

Making it Happen



June 2006

NEWS FROM THE COMMUNITY PROGRESS INITIATIVE

Community leaders in the forefront

by Chelsey Ross

Building strong leaders of tomorrow – Teen Leadership Program set to begin

In the fall 2006-07 school year, 25 local students will begin work in the newly established Teen Leadership Program. Modeled after a youth leadership program in Portage County, Teen Leadership South Wood County will provide high school sophomores a unique learning experience that will develop key leadership skills through a hands-on learning environment.

Students can apply during the spring of their freshman year. The class will meet once a month beginning in September and run through April of their sophomore year. Teen Leadership South Wood County will serve the public and parochial school districts of Auburndale, Nekoosa, Pittsville, Port Edwards, and Wisconsin Rapids.

The program's curriculum was developed with the help of a steering committee

made up of leaders in our community. Students will learn and demonstrate leadership building skills through three main program areas: Interactive Sessions, Leadership Shadowing, and a Community Project.

Lonnie Reetz, Vice President of River Cities Bank and program committee member said, "It is my hope that this program will provide the confidence and skills needed to better prepare participants to voice their opinions, concerns, and thoughts, and help make decisions that will have a direct and lasting impact today and into the future."

Watch for additional news about the Teen Leadership program in future newsletters.

Community Leadership Class graduates

On April 26, 2006, 21 individuals from our area graduated from the Community Leadership Program. The program was an eight-month course running from September to April, giving the participants the opportunity to develop their leadership and communication skills, as well as enabling them to better understand themselves and the community.

As a key element of the program, participants formed four different groups that each focused on a separate community service project. The 2005-06 class projects included the development of a community information trailer, an outdoor movie in the park night, an improvement effort for area bike trails,

and a campaign to highlight "52 Reasons to Love Where You Live." For a full description of each project, visit www.progressinitiative.com/BreakingNews and click on April 24, 2006: "Leadership program grads ready to serve." The leadership program would not be as effective as it is without the support of community members such as Solarus, Paper City Savings, and Wisconsin Valley Concrete.

Applications for next year's class are available at the Heart of Wisconsin Business & Economic Alliance, or by contacting Jill Cavanaugh at 422-4860.



Tom Loucks/Daily Tribune

Jessica McCracken, left, and Robyn Wayne are two of nine area high school students asking local municipal boards for financial support for the July 4th fireworks. The Community Fireworks Committee is a youth-led initiative working to ensure a collaborative community fireworks celebration, for this year and years to come, after \$22,000 in funding was eliminated in early 2006. Municipalities, businesses, service groups and private citizens have committed more than \$10,000 to date. The group hopes to raise nearly \$18,000.

Creating a business-friendly culture!

Volunteer Spotlight - Marion Ruelle



Marion Ruelle, a Wisconsin Rapids resident since 1989, is a member of the Public Art Group which is part of the Downtown Cluster Committee. She was also a participant in the Australia Study Tour in November 2004.

When asked why she gives back to her community, Marion stated that she was enthused and impressed with the energy, passion, and clear thinking of everyone involved with the Community Progress Initiative from its very beginning.

"We truly must start by looking at what we have and what we can do with it. With a can-do attitude and a commitment to re-energize our Wisconsin Rapids area, the possibilities are endless. In just two years, we've changed our defeatist attitude to working on new possibilities and businesses, and it is beginning to happen!

Thank you Marion for "Making it Happen!"

Turning conflict into resolution

by Chelsey Ross

On April 18 and 19, Advanced Leadership Institute members attended a session entitled "Adaptive Leadership Skills: Learning to Lead and Manage Change." The two-day session was facilitated by Katherine Tyler Scott and Irma Tyler Wood, and was the second session in the eight month program funded by the Ford Foundation.

The session focused on the challenges that leaders encounter when operating in an environment or community facing changes. Participants were taught that, when addressing complex problems or negotiations, in order to be effective leaders, they need to adapt and keep the other person's interests and perspectives in mind. By working together, individuals involved can find a common solution, making it a better situation for all.

Following the session, Joe Terry, Village



Advanced Leadership Institute participants, Leata Anderson and Ann Kroll, discuss negotiation strategies during their meeting session in April.

of Port Edwards Engineer/Administrator stated, "With the tools that I have gained, I believe I can now approach any negotiations with the knowledge that both sides of the table can agree on common objectives and interests. By avoiding the adversarial positions that each side often takes, a stronger and more unified organization or community will be created."

