



PAL UPDATE

Building a New and Prosperous Michigan

Fall 2009

Successful regions in Michigan have come together with one objective - to plan for the kind of growth that would make them places to live, work, and play.

STATE LEGISLATORS EMBRACE PAL MESSAGE

For the first time in the People and Land (PAL) Coalition's history, PAL co-directors Dr. Soji Adelaja and Bill Rustem testified before the state House Committee on New Economy and Quality of Life, chaired by state Rep. Ed Clemente (D-Lincoln Park). Their appearance was prompted by the release of a national study by the Land Policy Institute at Michigan State University.

Adelaja presented the new report, *Revisiting the Past or Investing in Our Future: Placemaking for Prosperity in the New World*. Rustem made a presentation on the PAL Leadership Council's Six Pillars for Prosperity, which underscored Adelaja's report.

"Policymakers should consider a new model for economic development that is less focused on tax incentives and more focused on increasing Michigan's population of 'knowledge workers' who look for interesting places to live, move there, and enable economic activity to follow them, including job creation," Adelaja told the committee.

Rustem explained how the PAL Six Pillars for Prosperity are interdependent forces in leading Michigan back to prosperity. He noted it's no accident that the first pillar concerns the need for attractive cities and neighborhoods that will help Michigan keep its best minds and attract knowledge workers to the state.

The positive legislative response afterward demonstrated that PAL's agenda is both timely and effective in helping Michigan dig its way out of "Old Economy" thinking, Rustem said.

"They appreciate the PAL message that we have to do things differently in Michigan in order to move forward," he said. "They want to work with us to pursue a bold and achievable vision for Michigan with our state playing a key role in the knowledge-based economy."

The Six Pillars for Prosperity were developed by the PAL Leadership Council, a group of diverse business, environmental, social justice, and agricultural thought leaders laying out a vision for Michigan's future prosperity. Visit www.PeopleandLand.org for more information.



GREAT WATERS MAKES BIG SPLASH IN SOCIAL MEDIA

Based in Marquette, Northern Initiatives (NI) is a nonprofit community development corporation working in partnerships with entrepreneurs, businesses, banks, and manufacturers to elevate the Upper Peninsula, northern Lower Peninsula and northeastern Wisconsin economies. Promoting tourism is just one of the several strategies NI is employing to boost regional economic development. In 2008, NI received a PAL Regional Prosperity Initiative grant to help promote the "Great Waters" of the eastern U.P. region bordered by lakes Huron, Michigan, and Superior. The objective is to encourage U.P. hoteliers, bar and restaurant owners, outdoor sports equipment, and other businesses to promote eco-tourism and cultural attractions in the Great Waters area by touting the region's beauty. This year, NI launched tactics to build awareness of U.P. wonders by engaging visitors in an online dialogue. NI hired Samantha Rogers, a Northern Michigan University entertainment and sports marketing student, as an intern to utilize social

Rogers coordinates the Great Waters Facebook page, which features photos, information on attractions, and a discussion forum. Nearly 1,000 members have already joined the Facebook page. www.facebook.com/pages/The-Great-Waters/57717589378 Rogers also manages special-interest Facebook and Twitter pages on biking in the U.P., where opportunities abound. For a sample, visit facebook.com and search [Bike Michigan Upper Peninsula Trails](http://facebook.com) or follow on Twitter @BIKEMI_UPTRAILS. In addition, NI has a new partnership with the Travel Michigan Campaign of Travel Michigan. In the next six weeks, Hollywood actor (and Michigan native) Tim Allen will be promoting the Great Waters in a radio spot called "Wonder." Travel Michigan will feature the Great Waters for three months on its www.michigan.org website, including Great Waters trail maps and links to NI's social media

The Great Waters campaign gives voice to small communities like Curtis, Newberry and Paradise that may otherwise be ignored," said Chris Rector, director of regional strategies. "The level of collaboration and support is unprecedented in rural U.P. communities that span a large geographic region."



