

Boone – eCommunity Leadership 2007

Introduction

Northern Kentucky is a very special place. Over the past twenty-five years, our region has demonstrated again and again its capacity to dream big dreams, overcome challenges, and unite around a shared vision for our future. We've been able to achieve great things because of the strength and resiliency of our people and the commitment to build on behalf of all who call Northern Kentucky home. Much has changed since the Quest Visioning process was convened ten years ago. Today, we confront a global knowledge-based economy in which regions compete based on their access to talent and their capacity for innovation and commercialization. The fundamental questions for Northern Kentucky are these: Can we compete in this new economy? Can we nurture, retain and recruit the talent necessary to drive innovation and assure a bright future?

What we know for sure is that ten years from now there will be winners and losers as regions work to position themselves in this new world. Vision 2015 is our best effort to assure that Northern Kentucky is in the winner's column! What will it take to nurture, retain and attract a talent pool that is competitive on a global level? We know that today's knowledge workers make decisions on where to locate based on two considerations-- professional opportunity and quality of life as reflected in a combination of physical, social and cultural assets. In other words, great jobs are not enough. Winning regions in the new economic environment will offer the whole package.

Over the past year, we've had the honor of leading a region-wide strategic planning process called Vision 2015. The process itself has been a testament to the willingness of our region to come together in order to define our collective future. Our Leadership Team was comprised of over 100 leaders from every sector of the region. They helped us think in a way that insured all the dots were present and connected. Our five action teams focused on goals, strategies and progress measures related to economic competitiveness, educational excellence, urban renaissance, effective governance and livable communities. The action team co-chairs joined us in comprising the Steering Committee that helped guide the process from start to finish. All along the way, we benefited from cross-generational leadership. Legacy, a group of 150 young professionals, co-chaired each of the action teams as well as the Leadership Team. In a sense Vision 2015 forced us to transcend generational boundaries in order to understand and anticipate what must be done to insure our region's competitive advantage. Legacy made this boundary spanning possible.

The following report to the citizens of Northern Kentucky paints a picture of our future in which we hope every citizen can find themselves. It is a bright picture in which everyone is invited to participate and none are left behind.

Overview - Vision 2015

Great communities don't happen by accident. They start with vision. In March 2005, a team of nearly 100 civic, business and government leaders launched a community planning effort to develop a strategic plan for Northern Kentucky's future.

Working from a successful 1995 plan called Quest, the group identified six critical areas the region must successfully address to ensure its economic competitiveness and prosperity. The group divided into action teams to study critical issues related to:

- Economic Competitiveness
- Educational Excellence
- Effective Governance
- Livable Communities
- Urban Renaissance
- Regional Stewardship.



The teams, which were co-chaired by members of Legacy, Northern Kentucky's young leaders group, engaged neighborhood and community groups, local and state officials, educational and social service organizations, and academic experts from Kentucky's nine northernmost counties and Cincinnati.

In all, nearly 2,000 members of the community shared ideas. Input from this community planning initiative evolved into Vision 2015, a 10-year blueprint for Northern Kentucky. Vision 2015 is ambitious. Over the next decade it has the potential to transform Northern Kentucky through talent, innovation and civic contribution.

But Vision 2015 is more than just a plan. It is a call to action. Northern Kentucky's future depends on our ability to work cooperatively and find creative solutions to the economic and social issues facing our region. As members of this community, the future is in our hands. To see the complete Vision 2015 report, visit www.vision2015.org.

Strategic Directions for Northern Kentucky

Competitive Economy

The Northern Kentucky region will reinvent its economy and create new jobs that insure continued growth and prosperity.

Connectivity, clusters and inclusion are the linchpins of reinvention in a globally competitive environment. Northern Kentucky must capitalize on digital advances to reinforce international and local opportunities for economic and social synergies. We must support homegrown talent and encourage innovation and entrepreneurship to attract high wage, advanced technology sectors and the jobs they create. And, finally, we must become a culturally literate community of inclusion that welcomes and respects people of talent, ambition and aspirations.

