

Intercounty Coordinating Committee (ICC)
January 19, 2009
UW-Extension, Jefferson County Office
Jefferson, Wisconsin

1. Introductory Business

Call to Order – Chair Russ Kottke called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Attendance

See attached sheet

2. Certification of Open Meeting Notice

The Secretary confirmed that the requirements of the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law were met.

3. Adoption of Agenda

Motion by Green Lake County, second by Columbia County to approve the agenda. Approved.

4. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion by Columbia County, second by Jefferson County to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2008 meeting of the Intercounty Coordinating Committee. Approved.

5. Visiting Officials – Marquette County.

6. WCA Report:

John R.

- New session of legislature
- WCA busy on legislation exchange in February
- Only six bills have been introduced

Q. Beer Tax/Alcohol Tax?

A. Only talk at this time; could see a bill; Legislative Majority doesn't think it will go anywhere. WCA Board is supportive of the "beer tax".

Mark O.

- Lots of local "request forms" have been developed for "shovel-ready" projects for the stimulus package
- At 2% of stimulus, Wisconsin would get significant funding
- Appears to be a "consumer-led" recession along with other considerations. Typically can expect a 6-month recession (but this looks like a longer recession which requires other stimulus package elements).
- Stimulus package will be approved, and a process will be developed in Wisconsin (will be passed in February or March). Trickle to Wisconsin in summer or fall.
- Recommendation by WCA: Don't hold off doing projects in order to "wait" for stimulus funds (i.e. needed projects should proceed with or without stimulus).
- Rules for stimulus haven't been set yet

Q. Competition among local government?

A. Possibly. Could stay with existing formulas for normal and usual distribution.

- All the stimulus money is estimated at up to \$8 trillion. It is expected that about half of this will not be paid back. This is estimated to increase per capita debt at around \$15,000 per citizen.
- We are now the number 1 “debtor nation” in the world
- Social Security, Medicaid, Medicare and debt payments could dominate future federal budgets
- Affects on local government of the U. S. debt: aid from Federal government to States will be reduced which means less to local government (while service needs at the local government level will go up).
- Eligibility for federal benefits will be more stringent (will need to be “worse-off” or “older”).

Q. Will people retire later?

A. Yes, younger workers won’t retire until in their 70s. Large numbers of baby boomer will not be ready or able to retire.

Q. Any deadlines announced for federal stimulus funds?

A. No dates announced, but work to be ready. Include estimates on economic impact on local economy and number of jobs created.

Q. What credibility is placed on “peak oil” estimates?

A. The moment you see the “end of the resource”, there will be major social upheaval and chaos. We will see a dramatic shift to other forms of energy (nuclear fusion) with significant advances in “energy storage devices”. We will power things in innovative ways with alternative forms of energy which will push “peak” oil out 100-200 years. (This may be a minority opinion.)

- WCA is very optimistic about the future of innovative energy production.

Q. See any reduction in revolving loans or housing programs?

A. Yes, sees reduction in all funding programs. Even if the Wisconsin budget problem is \$2 or \$3 billion, there will be cuts everywhere. Could even include cuts to k-12 or revenue sharing. WCA sees the next budget as a “band aid” budget.

Q. Will the budget pass on time?

A. Probably yes because it’s the same party at all levels.

▪ **PROGRAM:**

Presentation by Mark O’Connell, WCA Executive Director and John Reinemann, WCA Legislative Director on “The Wisconsin Way”.

- The net debt in the nation: \$59 trillion (which is \$190,000 per capita in debt)
- This means less money coming back to Wisconsin from the federal government
- Fast growing job trends in Wisconsin: 9 of 10 only require a high school education
- Education of populous is directly correlated with per capita income
- We rely more heavily on property tax, but less on user fees
- We in Wisconsin are getting “older fast”
- We are continuing to “tick downward” on our educational attainment and per capita income
- “Government by the masses” (i.e. initiative referendums) is not good for government
- WCA, Board of Realtors, WEAC, Road Builders, Wood Communication. All were seeing the same trends so they go together to talk and plan.

- Need to stop talking about problem solving in 2 to 4-year increments (election cycles) and instead look at problems and solutions in long-range terms.
- Other good proposals: Kettle Commission, but not implemented because there was no constituency (no price to pay for not doing anything).
- Only way to see change is to get the “citizenry involved”.
- Also, establish the need to plan out for at least 10 years.

