



CONVERSATION #9 – Economy

DATE: February 9, 2012

Session: 9

Attendees: 16

THEMES:

1. Continue to capitalize on Education as strength. NCTC and UND offer economic development opportunities. Promote cooperation and collaboration at the University
 - a. EERC
 - b. Research
 - c. Aviation
 - d. Entrepreneurship
 - e. Traditional Programs
2. Promote/Market what Grand Forks/East Grand Forks already has locally, regionally and nationally. Create a nationally recognized presence in specific areas – aviation, UAS, energy
3. Develop strategies to best capitalize on emerging industries.
 - a. Biomass/Value Added Ag
 - b. UAS/RPA - Airspace
 - c. Energy/Oil Basin
 - d. Air Base Opportunities
 - e. Data Center
4. Work towards an even more favorable tax structure.
 - a. Target a 30% - 50% property tax reduction in 5 years.
5. Workforce development. Our ability to attract talent will be the key to future growth in our region.
6. Encourage investment in more infrastructure
 - a. Westbound Air Service
 - b. Faith Groups
 - c. Social Groups
 - d. Volunteerism in general
7. Daycare shortage
8. Continue to focus on social offerings and recreational opportunities
9. Focus on adding housing and affordable housing in particular. Regional strategy.
10. Continue to focus on downtown development

CONVERSATION #9 Continued:

IDEAS:

- 1. Continue to do what the various partners like the EDC, Chamber, municipalities, etc are already doing in all of the above areas.**
- 2. Address housing from a regional perspective. Phase in property taxes for new housing of all types.**
- 3. Focus on key emerging Industries**
- 4. Double the size of the two colleges**

NOTES FROM 02.09.12 CONVERSATIONS

WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS OF OUR ECONOMY?

- Greg Hanson: Our workforce's willingness to work
- John Schuller: We have a strong unemployment and school systems
- Mike Moore: There is an incredible potential for growth
- Phyllis Johnson: Education; the University of North Dakota; the arts are more accessible with reasonable parking prices
- Russ Erickson: The workforce is great and very productive; strong leadership, city/business leadership
- Alexander Platt: The symphony brings enormous potential to the area
- Bruce Gjovig: Talent, leadership and the people; agricultural, cultural, music groups; entrepreneurial community; Amazon and American Crystal; the Air Force is a huge asset to our community as well
- Phil McKenzie: We have a long history of willingness; the right people are ready to go; diversity of consistent economic flow; important and vibrant health
- Mark Larsen: Intellectual capital; aviation and agriculture departments, quality of life, low commute time, low crime rate; wellness center
- John Snustad:
- Don Fisk: We are a strong community; Fargo money is coming to Grand Forks
- Jay Kleven: Well-balanced educational programs/good public schools – assured individuals are getting a good education; we are humble which is a huge virtue- a big reason why we are where we are
- Mary Fontes:
- Klaus Thiessen: We are a University town; high degree of collaboration; we have a "want" to succeed; we have readily access to decision makers, infrastructure; transportation
- Steve Burian: We have maintained the population before and after the flood and continue to do the things that we've been doing; the economy is steady, sustainable and predictable
- Mike Jacobs: The community is safe, clean; people are smart and willing to work

WHAT ARE WEAKNESSES/CONCERNS OF OUR ECONOMY?

- Greg Hanson: Adding a lot of jobs that don't pay very much; the reimbursement is going down
- John Schuller: Affordable housing and availability
- Mike Moore: Population limits; the perception of North Dakota – until people come here and experience our community it's hard to change their perception (cold, prairie, nothing going on here)
- Phyllis Johnson: Perception that there are few people here and we aren't intelligent; don't want to blow our own horns – telling our story

- Russ Erickson: Housing; employers have a difficult time finding individuals who are experienced and specialized in specific fields; strong leadership
- Alexander Platt: Bringing music into the community; the relationship with GGF Symphony and UND; the GF Symphony is underfunded; down-playing North Dakota (negative)
- Bruce Gjovig: Planning and executing our growth; people have to make it happen
- Phil McKenzie: Threat – vortex of money and distribution of funds; self-depreciation
- John Snustad: It's hard to grow an attractive business; hard to grow how we feel that we should be able to grow; amount of people and capital are lacking; higher paying jobs
- Don Fisk: As businesses grow, competition becomes more intense; more competition for employees; small businesses and hourly wage; we've always been impacted by external government factors such as agriculture and the Air Force Base (dependent on federal government and different subsidies)
- Jay Kleven: We need more trained professionals so we don't have to look outside of our community to train the people we need; maintaining hard working culture; there is a need for a well-balanced education background
- Mary Fontes: The length of time it takes to get a program approved; financial aid eligibility; there isn't enough money for technology programs; if you don't have the startup money you're not able proceed; high demand – high wage occupations; money stops at the river
- Klaus Thiessen: Affordable child care; population growth
- Steve Burian: It's not a huge incentive to take more risks; getting out of the "comfort zone"; growth; too comfortable
- Mike Jacobs

WHAT ARE YOUR BIG IDEAS?

