

Get involved to make a difference. Call The Forum at 337-7002 for more details.

VISION: *What We Seek to Become*

We seek to increase the capacity of communities to identify their critical issues and opportunities, create consensus-based community change and monitor the results of the change efforts.

MISSION: *Our Purpose*

We exist to improve the quality of life for ALL the residents of our community.

VALUES: *Our Strongly Held Beliefs*

Our customers are the public and then the Forum membership. The Forum's role is to initiate and facilitate, but not duplicate action by others. We include and respect the diverse individuals and interests of the community in all phases. We build and model leadership that is inclusive, collaborative and vision based; creating what we WANT.



The American Ideal is not that we will all agree with each other or even like each other, every minute of the day.

It is rather that we will respect each other's rights, especially the right to be different, and that, at the end of the day, we will understand that we are one people, one country and one community.

And that our well-being is inextricably bound up with the well-being of each and every one of our fellow citizens"

Arthur Kropp, People for the American Way
--"New York Times,"
June 21, 1995

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FORUM LEADERS SET NEW DIRECTION TO SERVE COMMUNITY & INVITE YOU TO JOIN

ahead as a place where people can voice concerns constructively, learn about their community and arrive at common ground upon which to build on current public issues and opportunities. The new direction for the coming year (July-June) was agreed upon in the recent Board strategic planning session by 25 representatives from diverse walks of life in the community. The community is urged to become involved. New Board Chair, Brent Larson announced The Forum theme- "Improving Countywide Cooperation and Relationships" continues to provide the framework for this year's thrusts to educate, convene and develop common action on..."

✘ Economic/Community Development - Educate/Convene/Dialogue to Action
Objective: Present an impactful, educational series or major program event

Focus on: a) Fostering a greater understanding of economic development and its implications for individuals and organizations in all areas. What is economic development? Do we need it? Who really provides the jobs & prosperity?

b) How can economic growth and environmental/greenspace concerns be compatible? c) Address the Economic Cluster and Fresh Start initiatives-foster quality dialogue, response and action. d) Explore the role of higher education in the community. Bring together diverse perspectives. e) Attempt countywide agreement on a common vision. Work together with many partners and those doing economic development. Convene *Kalamazoo to Meet Yourself, Look in the*

Mirror.

✘ Action on Social Issues - Focus on Youth

Objective: Create a real place for youth in community development; visible representative voice, focus and presence

Focus on: a) Fostering a dynamic process/action bringing youth to the community dialogue & planning through a representative Kalamazoo Area Youth Forum to hear and understand youth visions;

b)Work cooperatively with schools, youth groups, job training programs and others; c) Develop with others, genuine youth-driven programming with adults coaching and supporting.

✘ Improving the Environment - Combine Environment & Economic Action

Objective: Effectively continue the good efforts with the River, Regional Trailway, Clean Water Grants, Water QualityTrading Demonstration Project and Redeveloping Brownfields with 300 people.

Forum role: *Catalyst for Community Improvement, Create Consensus-based Change, Monitor Results, Foster Communication Across Boundaries, Outreach, Convene, Facilitate to produce good dialogue leading to productive action. Provide leadership in initiatives or specific programs around an important issue if no one else will.*
Forum Board of Directors, June 1998

