



Meeting Summary

Education, Workforce, and Economic Development Task Force

December 15, 2008

Highlands County Agricultural Center

Summary

The second meeting of the Heartland Education, Workforce, and Economic Development (EWED) convened December 15th in Sebring, FL. This group is one of a total of five issue area Task Forces to work collectively to advance the Heartland 2060 visioning process. The Education, Workforce, and Economic Development Task Force will identify key regional issues, develop goals and objectives, and recommend implementation polices and strategies. The co-chairs of this group have been identified as Mark Morton or Lykes Brothers and Glades EDC, and Jim Otterman, Director of Florida Heartland Rural Economic Development Initiative (FHREDI).

The meeting was convened by Pat Steed of the Central Florida Regional Planning Council and included several presentations, followed by small group discussions. Pat Steed welcomed the group and reiterated the importance of the Task Forces in shaping the goals and strategies for economic development and education in the region within this visioning process and in current efforts. Mrs. Steed introduced the key issues this Task Force will address over the next several meetings as: Economic Diversification; Supporting Infrastructure; and, Education and Workforce Issues.

Meeting Presenters

Meeting speakers focused on economic diversification and the region's future economy in this December meeting.

Bridget Merrill, Vice President of Targeted Programs, for Enterprise Florida presented on the topic of recent regional economic leadership, diversification, and innovation efforts. Discussion included the results of the Rural Catalyst Project and the Innovation Forum and focused on the role of regional leadership, including regional planning councils, workforce development boards, chambers of commerce and development councils, as well as FHREDI in delivering the message of the region's future economic diversification needs.

Tony Carvajal, Executive Vice President for the Florida Chamber Foundation, presented an overview of the Chamber's work at the state level to identify the economic drivers of Florida's future growth. Mr. Carvajal reviewed the efforts of the Chamber to align the business

community and to further the work being done across the state to address the state’s future economic needs. He introduced the Chamber’s concept of the 6 pillars supporting the economy as well as the Foundation’s recent “Economic Dashboard” research efforts.

John Kaliski of Cambridge Systematics followed with by presenting the topic of rising global economic and social mega-trends that will shape the Heartland’s economy. This discussion included a review of global economic and trade activity, statewide population growth, future resource needs, and regional land use patterns that are sure to influence the region’s development.

The broad questions raised here, including economic diversification needs and gains to the Heartland from these major trends, set up the small group discussions with Task Force members that followed the presenters. All materials presented at this Task Force meeting are available through the CFRPC at www.cfrpc.org.

Key Issues Moving Forward

Previously, the Leadership Team identified the primary core factors and key issues within the Heartland to inform the work of the EWED Task Force as:

Economic Diversification

- Business retention and attraction
- Opportunities for youth
- Meeting future industry skills needs
- Mix of employment opportunities

Infrastructure to Support A Diversified Economy

- Community development
- Transportation
- Energy infrastructure
- Healthcare facilities

Early Learning, K-16, Lifelong Education

- Linkages of quality of life, workforce, and education
- Opportunities to learn, stay, and work locally
- Attainability of continued education
- Develop pipeline for educational attainment

Goal Setting: Breakout Group Discussions

After a description of the key issues the EWED Task Force will address, meeting participants broke into 4 small groups to discuss and create attainable, measurable goals for policies within each of the following key areas: Business retention and attraction; Opportunities for Youth; Meeting future industry skill needs; and, Mix of employment opportunities. The results of these discussions are presented below.

1) Business Retention and Attraction

Key Issues	Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote industries with significant ties to current regional industry clusters, e.g. Bio-fuels and bio-tech as related to citrus agriculture. • Evaluate regulatory environment to be business friendly • Business attraction means diversification into industries such as bio-tech or bio-agriculture • Target industries include: 1) Distribution & Logistics, 2) Clean Fuels, 3) Niche Manufacturing, 4) Building Materials Manufacturing, 5) Bio-tech and medicine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2035, 3 of the region’s target industries will be established, with supporting educational and lifestyle resources and infrastructure in place. • By 2060, six of the region’s target industries will be established.

2) Opportunities for Youth

Key Issues	Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create innovative high-wage jobs in the region • Leverage existing resources for youth employment at regional institutions of learning • Address related issues, such as the provision of childcare • Improve the town-gown relationships among the region’s colleges and universities • Involve the private sector in outreach, mentoring, and career guidance through mentoring in the public school system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2035, establish mandatory career exploration programs and partnerships between private and public sectors, in 100 percent of region’s public schools. • By 2060, greater opportunities for youth in the region will have been created, so that the median age of the population is 10 years less than 2010.

3) Meeting Future Industry Skills Needs

Key Issues	Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Necessary to expand regional workforce training systems to support employers Promote quality of life and lifestyle amenities Address housing affordability and cost of living Target industries include: agriculture, tourism, and retirement communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2035, the Heartland will become a national leader in providing financial resources to support workforce training and skill development programs. By 2035, all service providers and economic development institutions will collaborate to maintain a skilled workforce. By 2060, employers in the Heartland will find and are able to maintain sufficient skilled workers for their employment needs.

4) Mix of Employment Opportunities

Key Issues	Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anticipate changes in the agricultural industry Promote targeted industries, including renewable energy, environmental sciences, and logistics & distribution Identify closer related or inter-related industries, for “cluster” potential Create diverse jobs for a population with a range of education levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2060, the mix of industries in the region will have changed to increase the share of employment in: Professional and Technical Services, Healthcare, Tourism Services, Natural Resources, Transportation, and Wholesale Trade By 2060, the share of employment in upper and middle management and skilled labor positions should grow to 60 percent.

Next Steps

The next meeting of the EDWED Task Force is scheduled for February 25th, 2009 at the Sebring Civic Center. The focus of this meeting will be on developing the infrastructure necessary to support the region’s economic diversification goals and future economic success.