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REGIONS AND THE MEDIA Roundtable Discussion

Civic Entrepreneur Summit 2000
Hosted by California Center for Regional Leadership
September 17, 2000

Topics:

- Introduction: Newspapers as Regional Stewards
- The Role of Publisher as Civic Leader
- Creating the Concept of a Region
- Telling the Regional Story
- Working with the Media: Perspectives from a Regional Steward

Panelists:

Christian Anderson, publisher of the Orange County Register. He is a former president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, and during a recent speech to the group, he spoke of the need for newspapers to be stewards for their communities. He will give an introduction to the panel discussion.

Jay Harris, chairman and publisher of the San Jose Mercury News. He is currently the chair of the Bay Area Council and has been on the board of the Joint Venture: Silicon Valley, acting as co-chair of the Silicon Valley 2010 Vision. He is going to talk about the role a publisher can play within a region.

Rob Elder, editorial page editor of the Mercury News, has been involved in the Mercury News for 23 years. Rob is going to talk to us about how a paper like the Mercury News looks at a region. What is a region? How does it think about a region?

David Yarnold, the executive editor of the Mercury News, is going to give us perspective about what do you put on the front page? What do you choose and how do you put things together?

Becky Morgan, former president and CEO of Joint Ventures Silicon Valley, is now president of the Morgan Family Foundation. Becky is going to give us the regional perspective. How do you look at it from the standpoint of a collaborative regional initiative? Becky is also one of the founders and sponsors of the new national Alliance for Regional Stewardship. This is a network of twenty regions around the country and one of their big topics nationally is the media and how you work with them.

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INTRODUCTION: NEWSPAPERS AS REGIONAL STEWARDS
Christian Anderson, Publisher, Orange County Register

I want to talk today about the role of newspapers and their connection with the community. I want to talk about newspapers as stewards. *Stewards of their communities*. Newspapers, more than ever before, have an opportunity and, in fact, an obligation to be the place where communities should in fact come together to talk about it's past and about it's present and I think most importantly about it's future. It ought to be a place where a community reflects on itself as well as thinking about where it's headed.

Newspapers have historically been leaders in establishing community agendas. I don't think we ought to apologize for that. In fact, I think we have a role to extend that further. There is an ongoing debate in our business about the role of newspapers in their regions. Our weekly industry magazine, Editor and Publisher, has as it's cover boy last week, Jay Harris along with his boss, Tony Ridder, the CEO of Knight Ridder. And part of the story was a discussion of, and I think, Jay, it would be safe to say an implied criticism of Jay's role in leadership in the Silicon Valley.

I found similar criticism when I was the publisher and president of our sister newspaper in Colorado Springs. I was there from 1994 through the end of 1998, and I remember a session that I was in with a group of community leaders who had this private little breakfast meeting once a month. I was invited to it because I was chair of the Greater Colorado Springs Economic Development Corporation. I was told by one person there that I wasn't welcome in that setting because they were afraid that they couldn't have a robust conversation about where the community was headed without my putting it into the newspaper. And I said to them that I really had two choices: One is to sit idly by and not participate in the discussion about where a community is headed, the other is to be involved and I wouldn't hesitate for a second to choose the latter because I think it is important for leaders of a newspaper, and for the newspaper itself, to be involved in that undertaking.

I think that it helps a little bit for us to contemplate, for a moment or two, the lives of the people we are trying to serve in our regions. How can we help them make sense of complicated lives? How can we help them make sense of entwined government private initiatives that are about where a region is headed? How can we help them become involved, rather than simply sitting on the sidelines? And that is what I talk about when I say the right thing is to be leaders and the right thing is to help people understand these things. The right thing is for us to be stewards in our region. It's vital to a community success to have people involved in the civic life of those communities. It's vital to our future because it is about our role in building and nurturing communities, which is what I think newspapers have as a core competency.

I want to share with you just to sort of wrap up here this morning a quote that I shared last April that I believe in fully, as it relates to newspapers, and I think, as it relates to the work that you all do too. It's from the author Will Durant, "Civilization is a stream with banks. The stream is sometimes filled with blood from people killing, stealing, shouting and doing the things historians usually record. While on the banks, unnoticed people build homes, make love, raise children, sing songs, write poetry and even whittle statues. The story of civilization is the story of what happened on the banks. Historians are pessimists because they ignored the banks for the river." I submit that we all have a role here today to reflect on what's happening on the banks. To bring more people into life together. To see what we can in fact do to build and nurture communities however we want to define that word. We need to know how people are making decisions and how we can help them make decisions with the information we provide them, but also to bring together leaders in any region to think about the kinds of things that we ought to be talking about – the things we ought to be sharing, the agenda that a community ought to have and it ought to be a rich, full, inclusive agenda. That, to me, is the role of a newspaper in the 21st century.

