

Michigan Future touts economic 'vision' to OCC

BY RALPH R. ECHTINAW
STAFF WRITER

They aren't calling it the power of positive thinking, but that's what it is.

Michigan Future, Inc. prefers to refer to it as "vision," but the idea is a lot like what the Lost Boys recommended to Peter Pan so he could fly. "Think happy thoughts."

That was the message last week at a Michigan Supreme Court Justice James Brickley and Michigan Future project director Louis Glazer had a long talk with about 90 officials from cities, school dis-

tricts, churches and businesses at an Oakland Community College seminar, encouraging them to think positive thoughts about the state economy.

The premise is that our economy is in flux, and the low-skill, high-wage, assembly-line jobs are giving way to high-skill, high-wage jobs that require workers to have a lot more decision-making authority than they've had in the past.

The problem is that Michigan residents don't have a good idea of where they're headed in the fu-

ture. The answer is to get a "vision" of what we want society and the economy to look like, then work really hard to get there.

Michigan, Glazer said, can either get with the program and be a "leader" as these changes occur, or be left behind floundering with everyone else who doesn't know or care what's happening.

"There's something going on out there and it isn't just the fact that autos aren't selling this year," said Glazer.

(Glazer was filling in for Michigan Future director and

founder Doug Ross, who has taken a leave of absence to become the assistant secretary for employment and training under U.S. Secretary of Labor Robert Reich.)

Justice Brickley, who is on the Michigan Future board, said it's "far better that we be prepared for something that's inevitable, but also that we play a leadership role (and) have a vision of what it is that we're shooting for. We want to control our future and not be a victim of it."

Brickley and Glazer admit to being short on specifics regarding

how everything should change, but they figure that "people's insights are wonderful in figuring out how to get there," said Glazer, adding that the Michigan Future plan "is a work in progress."

Audience members seemed impressed with the Michigan Future idea.

Sister Regina Marie Doelker, the principal of Mercy High School in Farmington Hills, said "it's good to hear people looking at something in a positive way." J. Cristy Osborn, a candidate

for Southfield mayor, said she came to the seminar completely ignorant of what Michigan Future is, but left the auditorium calling the plan "an excellent program. This (presentation) has restored my faith in mankind." Having a good vision, she said, is "90 percent of the battle."

Osborn's campaign manager, Sally Tilley, is a gym teacher in Allen Park schools. The students there, she said, "don't have any vision. You see it every day. They don't think they're going to be around for a very long time."

Hillegonds, Hertel vow friendship, talk about issues

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They did everything but embrace and vow to join each other's political party.

In their first personal appearance together, the co-sponsors of the Michigan House, Democrat Curtis Hertel and Republican Paul Hillegonds, called each other friend last week and addressed the Civic Searchlight's annual gathering in Southfield.

Despite their political and geographic differences — Hertel is from Detroit, Hillegonds from Holland — the two men were forced to share the speaker's

position after elections last November left the 110-member House divided evenly between Democrats and Republicans.

Each man doubted if the arrangement would work, they said Monday, but it has so far been "a blessing in disguise (and) the beginning of a genuine friendship," Hillegonds said. "The shared leadership can be judged a success as of today."

Hertel was likewise quite civil to Hillegonds, and the luncheon was unmarred by outbursts, arguments, vitriol or anything else normally associated with partisan politics.

Both men said that things are actually getting done in Lansing now because neither party has a majority in the House. One party's bill isn't likely to get locked up in the other party's committee like it used to, Hillegonds said. "That kind of blame game is really over."

After short opening statements, Hillegonds and Hertel answered these questions from the audience:

■ On campaign finance reform, Hillegonds said the

House will do something later this spring. He favors tighter restrictions on campaign finance disclosure and limits on the amount of political action committee money candidates can collect.

■ On plans to limit jury awards in medical malpractice cases, Hertel said legislation is pending that attorneys and doctors approve of. "Maybe that means it's pretty good," he said.

Composting workshops scheduled

The Southeastern Oakland County Resource Recovery Authority is having a series of workshops on composting.

The first session is 7:30-9:30 p.m. Wednesday at the Royal Oak

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Through a series of workshops and demonstrations, citizens learn the basics of composting, natural mulches, benefits of com-

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