



BBC County Congress
 Solving Public Issues - Reviewed
 December 29, 2006

The County Congress looked another look at the issues, questions and solutions generated during the September Candidate Forum. Brainstorming and priority weighting techniques were used to review all the issues. First, additional questions and potential strategies were identified (see Review – questions and strategies). Then, participants were given 5 opportunities to “weigh” the issues. They could put all their support to one issue or divide their opportunities among several issues (see the first column). *Remember* – all issues generated more questions and strategies and were viewed as important by the group. *The weight score only given an indication where this group’s priorities were on this particular day.* Finally, more specific strategies were presented to the group and are listed at the end of this summary. The starred items were identified as priority strategies by the participants. The group noted that Health Care was not identified during the Candidate Forum and greatly impacts economic development.

	Public Issue	Information needed, ideas and strategies identified	Review – questions and strategies
11	Creating environment to attract business & industry	Energy Transportation connections Safe environment Incentives for inter-governmental cooperation	Utilities Technology Attract diversity
9	Jobs and employment opportunities	Need to narrow gap between high/low paying jobs	What does business and industry need? What do we have? Do we have an abundant/adequate work force? What has worked Support industries (train specific job skills) Tax base Build transportation that supports business Available housing impact? Is 2 nd income opportunity available?
9	Retain young people in community		Where are the jobs? What skills are in job force? What do we need? What education is needed? What is the mobilization (movement of workers)? Consider the regional work force. Who will be the workers as baby boomers retire? What is the effect of baby boomer retirement? How to promote telecommuting? Home-based businesses? Region 9 SCORE
			Create jobs Good school systems attract families Small business assistance What is effect of paying higher minimum wage on small business



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			Market - quality of life; affordable housing; parks; kids programs; safety and security
7	Local education impact	Enrollment and unfunded mandates Basic funding	State funding Impact of declining enrollment? Impact of transitory populations? Market private schools Decreased \$ = limited options Impact of migrant populations Mandated programming not being funded by state or feds QUALITY
6	Jobs/Living wage	Economic development incentive Family friendly employers Educate on "quality of life"	What is a living wage? (\$10.75 + benefits; \$12 without) What do workers see as living wage? Identify which jobs provide Understand there will be a range Impact factors - some will work for less; 2 income families; education; ability or interest/ opportunities
4	Drug Use/Crime: Short and Long-term effects on society	Program/work so addicts can develop a sense of worth, self-esteem Education for all ages	Drug Court – public buy in? employer buy in? Are we safe? Can it be improved? How to measure? Who is measuring? Who is responsible? Education Costs of crime/drug use? To area: To business: to family? To society? To taxes? How to build strong families? Norms – What are they? How to change?
4	Electric Production and distribution	Promote diversity Need more transmissions/system line grids	Education re: state/national shortage. Mandates re: renewable/environmentally sensitive energy. Educate – conservation; when to buy Where is it produced? Where is it needed? Education about grid system
4	Out-state representation (loss of political clout)	Concern of rural vs metro	We have LESS Need STRONG leadership Convey LOCAL/regional issues to reps – identify, measure and understand Support rep action that works toward local issues vs party line politics.



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			Promote unity among reps = increased power/influence.
3	Protect water quality	Keep strict laws to maintain quality Identify where pollution is coming from	Pollution – where is it coming from? How to measure amounts? What is it? Who’s responsible? Upgrade infrastructure Increase public awareness Where does our water come from? Monitor permits – follow ups; intermittent checks. What do we do with polluted water?
3	How do we motivate “stagnant” community “Leaders”	“Boot Camp”, orientation, education tests?	Provide training / education to constituents and leaders Don’t micromanage Encourage and support leaders – what do they want? Blandin Reach out and develop leaders Adequate compensation (\$, time, benefits, fame & glory,
3	Affordable housing		Need more? How much more? Where? Shoe needs it? Where is it started? What help is needed? What \$ is available? How to get it? Subsidize or not? Private or Government?
2	Child protection funding	Property taxes base shouldn’t be used for this service. MN is one of the two lowest contributors of finance for this service.	Decrease in fed \$ - what will be impact? Continue to focus on getting what is available. What is child protection????????? Out-of-home placement, temporary aide for needy families, How do we identify the needs? Who gets service? How do we collect the funds available?
1	Share public safety resources	Cooperative agreements Ability to communicate Understanding socio-economic factors County-wide economics (retail, housing, industry, manufacturing, etc)	Public education – What is safety? What are standards? How does the language barrier impact? How to enhance mutual aid agreements? Increase confidence in PS personnel? Benefit to sharing How to measure? How to encourage? How to get buy in? IS there \$ to support?



