

Footnotes...

THIRD QUARTER 2008

Discussion flows at first Policy in a Pub

Survey results on government structure released

On August 18, the Forum stirred things up by holding its first members-only event – an after-work gathering billed as *Policy in a Pub* at the Milwaukee Ale House – during which it released the findings of its Milwaukee County resident survey on county government structure.

“We wanted to get our members together in a more informal and relaxed setting,” said Forum President Rob

Henken. “At the same time, we wanted to provide some ‘meat’ to go along with the drinks and hors d’oeuvres. We used the event as an opportunity to release the results of our survey on Milwaukee County government structure.”

Overall, the survey revealed that Milwaukee County residents have a favorable view of county government and the services it provides. Nevertheless, a large majority

thought some restructuring is needed. African-Americans, as well as low-income respondents, were more negative about the county and a higher proportion supported restructuring.

Survey respondents gave high ratings to the zoo, airport, sheriff’s department, and parks, but low ratings to



Forum President Rob Henken (on stage), along with Forum Research Director Anneliese Dickman, summarized the findings of the Forum’s survey on Milwaukee County government for the 125 members who attended what was called *Policy in a Pub*.

county services involving mental health, food stamp/Medicaid eligibility, and long-term care for the elderly and disabled.

Less than 20 percent of respondents said county government structure is fine as is; one-third said it needs major restructuring, while 50 percent supported minor restructuring.

About half of the respondents were open to governance alternatives, including a regional parks authority, state takeover of social services, and creation of a governor-appointed fiscal oversight board. Almost two-thirds supported a regional transit authority.

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Footnotes (published quarterly)

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Policy in a Pub, from previous page

More than 50 percent felt there were too many layers of local government. Close to 75 percent said it doesn't matter which level of government provides critical services, like fire, police, and social services, as long as they are provided efficiently.

Lastly, more than 40 percent of respondents were unsure what county government does; two-thirds didn't know the name of their county supervisor.



Forum Senior Researcher Ryan Horton (left) has a lively discussion with Forum members Charles Webb, of CH2M Hill (center), and Dennis Krakau, of Associated Bank, at the Forum's first members-only event.

Workforce funding needs to be broadened

Report analyzes organization of job training programs

Workforce development is being hampered by a too heavy reliance on federal funding, according to a Forum report, "Wisconsin's Workforce Development System." In addition, the report suggested that the myriad job training programs are not organized as effectively as they could be.

"Securing more sources of and greater flexibility in funding will likely be necessary to meet training demand," said Ryan Horton, Forum senior researcher and author of the report, which was funded by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development and Chicago-based The Joyce Foundation. "Now, Wisconsin relies on the federal government for 83 percent of its workforce development funding. From 1985 to 2008, there has been a 39 percent decrease in federal funding for these programs, which should indicate to officials the need to grow the state's share of investment."

In addition to greater funding from the state, Horton said a greater share may need to come from private employers and foundations.

With so much reliance on federal funding, which is generally targeted at narrowly defined populations and tends to have more strings attached, the report said it's probably more difficult to organize and coordinate training programs as effectively as possible.

"The current workforce development system is fragmented," Horton said. The report, which identified \$339 million in 2008 spending on employment and training, said the money will be funneled through six federal agencies, eight state administrative departments, and 36 programs. "A question that may need further study is the degree to which current programs could be consolidated under fewer departments to achieve perhaps improved delivery," he said.

In the next 20 years, demands for job training are expected to increase because of demographic and economic shifts.

"Wisconsin needs to build up the supply and skills of its workforce because the labor force is anticipated to show a decline in the number of participants from retiring baby boomers," Horton said.

According to the Wisconsin Department of Administration, the working age population will peak in 2015 at 3.7 million and then drop to 3.63 million by 2030.

The report and accompanying flow chart of how the state's programs are organized and funded can be found on the Forum's Web site at www.publicpolicyforum.org. For a hard copy of the flow chart which cannot easily be printed from the Web site, contact the Forum at 414-276-8240 or rhorton@publicpolicyforum.org.



As a follow up to the report, the Forum held a Viewpoint on workforce training efforts on September 29. Panelists included (seated, left to right) Roberta Gassman, secretary, Wisconsin Dept. of Workforce Development; Phil Neuenfeldt, secretary/treasurer, Wisconsin State AFL-CIO; and Tim Sullivan, CEO, Bucyrus Int'l. Dan Bader (standing), chairman, Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board, moderated the discussion. About 175 attended the event.

New category expected to strengthen Forum board

To help make room for and develop new board members, the Forum has revised its by-laws to create a trustee emeritus classification.

"Any board member who has served for three terms or longer has the option of becoming a trustee emeritus," said Forum President Rob Henken. "We value our long-term trustees and want to retain them. At the same time, we want to be able to bring on new trustees to open the Forum to new perspectives. As a result, we created this category."

The only difference between a trustee and trustee emeritus is that the latter does not have a vote. Currently, there are 67 board trustees. The bylaws make provision for 60. Consequently, seven longtime trustees have opted to become emeriti, including Bill Adams, Jeff Browne, Richard Dieffenbach, Dave Mauer, Dave Meissner, Art Smith, and Doug MacNeil.

Justice council relies on Forum research

While the Community Justice Council deliberates on ways of solving problems confronting Milwaukee's justice system, the Forum has been praised by Milwaukee County's chief judge, district attorney, and county executive for its work in assisting the Council to carry out its mission.