Northern Michigan University student Samantha Rogers surfs Lake Superior and navigates the Web to promote the U.P.'s "Great Waters" region.

provide

WEST MICHIGAN BUILDS FOR FUTURE WITH "TOOL SHED" FOR GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

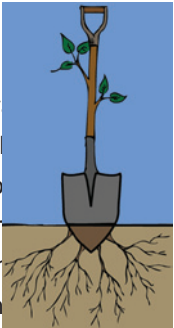
The West Michigan Strategic Alliance/Green Infrastructure Initiative (WMSA/GI) is attempting to help leaders from the Grand Rapids, Holland and Muskegon areas organize some professional land use planning tools by creating a "Tool Shed" for green infrastructure development. "Our Tool Shed will provide an online resource of examples, templates, and ordinances that have proven successful in preserving elements of green infrastructure while enhancing business initiatives," said Ken Freestone, WMSAGIS project manager. The concept was the direct result of input from focus groups held throughout 2008. Attendees agreed that leaders and decision makers needed easier access to planning tools related to land use.

While many excellent tools are available, finding and learning how to apply them is difficult. WMSA also invited nine planners from West Michigan to help identify tools and policies to include in the Tool Shed; these planners are now serving as advisers to the project throughout development and launch later this year. Funding for the project was provided by a PAL and WMSA, Kellogg Foundation grant. WMSA also provided technical services to organize the tool database and create a user-friendly model for access and asset sorting. The Michigan

Association of Planning and the Land Information Science Association partnered to further develop the Tool Shed. "Our goal is to make it easier for someone searching for a tool to find the best options for their needs," Freestone said.

WMSA's six green infrastructure focus areas are to implement watershed management and planning, integrate green infrastructure into urban redevelopment, promote a regional trails and greenways network, promote regional farmland preservation, protect critical areas of biodiversity, and protect shorelines and dune ecosystems.

Learn more at www.wm-alliance.org



RALEIGH CONVENING BUILDS CONNECTIONS

PAL Regional Prosperity Initiative (RPI) grantees gathered July 28–29 in Raleigh, N.C., for the annual meeting of the Alliance for Regional Stewardship (ARS), which is the only national organization focused on issues of regionalism pertinent to the PAL Coalition.

“PAL grantees received information relevant to their grants and regional objectives, and networked with RPI grantees and the PAL Leadership Council,” said Julie Metty Bennett of Public Sector Consultants, which coordinated the conference for PAL. “They also benefited from a national perspective on what works and doesn’t in terms of regional collaborative models.”

Heaster Wheeler, executive director of the NAACP–Detroit and a PAL Leadership Council member, was impressed by a presentation chronicling the

transformation of the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill area from a former center of America’s tobacco industry to a vibrant metro region.



Heaster Wheeler

their effort to the level of being transformational, not merely transactional.”

RPI grantees also praised a presentation by national regional change consultants Michael Langley, president of the Langley Group, and Stephen Michon,

“Any time three major urban communities can build a coalition to that degree, anyone in the country can learn from them,” Wheeler said. “Their leadership seemed to understand how to reconcile issues that divide people. That elevated

managing director of FutureWorks. They provided examples of successful regional collaboration and hosted an interactive session with RPI grantees to develop strategies for Michigan.

“We were so impressed that we asked Michael Langley to come to Michigan and speak to our board in November,” said Denyse Ferguson of Lansing’s LEAP Foundation.

Other sessions focused on regional cooperation and economic development, the importance of placemaking in regional approaches, whether the current “green” approach to sustainable economic development is indeed sustainable, and strategies for attracting and cultivating civic and regional leaders from various sectors who can promote change.

MILLENNIALS HELPING METRO DETROIT TAKE ACTION

When the Michigan Suburbs Alliance (MSA) submitted a proposal for a PAL Regional Prosperity Initiative grant in the summer of 2008, the Leadership Council was particularly intrigued by the logic of MSA’s fundamental premise.

When trying to attract young people to the Detroit metro region, why not get them engaged in making it the kind of place they want?