Thank You to All 1998 Members

Organizations

Ahrens Construction
Amerikal, Inc.
A.M. Todd Company
Business Direct
City of Kalamazoo
City of Portage
Comstock Public Schools
Comstock Township
Connable Associates, Inc.
Consumers Energy
Council of Governments
Davenport College
Diekema/Hamann Architects
Downtown Kalamazoo Inc.
Stuart Eddy, P.E., P.C.
Educational Comm. Credit Union
Envirologic Technologies, Inc.
Fabri-Kal
John E. Fetzner Institute
Gove Associates, Inc.
Greater Kalamazoo United Way
Healthy Futures
Hispanic American Council
K-Lift Corporation
Kalamazoo Co. Chamber of Commerce
Kalamazoo College
Kalamazoo County Road Commission
Kalamazoo Education Association
Kalamazoo Foundation
Kalamazoo Nature Center
Kalamazoo Public Library
Kalamazoo Public Schools
Kalamazoo Township
Kalamazoo Valley Community College
KALSEC, Inc.
KAR Laboratories
Kushner & Company, Inc.
Michigan National Bank
MRC Industries, Inc.
Mulders Glass & Glazing, Inc.
National Products Company
The Owen Group
PHP of SW Michigan
Plante & Moran
Portage Commerce Bank
Reed Stover & O'Connor
Schupan & Sons, Inc.
STS Consultants Ltd.
Upjohn National Leasing Co.
Vamum Riddering Schmidt & Howlett
Visiting Nurse & Hospice Services
Weber Specialties
Wenke Greenhouses
Western Michigan University
W.E. Upjohn Institute

Churches

First Baptist Church
Kalamazoo Deacon's Conference

Families

Bob & Maria Anderson
James & Susan Baldwin
Charles & Diane Bell
Don & Mary Brown
Phillip & Allene Dietrich
Robert & Mary Doud
Robert & Louise Dunbar
Frank Eichelberg
Marc Elliott & Laurie Russell
Steve & Connie Ferguson
Ward & Mary Greiner
John & Ginny Hartline
Thomas & Brigitte Huff
Allan & Rochelle Hunt
Louis & Nancy Jean
Bill & Jeannette Maxey
Gary & Joan Melvin
Preston & Barbara Parish
Dave & Pat Reeves
Gerald & Elaine Roberts
Bill & Marjorie Thacker
Charles VanZoeren & Family
Melvin Visser & Family

Individuals

Pat Adams
Bob Anderson
Hugh Anderson
Jeff Appeldoorn
Jared Arnold
Gale Arent
Paul Ballard
A.W. Betts
Robert Borsos

Martha Dahlinger
Marguerite Day
Bill Dimond
Pat Dolan
Frank Eichelberg
Alice Foote
Beverly Gallagher
Suprotik Ghosh
Ed Gordon
Sandra Gower
Audrey Gray
William Hamilton
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Martha Hilboldt
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James Houston
Shawn Hulsebos
Robert Hume
Jo Jacobs
James Kalleward
Jack Kehoe
Mark Kieser
Frances Kimball
Renee Kivikko
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Ed/Ann LaForge
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Orlin Loen
R.S. Longnecker
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Dora Mann
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Helen Truss
James Turek
Roger Ulrich
Tom/Lisa VanDis
Mary Vinton
Margaret vonSteinen
Carl Walker
Jeff Weisman
Richard Wilde
Sue Wilson
Carolyn Williams
Thell Woods
Jacqueline Wylie

Dear Forum Member or Prospective Member:

We're on a roll!! And we need you to roll with us as momentum continues in the Kalamazoo area for significant change and increasingly rapid progress toward new growth and development.

You know the bad news, centers of gravity moving away from Kalamazoo for major employers, the perception that many of us are singing off different song sheets, flat growth or standing still if we don't dramatically shift focus and the way we do things. What do you think, and what do you think about what is being proposed to bring about change? It matters what you think, and you have a responsibility to be heard.



Brent Larson, Forum Chair

The Forum intends to be in the middle of it all as many new forces, initiatives, ideas, dedicated people and organizations with opportunity and ability come together toward the common goal of a real departure from business as usual. Does the rhetoric and involvement seem top heavy or biased to you? That's what some have said. The only way all voices can contribute to the dialogue is if all people take the opportunity and the initiative to make their voices heard.

The Forum for Kalamazoo County is an excellent vehicle for that purpose for all of us. It is our mission to provide all people and organizations the ability to come together, to speak and listen, and to serve as an effective catalyst for meaningful action based on the seeking of a common purpose and consensus.

Take the opportunity to be a part of the discussion and the action. I invite you and all others to join us as an active participant in the part the Forum will play in this endeavor. Join the citizen Task Forces to meet in September.

Also, in the coming year we will take steps to create new opportunities for and with young people to be a part of the community dialogue. This initiative may take the form of a "Youth Forum" and much more. It is obvious that in planning the future together our young people have a stake that needs to be recognized and valued.

