

## 360 Group March/April 2010 Survey Results Summary

This document offers a brief summary of results from the 360 Group's online survey, which was available online and via fax for just over two weeks in early March, 2010. In order to squeeze the most out of responses, I calculated counts for responses to drop-down questions (Qs 1, 2, 9, 13) and some basic statistics – mean, median, mode, lowest quartile, and standard deviation – for Likert Scale questions (Qs 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10).

The responses below are broken into three basic categories:

- Counts – a profile of survey respondents and yes/no/dropdown responses
- Summary trends – based on aggregates of basic statistics for Likert Scale questions
- Open-Ended Responses – responses to “other” and Questions 11 and 12

### Counts

- Forty-one members responded as of 03.30.2010 (out of 91 = 45% response rate).
- Q1: Twenty-three respondents (56%) attended the meeting, eighteen (44%) did not.
- Q2: Respondents' organization types are broken down as follows:
  - Private business (6, 15%)
  - Economic Development (4, 10%)
  - Local Government (10, 24%)
  - Non-Profits (12, 29%)
  - Education (5, 12%)
  - Other (State, Pokagon, Etc. – 3, 7%)
- Q13: Seventeen respondents (41%) would definitely participate in the CEDS Committee, another seventeen (41%) might participate pending more information, and five (12%) are not interested in participating.
- Q9 (The 360 Group role): Respondents see the 360 Group taking the following form(s), ranked from most votes to fewest:
  - Thirty-Three (80%): A forum for regional collaboration – participants pool resources, make collective decisions on projects/initiatives affecting the region's economic health.
  - Twenty-Four (59%): A forum for ideas, data collection and compilation, report generation, and making recommendations.
  - Eleven (27%): A promotional organization working toward regional branding and marketing.
  - Three (7%) A [non-profit] organization, removed from the SWMPC, and focused on one of the above missions or something else.

### Summary Trends (An aggregate of basic statistics):

Responses were strongly positive on average for all the Likert Scale questions. Means, medians and modes all hovered near the top (between 4 and 5) for Qs 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8; and a bit lower (near 4) for Q 10 (“Please identify how likely it is that your organization would support each of the following . . .”), suggesting more hesitancy to strongly support specific initiatives.

- Qs 4, 5, and 6: The group most strongly agrees that of the CEDS categories, “K-12 and Workforce Education” is most important **to both the regional economy and the region's quality of life.**

Respondents also strongly responded that education is **the most important to their respective organizations**, though there's a larger deviation in responses here. Though all categories received relatively high marks across the three questions, the group feels the following CEDS categories are least important:

- Q4 (to the regional economy): Land Use – natural/built environment
- Q5 (to the region's quality of life): Partnerships/Collab. Between local entities
- Q6 (to their own organizations): Land Use – natural/built environment
- Q7: Presentation topics the group is most interested in include Collaboration and Entrepreneurship.
- Q8: Discussion topics the group is most interested in are:
  - How to collaborate!
  - How to create a robust, actionable CEDSs.
- Q10: Consensus was spotty re: support for specific 360 Group initiatives, though it was generally strong for all portions. Specifically:
  - The highest number of respondents (18, 44%) suggested they would strongly support an initiative to "Incorporate land use data (e.g., development suitability) into economic development planning process & possible regional land use plan." 29 (71%) ranked it a 4 or 5.
  - The lowest number of respondents (12, 29%) would strongly support a "Survey [of] economic development entities to explore options for productive changes in region's economic development system." However, 29 (71%) also ranked it a 4 or 5.

