

## Futurist Lou Glazer Helps Bay County Leaders Sketch a Vision of Progress

### Percentage of Adults With 4-Year Degrees Said Key to Growth Potential

July 09, 2006

By Dave Rogers



As Michigan is ripped by the mega forces of globalization and technology, how do we transform the economy for the future?

That's the question Ann Arbor Futurist Lou Glazer pursued with about 60 local leaders recently in a soul-searching and brainstorming session at the DoubleTree Hotel - Bay City Riverfront, arranged by County Executive Thomas L. Hickner.

The No. 1 issue is job creation and in improving opportunities for the under-employed, said Mr. Glazer, adding: "It matters to a community whether jobs are \$10 or \$25 an hour. How do we get our income above the national average, a status we enjoyed for the first 70 years of the 20th century?"

He said state and local policy makers have been "spending a lot of time trying to avoid the issue of transforming the economy, which is not a way to get to a successful economy."

The old world is over, said Mr. Glazer, noting that 20 percent of the nation's manufacturing jobs have been lost since 1990. Offices, schools and hospitals embrace about 42 percent of the nation's economy now, but Michigan has only about 17 percent in that sector that is growing twice as fast in the rest of the country.

Mr. Glazer said four areas are key development targets: 1-Information processing; 2-Financial services, insurance, accounting; 3-Professional-technical services (architecture, engineering, etc.); and 4-Corporate headquarters.

To compete, Bay County needs a high percentage of adults with four year college-university degrees, according to Mr. Glazer. The state average of 24 percent puts Michigan in 31st place nationally; Bay County's 12.8 percent is nearly as low as Detroit, with 11 percent,

according to U.S. Census reports.

Recently released U.S. Census estimates show that Bay City lost about 5 percent of population from 2000 to 2005, dropping from 36,738 to 34,879. Bay County lost about 1.1 percent, falling from 110,157 to 109,029.

"If you are concentrated in farms, factories and tourism, you will not be prosperous," Mr. Glazer commented, adding: "You want to be a place where talent wants to come."

"Almost all the good paying jobs are connected to knowledge," he said.

He recently completed his seventh report on the future of the Michigan economy for the Mott Foundation and other charitable funders. It is called "A New Agenda for a New Michigan."

The New Michigan report calls for action in several priority areas:

Build an entrepreneurial, inclusive culture aligned with what author Thomas Friedman has termed the flat world.

Increase investment in higher education.

Build regions that are attractive places to live, with vibrant core city neighborhoods to offset their suburban partners.

Attract export based industries.

Align K-12 education with a knowledge driven economy.

Seek new regional leadership (civic, business and political).

The report is available at <http://www.michiganfuture.org>

Breakout groups brainstormed ideas for Bay County development. One group, headed by Dan Latal, Dow Corning executive, suggested that regional leaders need to get together.

Spinoffs from large companies also should be encouraged through an industrial incubator, the group urged.

A lack of regional leadership was mentioned by several groups. Some also focused on improving the quality of K-12 education, including how to change a mindset among members of the public who don't value education.

A compilation of ideas from the breakout groups will be published by MyBayCity.com in a future issue.