Educational Excellence

Our educational system will promote talent and innovation and prepare children and adults to successfully compete in the global knowledge-based economy.

Educational excellence begins with early childhood and continues through to postsecondary school and adult education. Each child will be prepared to move to the next level by demonstrating mastery of reading and mathematics. All children will meet and exceed national educational standards at every transition point. School curriculum beginning in preschool and continuing to post secondary and adult education will demonstrate rigor and relevance. Schools will reinforce a culture of contribution among young people by expanding service learning opportunities that reinforce learning and “give back” to their community.

Livable Communities

All Northern Kentucky residents will have the opportunity to access and fully participate in the civic, cultural and social life of the community.

Livable communities have a clear sense of identity rooted in landscape, architecture, history and culture; access to high-quality outdoor recreational activities; and the presence of an intense, creative and diverse social scene. They preserve history, value heritage, display tolerance and practice inclusion. They acknowledge barriers some people face and work to build bridges to opportunity.

Urban Renaissance

The urban center of the region will leverage its unique assets to add economic and social value to the community and make the region more competitive in the global economy.

The skilled workers of the new knowledge-based economy, combined with an aging population that values easy access to social and cultural amenities, have made the urban center of our region an important component of our region’s international competitive advantage. We must capitalize on these assets both for the benefit of the region and for existing neighborhood residents who can benefit from the “rediscovery” of the value of urban living.

Effective Governance

Local government will enhance the economic competitiveness of the region by insuring that high-quality public services are efficiently provided.

As we enter a period of intense, fast paced economic and social change, collaboration and bold action are required. Northern Kentucky is challenged to develop the means by which we can preserve and enhance the identity and intimacy of our communities while maximizing the efficient use of public dollars for public services. We must strive to insure that public resources are supporting the creation of opportunity and prosperity.

Regional Stewardship

Our community leaders and citizens are collaborating and working together to achieve a shared vision for the future.

Only by working together toward a shared vision of our future can we leave a better place for our children and future generations. Each leader and citizen must value civic ambition, broad public deliberation and participation, cross-sector, multi-generational leadership, inclusion and a culture of philanthropy and volunteerism. It is these values that will knit together all our efforts on behalf of the Northern Kentucky region.

Project Details - Government

Effective Governance

Goal

A strong economy and desirable quality of life depend on effective regional governance.

We want to see Northern Kentucky become a model for “networked governance.”

Networked governance would retain the benefits of small government while encouraging local governments to work together to deliver services more efficiently and use resources more efficiently.

Overview

Effective governance depends on:

Maximizing the use of public dollars for public services, while preserving and enhancing the identity and intimacy of our communities.

- Streamlining the efficiency of government services.
- Creating ways to evaluate costs and preferred service-delivery methods.
- Replacing our current system of constitutionally prescribed taxes with one that gives local government flexibility to respond to new demands and eliminates inter-jurisdictional competition.
- Encouraging citizen involvement so we can speak with a strong, unified voice in Frankfort and Washington.

Strategies

Six strategies for achieving effective governance:

- Establish a Northern Kentucky Effective Governance Commission that will ensure the most effective delivery of government services through research and analysis.
- Develop a fair, equitable and flexible revenue system for local governments and remove competition for limited resources.
- Ensure planning in all Northern Kentucky counties by developing a regional council of planning and zoning professionals.
- Transform the application, licensure and tax collection system to foster business retention, attraction and development.
- Eliminate outdated constitutional offices and convert certain partisan elections to non-partisan.
- Enhance communication between local governments and citizens, and establish one unified voice in Frankfort and Washington.

Current Projects:

911 unification

Covington and Kenton County have reached a tentative agreement to merge their dispatch systems. The Effective Governance team supports the development of an efficient and cost-effective public safety communication system to meet the long-term needs of the Northern Kentucky region. The team will encourage other communities to evaluate the results of the pending Covington/Kenton County merger and to consider the potential of a similar solution for cost savings to their individual community situations.