The future of leadership is in your hands

by Chelsey Ross

"Engaging topic... Great speakers... Positive Message... It really hit home!"

Survey respondents, The Future of Leadership presentation

On April 19, 2006, Tom Thibodeau and Dr. Richard Kyte kicked off the New Ideas! Speaker Series with "The Future of Leadership." This motivational presentation informed attendees that the community that our children and grandchildren will inherit depends on people willing to step up, serve, and lead our community today. With commitment, dedication, and a willingness to give back to the South Wood County area, citizens of today and tomorrow can look forward to a vibrant and promising future in the place they call home.

To check out a video of the Speaker Series event, please contact the Community Foundation, 715-423-3863.

Join us for a study tour in Ireland

by Chelsey Ross

What is it? On November 4-14, 2006, you can take part in a regional innovation study tour to Ireland. Participants will explore fascinating regional initiatives focusing on the West Cork region of Ireland. The tour will look at regions successfully embarking on two unique and distinct approaches to building local businesses: developing knowledge-based industry clusters and developing regional brands.

The tour will provide an in-depth learning experience, with the opportunity to learn first hand how regional revitalization is occurring within Ireland. The itinerary will include site visits and discussions with local leaders. If you are interested in participating in this learning opportunity, please contact Connie Loden, cloden@heartofwi.com 715-423-1830.

Shaping our economic future: Using Industry Clusters as an economic development tool

by Melissa Loken

The Industry Cluster Networks of the Community Progress Initiative are focusing on the economic future of South Wood County and Town of Rome. We are not alone in this economic development strategy which Michael Porter, Harvard University Professor, brought to the forefront in recent years. This is an approach that has garnered the attention of many economists and researchers, and has produced numerous reports that validate the effectiveness of focusing on Industry Clusters.

"Until the Community Progress Initiative, there was never a time in our area's history where an average citizen, not in political office, has been able to have a say in the community."

Joy Anne Hendrickson, Downtown Cluster Team Member

One of the latest reports, published in March 2006, comes from Joseph Cortright, of the Metropolitan Policy Program, The Brookings Institute. In the report, "Making Sense of Clusters: Regional Competitiveness and Economic Development," Cortright shares his research regarding the cluster

approach. He found that "clusters represent a fundamental organizing framework for understanding local and regional economies and for developing economic strategies. The cluster approach can help deepen the practice

of economic development to better build communications among the firms that make up the regional economy and to focus public policy on those issues that are likely to have the greatest long term effect on regional growth."

The effects of Industry Cluster collaboration are making economic waves in the Heart of Wisconsin Area. Businesses are increasing revenue, upwards of over \$20,000 per year as reported by several businesses. This is thanks to the connections made from their participation in the clusters. Doors are being opened again by businesses that were once closed, and new business opportunities are being developed including:

- A new website which will collect fresh business ideas and available resources to incubate into businesses.
- Training programs that will meet the needs of current business owners and residents.
- A beautification project of the community to attract visitors, residents, and businesses.
- Information kiosks will be welcoming visitors, and community information will also be available from employees of local businesses that have completed a customer service and community orientation training.

You too are invited to join us in shaping the economic future of our community! Visit www.progressinitiative.com/IndustryClusters for upcoming Industry Cluster meetings.

BOOK REVIEW:

by Antoinette Rahn

Leadership on the Line

by Marty Linsky and Ronald A. Heifetz

There are countless how-to books about being an effective leader. However, as one reviewer pointed out, *Leadership on the Line* serves more as a troubleshooting guide for leaders striving to be more effective.

This book takes you to places typical leadership books may hint at, but don't completely visit. Through the three parts of this book, *The Challenge, The Response and Body and Soul*, the authors explain the perils of leadership, demonstrate how to navigate through rough waters that come when you take people out of their realm of comfort for the sake of improving, and provide strategies for going beyond surviving as a leader.

One of the most encouraging, if not inspiring, elements of this book is how the messages and strategies stated are illustrated in the work of real world leaders. From Aristotle and Rosa Parks to Jimmy Carter, Michael Jordan and Geraldine Ferraro, their leadership helped produce positive change, but not without provoking some perilous moments.

It's the leadership handbook that will inspire, if not change your thoughts about leadership in general, and in your own life.

The Ideas Incubator is ready for your ideas!



What is it? The Ideas Incubator website is a place for members of our community to submit ideas for businesses they would like to see in our area. Those ideas will then be available for people who are interested in starting their own business, or incorporating the idea into an existing business. The website will also provide resources for starting a business, and a forum where people can discuss their ideas and progress on a particular business.