Yes, we will also continue our active involvement in environmental issues which are inextricably intertwined with economic and community development, with youth concerns, and with other arenas. There is much on our plate, and we need you to be a part of the movement toward solutions. The lessons of the "power of one" and the "powers of many" can be proven again and again if we choose to come to the table with respect and with dedication to a common purpose we decide together. Call the Forum office today at 337-7002 to say, "I'm with you."

Very sincerely,
Brent L. Larson,
Chairman of the Board of Directors

We are making significant changes to attract more people to be members of The Forum. Beginning in 1999, individuals can join for only \$5 and families for \$10. As our numbers grow, people from throughout our county can be more effectively heard, and can play an integral part in the planning and the actions that will affect us all for many years to come.

Class Act- Youth and the River

Aaron Cantrell, avid fisherman and community leader, directed a Youth Fishing Tournament for The Forum Community FunFest. Thirty five young people and families enjoyed the Catch and Release funfilled event, complete with free poles at Comstock Merrill Park. "Class" reigned over the whole event!



1st Place: Dustin Rabbitt, age 9, 15.5" Bass



2nd Place: Mike Fitzgerald, 12" Bass



3rd Place: Jeff DeGoede, 11" Bass



Courtney and Norris McKinney enjoy family fishing along the River at FunFest.



Robin Gordon (center back), Kalamazoo City Recreation & Leisure Dept. leader, helps two young fishing enthusiasts.



Aaron Cantrell, avid fisherman and community leader, caught tournament prize fish at Aug. 1997 FunFest.

**Are you Wondering,
“WHAT HAS THE FORUM DONE FOR ME LATELY?”**

Highlights from the 1997-1998 Year

Thank You to Citizens and staff who combined skills, knowledge and leadership to:

- Implement the new theme: “Improving Countywide Cooperation & Relationships”
- Convene, design and facilitate breakfast meetings with members and stakeholders to discuss the most important outcomes to be achieved under cooperation
- Find and present “Courageous Examples of Genuine Collaboration among Gov’t, Education, Business, Healthcare and the Environment”—to foster positive action
- Develop and implement the educational March series on economic development- “Community Vitality - Changing Trends” to benchmark against the best and promote local/regional cooperation in How We Grow
- Convene 10 major Youth Groups to discuss current “doings” and create a Youth Forum
- Bring economic and environmental interests together to work regularly on challenges
- Create Urban Brownfield Redevelopment to develop abandoned sites and provide jobs
- Revitalize, reclaim and return the Kalamazoo River as a community resource
- Finalize the regional Master Plan for the Kalamazoo River Valley Trailway with 12 governmental units and 300 citizens in 5 teams
- Obtain the 1st Clean Water Act Grant in MI and are cleaning up polluted Davis Creek
- Consult for City of Kalamazoo on plan to create Nonmotorized Transportation
- Develop a partnership with business/citizen landowners to construct on site stormwater basins
- Create two Community FunFests, to bring together governments, celebrate Families
- Provide more than 12 experiential youth events: creek cleanups, stenciling storm drains
- Administer a partnership and grants among corporations/farmers/environmentalists/wastewater treatment facilities/landowners to improve water quality and save jobs through the Water Quality Trading Demonstration Project.
- Bring in over \$400,000 annually to be spent in this area
- Promote constructive community dialogue leading to action and change

Results: Leadership and movement on Countywide Cooperation on important issues; Progress on coming together around our county’s prosperity; Progress on “Not Talking is Not Acceptable” among economic and environmental interests; Community utilizing the Kalamazoo River; Cleaner water in the river, lakes and streams; Jobs for neighborhoods

Over the past 8 years, Forum members and volunteers have succeeded at more than 15 major community improvement initiatives. **The Forum currently acts as a consultant for public input and education for 5 local planning projects; staff and skills are currently utilized by 2 cities & the state for community input. Facilitation, public & small meeting design expertise are available.**

THE FORUM

for Kalamazoo County
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