THE ROLE OF PUBLISHER AS CIVIC LEADER
Jay Harris, Publisher, San Jose Mercury News

The thing that I would like to talk about is my role as an active and admittedly, as Chris notes, an unabashedly active leader in the civic life of the Bay Area. Two of the focal points of my activities are Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network and the Bay Area Council. I was on the Joint Venture Board for two terms, six years, and I had the good fortune of chairing its vision leadership project, which was the Silicon Valley region's first serious attempt recently at laying out a vision of where we wanted to go and some principles that might guide us along the way. currently, I serve as the chairman of the board of the Bay Area Council, which is a 50 year old plus organization which is the CEO led public policy group in the Bay Area.

The Silicon Valley 2010 Experience: Regional Challenges Cross Issues and Boundaries

I am increasingly of the opinion that, in the Bay Area, while we have done a very good job of diagnosing the root causes of the challenges that face the region, we have been far less successful at identifying and implementing effective long term remedies. To set the stage for this, let me go back quickly to the 2010 report which was released two years ago. Let me give you a few lines from that report.

One of the observations was this: Preserving our quality of life in the fact of rapid change. Bridging the gap between the requirements in the changing economy and the skills of many residents. Reversing the disturbing trend towards greater inequality. These challenges and more will test our regions ability to sustain its success.

Second point from the report: As the Silicon Valley economy has grown, so has the geographic range of its workforce and impact and the regions impact on the development of surrounding areas. People who work in Silicon Valley increasingly live in outlying regions as far as 100 miles from the heart of Silicon Valley.

And finally this observation: Silicon Valley's destiny is intertwined with that of the Bay Area region. Silicon Valley needs to act responsibly so that it can preserve the positive impacts it has on the Bay Area region and beyond, while minimizing the negative.

Now one thing that became clear, in the one year visioning study, to me and my colleagues was that none of our major challenges stood alone. Housing, transportation, education, social equity, all of these were related one to the other. And potential solutions to these challenges, more importantly, cut across existing governmental boundaries, both city and county and across the responsibilities of both regional and state agencies. These observations led the 2010 Vision Leadership team to recommend as a strategic direction, regional stewardship to develop shared solutions.

Two years hence, I would tell you that while we have made progress on a number of the specifics, I would say on that overreaching goal of working collaboratively across the whole of the region, of everybody coming together, in some ways we were either enormously hopefully or enormously naive and probably a combination of both. And as I have worked on that with many of the good people in this room over the last two years, I've come to appreciate the difficulty of doing it. And I think, as you'll hear, the difficulty of covering it.

Bay Area Council Initiatives: Examples of Regional Collaboration

For the last two years, I've been working very closely with the Bay Area Council. And I'm pleased to be here with the various members of the leadership team for the Bay Area Alliance. But one of the things that we've found at the Council, as we have worked on these problems, is that collaboration among very

diverse stakeholders is very, very difficult and that the issues in achieving that are enormously complex. It takes a lot of time and dedication to reach agreement, and often it is difficult to convey to the media the complexity of both the issues and the necessity for dealing with them.

We are making progress in specific projects and there are three that I'm particularly proud of. One is the Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development, where we have engaged a spectrum of leaders from the three E's. [Economy, Environment, Equity] We have, through this Alliance for Sustainable Development, just completed a draft compact for a sustainable Bay Area, which we will be circulating to government leaders throughout the region and to other players, and hope to release the final compact by the middle of next year. So that is one important initiative on sustainable development and it is region-wide.

The second, which I am both professionally and personally engaged, is our Community Capital Investment Initiative. And this brings the business sector, particularly major funders together to try, in a way that makes business sense, to have sustained and substantial reinvestment in poor neighborhoods and in brown field areas, so that we really can accomplish smart growth, and do it in a way that provides market returns.

And finally, I would point to very quickly to the Bay Area Regional Visibility Footprint Project, which has a long title but speaks again to the need to have for the region as a whole, a sense of where various things are going to get done. Where will residential development occur? Where will commercial business development occur? How will these things that are relate to one another. So on an episodic basis good work is going on.