The answer gave rise to the Millennial Mayors Congress, which met in June with about 20 communities involved. Each municipality was represented by a local government official and an 18- to-35-year-old Millennial resident.

“The Congress elected to make decisions by consensus to respect local interests and empower new voices at the table,” said Sharon Carney, MSA’s special projects director. “The goal is to have Millennials work with civic leaders to sift through issues facing the region and focus on a handful, such as community reinvestment and energy efficiency.”

Partners critical to engaging Millennials include the Detroit Regional Chamber’s young professionals group, Fusion; the Great Lakes Urban Exchange; and Leadership Next, the United Way for Southeastern Michigan’s young professionals group.

“The economic future young people want is one where environmental sustainability and economic development go hand in hand,” said Andy Wakeland, a Millennial representative from Madison Heights. “We need to be proactive about taking advantage of these opportunities if we expect metro Detroit to be viable 20 years from now.”

A top concern of group members was the fiscal stability of their local governments, which they plan to address by pursuing cost savings through energy efficiency and conservation. Such action will likely accompany a call for state action to remedy flaws in Michigan’s municipal financing structure.

“It’s become an essential quality-of-life issue,” said Mayor Suzanne Pixley of Eastport, chair of the Congress. “If we are to create attractive communities

in a vibrant metropolitan region, we need to provide the essential services that people expect.”

By the end of 2009, Mayors Congress representatives expect to outline specific outcomes that participating communities will pursue. To watch their progress, visit www.millennialmayors.org.



Photograph by Christina Drane

Millennials work with civic leaders to determine the best way to attract young people to the Detroit metro region.

FIVE QUESTIONS WITH AMY SPRAY

Michigan United Conservation Clubs Resource Policy Specialist
and PAL Leadership Council Member

Note: This is the first installment in a series of interviews with PAL supporters that will be regularly featured in the newsletter.

Q: In your PAL experience, what is the most significant example of progress on regional cooperation?

A: During the Michigan Land Use Leadership Council discussions, we couldn't even talk about "regional" cooperation; it was "multijurisdictional." We have come a long way. Regional recreation plans were a first step. Now we even have regional assets funded at the regional level, like the Potter Park Zoo in Lansing and the Detroit Zoo.

Amy Spray

Q: Do you think PAL has helped raise the profile of the contributions provided to Michigan's economy by the state's natural resources?

A: PAL has elevated the dialog around our land-based industries – tourism, forestry, agriculture, and mining. These are all critical elements of the "new" economy. Hunting and fishing recreation – which require quality habitat and access – alone contribute \$3.4 billion per year.

Q: How is investment in Michigan's natural resources important to the vitality of many of the state's regional economies?

A: Many areas of the state depend on the wise use and enjoyment of natural resources as a major component of their local economies. The local businesses, hotels, and restaurants depend on seasonal tourists. Attracting these tourists requires clean water, public access, and actively managed forests and trails. Unfortunately, very few people contribute financially to the management of the state's natural resources. Michigan ranks 47th among states in its per capita investment in maintaining the quality of our natural resources. We have to improve in order to adequately manage our resources.

Q: Has PAL provided any lessons on what can be accomplished when leaders find common ground?

A: There are many examples of regional success. We just need to bring these up to the state level and find more common ground at the Capitol. It's up to us to start with the Six Pillars for Prosperity, which we all agree on.

Q: Should PAL be credited with helping shape the way Michigan's regional groups and state agencies are now putting more emphasis on land use issues such as farmland preservation, natural resources restoration, and urban redevelopment?

A: Yes. PAL has been a critical group to connect the dots between these issues among regional and statewide organizations and government agencies. The Six Pillars for Prosperity are all interrelated.

Amy Spray began working at the Michigan United Conservation Clubs in 2007 and joined the PAL Leadership Council in 2009. She was the PAL grant manager for 4½ years while working for Public Sector Consultants (PSC). Spray has previously served as staff to the Michigan Land Use Leadership Council, the Lt. Governor's Commission on Higher Education and Economic Growth, and the Michigan Renewable Fuels Commission.

Visit PAL at www.PeopleandLand.org

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