



# PAL UPDATE

## Building a New and Prosperous Michigan

Winter 2010



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

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## BUILDING A MOVEMENT FOR MICHIGAN

People and Land Launches New “Michigan Prosperity Network” via Social Media

*By Dr. Soji Adelaja and Bill Rustem, PAL Co-Directors*

On November 11 and 12, at the Edward Lowe Foundation conference facility in Cassopolis, more than 30 Michigan thought leaders gathered to begin to build an action agenda for moving Michigan forward. Although wrestling with the systemic problems confronting our state is hardly news, this gathering of leaders – from business to the public sector, from higher education to young entrepreneurs, from Greater Detroit to the Upper Peninsula – was historic on several fronts. And through the Michigan Prosperity Network, that work is continuing with an open invitation for all Michiganders to jump in, log on, and become a part of the movement.



Dr. Soji Adelaja



Bill Rustem

Our state needs to transform its approach to the future. This work will require hundreds of organizations and thousands of people to reach basic agreement on what the future should look like, and then begin building the plans, policies, and initiatives to get us there.

Consensus already exists on a host of fronts. What is lacking is a forum for these ideas to blossom into action.

At the Lowe retreat on Michigan’s Future, leaders embraced PAL’s Six Pillars for Prosperity as a general road map to transforming Michigan into a state that can attract and keep the talent that will rebuild Michigan’s communities, economy, and natural environment. It will take innovative, nonpartisan solutions to help us address these problems and achieve renewed prosperity.

The purpose of the Michigan Prosperity Network, which was first discussed last April at the 2009 Michigan Land & Prosperity Summit, is to help connect the organizations and people who are working to build a better Michigan.

To keep our conversations going; to keep us focused, relentlessly, on moving forward; and to include new voices, we have established People and Land pages at LinkedIn ([www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)) and Facebook ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)). We encourage you to find us on these sites and create connections to your own organizations, and then invite your friends to join our network as well. If you would like more instruction on how to find PAL on these sites, please visit our website at [www.peopleandland.org/PAL\\_Connections.html](http://www.peopleandland.org/PAL_Connections.html).

# LOWE FOUNDATION RETREAT FORGES CONSENSUS ON KEY 2010 ISSUES FACING STATE

The rewards of effective regional collaboration are enriching communities throughout Michigan, thanks in large part to the networking efforts generated by the People and Land (PAL) initiative.

The dividends coming from Michigan's innovative regional planning and development activities were highlighted by some of the state's foremost policymakers and thought leaders when they gathered November 11–12 at the Edward Lowe Foundation conference facility in Cassopolis for a retreat hosted by PAL members and staff.

"It was amazing to hear about the stories of success that are going on in Michigan, but it is unfortunate that too often nobody knows about them except their local constituencies and local partners," said Mary Beth Graebert, program development manager of the Land Policy Institute at Michigan State University. "Everybody is so down about what is happening in Michigan right now, but I think most of us left the conference energized about what we can do to move Michigan forward."

Government and policy officials attending the Lowe retreat agree they need to commit to sharing their local triumphs with each other and with broader Michigan audiences. The diverse group of business, environmental, social justice, and agricultural leaders who attended the Lowe conference pledged to use their social networks during 2010 to help spread the "prosperity through regional collaboration" message.

"One of the big outcomes of the retreat was that people recognized the value of developing a new networking framework within the new social media model," said Brad Garmon, land programs director for the Michigan Environmental Council. "A consensus formed that we need to start building our own prosperity in Michigan rather than seeking outsiders to do it for us."

PAL enlisted key new allies from the conference, Graebert added, which provides "a good foundation for expanding what PAL can do with all of our partners to support regions and networks that are doing this incredible work toward policy reforms that moves us closer to the PAL Pillars."

According to Deborah Younger, Detroit program director of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation,



Deborah Younger

the emergence of new voices and new approaches to solving some of Michigan's historical challenges also sparked optimism for the state's future during the conference.

"Excitement is growing about the opportunities for entrepreneurial success, regional collaboration, and technological innovations that exist in Michigan,"

Younger said. The recent creation by Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb county officials of a regional authority to oversee renovations at the Cobo Center in Detroit proves that traditional barriers are surmountable, she noted.

"Strides are being made," said Younger. "I'm beginning to see new leadership emerge who do not have the same attitudes and historical mistrust and distrust of their predecessors. There is only one way for Michigan to go, and that is up."



Attendees at the Lowe retreat engage in a creative problem-solving exercise.