Ongoing Challenges to Regional Stewardship

And I want to conclude with a few observations and then turn it over to Rob. The first is that one of the things that worries me greatly, as I have looked at these areas and these issues over the last few years, is that I am increasingly concerned that government no longer leads to the extent that it should as a collaboration. Indeed, I must tell you that I am worried about the responsibility and responsiveness, generally, of government in a time of quickened change. I think that, too frequently, people representing the business sector or the independent sector are actually ahead of government in both our identification of problems and the move to solutions. And I think that the slowness in government actually slows down our efforts.

The second real issue that I would think about and I worry about is this: that as I've look at what we are trying to do in the Bay Area, it is increasingly problematic to me that no government body has either a mandate or geographic jurisdiction that is a fit with our problems or with the set of potential solutions. And I do think that there is a limit effectively to how much we can accomplish, and can we accomplish it as quickly as we need to, without some readjustment of governance in our regional area.

And finally, on governance, I would say that I am concluding that we really do need, at this juncture, to look at new models of governance, ones that involve business, government and the independent sector that is capable of producing timely action. I would say that one of the things that we have before us today is a need for governance structures, not necessarily government, but governance structures that are adequate to the exigencies of our regions.

I think this is our great regional challenge today and I think, as I turn it over to my colleagues, that it is one of the dilemmas in the coverage issue that we will talk about today. And so I would leave you with the thought that this is something that we are passionate about figuring out how to do. I very much agree with my friend Chris Anderson that we need to be involved as agenda setters. As stewards of our community, along with the members of our community, and now I will turn it over to two of the best pros in the business to tell you how they are going about that job. Thank you very much.

CREATING THE CONCEPT OF REGION

Rob Elder, Editorial Page Editor, San Jose Mercury News

Defining the Region

I want to talk about the idea of a region, the concept of a region. My contention to you is that unlike a table or a podium or a window, a region is not something that is just there. A rose is a rose is a rose, but a region is not a region is a region. A region is a concept. It's an idea. And it's not necessarily synonymous with geographical places, although geographical places often give their names to regions. And newspapers often help name them that way—the Valley, the Peninsula, the paper in Santa Rosa, the Press Democrat has been very ambitious in staking out a region in which they call the Redwood Empire. So the media help define these sort of vaguely bounded places that we all regions.

Now, where we live and work is historically called the San Francisco Bay Area and it gets its name from a geographic feature, the San Francisco Bay. Before that, it was designated as nine counties by the Bay Area Council. The interesting thing about this as a region is that it is not necessarily the most functional way to get at a lot of things that we need to get at. For example, in this San Francisco Bay Area region are Silicon Valley and the Napa Valley. Now I would submit to you that about all those two places have in common is that we make money to buy their wine. But except for that, they are in almost every way you can think of very, very different places with different problems, different potentials. And yet we are historically thought of as being in the same region. Whereas the historic definition does not put San Jose and Santa Cruz in the same region even, though we do share a lot of problems and a lot of possibilities.

So my point is that a region, like a community does not exist in any workable way until someone defines it, names it, identifies it's stake holders and begins to codify their relationships. Now let me say that again because it is a fairly complex thought and it is that a region for functional purposes doesn't really exist until you name it, define it and work out how the members of it are going to get along with each other. I've been writing about regionalism at the San Jose Mercury News for almost a quarter of a century. And during that time the region I talk about has in my own mind gone from being Santa Clara county to being the nine county Bay Area to being something that Joint Venture: Silicon Valley redefined as a place that was united by the high tech industry, which stretches all the way from Scott's Valley way up into San Mateo County and is really different from the traditional notion of the region. And it is still changing. It changes all the time. There is no there in a permanent way. And part of our job, I think, is to be aware of that and tell you about that.

Regions Share Common Problems and Common Solutions

Now in trying to write about this, I've come to my own rough definition of a region. And I think a region, for my purposes as a journalist, is a place whose people share common problems and potential but can't solve the problems or realize the potential unless they work together. The problem about working together is as Jay said that a region usually doesn't fit the governmental jurisdictional boundaries where governmental power is exercised.

