



**Visioneering  
Unified Legislative Agenda Meeting  
July 15, 2005  
Meeting Notes**

Attendees: Connie Dietz, Diane Gjerstad, Charlie Peer, Willis Heck, Keith Lawing, Rick Rekoske, Shelly Duncan, Trix Niernberger, Vickie McArthur, Bob Hanson, John Stevens, Travis Smith, Joel Pile, Roger Douthett, John Waltner, Clay Bastian, Linda Sorrell, Marilyn Cook, Carla Lee, Rosa Molina, Oletha Faust-Goudeau, Mark Eby, Perry Schuckman, Scott Schneider, Bernie Koch, Camille Kluge, Steve Huebert, Kent Brown, Keith DeHaven, Erick Sexton, Charlotte Foster, Peggy Johnson, Bill Pickert, Andy Schlapp, Brenda Landwehr, Les Depperschmidt, Lyndon Wells

Resource Team: Bernie Koch, Keith Lawing, Scott Schneider, Eric Sexton, Andy Schlapp, John Waltner

Next Unified Legislative Agenda Meeting: August 12, 9:30 am, McKinley Administration Center, 1<sup>st</sup> and Pine, Newton

Minutes from June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2005 alliance meeting were accepted and approved.

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The Purpose of the Unified Legislative Alliance meeting:

To gain a better understanding of regionalism based on multiple points of view. The strategic alliance will review guiding principles for working together making necessary changes or additions. The alliance will discuss the Visioneering Benchmarks and identify those for additional discussion for potential legislative action. Based on the identified benchmarks, participants will create a list of possible issues related to the benchmark. Participants will also be provided the opportunity to expand the alliance by identifying other participants to attend in the future.

I. Why is Regionalism Important?

Participants were asked to consider why regionalism is important from multiple points of view, including:

- The mayor of a "suburban" town
- Large business owner
- Adult living and working in rural community
- Elected official of Wichita
- Minority small business owner

Following discussion at their tables, participants were asked to "call-out" responses to the larger group. Participants identified the following reasons why regionalism is important:

- Able to qualify for different level of assistance from the federal government
- Expanded customer base
- Different communities compliment and benefit each other
- Increased arts/social activities
- More opportunities for coalitions among minority groups to develop
- Doesn't threaten "small town nature" when consider that we can pull our identities together, while maintaining our own individualism
- Breakout of existing "coalitions" – Expand opportunities to work with new groups and individuals
- We can better use facilities with better understanding of each other
- Pulling our identities together while maintaining our own individualism
- Greater power and financial resources when pooled together
- Well trained labor pool
- Additional arts and cultural opportunities
- More opportunities for relationships and networking
- Job opportunities

- Increased volunteers
- Increased tolerance for the diversity opinions
- Greater access to state – regional political leaders have more ‘clout’

Keith Lawing presented several overheads from a recent presentation by Joe Aistrup at REAP’s June Summit. The overheads highlighted the economic importance of regionalism and its benefits to south-central Kansas communities. The presentation overheads are available for review at [www.visioneeringwichita.com](http://www.visioneeringwichita.com) under the documents section titled REAP Presentation.

## II. Finalize Guiding Principles for Developing a Unified Legislative Agenda

Participants revisited the previously developed “guiding principles” for the alliance to clarify and determine if any additional guiding principles were needed. Based on a brief presentation, participants agreed that these guiding principles can be used for the alliance.

- Identify the “pros and cons” of ideas so that we can make well informed decisions
- Elected officials represent the community’s will
- Respectful of everyone’s opinions, recognizing there are multiple viewpoints
- Need to agree how to communicate the decisions of the alliance, both within the alliance and to external partners (i.e., media)
- Maintain a regional focus
- Address other Visioneering benchmarks
- Focus on issues not personalities
- Inclusiveness (i.e., minorities, multiple community sectors, different communities)

## III. If “We Got it Right” by the Start of the 2006 Legislative Session

Participants worked in small groups to determine what could be accomplished by the start of the 2006 legislative session. This discuss built upon a previous discussion of participants’ “hopes and concerns” at the previous legislative alliance meeting. Following small group discussion, participants called out their vision to the larger group in a value-added process. These are provided below.