## ATTENDEES OF THE LOWE RETREAT HOSTED BY PAL INCLUDED:

- Soji Adelaja, *Director, MSU Land Policy Institute*
- Jim Barrett, *Past President, Michigan Chamber of Commerce*
- John Bellow, *Executive Director, Center for Michigan*
- Rich Bowman, *Director of Government Relations, The Nature Conservancy in Michigan*
- Andrea Brown, *Executive Director, Michigan Association of Planning*
- Dan Carmody, *Executive Director, Eastern Market*
- Sharon Carney, *Special Project Director, Michigan Suburbs Alliance*
- Rob Fowler, *President and CEO, Small Business Association of Michigan*
- Floyd Gallegos, *Founder, FEG Advisors (At the Creek)*
- Brad Garmon, *Land Programs Director, Michigan Environmental Council*
- Lou Glazer, *President, Michigan Future, Inc.*
- Mary Beth Graebert, *Program Development Manager, MSU Land Policy Institute*
- Ponsella Hardaway, *Director, MOSES*
- Gary Heidel, *Director of Program Policy and Market Research, MSHDA*
- Allan Hooper, *Executive Director, Rural Partners of Michigan*
- Rachel Kuntzsch, *Executive Director, Heart of the Lakes Center for Land Conservation Policy*
- Mark Lelle, *Consultant*
- Lisa Marckini-Polk, *Senior Consultant, Public Policy Associates*
- Hannah McKinney, *Vice Mayor, City of Kalamazoo, and Professor, Kalamazoo College*
- Julie Metty Bennett, *Vice President, Natural Resources, Public Sector Consultants*
- Kizzi Montgomery, *Legislative Aide, Rep. Woodroe Stanley*
- Greg Northrup, *President, West Michigan Strategic Alliance*
- Kat Owsley, *Director, One D*
- Amy Rittenhouse, *Assistant Manager, People and Land*
- Conan Smith, *Executive Director, Michigan Suburbs Alliance*
- Marsha Smith, *Executive Director, Rotary Charities of Traverse City*
- Sarah Szurpicki, *Cofounder, Great Lakes Urban Exchange*
- Sebastian Wade, *Vice President, Government Relations, Greater Detroit Regional Chamber*
- Dennis West, *Executive Director, Northern Initiatives*
- Gil White, *President, Gilbert M. White Realtor*
- Mark Wyckoff, *Director, Planning and Zoning Center-MSU*
- Deborah Younger, *Detroit Program Director, Local Initiatives Support Corporation*

# PAL SPEAKERS TO KEYNOTE 2010 NEW ECONOMY POLICY SERIES FOR LEGISLATORS

Several members of the People and Land (PAL) coalition will be featured as keynote speakers in 2010 during the Land Policy Institute Legislative Forum Series on "New Economy 2.0." The luncheon forums focus on the critical issues facing Michigan and are intended to provide timely science-based research that is useful to state legislators, policymakers, and other engaged stakeholders.



Dan Kildee



Chris Rector

The series kicked off January 19 with "The Problem and Promise of Detroit," hosted by state Rep. Gabe Leland (D-Detroit). The forum provided perspectives on Detroit from a panel of speakers that included *Detroit Free Press* reporter John Gallagher; Chazz Miller, founder and director of Public Art Workz; and PAL Co-director Dr. Soji Adelaja, John A. Hannah Distinguished Professor in Land Policy and director of the Land Policy Institute.

Subsequent programs will offer additional insights on New Economy growth factors, as well as ideas for how this information can be leveraged for Michigan's prosperity. Three more New Economy forums are scheduled:

**February 23:** "Right-Sizing Michigan," featuring Dan Kildee, president of the Washington, D.C.-based Center for Land Reform; PAL Leadership Council member Conan Smith, executive director of the

Michigan Suburbs Alliance; and PAL grant recipient Chris Rector, director of regional strategies for Northern Initiatives.

**March 23:** "The Policies for Placemaking (Stimulus II)," featuring PAL Co-director Bill Rustem of Public Sector Consultants.

**May 18:** "Renewable Energy 2.0," featuring Chuck McKeown, renewable energy program manager and informatics coordinator for the Land Policy Institute (LPI).

The LPI forums take place from 11:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the Mackinac Room of the Anderson House Office Building, near the Capitol in Lansing. The luncheon events are free and open to the public. Those interested in attending the forum are requested to RSVP to Jessica McFarland at [mcfarland@landpolicy.msu.edu](mailto:mcfarland@landpolicy.msu.edu) or call 517-432-8800, Ext. 103.

## PAL GRANT HELPS GREATER LANSING NEXT PROVIDE BLUEPRINT FOR REGIONAL PROSPERITY



The partners and members of the Lansing Economic Area Partnership (Leap) have unveiled their findings from a much-anticipated year-long study that examines what steps businesses, governments, and institutions in Ingham, Clinton, and Eaton counties must take to create jobs, attract new employers, and promote diversity.

