

Task Force: An online survey will help initiative best serve community

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sustainable development strategy for Eugene business and the community. The strategy expands the "triple-bottom line" — economic, social and environmental well-being — in an attempt to make Eugene "a nationally known 'center of excellence' in this rapidly growing field," according to a press release from the mayor and city council.

Piercy's economic vision combines community outreach and involvement, sustainable business and jobs summits and a development strategy drafted by the task force over the next 15 years. The goal is to "identify economic development needs and opportunities that can benefit all industries, businesses and workers in the community," according to the press release.

Gathering community input will be one component of the SBI. A 15-minute online survey asking for ideas and feedback from citizens "on methods and opportunities for growing sustainable businesses and jobs that benefit the entire community" will be made available to the public around Aug. 12.

In order to best serve the community and city of Eugene, the survey draft correlates access to jobs, good wages and benefits with environmental conservation efforts and an overall healthy city economy.

The draft adds, "the success of the SBI depends on creative input from the general public. Specifically we want to know your vision of the future of sustainable business and job development in Eugene and how best to reach that vision."

Cluster appeal

The second official SBI meeting

was held Thursday in the Eugene Public Library where Bob Doppelt and Mike Russo of the University gave separate presentations on general goals and how the task force should go about combining each sector of economic development.

Doppelt, a courtesy associate professor at the University, used "The Ladder of Inference" in his presentation to describe his point that "we live in a world of ideas and beliefs that are largely self-generated and untested."

He said that people often make assumptions without thinking critically about the different sides and different data before taking action.

"Don't assume it's true just because people think another option is more sustainable," Doppelt said. He suggested that task force members inquire about other members' ideas, ask about data from both sides and think critically as individuals, keeping in mind the underlying objectives of the task force.

Doppelt emphasized the importance of keeping the main objective in mind while working on the individual sectors in the day-to-day setting.

"All the parts of the value chain must participate effectively," Doppelt said. "We need to focus on benefiting everyone (and) we need to keep in mind how we want sustainable business to function in the future."

As the basis for the task force's collective mold, Doppelt defined a system as, "any group of interacting, interrelating, or interdependent parts that form a complex and unified whole with a specific purpose."

"This task force is a system," Doppelt said.

Michael Russo, professor and

department head in the University's Lundquist College of Business, spoke to the task force about "clusters of development" and how the economic activities that cohere around similar industry sectors create mutual interest and a more competitive economy.

"It's about accumulating the ability to do things in Eugene that would be difficult to do alone," Russo said.

Clusters benefit both businesses and consumers because they offer alternative means of transportation, packaging and other mutual interest options for business owners while providing high competition for cheap and easily accessible products for consumers, while working toward a more environmentally conscious economy.

"People want to move where clusters are," Russo said. "The idea is that ... it won't cost as much for a business to move here."

Russo also talked about how to reach apathetic consumers. He used a national poll showing the percentage of consumers who are environmentally conscious in their purchasing and those who did not care. Only 9 percent were titled "True Blue Greens," consumers who speak out on environmental issues and consume environmentally-friendly products, while 33 percent were found to be apathetic.

Task force member Scott Pope of Sustainable Wealth Management said, "I think it's not that they don't care, I think they just don't know."

Concerned with these statistics, the task force vowed to continue researching ways to inform the community about environmentally friendly goods.

Community Roundtables

Thursday's meeting focused on how to implement a plan and how to work together. A different set of meetings, called "Roundtables," will address various sectors of the SBI with the guidance of six to 20 experts in each field and suggestions from the community.

Members of the task force will not be obligated to attend any particular number of Roundtable meetings or any that they are not interested in. Piercy said that in order for people to really get involved in these groups, members should choose the Roundtables that are most appealing to their interests.

"We're creating opportunities that individual task force members can take advantage of," Piercy said. She emphasized her desire for task force members to take responsibility for aspects of Eugene sustainability that interest them because "they're not going to be forced on people."

Roundtable meetings will be open to the public, and co-Chairman Dave Funk of Funk/Levis & Associates encouraged participation.

"We count on all points of view represented at the table to shape the community," Funk said.

All information presented and discussed at the meetings and Roundtables will be posted online. The Web site has not yet been activated.

Although the meetings will be looking at long-term growth and development, task force member Kartar Khalsa's suggestion to take action on certain issues before 12 to 18 months found agreement from other members.

The best way to "benefit everyone," as Doppelt said, is to have everyone's voice when making decisions.

To get involved contact co-Chairmen Rusty Rexius at rusty@rexius.com or Funk at 485-1932; or the City of Eugene Mayor's Office at 682-5010 or visit www.ci.eugene.or.us.

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ROUNDTABLE SECTORS

The online Draft Survey will present these subjects:

- **Alternative transportation:** Explores renewable energy and systems of travel beyond solo vehicle use such as carpooling, public transportation, walking and bicycling.
- **Biofuels:** Focuses on renewable sources of energy such as vegetable oil, animal fat and algae.
- **Bioproducts:** Explores continual and future development of non-food agricultural and renewable resources other resources such as biodegradable plastics and plant-based lubricants.
- **Education for sustainability:** Addresses ways to help schools and colleges implement sustainable principles and practices that minimize environmental impact.
- **Green building:** Focuses on design and building techniques that reduce operation and construction costs, minimize energy consumption and environmental hazards and contribute to the health and productivity of residents and workers.
- **Organic and sustainable foods:** Continues and advances organic and sustainable food certification standards.
- **Renewable energy:** Moves away from fossil fuel consumption and dependency through sources such as biomass, hydro, solar, wave and wind power.
- **Sustainable healthcare:** Focuses on health facilities, materials, practices and products that with minimal waste and environmental impact.
- **Sustainable forestry:** Concentrates on forest management and wood manufacturing practices that meet the "triple-bottom line."
- **Sustainable tourism and recreation:** Explores ways to use tourism and recreation to generate income and employment with minimal effects on the environment and culture of Eugene.

All Roundtable sectors are open to the public.

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