Regional tax reform.

The Effective Governance team is meeting with stakeholders to discuss tax reform in the Northern Kentucky region. The team's starting point has been the suggestions contained in the June 27, 2006, final report of the Task Force on Local Taxation co-chaired by Sen. Damon Thayer. The team has discussed the issue with representatives from the Kentucky League of Cities and from the Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce and is working to create an environment for continuing dialogue among these and other stakeholders.

Other Areas for Partnership

Business

Connect the region by creating an electronic public platform (eCommunity) for commerce, education and communication that maximizes access and use of online opportunities and information (Item #5).

- Create a comprehensive communication strategy to assure the leadership of all regional businesses and organizations stay informed of opportunities and information they need.
- Provide survey tools online to empower businesses and organizations with quick and efficient feedback to help them grow well.
- Create an electronic venue that encourages and facilitates innovation by allowing entrepreneurs a forum and structure for partnership and collaboration.

- Create a local comprehensive search engine that will serve local businesses and organizations.
- Create a free, web-based search tool for Northern Kentucky business products and services – Northern Kentucky Business Finder (like the state system.)

Education

Develop a nationally recognized “culture of contribution” accomplished through service learning and full community engagement in schools (Item #3).

- Create the Center for Contribution at Children, Inc.
- Create the criteria for “Schools of Contributions.”
- Hire staff to support teacher and principals with the first efforts of doing high-quality service learning.
- Build support, like a Northern Kentucky website, electronic newsletter sharing promising service learning projects, and a database of organizations interested in partnering with schools, dedicated to service learning.
- Create region-wide annual service learning celebration.
- Seek out individuals, corporations and foundations that see the difference that young people make and share the desire to provide on-going support.
- Demonstrate the outcomes of service learning to the United Way to win on-going support.

Community

Conduct ongoing health and social needs assessments and implement a comprehensive regional approach to meet and fund those needs (Item #4).

- Establish an Alliance for Healthy Life Stages and Cycles to develop and implement a database/mapping system to help communities plan for healthier lifestyles.
- Map existing organizations or programs for health needs and identify organizations/programs lacking in various communities.
- Measure the prevalence (and decline) of known health risk factors in the community.

Renaissance

Increase home ownership rate and quality affordable housing options (Item #3).

- Develop and advance an affordable housing plan for the entire region- i.e., the urban core and the suburbs.
- Utilize strategies to make a certain percentage of new housing developments for affordable to lower and moderate income people.

Government

Transform the application, licensure and tax collection system to foster Northern Kentucky business retention, attraction and development (Item #4).

- Establish an organization covering Boone, Kenton and Campbell counties and all cities and municipalities that impose business license or payroll taxes. Through an inter-local agreement, the participating entities consent to the formation and operation of the collecting organization and allow private and government entities to bid as the service provider.

Enhance communications between local governments and citizens and establish one, unified voice in Frankfort and Washington (Item #6).

- Set a common date each year for city, county and Northern Kentucky address. Hold regional forums as necessary to foster regionalism and collaborative problem solving. Engage the media to dispense information provided in addresses and forums.
- Build and support a comprehensive, integrated and branded website that will foster information flow to and from government entities in NKY. The website will have a leading edge search engine to locate important information within the region and it will serve as a resource for citizens regarding information on their governments. Additionally, it will provide an avenue for direct input from citizens.
- Build a public relations plan around Vision 2015 release and an economic competitiveness plan embracing the local identity of NKY communities within the broader context of a strong regional brand.

Stewardship

Four strategies for regional stewardship:

- Increase number of women, minorities and young people in key leadership positions.
- Expand leadership development opportunities throughout the region.
- Build and sustain a culture of civic volunteerism and philanthropy.
- Create a regional stewardship council to lead the implementation of Vision 2015.