### ***If we “Got It Right” by the Start of the Legislative Session***

- Establish our “identity” – formal entity
- Alliance meetings are easy to attend
- A process is identified that will have the greatest impact & opportunity for success
- Building trust among participants
- We are more aligned based on our similar interests
- Big “Group hug!” (ha!)
- We have a mechanism to react to “opportunities” and “threats” to our area
- Invite presidents of ‘Neighborhood Associations’
- Group of focused priorities that have been jointly identified
- We will understand why some people are not here & develop strategies to get them to attend
- Clear and better understanding of how interdependent we are
- Unify our legislative delegation
- Our “objective” is bigger than just legislative agenda (more than just common issues), but is about how to make south-central Kansas stronger and powerful
- Constituents need to contact legislators regarding the issues we identify

These “If we Got it Right” statements will be used to help determine future agendas as we work towards their accomplishment.

IV. Visioneering Benchmarks – A Logical Place to Begin

Suzie Ahlstrand provided a brief summary of the eight benchmarks that have been identified through the Visioneering process (See below). These benchmarks are a logical place to begin discussing common interests and possibilities for collaboration and joint action. Participants were asked to vote for their top three benchmarks that they believed were timely and could have legislative issues. Below is a list of the benchmarks and number of votes received.

Job Growth - 28 votes

Education – 24 votes

Per Capita Income - 17 votes

Family Stability - 9 votes

Downtown Development – 6 votes

Leadership – 3 votes

Racial Diversity, Opportunity & Harmony - 3 votes

Arts/Recreation – 3 votes

V. Visioneering Benchmarks – Job Growth & Education

Participants were asked to self-select into one group to discuss possible issues related to job growth and education. It is important to note these discussions were designed to identify possibilities. Additional dialogue is needed to clarify these possibilities and determine if other issues are more pressing/needed. Below is a list of brainstormed issues.

***Potential Issues Based on Top Visioneering Benchmarks***

Job Growth – Potential Issues

- Support for new companies and industry in the area
- Encourage the development of home based businesses
- Local & state incentives to bring-in or expand companies
- Address the skills gap and its relation to job growth in the area
- Better understanding of the complexity of local issues and how votes relate to the region
- Control over lottery funds as it relates to economic development
- Casinos'/Gaming...what are the "+" and "-" They need to be controlled and taxed
- Transportation, including air travel. Important for companies needing to get in and out of the MSA. Also the Highway Intra-Region and its impact on regional movement
- Work with local legislators to help determine what is "job growth"

Education – Potential Issues

- Developing effective statewide system for technical post-secondary funding, training, and retraining
- Ongoing disconnect between high school & post-secondary technical education
- Brain drain – how to keep talented, educated individuals in region. Providing opportunities that are consistent with their interest.
- Reasonable % state general fund
- Connection education and job support
- Education and research supports jobs growth
- Recruitment of new jobs and industries
- Helping access federal funds, grants
- Consolidation/collaboration
- Not just cost – specialize services
- Process for identifying future employment needs
- Diversity – understanding changing demographics

- Rising healthcare costs & relation to job growth
- "Cost of Doing" Business → other states have incentives. More taxpayers can create a more favorable cost of doing business in the region.
- Housing...importance of well-maintained houses & neighborhoods
- Relation of job growth to education & skill development (All levels)
- Connection of Economic Development & Workforce Development
- Not just jobs or education – both compliment each other
- Reasonable per pupil cost (average)
- Adult Basic Education (ABE) - ESOL
- College Mecca

VI. Next Steps

- Next meeting will be August 12, 2005 at McKinley Administration Center, 1<sup>st</sup> & Pine, Newton, Kansas at 9:30 am – 11:30 a.m.
- Please invite people who need to be "at the table". Remember to consider the guiding principles of Visioneering.