Launched on May 16th, the Ideas Incubator is ready for ideas and suggestions from you! Visit www.ideasincubator.org to submit your ideas, or get ideas for your business!

Building a strong and positive community!

WHAT ARE PROGRESS TEAMS?

The Community Progress Initiative is all about looking at what we need now to improve our future, and hundreds of local residents are taking the lead by being doers and achievers through their local Progress Teams.

"Visioning sessions" were held in 2004 for residents to come together, create a vision, and start to make plans for the future. There are seven Progress Teams working to advance their community's vision by collaborating with key community groups, officials, and leaders, and giving all residents a chance to get involved in community improvement projects and issues:

- Nekoosa Area Progress Team
- Pittsville Area Progress Team
- Port Progress Team
- Rome Is More Team
- Rudolph Progress Team
- Vesper Area Progress Team
- Wisconsin Rapids/Biron/Grand Rapids Progress Team

To see all vision statements, visit progressinitiative.com.

Rapids Area Team weaves community fabric

by David Beurle

The very active Biron, Grand Rapids and Wisconsin Rapids Community Progress Team holds meetings on a monthly basis and has about 20 core members. The meetings are well attended, and one of the team's key features is the very diverse representation within the team, which includes individuals from a variety of different businesses and backgrounds.

The team has had a very strong focus on building the partnership, links, and collaboration between the three participating communities of Biron, Grand Rapids and Wisconsin Rapids. Early on in their deliberations, they saw that closer integration of the communities was critical to building a truly effective and inclusive region. Currently, the team is working to develop a presentation that will be introduced at each of the three local governments over the next several months. The primary focus of the presentation will be to promote and create a better understanding of the area's Vision Statement.

Weaving the links between the communities

The Progress Team is continuously looking for ways to create better links between the local communities. As part of this work, Tom Marshall, the team co-chair, visited other communities in late 2005 to talk about the work in Rapids Area, including the work being done by the Wisconsin Rapids Downtown Cluster.

In addition, the Rapids Area Team is currently working to identify a location where an information kiosk can be constructed, which will promote information to visitors about the many wonderful attractions in the Greater Wisconsin Rapids Area. It is expected that pamphlets and brochures will encourage curiosity and will promote a desire for visitors to spend several days in the area, helping build the local tourism economy.

Joint leadership reflects philosophy

Jean Young and Tom Marshall are co-chairs of the Biron, Grand Rapids and Wisconsin Rapids Progress Team. This shared responsibility and partnership reflects the underlying philosophy of the team, which is to build and meld a truly cohesive and collaborative community across the region.

In conjunction with their diverse and active team members, they are working to build stronger links between the elected officials, community groups, and citizens in the three municipalities of their Progress Team area.

Community Progress Funds

The Wisconsin Rapids area is working hard to build its local Community Endowment. Since May 2006, thanks to donations from Wisconsin Rapids area residents, families, friends, businesses, and organizations, the fund has grown to over \$11,500. The goal is to reach \$20,000, as the Barker Mead Fund will match the total up to that amount.

You can help! Some of the sales at the Wisconsin Rapids Community Picnic on June 30 will go toward the Wisconsin Rapids Area Progress Fund. Enjoy an evening of fun and entertainment, while donating money to your own future!



The Wisconsin Rapids Area Progress Team has gone to great lengths to promote awareness of their community fund. Motivated and determined to help, co-chair Tom Marshall sold popcorn to spectators at last year's WIAC baseball tournament.

For more information on the Rapids Area Team, contact Jean Young at youngsj@wctc.net or Tom Marshall at Tom.Marshall@wrps.org.



WISCONSIN RAPIDS AREA VISION STATEMENT

The Wisconsin Rapids area is a close-knit inclusive community that celebrates diversity, supports and promotes the arts and special events, and offers a hip cosmopolitan and bustling downtown.

We support a thriving, diversified economy in a healthy environment, and through a strategy of regional branding, we support the development of businesses and entrepreneurship. Unique recreational and tourism opportunities are abundant and anchored by a historic downtown and riverfront neighborhood.

"We have a fantastic Progress Team – the diversity of views and ideas is really impressive. We really see ourselves as part of one bigger community – and that is our focus; to bring all the people in our area together to shape our future."

Tom Marshall
Wisconsin Rapids Area Progress Team member

Daily Tribune photo

Community Picnic promises to be a huge event!!!