#### Open-Ended Responses:

##### QUESTION 7 (Other)

Suggestions for informational and educational presentations for future 360 Group meetings:

- How to influence collaboration with people who are used to doing everything on their own.
- f. establishing a clearinghouse for responding to site solicitations g. standardize site information data bases in the region h. lessons learned from those like Cornerstone and Berrien County EDC that would help Cass and Berrien entities and municipalities. i. AND... Then follow that with a session from the utility providers where they tell us what they learned and advise how all the municipalities working together could make their efforts more successful. j. inclusion of gas, electric, & internet data people at the meetings k. At each meeting time to discuss joint grant application possibilities and solicit partners for the applications. Could also be done via email alerts sent to all within the group.
- Sustainable business design & development, triple bottom line successes, resilient community discussions
- How does agriculture play a role in Southwest Michigan and through land planning and economic development? What is our focus to address issues as a region and locally related to the expansion of Ag business which can also be shared in part by tourism (ie. Farm markets, nurseries, flower shops, wineries)? What are local municipals doing to encourage agricultural incorporation into their plans for the next five years?
- workforce development opportunities

- Opportunities to develop people and organizational networks and increase knowledge of area amenities and assets.

#### QUESTION 8 (Other)

Suggestions for meaningful discussion topics between the members of the 360 Group:

- see # 7 as well. not sure where they all go.
- Create a holistic vision of economic development, manufacturing and sense of place.
- This effort cannot just be focused at Harbor Shores and Benton Harbor.

#### QUESTION 11

Please provide one sentence descriptions of one or two initiatives your organization is involved in that could contribute to or benefit from the 360 Group's ongoing efforts.

- Sponsorships 2. Provide leads (To Economic Development organizations) for companies looking to relocate into Michigan
- A forum for regional collaboration in the sense of its participants pooling resources and making collective decisions re: projects and initiatives affecting the region's economic health.
- Assuring that children are prepared to enter school ready to learn; assuring that youth graduate on time. Berrien Great Start. 2-1-1 - Comprehensive Information & Referral
- Bring together community members, faculty, business experts and students to engage students in community service-learning, offer training, research and advocacy for educational units, social/cultural units, new ventures, existing small businesses, and innovative technology companies.
- Developing "place". Making communities and regulations more entrepreneurial friendly Preserving, protecting environment.
- Developing a systematic approach to small business development. Encouraging the development of Small Business Centers within the existing infrastructure.
- Expanding regional thinking beyond the state line.
- Hollywood Road Corridor Project- This project is designed to manage and attract new investment to the Corridor leading to a world class health care and related office/retail/light industrial mixed use development.
- I'm not at liberty to discuss some of our economic development projects just yet. Suffice it to say that The Pokagon Band will have some positive effects on the local economy.
- Land Use - Community Gardens
- Land Use Data Base
- None known.
- Quality of customer service programming in the region. Retention and expansion of the existing business community.
- Site Selection Database. Business and other email database for information and promotional.
- small business development through education and networking opportunities; training in new economy initiatives.

- The creation of i-94 and Red Arrow highway Corridor developments.
- the development of Harbor Shores.
- The Inovateus Business Incubator with SCORE mentoring could advise needs of business startups and be receptive to knowledge gained by 360 to further business incubation.
- Training and education for workforce education and development. We are a resource for existing and new businesses to improve productivity and effectiveness.
- Training incumbent workers in new skills or technology Remediation of adults for future jobs/careers
- Walking and bike trails connected throughout the county.
- Water quality awareness in the Black River and Paw Paw River watersheds.
- We are currently working on putting a group together to facilitate a branding of the region in a more collaborative multi municipalities.
- We are keenly interested in the quality of K-12, adult education and post-secondary training opportunities
- We updated Master Plan and included a downtown market analysis from which we are developing a growing and recruiting strategy.
- Working to have cooperation between out various industries to KEEP work in the area rather than going outside to have them done.
- Michiana Partners (Bi-State) Regional meetings. Joint planning projects involving corridors and other economic development activities.
- transitioned shortly after meeting from Tfactor to Pokagon Band - unable to answer at this point
- (1) utilizing the Michigan New Jobs Training Program to attract new jobs to SW MI. (2) advocating the use of WorkKeys as a measure of the skilled workforce available in SW MI to new employers
- The Andrews University Airpark is being upgraded for increased safety to serve the community more effectively. The newly accredited engineering program at Andrews University could be utilized for community continuing education via evening courses.

#### QUESTION 12

The SWMPC believes that there is real value in fostering a culture of entrepreneurialism with the region's agricultural business sector. Do you agree? If so, how do you think the 360 Group can help foster this culture of entrepreneurialism to leverage greater economic success in agriculture?