"We certainly are grateful for the recognition," says Forum President Rob Henken, "but our end goal is to help the Council realize its potential in making the justice system more efficient and cost-effective. If we can do that, the entire community benefits."

The Council's mission is to create a more coordinated, intergovernmental approach to solving system problems.

Recently, the Forum completed an analysis of global positioning satellite (GPS) technology for monitoring offenders on work release. Should the Council go ahead with a pilot GPS program, the Forum will design the evaluation of that pilot.

In addition, the Forum advised the Council to consider a budget initiative to implement universal screening/risk assessment of those entering the criminal justice system. And the county executive endorsed the recommendation by including it in his 2009 budget. The practice is widely used in other cities to reduce pre-trial incarceration days, increase diversions, and effectively and safely manage Milwaukee County's corrections population.

First fellow takes on tax increment financing

The first Norman N. Gill Civic Engagement Fellowship fellow has joined the Forum.

John Kovari, currently a graduate research assistant at the Center for Urban Initiatives and Research (CUIR) at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, will spend two days a week at the Forum for the next nine months studying the impact of tax increment financing (TIF) on property value growth in Wisconsin.

Kovari has a bachelor's degree in political science and history and a master's in political science, both from Marquette University. Prior to joining the CUIR, he was the executive director of the Milwaukee Alliance, a legislative assistant to city of Milwaukee Alderman Michael Murphy, and development associate at Milwaukee's Betty Brinn Children's Museum.

The Fellowship, which was created by a grant from the family of the late Norman N. Gill, will be awarded annually. Gill served as executive director of the Forum from 1945 to 1984. He died in 2005.

New members (since July 1, 2008)

Disability Rights Wisconsin	Joy Tapper
Racine County	Village of West Milwaukee
Greater Milwaukee Literacy Coalition	

Milwaukee County government: Here today, gone tomorrow?

In the wake of recent calls for the abolishment of Milwaukee County government, the Forum gathered together six former county government officials to discuss the future of Milwaukee County government at a Viewpoint on July 23. While none of the panelists called for the outright elimination of county government, most urged better and stronger county leadership; consolidation of departments and services within county government; greater efficiency in the delivery of services; an increase in state funding for services mandated by the state, e.g., the courts; and the possible consolidation or elimination of local municipal governments.

Panelists included Richard Cox, former superintendent, Milwaukee House of Correction; Dan Finley, former Waukesha County Executive; Ralph Hollmon, former director, Milwaukee County Human Services; Chas. Mulcahy, former supervisor, Milwaukee County Board; Linda Seemeyer, former director, Milwaukee County Administrative Services; and Michael Skwierawski, former chief judge, Milwaukee County. Mike Gousha, of Marquette University and WISN-TV, moderated the discussion.

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1) Making change in county government when "the bottom line is control" is difficult, said Dan Finley (holding microphone), president/CEO, Milwaukee Public Museum. (Left to right: Michael Skwierawski, Ralph Hollmon, Finley, and Richard Cox.); **2)** Linda Seemeyer, director, Walworth County Department of Health and Human Services, said one of the obstacles to consolidation in county government is the "desire to protect county union jobs." On her left is Skwierawski; to the right is Chas. Mulcahy; **3)** Mulcahy listened intently as Ralph Hollmon, president/CEO, The Milwaukee Urban League, said the county needs to "accelerate its decisionmaking" to be more effective and eliminate the perception that things move too slowly.

Forum undergoes staff changes

Senior Researcher Ryan Horton has announced he will be leaving the Forum in December and moving to Denmark. Not Denmark, Wisconsin, but Denmark, the country. Horton has been with the Forum since August 2004, specializing in economic development issues, like income migration and workforce development. His reports on tax increment financing and the city of Milwaukee's use of economic development funds were well publicized and resulted in substantive policy changes.



Milwaukee County Board Chairman Lee Holloway was the guest speaker at the Forum's board of trustees meeting on September 12.

Also, Jerry Slaske, the Forum's director of communications and development, is no longer a full-time employee, but has been retained by the Forum as a consultant. He also joined the Forum in August 2004.

Vanessa Allen will join the Forum as a researcher, specializing in government finance. Her first day will be October 6. Allen has a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Notre Dame and a master's from the University of Wisconsin-Madison's LaFollette School of Public Affairs. She comes to the Forum from Milwaukee County's Department of Administrative Services where she was a fiscal and management analyst.

Forum researchers gather with peers in Boston

In early August, a contingent of Forum researchers attended the Governmental Research Association (GRA) annual meeting and conference in Boston.

During the three-day conference, Ryan Horton, senior researcher, moderated the panel discussion, *What is the secret to surviving an economic downturn?* Panel members were Michael Christensen, Ph.D., director of the Legislative Office of Research and general counsel to the Utah legislature; and Michael Goodman, Ph.D., director of economic and public policy research at the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute.

Also, Forum President Rob Henken was elected as a GRA trustee to a two-year term. And Horton, who resigned from the board because he will be leaving the Forum in December, was recognized for his 18 months of service.

Forum Research Director Anneliese Dickman and Researcher Melissa Kovach also attended the conference.

The GRA, founded in 1914, is the national organization of individuals professionally engaged in governmental research. Its purpose is to encourage governmental research in the general interest. Governmental research is defined as the collection, analysis, and distribution of factual information on governmental activities to citizens and officials for the improvement of government and the reduction of its cost.

There are 16 GRA agencies throughout the country, including two in Wisconsin: the Forum and the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance.