

FOUNDING CHAMPIONS

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 Bob DeNooyer
 Paul DeWeese
 Fred Dillingham
 Paul R. Dimond
 James Duderstadt
 Aaron Dworkin
 Anthony Earley
 Dave Egner
 Ken Fischer
 Michael Flanagan
 Randolph Flechsigs
 Eugene Gargaro
 Dan Gaydou
 Elisabeth Gerber
 Ralph Gerson
 Don Gilmer
 Alan Gilmour
 Larry Good
 Steve Hamp
 Pat Harrington
 David Haynes
 John Hertel
 Tom Hickner
 Jim Hilboldt
 David Hollister
 Veronica Horn
 Mike Jandernoa
 Dottie Johnson
 Kevin A. Kelly
 Dan Kildee
 Kurt Kimball
 Ron Kitchens
 Birgit Klohs
 Mary Kramer
 Gary LaPlant
 Mel Larsen
 Bob Larson
 Jack Lessenberry
 Thomas Lewand
 Sam Logan
 John Logie
 Albert Lorenzo
 Doug Luciani
 Richard McLellan
 Hank Meijer
 Anne Mervenne
 Dan Musser
 Brent Nickola
 Greg Northrup
 David Page
 Lana Pollack
 John Porter
 Keith Pretty
 Margaret Ann Riecker
 Marvin Roberson
 Milt Rohwer
 Doug Ross
 Sharon Rothwell
 Doug Rothwell
 Matthew Roush
 Nancy Schlichting
 Paul Schutt
 Marc Schwartz
 Joe Schwarz
 Dan Scripps
 Maureen Smyth
 Rick Snyder
 Helen Taylor
 Paul Todd
 Gail Torreano
 Margaret Trimer-Hartley
 Jan Urban-Lurain
 Amanda VanDusen
 Peter Walters
 Tom Watkins
 Dennis West
 Gil White
 Cynthia Wilbanks
 Dan Wyant
 Gil Ziegler

MICHIGAN'S DEFINING MOMENT



spend a little time on the future of your state

CO-CHAIRS

Paul Hillegonds
 Mark Murray
 Phil Power
 Glenda D. Price
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Thousands of leaders and citizens mobilize to build a bipartisan, common ground agenda for Michigan's future

"EnvisionMichigan" story competition offers \$30,000 in prizes!

October 11, 2007 (Lansing, Mich.) – More than 1,000 of community leaders and citizens are meeting in more than 80 locations this fall to move Michigan past bitter, polarized politics to a new era of bipartisan leadership and problem solving.

The **Michigan's Defining Moment Public Engagement Campaign** kicks off with these **Community Conversations** and an **EnvisionMichigan Storytelling Competition** with more than \$30,000 in prizes.

"We have just concluded months of gridlock and last-minute muddle to avoid a government shutdown in Lansing, but there's a lot more work to do," said Phil Power, president of the Center for Michigan, which teamed up with more than 100 statewide Founding Champions to launch the campaign. "If you care about Michigan's future, we have a place for you. Please join us in this statewide effort to find common ground, to bring into keen focus the difficult challenges and choices – and workable solutions – Michigan citizens and leaders face in the near future."

Michigan citizens can immediately participate in three ways:

1. **Join a Community Conversation.** Have your say in Michigan's future. Join this unprecedented series of statewide conversations to set a clear citizens' agenda for a new Michigan. To reserve a seat, call 734-769-4625 or email info@thecenterformichigan.net. Contact us today because space is limited.
2. **Share your views online.** "Online Community Conversations" allow any Michigan resident to quickly register views on what Michigan must do transform its economy, government, and education system. Online participants can instantly see how their views compare to others' statewide. Go to www.thecenterformichigan.net/community-conversations to participate.

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- 3. Share your Michigan story and win!** What do you love about Michigan? What do you want to change? What's your best vision for our state's future? How do we get there? Tell us in words, photos, or online audio/video stories. We're offering more than \$30,000 in prizes, including college scholarships, vacations to top Michigan resorts, and weekly Meijer shopping sprees. Go to www.thecenterformichigan.net/stories to enter. Sponsors include Boyne USA Resorts, Crystal Mountain Resort, the Grand Hotel, Meijer, the Presidents Council State Universities of Michigan, and Thunder Bay Resort.

The overall purpose of the Michigan's Defining Moment Public Engagement Campaign is to establish a statewide, citizen-driven agenda to help navigate Michigan through a critical era of change and challenge and transform Michigan to a new era of prosperity.

"Leaders in Lansing avoided a shutdown of government, and we're thankful for that," said Mark Murray, president of Meijer, Inc., a co-chair of the Defining Moment Campaign, and a former state budget director. "But many significant challenges still face the state."

Despite some progress this fall, state government remains on a path to spend far more than it takes in for years to come – a chronic structural deficit that remains, regardless of what happened in Lansing. Costs continue to escalate for such things as educating and building a world-class workforce, housing an ever-growing prison population, caring for society's least fortunate, and paying for police, fire protection, and other public services that help maintain desirable and competitive local communities. Despite more than \$1 billion in tax increases passed on October 1, we will continue to have a structural imbalance in the budget without further action. State leaders began the process of clarifying the state's long term trajectory, but much work remains.

"What we care about is making sure future-oriented issues, rather than tired partisan dogma, win out," said S. Martin Taylor, a retired DTE executive, president & CEO of SM Taylor & Associates, LLC, and a fellow co-chair of the Defining Moment Campaign. "We need candidates from both parties who will lead by making tough decisions. And those leaders in Lansing will benefit from in-depth, statewide citizen dialogue about the tough choices to come."