The Progress Team's Community Picnic will take place on Friday, June 30th at the Grand Rapids Lion's Park, and will begin at 4:30 p.m. This is the second year that the Biron, Grand Rapids, and Wisconsin Rapids communities have come together to create a celebration of the area in which they live. The event will feature entertainment, music, food, and young children's activities. This event builds on the inaugural and well-attended event held in 2005.

You can expect this year's Community Picnic to be a larger and more diversified celebration. In the spirit of community, all Progress Teams and Clusters are invited to participate, along with all citizens in the South Wood County and Rome area. Be sure to put this festive event on your calendar and watch for more information to come in the future.

Chefs Dan Eisch and Dave Stark share a laugh as they worked behind the grill, cooking food at last year's event. Stark and Eisch are members of the Rapids Biron Progress Team who volunteered their time to help with this worthwhile community event.

Building a strong and positive community!

"Our role as the Rome is More Team is to help find ways for our whole community to share a common vision and work together. We have the unique situation of community areas clustered around our lakes, and knitting these together into the Rome community is our focus. There are so many good ideas and projects coming from the various teams and committees – it is inspiring to be part of shaping the future of our community!"

Sharon McCray
Rome Co-Chairperson



ROME AREA VISION STATEMENT

Rome strives to be a diverse community, offering a variety of residential living, year round recreation and business opportunities, with an emphasis on environmental preservation.

Rome charges ahead

by David Beurle

The Rome is More Team is laying out bold plans for 2006

One of the features of the Rome community is the large number of people who are participating in groups and sub-committees. Following the well-attended community visioning event in 2004, 14 'unity' committees were established to tackle various projects and topics. These committees have progressed in different ways and new project teams are continuing to be created as new ideas emerge. This local working committee approach requires some clever community organizing, and the Rome is More Team recently started compiling a master community calendar. The community has supplied the information to the Rome Is More Team, building a picture of what is happening across the community for 2006 and 2007. Events and organizational meetings were put into a calendar created by team member Ted Waite. Distribution will be done via e-mail to all event and organization chairpersons, along with announcements that copies will be available at the Town Hall and the Rome Library.

This kind of organizing is critical to harnessing the energy now being created in the innovative and dynamic community of Rome.

Taste of Rome

One committee formed from Unity Meeting was the Rome Connection Committee; they hosted a first time event, Taste of Rome, in 2005. It was a huge success, attracting nearly 3000 people, and supported by year-round and seasonal residents alike. This event was a great achievement and helped cement Rome's reputation as a go-getter community with a lot to offer residents and visitors alike. The committee, created out of the Community Progress Initiative, has planned to make the 2006 event as big a success for the whole community. The committee has planned an even greater event with the 2nd annual Taste of Rome which will be held on July 15, 2006.



The "Rome is More" booth
L-R Sharon McCray, John Prey, Jane Spencer, Ted Waite, Pat Welch, and Bob Ebben



At the 2005 Taste of Rome event, Progress Initiative volunteers worked behind the Rome Progress Initiative Booth, promoting the Initiative and the activities created by it - including the Rome Dog Park.

Transition of leadership

The Rome is More Team has worked hard to build strong leaders, committees, and teams. In early 2006, after a very committed 12 months in the role as Chair of the team, Joanne Harman stepped aside.

In no time, Sharon McCray and Arlene Scalzo eagerly stepped forward and are currently sharing the role as co-chairs. Building on the work Joanne started, Sharon and Arlene are working to expand the participation and goals of the Rome is More Team.

Rome - Making its mark

The Rome community has been working hard to create a unique reputation and identity for itself. Nearly 100 people attended the 'Creatively marketing your community' event in late 2005, and several innovative ideas were proposed. Creating an identity for a community is always a fun and challenging task, and Rome has taken great pride in their efforts.

Examples of work to date include the Town Entry Signs (pictured at right), development of a web site, competitions for a logo and banners, and new ideas for street signs and sculptures.



Rome's Community Progress Funds: Laying a foundation

Rome is busy with several events which all will help to build its Community Fund. Contributions from local residents, businesses, and groups have already brought the total endowment balance up to \$11,000 as of May 2006. All contributions made by December 31, 2006 will be matched dollar-for-dollar by the Barker Mead Fund through the Community Foundation of South Wood County, up to \$20,000.

