

# Group pushes design for Michigan economy

BY RALPH R. ECHTINAW  
STAFF WRITER

If almost everybody changes the way they think about almost everything the Michigan economy will be able to do almost anything.

So says Doug Ross, the director of Michigan Futures, a Southfield-based think tank that has striven for the last 18 months to see how the state might reconfigure its economy to perform admirably in a new economic order that's already taking root around the country.

Ross, 56, of Farmington Hills, is a former state commerce department director in the Blanchard Administration and a potential appointee of President-elect Bill Clinton.

In fact, the ideas espoused by Michigan Futures were sufficiently popular that Ross was invited to Clinton's economic conference last week. Ross made a presentation to Clinton similar to one he gives throughout Michigan about how the mass production method on which American industry has been based for decades should be scrapped.

"Unless we change dramatically there's no hope," he said. "We will simply get poorer. We will lose jobs. Paychecks will keep shrinking."

## More skill, more money

The gist of it is that mass production of identical products by relatively unskilled workers must give way to automation and flexible manufacturing of products customized to the demands of individual customers. That way, Ross said, the workers have to be more skilled and can therefore earn more money.

"(Nowadays) anything that's done routinely can either be automated, or there are people all over the Third World willing to do those same things for a buck an hour," Ross said. "That way of making things is becoming obsolete in all the advanced countries. We stay in the mass production business, we're finished."

As an example, Ross said clothing could be tailored to individuals by electronically measuring them, sending the specs to the factory, then using computer-controlled lasers to cut the fabric and produce custom garments.

"In the old system you showed up and the machines ran you," Ross said. "Suddenly (with the new system) skilled people are at the heart of every business."

## Slide show

If you accept that premise, the

question becomes . . . How do you get manufacturers and politicians to make the necessary changes?

Well, it's kind of a grass-roots thing, Ross said, and Michigan Future is tending lawns all over Michigan with a slide-show presentation and lecture designed to spread the word about how everything has to change.

The main goal is to modify the way people think about manufacturing, schooling and almost everything else. It's a vision thing.

"Once we can imagine what we want to be it gets much easier to figure out how to get there," Ross said.

The slide-shows are available to almost any group of any size that shows any interest. However, Ross said you should have at least 30 people together before he'll come out and make his pitch. The group can be anything from a neighborhood association to a chamber of commerce because Michigan Future believes that every aspect of life in Michigan has to be in on this change for it to work right. (Call 645-0360).

## Politicians love parades

Although government people have been cautious so far about what Michigan Future proposes,

Ross figures that once you convince enough regular people of your plan, then the politicians have no choice but to get on board. "You can always count on politicians to jump in front of the parade," he said.

At least one politician has already joined the parade. Bryan Amann, a Democrat Wayne County commissioner representing Canton, said, "The stuff (Ross) talks about ought to give hope to the people of Wayne County. Michigan Future is inextricably linked with Wayne County's future. That group is showing that you can do certain things through progressive policies that aren't punitive."

Michigan Future is a non-profit, non-partisan group born in the summer of 1991. Its 1992 budget, funded by foundations and corporations, is \$220,000.

Included on the board of directors are: Dwight Carlson, president of Farmington Hills-based Perceptron, Inc.; James Brickley, state supreme court judge; Rick Inatome, president of Troy-based InCom Computers; and Beverly Wolkow, executive director of the Michigan Education Association.



JERRY ZOLYNSKY/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The vision thing: If Michigan is going to prosper in the new technology-based economy, inhabitants must have a "vision" of where they're going, said Doug Ross, the director of Michigan Future, Inc.

# Recycle trees at a county park

Don't put your Christmas trees curbside after the holidays, recycle it at the Oakland County Parks.

Yule trees will be accepted Jan. 2-3 and Jan. 9-10 at nine Oakland County Parks. Drop-off hours are 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

New this year, roping and wreaths will be accepted. All metal materials must be removed. Plastic used to transport trees must also be removed at recycling sites. No commercial trees will be accepted.

Recycling sites include Red Oaks Golf Course in Madison Heights; Addison Oaks near Oxford; Glen Oaks Golf Course in Farmington Hills; Groveland

Oaks near Holly; Independence Oaks near Clarkston; Orion Oaks in Orion Township; Springfield Oaks Activities Center in Daviessburg; Waterford Oaks in Waterford; and White Lake Oaks Golf Course near Pontiac.