As a first step, the Defining Moment Campaign gathered more than 100 statewide leaders for roundtable discussions in May 2007. Those bipartisan "Founding Champions" -- from the private, public, and non-profit sectors -- debated, refined, and ultimately endorsed three "Principles for Michigan's Transformation." The names of the Founding Champions are listed in the left-hand column of this press release. The details of their endorsed principles are attached. In short, they called for a tight public focus on three things: 1) A talented, globally competitive workforce; 2) A vibrant economy and great quality of life; and, 3) Effective, efficient and accountable government.

Now, in the more than 80 statewide Community Conversations, citizens and local leaders will refine and prioritize those principles and the strategies for getting there. Next, those

participants will be called into action by holding more local discussions and hosting issues-based debates in key, competitive races for the Michigan Legislature in fall 2008.

More than 80 volunteer conveners are holding the first round of Community Conversations in October and November in locations from Metro Detroit to Marquette.

“This truly is an effort to find points of consensus among Michigan’s diverse regions and populations,” said Marilyn Schlack, president of Kalamazoo Valley Community College, fellow co-chair of the campaign, and convener of one of the Community Conversations. “It’s deliberative democracy – an effort to go beyond the gut reactions of public opinion polls and get to the challenging choice making Michigan citizens and leaders ultimately must face.”

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR MICHIGAN:

The Center is a 501c3 non-profit “think and do” tank founded in 2006 by a bipartisan Steering Committee of experienced statewide leaders. The center hosts conferences, distributes a weekly policy and current events newsletter, collects and distributes public policy research focused on Michigan’s future challenges and opportunities, and works to promote citizen dialogue and action. The Center’s web site is www.thecenterformichigan.net.

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Transforming Michigan Common Ground Principles

Michigan is at a defining moment. We can stay lashed to the past, lamenting the loss of 20th Century economic dominance and operating under “old ways” likely to lead to a poorer, more divided future. Or we can come together, embrace change, and create a new era of opportunity. In this new era, Michigan will be known globally as the attractive “North Coast,” a place with a highly diversified and innovative economy, bountiful natural resources and a great quality of life.

We propose this vision for a prosperous Michigan future:

- A Talented, Globally Competitive Workforce.
- A Vibrant Economy & Great Quality of Life.
- Effective, Efficient & Accountable Government.

Many individual leaders and community groups across the state have endorsed these principles, which are gaining traction in our State Capitol. Michigan needs broader public engagement and demand for a transformational agenda. Michigan needs elected leaders at all levels to take the steps necessary to realize a long-term, future-oriented vision for the state. To that end, now is the time to grow, inspire, and support leadership across our state.

A TALENTED, GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE WORKFORCE

Principle: To prosper in the flat world of the 21st Century, Michigan must greatly enhance the skills and potential of its people so they can compete with workers around the globe – and win. That means we must grow, retain, and attract talent.

How:

- Dramatically improve overall learning and completion rates from early childhood to K-12 to higher education.
- Assure affordable access to lifelong learning so young people get the skills they need to launch prosperous careers and workers in mid-career and beyond can best adapt to the rapidly changing economy.
- Greatly increase recognition that education and creativity are essential tickets to prosperity.
- Make Michigan welcoming to all.
- Rejuvenate communities to assure they have the amenities, culture, and diversity to develop, attract and retain talented people. Effectively manage the size and cost of our infrastructure.

A VIBRANT ECONOMY & GREAT QUALITY OF LIFE

Principle: To compete globally and prosper, Michigan must invest in those assets which differentiate it from other places to best attract and retain job providers and talent.

How:

- Remake and re-brand Michigan as a vibrant and entrepreneurial “North Coast.” A place that is home to one-fifth of the world’s fresh surface water and other bountiful natural resources that support sustainable growth in industries such as agriculture, tourism, and forestry. And a place that grows ever smarter and more innovative.
- Establish a new “public purse” – a tightly focused, long-term, sustained taxing and spending strategy. Top spending priorities: education, economic development, marketing our state to the world, and quality of life investments

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in arts & culture, natural resources, health, and safety. Michigan must continually assess and modernize its tax structure to maximize and sustain those public investments that are crucial for the state's competitiveness in the global economy.

- Greatly boost economic development by growing an entrepreneurial culture, growing venture capital and ensuring a competitive, simple and predictable business tax structure.
- Intensify commercialization of university research.
- Continue to thrive as a manufacturing powerhouse, especially in high-tech manufacturing and engineering requiring highly skilled workers.
- Provide greater recognition and support for our state's growing new economy of entrepreneurs and small businesses.
- Embrace change and risk as key factors in 21st Century personal and corporate success.

EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT & ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNMENT

Principle: For Michigan to maximize the amount of tax dollars devoted to our most distinctive and competitive assets, our public sector must be nimble, thrifty, and accountable. State and local government, schools, and higher education must maximize efficiency to assure sustainable funding for Michigan's most pressing and strategic future needs. Public institutions must better serve people and embrace change.

How:

- Increase collaboration and service sharing among Michigan's hundreds of school districts and local government units. Tax revenue sharing and state laws should reward collaboration, service sharing, efficiency, and best practices.
- Benchmark public sector practices and highlight and replicate the best and most efficient.
- Continually examine public sector pay and benefits, weigh those costs against private market standards, and adjust accordingly to assure the public receives highest possible services at most reasonable costs.
- Scrutinize and limit spending on corrections and general government operations that do not clearly contribute to the state's future competitive stake.
- Manage large and growing public sector pension and health care burdens so that those legacy costs do not erode public investment in Michigan's most pressing and strategic needs.
- Increase political accountability so that Michigan can rely on experienced, strategic, competent and decisive leaders in elected offices -- leaders willing to set aside traditional party politics to craft and implement bipartisan strategies to move Michigan forward. Possible approaches to governance include lengthened term limits, a unicameral and/or part-time legislature, campaign finance reform, and redistricting.