- Greg Hanson: Not many daycares cater to off hours as well as day hours; recreation – use the river for fishing/catfishing
- John Schuller: Keep FedEx, air service to Denver; UAS center combined with installation
- Mike Moore: Find ways to work with Fargo rather than against Fargo; we aren't big enough to be more than what we are
- Phyllis Johnson: Investment in facilities for research at UND; theatre at UND; have to develop a way to generate money – development of UAS
- Russ Erickson: Communication—brag about your community – people don't know what the city has to offer; master plan to address the housing issue – if we want to increase the population we need housing, child care which are major issues in our community
- Alexander Platt: Fund the symphony which would allow people to come here to enjoy all types of music
- Bruce Gjovig: Make downtown an entertainment zone where everyone can go to have fun – great place for bars, restaurants, entertainment, data centers; UAS integration center
- Phil McKenzie: Fill the summers with more activities, International Symposia
- Mark Larsen: Plant shrubs/flowers in the area; sell strengths to ourselves; community marketing plan

- John Snustad: Lower real estate taxes (50%) – make homes/apartments more affordable; UAS fly zone approval
- Don Fisk: More broad base support - EDC
- Jay Kleven: Look at the engineering aspect; oil goes through here; petroleum refinery
- Mary Fontes: Focus on education
- Klaus Thiessen: Focus on downtown; affordable daycare
- Steve Burian: Passionate focus on collaboration where we get results; we have the foundation but are people will to take the next step and complete it vs. just talking about it; look at doubling UND
- Mike Jacobs:

POST IT NOTE SUGGESTIONS:

Greg Hanson (Valley Memorial Homes)

- Daycare off hours
- River fishing

John Schuller (Northrop Grumman)

- Keep FedEx hub
- Air service – west bound (Denver)
- United/SW/Frontier
- Property tax relief – income tax is reasonable
- UAS test area

Mike Moore (UND VP for Research and Economic Dev.)

- Brand Fargo and Grand Forks together, not just for ND but for the region/country
- Leverage the UAV mission at GFafb with UND inputs

Phyllis Johnson (UND VP for Research and Economic Dev.)

- Seed money for development and non-military UAS
- New facilities at UND for research labs and theatre

Russ Erickson (Bremer Bank) – No notes

Alexander Platt (GGF Symphony) – No notes

Bruce Gjovig (UND Center for Innovation)

- Medical Center – Mayo, Medical School, Altru and Bio Tech
- Downtown – entertainment center, UND student, food, culture
- Data Centers – Healthcare, financial service, software, IT/communication, innovation park
- Be 1 of 6 test sites (UAS/RPA)
- Entertainment Center – focus on Innovation, entrepreneurship, investment

Phil McKenzie (DigiKey)

- Resolve social issue
- Angel fund for rapidly scalable, emerging State/city collaboration
- Summer festivals

Mark Larsen (EdwardJones – Mark Larsen)

- Sell our strengths to ourselves via community marketing campaign about our wonder attributes, the goal is \$60,000 Ambassadors
- Flowers/shrubs on South Washington; median-islands and other locations – PLEASE

John Snustad (U.S. Bank)

- Attract more businesses with higher paying jobs
- Get UAS fly zone
- Lower real estate taxes 50%; affordable housing

Don Fisk (Insight Technologies)

- More broad base business support for GF EDC to primarily add businesses

Jay Kleven (EAPC)

- A petroleum refinery
- Have the commodity
- Have the engineering and construction technology
- Have the education basis

Mary Fontes (NCTC)

- What are the high demand/high wage education programs that we need to offer in the community?
- Can we beautify the roadway coming into town on Highway 2?

Klaus Thiessen (Grand Forks Region Economic Development)

- National P.R. campaign
- DGS
- Affordable daycare
- More industry/education collaboration
- Keep focus on downtown

Steve Burian (AE2S)

- Unified marketing initiative (may be in process)
- UND strategy to expand instead of feeling constrained (double in size)
- Passionate collaboration, focused doggedly on results

Mike Jacobs (Grand Forks Herald) – No notes