To help, you can now buy a 4"x 8" or 8"x 8" brick which will be engraved with your own personalization. These will be placed in Veteran's Memorial Park in Rome's Alpine Village and will remain for a long time to come. Also, on July 15, bottles of water will be sold at the Taste of Rome celebration, and on August 19, you can purchase a glow-in-the-dark necklace at the Camelot Frolic. Proceeds will go to the Rome Community Fund. The Fund Committee also continues to give presentations to local groups about the importance of endowment building and charitable gifts in estate plans to support their community.

For more information on Rome is More Team, contact Sharon McCray at drskm2@wctc.net or Arlene Scalzo at ascalzo@wctc.net.

SOME ROME PROJECTS PLANNED FOR 2006

Taste of Rome - 2006

The Taste of Rome is continuing to move along and will be held on July 15. It is being expanded this year, and with next year being Rome's Sesquicentennial, there are plans in the works to make it a very big event!!

Rome Dog Park

The Rome Dog Park Team has led the charge to establish the Rome Dog Park, which is now fenced, open, and usable! This project is part of an effort to make Rome an 'outdoor orientated and livable community', with great facilities that match people's interest. A Grand Opening for the park is planned in the near future.

Memorial Day Garage Sale

Maps are now on sale for the Memorial Day weekend garage sales. So far, 33 homes are having sales! After purchasing a map, you can take advantage of different specials from several local businesses, thanks to their willingness to provide coupons with each of the maps.

make it happen!
Community Progress Initiative

Would you like to Make it Happen?

- Please add my name to the Community Progress Initiative mailing list.
- I would like to get involved in the Community Progress Initiative. Please contact me.
- My contribution to the Community Progress Initiative is enclosed.
- I would like to make a contribution to the Community Progress Initiative. Please contact me.
- I'd like to receive Weekly emails about what's happening within the Progress Initiative.
- I'd like to join a Progress Team for the _____ community. Please contact me.
- I'd like to join an Industry Cluster. Please contact me.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Mail this form to: Community Progress Initiative P.O. Box 954, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495-0954

As a member of this community,
I can "make it happen"



- Create My Future
- Support Local Business
- Encourage Entrepreneurship
- Give to My Community
- Provide Leadership
- Drive Change
- Inspire Others
- Be Positive

The Community Progress Initiative is...

a bold three-year program in South Wood County and the Town of Rome to create vibrant communities with prosperous local economies.

It is about making our local community stronger and better for the future by addressing what's needed today.

Community Progress Initiative Supporters

- Barker Mead Fund through Community Foundation of South Wood County
- Ford Foundation
- Stora Enso
- U. S. Dept. of Agriculture – Rural Development
- Wis. Dept. of Commerce with federal Community Development Block Grant Funds
- For a complete list, visit progressinitiative.com

Calendar of Events

Visit www.progressinitiative.com for details and other upcoming events.



- **JUNE 7:** **Advanced Leadership Training**, Biron Municipal Center, Leadership in Action: Planning to Make a Difference, 8 am-5 pm.
- **JUNE 8:** **Lunch by the River begins**
11:30 am-1:00 pm Veterans Memorial Park
- **JUNE 23-25:** **Celebration Central** (formerly known as Grand River Fest) Dairy breakfast, parade, and fun for the whole family. Visit www.progressinitiative.com for more information.
- **JUNE 30:** **Wisconsin Rapids Area Progress Team's community picnic**
4:30-10:00 pm Wisconsin Rapids Grand Lions Park
- **JULY 26:** **Advanced Leadership Training**, Riverview Hospital, The Power of Communication: Creating Meaning, 8 am-5 pm.
- **AUG. 2:** **CFSWC Annual Meeting and public celebration** at Hotel Mead
- **AUG. 3-5 & AUG. 7:** **Entrepreneurial Boot Camp** Contact Melissa Loken at the Heart of Wisconsin (715) 422-4856
- **AUG. 13:** **Rudolph Old Tractor Show** 9:00 am - 5:00 pm; Rudolph Village Park
- **AUG. 27:** **Port Edwards Fun Fest and Car Show**
- **SEPT. 16:** **Rudolph's Sesquicentennial (150 years) Celebration**
Rudolph Village Park
- **OCT 4-8:** **Study Tour to North Carolina**
- **NOV. 4-14:** **Study Tour to Ireland**

Making it Happen!

is a newsletter published every two months for the purpose of bringing Community Progress Initiative news to the community. Hundreds of volunteers devote their time to the initiative, and this newsletter will showcase their dedication and hard work.

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