Now if David will bring up my first slide it will have to do with BART. Now BART is the Bay Area Rapid Transit system. It presently serves three counties and a little bit of a fourth one. There is a lot of debate about it coming into our county, Santa Clara county, and going to San Jose. And if it does that, what we mean by the region will change. Super-structure, transit, highways, waterways, whatever can define a region as they are built and that is why I brought a slide about BART, because if we have BART, we will be sharing financial responsibilities with other places that we don't think of as very close to us. So a region, in that sense, will be defined by obligations and by the ability to get somewhere else quickly.

The Role of Newspapers

So what can newspapers do for regions? Well to begin with we have a problem because, like government, our readership areas may not be often or not coterminous with the regions that organizations like yours like to define and work with. But whether they are they aren't I think we have a responsibility to define what our functional regions and write about them and also report the vision of those who see the regions differently from the way we do. And this would at times include some of you.

There is never a shortage of people who would be glad to define the region and label it in a way that serves their interest. Politicians do it. Mayors, city councils, county supervisors, state legislators, congress people. They are all very happy to define a region as the area where they have influence. Where they can get elected. Well, newspapers do the same thing. We're happy to define a region as our market. So do business groups like the Bay Area Council and the Silicon Valley Manufacturing Group. Often they are better organized than some of the non-business civic organizations that some of you represent. And as Jay suggested, I think, where government is weak, some of these business-backed or business including regional organizations are actually more out in front with leadership than government is.

I think it's our job not to be co-opted as a newspaper by anybody else's vision except our own. I think that we have got to stand independently to define what we call news, to have what we see as the region, and to see the players in a way that we see them. That includes lots of stakeholders who are not part of the power structure and we have an obligation to look at that. Who do we identify as leaders? What becomes of the stakeholders who don't have any clout right now?

So what is the practical application of that? Well, one I think is that we listen not to just well-known organization like the California Business Roundtable, but also to newer, not so well-known organizations like Action Paro Valley. Newspapers need also to see across artificial boundaries like the county lines and city limits that officially put Monterey and Santa Cruz and San Bonito counties in one region, and Silicon Valley in another. Is Silicon Valley's prosperity going to be the ruination of the counties just south of us? Are our jobs going to drive up their housing prices to the point that we end up paving some of the richest farmland in the world in order to have room for people who work in Silicon Valley to live? Good question. To get at that question we had to break through all of the old notions about what the regions are. Those counties are members of something that's got a whole different organization from the one that we belong to, which is the Association of Bay Area Governments. Never until now have people really begun to think about these as folks who've got to work together. We were one community, they were another.

Now if we are causing problems for them, I would submit to you that we've got to start thinking about that as a region. And part of the newspaper's job is to help people work that out. We haven't gotten very far with it but we made a start. We began talking across those line and identifying things that we have in common, and I think you need to be able to expect that of your newspapers – that we just don't just define the problems in the old terms. I would say a newspaper needs to understand what you are talking about and what you are trying to do. It needs to report on it. It needs to welcome debate about it. It needs to use it's editorial voice to help lead it.

TELLING THE REGIONAL STORY

David Yarnold, Executive Editor, San Jose Mercury News

The Master Narrative

I would like to talk with you about how the storytellers in the newsroom can shape a region's sense of itself. It is my belief that a newspaper can best serve its community and help it define shared concerns through a focused lens. It's his belief, and mine, that nearly every community has two distinguishing traits that form the pillars of a local identity. Master narrative is an appropriate way of describing the stories that define a community, and invariably a region.

In Silicon Valley, we've identified two master narratives for the Mercury News. The story of technology, its globalization and its impact on our lives, and the changing demographics that are reshaping the place where we live. In fact we acknowledge this master narrative in our editorial mission statement everyday on page 2A and these are the salient sentences. I'll read this for those of you in the back. "Two stories are central to our mission. The impact of technology and the changing demographic landscape of America. These two stories create powerful connections between our community and others both domestic and international."

Identifying a master narrative is merely the first step though. I would say it's the easy part but if it was easy, more newspapers would have done it. Chris Anderson's Register is an example of a newspaper that has made the hard choices required to focus its coverage. While some newspapers recognize the big stories unfolding around them, many newsroom leaders fail to boldly reallocate their people and expenses to cover their stories, choosing instead to follow the traditional path of covering everything about an inch deep. Unfortunately that approach seldom uncovers or explains the rich ties that bind us as citizens of distinct regions. And in a state as economically and culturally diverse as California, that is a tragedy.