- Yes. But you would need to educate your traditional farmers about the significance of a buy in into the process.
- Yes. Make it easy for new business startups. Establish incubators. Provide mentoring. Make sure local ordinances are entrepreneur friendly.
- By pulling together the region's agricultural stakeholders and coordinating those efforts.
- Good idea and could be a positive force but don't let MSU take over the program...make it a part of the process not the focus.
- Yes, develop a plan that helps coordinate the needed resources so small farms can thrive and compete against the larger farming companies.

- Complete agreement. The Niles DDA is pursuing the development of a community kitchen, which would serve the needs of the region. Agri-business in SWMI (both production and tourism) could benefit from such an endeavor. Grown...harvested...processed...and served in SWMI.
- Yes Examples from other communities Education about the basic components of entrepreneurship
- We should try the N. Carolina art trails concept. This set up trails (routes) from town to town highlighting arts and crafts entrepreneurs. Mark Thomas with the MSUE in Allegan/Barry County knows a lot about this. It would be perfect to learn from them so that people come to the region and move throughout the region. Stays are longer, benefits are more and it really paid off for the the entrepreneurs in NC. Talk about economic gardening!!!
- Create literature or programs in spanish if you don't already. Promote local food and farmer markets. Use resources like the "Can Do" kitchen to develop products for "market" or added value products.
- How does agriculture play a role in Southwest Michigan and through land planning and economic development? What is our focus to address issues as a region and locally related to the expansion of Ag business which can also be shared in part by tourism (ie. Farm markets, nurseries, flower shops, wineries)? What are local municipalities doing to encourage agricultural incorporation into their plans for the next five years?
- Yes, but not sure how to.
- Agree -- but needs to be done in concert with the many other initiatives in this area.
- n/a
- I do agree. Since ag is such a large entity in SW Michigan, SWAMPC should definitely be involved with a regional approach which has a consistent format to help ag entrepreneurs.
- Bringing entrepreneur resources to each community. A local facilitator.
- yes I agree. Assist with promotion of local farms and farm markets, assist in finding funding for small farm start up funds, promote MSU Extension and other farm organization training programs. Promote programs to preserve ag lands.
- By bringing state/national/international resources to strengthen the local communities, businesses.
- Absolutely, healthy eating is integral to reduction in our obesity issues
- How do we expand processing here and less elsewhere? What innovation do we have that can be expanded into another business?
- Emphatically yes. Collaborate with schools, MSU extension, FFA, county fairs, 4H, et al to develop educational series directed at young people. Develop support mechanisms, most likely volunteer mentors in specific field much like the retired engineers, and also include State of Michigan Technology and Growth something.
- Partner with MSU Ag Product Center Provide educational entrepreneurship programs that focus on the Ag industry
- Yes- I don't know how but we need to all work together and find a way. Other parts of the country have done similar things.
- Serve as a catalyst of entrepreneurialism and give Calli Berg a call. We are planning on working with the JA program and Calli is spearheading our economic gardening of the minds of our youth.
- Yes. 360 Group could help identify Ag stakeholders, look into developing Ag co-ops or Ag partnerships among small scale Ag producers.

- Yes I would hope so.
- I believe one way to do this is by organizational partnership to establish grants, scholarship and seminars for local small businesses and entrepreneurs in the area. We are currently doing this as a first time attempt through our "Exposing Greatness" South County Business Expo.
- Yes, I agree. This can be an excellent networking opportunity as well as a planning entity.
- Agree that entrepreneurship should be promoted across all industry sectors not just in ag. There is a school of thought that practitioners need to move away from being sector specific and from targeting.
- Knowing more about it would be the best first step for me. As important as it is, ag has not become central to my activities yet.
- Absolutely. The ties between ED and Agriculture are the weakest of all ties that ED has in Michigan.
- I agree. We have a strong entrepreneurialism focus in our region in agriculture already but there needs to be a greater committment [sic] to work together to promote each other and the area as a whole.
- (1) leverage local, regional and national resources on behalf of budding entrepreneurs; intro to investors
- There must be open and supportive communication between entrepreneurs, higher education, and community planners.