



Meeting Summary

***Education, Workforce, and Economic Development Task Force
February 25, 2009, Sebring Civic Center***

Education, Workforce, and Economic Development Task Force

The Heartland Education, Workforce, and Economic Development (EWED) Task Force is one of five issue area groups that are working collectively to advance the Heartland 2060 visioning process. These Task Forces will identify key regional issues, develop goals and objectives, and recommend implementation policies and strategies.

The key issues the EWED Task Force will address over its duration include: *Economic Diversification; Supporting Infrastructure; and, Education and Workforce*. The co-chairs of the Task Force are Mark Morton of Glades EDC and Lykes Brothers, and Jim Otterman, Director of Florida Heartland Rural Economic Development Initiative (FHREDI).

Summary of Agenda

The third meeting of the EWED Task Force took place on February 25th in Sebring and was convened by the Central Florida Regional Planning Council (CFRPC). The purpose of this session was to learn, discuss, and set long-term goals for addressing the necessary infrastructure to support a diversified economy in the region.

To begin, Pat Steed, Director of the CFRPC, welcomed the group and reiterated the importance of the Task Force and the long-term regional visioning process in shaping the long-term goals and intermediate strategies for education and economic development in the region. The meeting agenda included several presentations from national and regional speakers on infrastructure issues, followed by small group discussions and goal-setting exercises among Task Force members.

Meeting Presentations

National and regional speakers focused on key issue areas including logistics and trade, energy, and broad support infrastructure for economic diversification. Speakers included:

I. Jim Reeb, President of the Institute St Onge, a consulting firm specializing in logistics and supply chain investment concepts, presented *“The Impact of Emerging Supply Chain Trends & Issues from a Consumer Products Company Perspective”*. This talk provided an overview of the logistics industry and supply chain management techniques, with a focus on South Central Florida's unique position for an inland distribution center to meet significant future growth in demand for consumer products.

II. J.L. “Buck” Martinez, Senior Director of Project Development for Florida Power and Light Group, presented *“Ensuring A Clean, Reliable Energy Future For Florida”*. This presentation covered FPL's commitment to clean and reliable energy and highlighted significant ongoing and planned solar, nuclear, and possible wind or hydro energy projects within the region.

III. John Kaliski and Evan Enarson-Hering of Cambridge Systematics, Inc, presented, *“Infrastructure to Support a Diversified Economy.”* This presentation addressed current system gaps and the infrastructure needs (including Transportation, Energy, Utilities, Technology, and Business Support Networks) of the region's potential future target industry clusters.

Mike Willingham, Executive Director of the Sebring Regional Airport was unfortunately unable to attend the Task Force meeting but remains engaged in these issues from the airport perspective.

All materials presented at this Task Force meeting are available through the CFRPC at www.cfrpc.org.

Goal Setting: Breakout Group Discussions

Each presentation provided unique information and helped raise broad questions for the audience in terms of infrastructure opportunities and needs within the Heartland. Meeting participants were asked to form small groups to discuss key issues and create attainable, measurable goals within each of the following focus areas: Utilities, Transportation, Energy, and Business Climate.

Goals to be developed for the future of the Heartland are intended to be attainable by either 2035 (medium-term) or 2060 (long-term) and should be specific, measurable, attainable, related, and time specific. These goals will help inform the results of the visioning process. The results of these discussions are presented below.

1) Utilities

Key Issues	Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussions of utilities infrastructure in the region should incorporate all types including: water and sewer, electricity and natural gas, telecommunications and broadband, and solid waste disposal networks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2060, (exact % to be identified) of electricity consumed in the region will be generated in the region By 2060, 90% of the region’s water supply will be reclaimed or recycled By 2060, 90% of the region’s generated municipal solid waste will be converted to electricity By 2035, the Heartland will provide 100% telecommunication and service coverage within regional urban-growth areas, as defined by local plans By 2060, the Heartland will provide 100% telecommunication and service coverage

2) Transportation

Key Issues	Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify North-South and East-West multi-modal, multi-use corridors and plan nodes for connectivity. Relieve traffic on Highway 27 and SR 70 Plan for a multi-modal transportation system that incorporates roads and public transit. Fully utilize rail networks in the region for freight transportation and commuter lines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2015/35, the Heartland will adopt a transportation implementation plan for the region’s targeted industry clusters for global, national and state economic growth By 2060, the Heartland will be established as a hub for global, national, and state distribution, through development as a multi-modal, inter-connected transportation system

3) Energy

Key Issues	Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns include addressing the regulatory environment to enable clean energy production and public awareness and support for options. Actions steps could include identifying or inventorying alternative energy options and complete successful beta- site testing for development of alternatives. Expansion of infrastructure to support renewable energy includes means of transmission for inputs and outputs. Generation capacity in the region should provide a diverse mix of energy sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2035, the Heartland will use clean energy to drive economic development and increase energy-related employment, by a minimum of 15,000 jobs By 2035, the Heartland will increase relative energy infrastructure by 25% By 2060, the Heartland's electrical generation capacity will be carbon neutral and independent of foreign sources, and the region will be a net exporter of renewable energy

4) Business Climate

Key Issues	Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The region could develop catalyst sites focused on distribution and manufacturing immediately. Capitalize on the supply chain networks and goods movement taking place in the region, i.e. specialized packing or value added processes. Distribution industry is best positioned in the Heartland and could draw on road, rail, air, waterway networks and resources such as Foreign Trade and Enterprise Zones. Key issues and support resources for business development include: Workforce education and training programs, affordable energy sources, and business friendly state and local policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2035, the Heartland will develop a distribution industry with a network of hubs that connect to global markets and complement existing networks By 2035/2060, the Heartland will be sensitive to the cost-of-doing business and remain competitive with peer regions By 2060, the Heartland will develop vertical and horizontal integration including expanding manufacturing and research in the Heartland By 2060, the Heartland will continue regional collaboration on regional economic development

Next Steps

The next meeting of the EDWED Task Force is scheduled for April 22nd, 2009 at the Sebring Civic Center at 9:30am. The focus of this final Task Force meeting will be on the region's Early Learning, K-16, and Lifelong Education networks supporting the region's economic diversification goals and future economic success.