No park entry fee will be charged to drop-off Christmas trees.

"People are aware of the dramatic impact recycling has and are acting responsibly as stewards of their planet," Dan Stencel, chief of park operations, said.

For their efforts, recyclers will earn a coupon for free vehicle entry to the April 24 Earth Fair at the Independence Oaks Nature Center. There, they can obtain a

free pine seedling, compliments of the Hoo Hoo Club of Detroit. The club is a lumber industry organization.

The recycled trees are chipped and used on nature trails and for mulch and compost.

The recycling Christmas tree program is also sponsored by Bordine's Better Blooms of Clarkston and Rochester.

Meantime, start saving used automobile oil, oil filters and lead acid batteries. These recyclable items will be collected during the Earth Fair. The Nature Center does not accept recyclable items at any other time.

For more details and exact park locations, call 858-0906.

# Volunteers sought to help kids

The Oakland County Youth Assistance Volunteer Program is looking for adult mentors to help kids.

Two training sessions have been scheduled to teach volun-

teers how this job is done properly.

The sessions will occur 7-9 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 6 and 13, and

9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

To register, call 858-0041.

**20/20 SALE**

**20% OFF ALL ITEMS '20 OR LESS**

Perfect for kids of all ages with holiday money

**The Doll Hospital & Toy Soldier Shop**  
3947 W. 12 Mile • Berkley  
(313) 543-3115 • M-Sa 10:30-10:15

**Modernistic**  
CARPET & UPHOLSTERY CLEANING

For the Best Specials of the Year call:

**589-1700**

**Small-Business Start-up Kits**  
Want to own a small business and don't know where to begin?

Information on marketing, financing, licensing, getting customers and making your business happen is now available as part of the Kessler Exchange membership. Learn about the top ten small-business opportunities for 1993 from a company that has been recognized on NBC News, in *The Wall Street Journal*, and in *Money* magazine for its small-business expertise. Call The Kessler Exchange at 1-800-648-7888 for more information.

**The Kessler Exchange**  
Small-Business People Helping Each Other. OE 85-1228

WE AT GREENSTONE'S  
EXTEND OUR WARMEST WISHES FOR  
A SAFE AND HAPPY HOLIDAY.

We will be open Thursday, December 31st 9:30-5:30,  
closed Friday, January 1st, and will re-open  
Saturday, January 2nd 9:30-5:30.

**GREENSTONE'S**  
CREATORS OF FINE JEWELRY SINCE 1925.  
528 North Woodward • Birmingham, MI • 48009 • 313-642-2650

**"Outstanding Job!"**

Those are the words Neil Johnson, of Livonia, used to describe the response to his recent Observer & Eccentric Classified ad. He was very pleased with the results. Do you have a something you want to sell? You do? Then call us and let us do an outstanding job for you.

**Observer & Eccentric**  
CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING  
36251 SCHOOLCRAFT ROAD LIVONIA MI 48150

WAYNE COUNTY (313) 691-0900 OAKLAND COUNTY (313) 644-1070  
ROCHESTER-ROCHESTER HILLS (313) 852-3222  
FAX (313) 953-2232

**Time is running out...**

**PRICES SLASHED AGAIN**

*Save hundreds, even thousands of dollars!*

All Precious Gem Jewelry. . . . . NOW 45% OFF  
All Men's 14K Gold Link & Stud Sets. . . NOW 50% OFF  
All Movado, Concord & Rado Watches. . . NOW 50% OFF  
All Diamond Tennis Bracelets . . . . . NOW 50% OFF  
All Cultured Pearl Stud Earrings. . . . . NOW 60% OFF  
All Spode China. . . . . NOW 60% OFF  
All Godinger Crystal Masterpieces. . . . . NOW 50% OFF  
Entire Balance of Inventory. . . . . 40% - 60% OFF

A tremendous selection of magnificent jewelry and exquisite giftware still remains!

**After 90 Years**

**CLOSING**

**CHARLES W. WARREN**

JEWELERS & DIAMOND MERCHANTS SINCE 1902

Somerset Collection • 2801 West Big Beaver Road, Troy  
Mon., Thurs. & Fri. 10-9, Tue., Wed., & Sat 10-6, Sun. 12-5  
Visa, Mastercard, American Express & Personal Checks Welcome