In San Jose, we ride two powerhouse stories everyday. The ones that we've discussed, technology and diversity and they converge at the ambition that had come to characterize the Valley. Everything from our coverage teams, our beat structure, the missions of our various sections to our internal reward system, all point toward telling those two marvelous stories from many perspectives. And while they are ends in themselves, they are also gateways. They are gateways to issues like education, growth and environmental quality.

Telling the Story of Silicon Valley

So let me share with you a little bit about how the Mercury News's pages tell the story of the Valley. First topic I want to talk about is technology and its social implications. We are not shy about our mission. As you can see on "A day when the world changed," we reflected that in a dramatic way and I think that quote captures the essence of that story. It was AOL's purchase of Time Warner. We did a three-part project on Intel, its practices, its success story and its personality – a good critical analysis – the day after Andy Grove resigned. We are not celebratory. It is not our job to applaud technology. It is our job to be thoughtful, caring critics. We celebrate the people who deserve celebrating. I think that is an important role for newspapers to acknowledge role models. To acknowledge people who have gained success through their own measures. But we also take a good hard look at the implications of wealth and power and I will show you more of that.

So let me talk a little bit about some of the challenges. We all know about traffic. We traveled with a group of commuters who arise at 4 in the morning to get to work at 7 o'clock in Silicon Valley. And when Cisco proposed developing the last major piece of open space in San Jose, we were prepared with a package of no less than seven stories exploring the issue. Because we believe that on major issues like

growth and the intersection of technology and growth, there are so many angles to be explored that we do that. Getting back to this notion of a master narrative, we will do that to the exclusion of other stories on that day.

When I talk about this master narrative in defining stories, one of the points I want to make is that newspaper I think too often make too many compromises. That we try to present a menu of stories on our front pages and throughout our newspapers and that is the proper thing to do. But as a result of that, we lack voice and we lack emphasis all too often. So one of the hallmarks of the Mercury News is that we make a very clear statement about what we think the issue of the day is.

The question that I would ask you, do you see the diversity of your communities in your newspaper? Is there context? I want to get back to that I think the great strength that a newspaper has is that it can humanize the issues that we concern ourselves with. You deal with policy. You deal with issues and at the root of it all obviously is people. We can put human faces to those issues.

Diversity as a Journalism Value

Let me talk a little bit about diversity. For three years in a row I have chaired the Diversity Committee for the Associated Press Managing Editors Association. It's one of two major editors associations and for three years in a row, our committee has come up with the exact same finding: to the extent that communities of color see themselves in context in their newspapers, they view their newspapers as authoritative. And the flip side is true too. Now what do I mean by context? I mean being in diverse communities in a way that allows you to see role models. To see successes. To see neighborhood issues. To see families. To see religions. To see the things that people come together around, as opposed to dropping in when there is a gang shooting. I mean imagine your communities and some of you actually have this experience. But imagine being in a community that is in the newspaper usually only when crime is involved or poverty. It is not a very complete picture. I would submit and this is also in our page 2 mission statement. A newspaper cannot not be fundamentally accurate, can't be accurate unless it reflects the diversity of it's community. That raises diversity to the level of a core journalism value.

This is a project we did about becoming a minority-majority community. We humanized this story by focusing on five kids in the same class at a high school in the West Valley. And we took each of these kids for their ethnic background and we explored their families, their family's history, and how they are all wrestling with the same issues in Silicon Valley. We did this because the population of Silicon Valley and of much of California foreshadows where the United States will be in not very long. This story broke some pretty interesting ground. It talks not only about groups getting along but it talked about groups re-segregating.

This may be my favorite page of the last year because it embodies everything that I find rich about covering Silicon Valley. It's a page that two stories happened this day. One, a Vietnamese entrepreneur's IPO hit the market. Instant \$25 million income for this fellow. On the same day, the closing of the Del Monty canning plant, which is a direct result of the Valley's past full of orchards. And so we connected the two stories and the headline says, "As the final harvest ends, a tech fortune begins."

So I hope that by showing you these pictures, you can get a sense of how a newspaper can put that by arriving at a master narrative, a newspaper can put an unmistakable and intentional stamp on a region's identity. Thank you.

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA: PERSPECTIVES FROM A REGIONAL STEWARD
Becky Morgan, President, Morgan Family Foundation

I thought I would first start before Joint Venture Silicon Valley in my 18 years as an elected official which was good preparation for working with the media once I got to Joint Venture. And I think, first and foremost, I never saw reporters and newspaper media people other than as human beings trying to make a living. Now if you take the approach that these are human beings trying to make a living, you get a long way. And I was blessed over 18 years to be treated pretty well.