Wisconsin Way Approach:

- 30 sessions to ask what is going well and not so well in Wisconsin and what are ideas for the future.
- Also, assembled a “panel of experts”.
- Organized ideas into the draft “The Wisconsin Way” document.
- This document will be reviewed over the summer.
- Fall of 2009 will have completed document, and this will be forwarded to the legislature. (This is not yet ready for the “Legislature”.)

Ideas That Have Merit

1. K-12 System: tradition of educating kids from 5 – 18 years old
 - Get to children earlier for more impact, i.e. 3 – 16 years
 - Tracks at 16: College; Tech; Workforce
 - Open up the doors of higher education

2. Need the right kind of jobs and more job creation. Government should help create the right environment for economic activity.
 - Create fund for new ventures
 - Our income tax form allows investment into a “Wisconsin Venture Mutual Fund” to provide a fund for Wisconsin-based companies for local business activity. When businesses do well, they will pay back for tax-exempt dividends.
 - This is a “public-private” effort.
 - This idea needs more study.
 - ❖ Mark: Aside: Applauds Jefferson County for establishing an “overall economic vision”. We don’t do enough of this in Wisconsin and our local level.

 - ❖ Mark: Need to raise our per capita education level to the level of Wisconsin. Need to open the doors of higher education. Will provide education tuition to students if they commit to stay in Wisconsin for 10 years (4-year degree) or 5 years (2-year degree).

 - ❖ Mark: “Brain Power” is what is needed in the future economy.

 - ❖ Mark: Borrow money to create an “Education Mecca” in Wisconsin.

3. Eliminate corporate income tax and modify sales tax to morph into a “consumption tax”.
 - Look at this mix and change it.
 - Tax on the “discretionary” consumptive items with a gradient.
 - Change from a “sales tax” to a progressive “consumption tax”.
 - The market will control this.
 - This idea needs a lot of work, but is in The Wisconsin Way document.
 - Would retain income tax
 - A “consumption tax” is also being talked about at the federal level

❖ Mark:

- ◆ Public could care less about “mandates”
- ◆ All levels of government are the same to the average citizen.
- ◆ Citizens only care about whether the service is needed or good.
- ◆ WCA has stopped using terminology of unfunded mandates
- ◆ The federal and state fiscal challenges have helped people understand that changes are needed.

4. Another education incentives

- State will take an extra percentage of income if the State up-fronts education tuition (instead of student loans)

5. Keep corporate income tax local

- Since the locals provided the right environment, a portion of corporate income tax could be retained locally
- Principle in Wisconsin Way: is about “Investment”
- Principle in Wisconsin Way: is about creating the right environment for success
- The “wealth-makers” of the future are more concerned about “quality of life” than just making money. (This is important when thinking about the youth of today.)

General Comments:

- Tech schools are a “diamond” in Wisconsin.

Q. Would this Wisconsin Way effort have succeeded without a trust-based environment?

A. (Mark) Would have been a “disaster” if there was not a trust-based environment among the partners working on the Wisconsin Way.

Columbia County Observation:

- The Wisconsin Way forums have created an environment where ideas are not judged with no intimidation.
- We have governed by “polling” and “fear” in the past.
- Individual legislators are supportive of the Wisconsin Way.

Q. Does Wisconsin Way address levy limit?

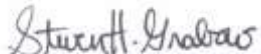
A. WCA has talked to administration about modifying or eliminating the levy limit and there appears to be support for this. (Mark thinks some kind of limit will remain, but it will be changed.)

9. Other County Issues: Marquette County was in attendance.

10. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by

Respectfully submitted,



Steve Grabow
Community Development Educator
UW-Extension, Jefferson County Office

ICC Meeting
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<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Russell Kettle	Dodge County Chair
Bob Westby	Col. Co. v-chair
Haley Baumgart	Col Co
Debbie Wipert	Columbia
Paul Cellar	WCA Staff
John H. Thompson	Columbia Co
Al Hoffman	Dodge Co. UWEX
Ray Seakholm	Dodge Cty.
BRENT MILLER	MARQUETTE COUNTY
Howard Zellmer	Marquette County
Paul Wade	Marquette Co.
Marty Harlowe	Marquette County UWEX
Jam Kauffeld	Green Lake County UWEX
Mary Bortelmann	Green Lake County
Dmv P. Ruske	Green Lake County
Steve Graw	UW Extension, Jeff. Co.
Steve Nass	Jefferson Cty. Sel. U-chair
John Reinemann	WCA
Mark O'Connell	WCA
D. Schaefer	Jefferson County Supervisor
Carlton Zentee	" " "
GREG DAVID	" " "
Joe Nehmer	" " Parks