- Develop a support network for entrepreneurs that crosses artificial state and regional boundaries.
- Build support for the Tri-State Summit Task Force on Entrepreneurism within the leadership of the Summit that results in an environment of advocacy similar to the successes of the Tri-State Summit Transportation Task Force.
- Fully participate in coordinating & communicating efforts of all Tri-State Summit Task Forces.

Action Items :

Immediate: Refine and approve the mission.

Short Term:

- Develop goals and strategies with defined outcomes.
- Identify all stakeholders.
- Evaluate Task Force composition for optimum composition from both skills and representation perspectives.