Probably going back to the 70's when I had my first elected office as a school board member, and I wasn't happy about how I was covered by a newspaper that is no longer in existence, I wrote an awful letter to the editor. And was wise enough to take it to the superintendent who was wise enough to remind me of that old adage that you don't argue with people who by their ink by the barrel. And I didn't send the letter because I would only arouse those people who hadn't read the article to begin with. Better to spend your energy moving forward and improving your relationships with the reports.

I had a second very telling experience in my first year in Sacramento as a Senator. I had come out of an election where the company that my husband happened to run had some toxic problems and that was the hot issues of 1984. The reporter wanted to come and say that I had a conflict of interest by serving on the toxic's committee in Sacramento and that people should really watch out for me because of all the bad things that my husband was doing, to which I had no control. But that was besides the point. And we spent about half an hour talking. I answered all of his questions as best as I could. I noticed as he was leaving my office that he had on a wedding ring. So I looked him in the eye as he was leaving and said, "This is a man that leads his company that I have been in love with and married to for 30 years. He is a fine human being and he is doing everything possible to clean up the damage that was done prior to him becoming the head of the company." That story never ran.

I do believe that there is a human element to most of the people in the media industry and they want to hear you, to be forthright, to be honest and to be direct. And I just share those two little stories as my experience of basically getting along with the media pretty well over the years. Because it is terribly important in regional collaborative to work well with the media. After all, they do sway opinions. Positive coverage makes fund-raising and the attraction of volunteers much, much easier and negative coverage, of course, can do the reverse.

I would share that it is important to know the roles. You have heard publisher, editor and executive editor here this morning. It took me a few years, I will admit, to really understand the roles. And they are different in different newspapers, but knowing the newspapers with whom you are working, that the publisher at least in the Mercury News as I have come to understand it, is more the business person. It is very important as we work with the media that we know the roles that people in the media play. Ask what, as regional leaders or leaders of regional collaborative, we should do. I think that is one thing. Know the roles and be honest, forthright and in regular contact. To only go to the media when you think you have a hot story is not going to get you an article or coverage in most cases.

We found very much at Joint Venture, and I think you would also, that the media wants to report on results. They are not interested in how many meetings an organization has held. They rarely will even report on a activity. We got their attention once when we got CEOs on a yellow school bus to talk about the work that we were doing in education. There needs to be a hook. There needs to be results, as when we had twenty-nine jurisdictions that unified their building codes. That had never happened before. That is a story and it is our one story that we made front page with.

I was always a little concerned, and I will say it in front of the Mercury, that we regularly made front page of the business section, we never quite got to the point of making front page of the Mercury itself. That was great in letting the business community know what we were doing because they provided 85% of our budget. On the other hand, it was hard to get the general public to understand what we were doing and to bring in the volunteers and to build the credibility of the organization trying to make a difference in Silicon Valley.

On the regional issue, whether you call it community as Chris did, regions as we did and the Mercury has talked about, I understand what Rob is saying about in a newspaper's need to remain independent. I also think it's important for each regional collaborative to define the region as they see it. It won't always, but if the media doesn't understand what you mean by North Coast or Silicon Valley or East Bay, they are not going to report on it as effectively. And so, first and foremost, we try to define our region. In our case it was where high tech was located in 1993. Now that is quite different today. We suggest that you have to change. We really need to carve our regions that have a commonality that is other than geography. And I think that for all of you here representing 18 regions to make sure you are doing that so that it is clear to the media.

In closing, I would comment on what I think is fair to expect from the media. They say hopefully a partnership, but knowing that the media has an obligation to always be objective. And we hope objective without being hostile. They have an obligation to be skeptical, we hope without being cynical. And in working together, hopefully you can develop those relationships. I'm encouraged that we are seeing more and more newspapers interested in what's going on in the region. They will be interested in the quality of the leadership. They will be interested in the successes and yes, in the failures. But if you have learned from those failures, it's been my experience that the media is less critical than if they feel you haven't learned from those experiences.

It is encouraging when the newspaper in any region is reporting what those of use that have worked in the regional collaboratives are trying to do. I think it's the only way we are going to look at new governance models, look at going to need from business, from government, from non profits and just civic leaders, to come together to change the face of this state and Doug and I believe, along with others the nation, as we move into our Alliance for Regional Stewardship. Make it a positive relationship if you can.