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1	Transportation	MVEST – constitutional amendment Roads and bridges funding	What needs transportation? Condition of hwys/rails? \$ to outstate? Did court approve DM&E through Rochester? Does gas tax stay local? Southern MN Transportation Coalition/ HWY 14 Coalition/ HWY 15 Collation Consider all modes (bus, rail, car, truck) State legislature to address properly (set priorities)
	Target investment dollars	At risk youth (city, county, non-profit, social services) Youth High risk offenders Living wage	Education How to set priorities? What is public opinion? Questions to consider – is it safe? What risk are you willing to take? Will it work/be effective? Will it produce concrete/stable results? How many people will be impacted?
	Information sharing	Media Get info from all parties – LISTEN County Congress – similar positions across the county getting together	How to increase awareness? Emphasis personal impact. What are the needs? What methods work best? Print /personal contact/web How to increase openness to issues/solutions? Education How to promote atmosphere of sharing? Contact opportunities. Public forums
	Education Funding	More state funding Less dependence on referendums Funding formula that respects declining enrollment	Grouped with impact of local education
	Energy issues	Locally: high cost & future stability of providers	Grouped with Electric Production and distribution
	Adequate funding for public services	Examine how it is collected and distributed	How to deal with less state \$? How to be more efficient? How can service providers collaborate? How do we share what's working? What is equitable? What are the services? How to create balance between \$ sources?



Specific Strategies - The starred items were identified as priority strategies by the participants.

Do more recruiting for Networking Brown County or Blandin.
* Identify housing types needed in specific areas and match with investors/funding sources.
Encourage the community to work collaboratively with police department..
More real life education provided to All ages re: drug use and crime (ie: meth user speaker)
* Create living wage jobs
Money for insurance and benefits
Promote home-based jobs/entrepreneurs
Put more resources in economic development (education, product development, sharing of ideas)
Establish networks for awareness on manufacturing growth and expansions to better know who and when to contact those "looking to move".
* Incentives to business and industry.
Determine areas of education needing enhancement to meet needs of industry. Communicate to educators.
* Market & promote rural lifestyles (quality of life, low crime, caring communicate, good work ethics, good schools, health care)
* Identify specific employers that have a need and match up a work force strengths in area.
Work on sustaining good environment – quality of life.
Intergovernmental cooperation
* Create committed economic development coalitions from one end of the county to the other – create a "development pact" between leadership.
Work together with local, county and state levels to give tax breaks/benefits to companies that expand into region.
Inform new businesses of financial support available.
Market excellent work ethic..
Support spin off industries of current businesses.
Provide on-site child care.
Seek high tech/high paying industries.
Pool sources to market job opportunities.
Spend \$ locally for improvements to draw people to community.
Find value-added methods for making new or better use of existing rural resources.
Offer job intern program
Have businesses offer incentives to youth returning to area
Market quality of life (parks, great place to raise a family; clean environment; proximity to excellent medical facilities in TC/Roc/Sioux F)
Employer support of family values
Invite college grads back
Build parks & recreation to promote community
What funds are available to support businesses?
Work for more state funding of education (mandated programs)
Public Forums
Joint task forces
Regional efforts
Promote college websites
Need to educate and get through to people that a good school district is a MUST.
Workers look at school district prior to coming to area.
Local education is affordable



Bridging Brown County

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Get info on our education center in media.

Continue to educate public on why schools are in trouble and what has already been done.

Identify where workers will be needed in order to influence career choices and education needed.

Fund all mandates given to schools.

Find grants to write more grants.

More volunteerism in schools by parents \$/or Sr citizens

Tour wind farms and other energy sources. (U of M, Carlton)

* Become comfortable with political system & know how to communicate with representatives.

Find leaders who will better protect outstate from attempts from urban legislators to create biased policies.

Communicate the problem and potential solutions.

Create a calling tree for issues so local rep's get the word ASAP.

Take tour to St Paul to meet with legislators face to face. Go to St Paul en masse.

* Educate all players (young, old, city, farmers, manufacturers) about issues/ solutions.

Promote state/national health insurance

Lobby state and fed for child protection \$.

Educate the public re: child protection services