The region's major employers, along with government policymakers and civic leaders, gathered November 10 at the Wharton Center on the campus of Michigan State University in East Lansing to discuss the recommendations and hear an analysis of the report by Michael Langley, former CEO of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development. Under Langley's leadership, Greater Pittsburgh attracted more than 45,000 new jobs. In addition, Pittsburgh recently was named "America's Most Livable City."

Leap and its partners in the Greater Lansing Next project hope to duplicate that success with their plan to ensure regional prosperity during the next

decade. As they noted, the Greater Lansing Region was recently ranked as the second-best region in Michigan for GDP growth.

"The Greater Lansing Region is on the move, and the Greater Lansing Next plan for regional prosperity offers the right ideas to build stronger local economies and communities," Langley said.

Among the recommendations that Langley and authors of the Greater Lansing Next plan say the region should address is the need to beautify the appearance of metropolitan Lansing's main traffic corridors between downtown Lansing and East Lansing as well as areas around the Capital City Airport. They also call for Ingham, Clinton, and Eaton counties to expand business incubator opportunities, such as the Technology Innovation Center in East Lansing, to other communities in the region.

"The new economic realities will require a different way of thinking and a different level of cooperation," said Leap President and CEO Denyse Ferguson.



Michigan State University basketball coach Tom Izzo and mascot Sparty help to kick off the "Greater Lansing Next" regional movement initiative.

"We know there is broad community support for transforming our region into a leading area for opportunity, talent, and jobs, and this gives us a road map for getting there."

"Greater Lansing Next: A Plan for Regional Prosperity" was funded through contributions by coalition members and a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, with additional support from the People and Land (PAL) initiative. The report is available on the web at [GreaterLansingNext.com](http://GreaterLansingNext.com).

# FIVE QUESTIONS WITH JIM TOWNSEND

Executive Director of the Tourism Economic Development Council (TEDC),  
Detroit Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau

**Note:** This is another installment in a series of interviews with PAL supporters and grant recipients working to restore Michigan to prosperity.

**Q:** Your PAL grant helped fund “Developing the D,” a plan to build “Destination Districts” that will attract and retain residents, draw new visitors, and spur investment in southeast Michigan. How is your initiative going?

**A:** The Destination Districts project (D2) was very successful during 2009, its initial year, in bringing together over 100 leaders from across metro Detroit to create strategies that will enable metro Detroit to attract and retain the people and investment we must have to thrive in the 21st century. D2 has established the five Destination Districts, created five strategic District plans, fostered relationships between D2 participants, identified a range of policy issues to be addressed, and secured over \$250,000 in grant support.



Jim Townsend

**Q:** What else is the Detroit Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau doing to promote regional collaboration?

**A:** The TEDC was created by the Bureau to lead the region in undertaking a broad set of strategic actions designed to grow the tourism economy in metro Detroit. Over the past several years, TEDC has been instrumental in building regional partnerships to improve the infrastructure and environment for tourism and the image of the region.

**Q:** Tourism is Michigan's No. 2 industry, yet the Legislature cut tourism advertising from \$30 million last year to \$5 million for 2010. Is there a better way for Michigan to fund tourism attraction efforts?

**A:** We are examining a four-bill package recently approved by the state House that would capture sales tax growth on tourism-related businesses and, in the meantime, let the Michigan Economic Development Corp. (MEDC) issue bonds to pay for the program's \$30 million annual budget. The state Senate is expected to act on the bills in early 2010. The proposed long-term solution is to tap part of the growth in sales tax receipts from businesses and other tourist attractions. The plan would permit the MEDC to issue notes against future sales tax collections to pay for the advertising in the short term.

**Q:** What is the best-kept secret about Metro Detroit that tourists ought to know?

**A:** That's a tough question to answer because there are many hidden gems. What we found in researching and developing the D Brand is that despite its recent struggles, Detroit remains a cradle of invention in technology, style and, most importantly, music. Everything we've done via the D Maps and visitdetroit.com is designed to help people access Detroit's creative, tight-knit community of artists and innovators who are inspired by Detroit's architecture, culture, and proximity to the Great Lakes.

**Q:** What can Michigan do to promote its unique tourism and recreation attractions?

**A:** Work regionally so people can experience them easily and make a weekend or longer vacation out of them. There is a great deal that could be done at the state and federal level to reward and even require regional decisionmaking and strategy that would allow visitors to have much more integrated and satisfying experiences. That's one important way that we will update our Rust Belt image and grow new jobs here.

## About Jim Townsend

Jim Townsend serves as Executive Director of the Tourism Economic Development Council (TEDC), an arm of the Detroit Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau. Prior to leading the TEDC, Jim founded and directed the Michigan Suburbs Alliance (MSA). Jim now serves as Vice President of the MSA Board of Directors.



Visit PAL at [www.peopleandland.org](http://www.peopleandland.org)

## PAL Leadership Council

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## PAL Leadership Partners

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*Michigan State University Land Policy Institute*

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