

Vision Shared's monthly newsletter

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2009 Annual Report is Online Now

Visit www.visionshared.com and scroll down to see our new annual report. You can learn about our activities from 2008-2009 and see where we're headed in 2010.

Create WV 2010 Conference Update

After three successful Create WV conferences starting in 2007, this unique forum for collaboration is heading to the Northern Panhandle. Create WV 2010 will be in Wheeling Oct. 17-19. Visit www.createwv.com for more details. Start planning now!

Strategic Planning for Vision Shared

Our volunteer team leaders are getting ready to review a list of suggestions for Vision Shared's future work – so let your voice be heard. Email President Juliet A. Terry by Jan. 15 and tell her what you think Vision Shared should be working on: president@visionshared.com. Volunteers will be assembling a draft strategic plan update for the Board of Directors to consider at their next quarterly board meeting Feb. 10, 2010.

VS Whistleblower Policy

At Vision Shared, we take our operations seriously and pledge to act honestly and appropriately. Visit our website, go to "What We Do" then scroll to the bottom and click on our whistleblower policy to learn more.

Generation WV Young Leaders Conference 2010

Generation West Virginia has scheduled its 2010 Young Leaders Conference for May 6 in Charleston.

Visit www.generationwestvirginia.com for details.

Sustainable Development Team Meeting Jan. 7

The Vision Shared Sustainable Development Team is having a conference call at 10 a.m. Jan. 7 to discuss the results of a new volunteer poll and sketch out its future work plan. To participate in the call, dial 866-453-5550 and enter code 23099084# when prompted.

2010 Legislative Session Begins Jan. 13

This week the VS Board of Directors will be deciding our key agenda issues for the 2010 legislative session. Check back soon for more details.

Also, representatives from all local Generation West Virginia chapters will be attending a full day of legislative activities at the State Capitol Jan. 21.

Imagine West Virginia Website Redesign

In addition to updating its 2008 report on West Virginia's energy future, Imagine West Virginia (Vision Shared's independent policy research division) is updating its Internet presence. Charleston-based Dream Catcher Creative will be redesigning Imagine's website over the next few weeks. Email Imagine Executive Director Rick Remish at rick.remish@imaginewestvirginia.com with any thoughts or suggestions.

Kellogg Grant Recap Coming Soon

We are compiling an update on all the VS activities that were part of the Kellogg Foundation grant for entrepreneurial development. The focus area teams funded by this grant produced a lot of great work for the VS Entrepreneurship Team to examine and continue.

SPOTLIGHT ON: TechConnect WV, the West Virginia Coalition for Technology-Based Economic Development



During the Jan. 5, 2010, edition of "VS: Dialed In," Vision Shared President Juliet A. Terry interviewed TechConnect's Executive Director, Kevin DiGregorio. A recap of the interview is on the next page. Listen to the entire broadcast by visiting www.visionshared.com and scrolling down to the "VS: Dialed In" icon.

The next installment of VS: Dialed In will be at 10 a.m. Feb. 1, 2010. Mark your calendars now!



VS: Dialed In — Jan. 5, 2010: Spotlight Interview with Kevin DiGregorio, executive director of TechConnectWV, the West Virginia Coalition for Technology-Based Economic Development

Vision Shared: How did TechConnect WV get started?

DiGregorio: The Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation got the ball rolling in November 2004. Pat Getty, Benedum's President, saw a need — maybe even a gap — in West Virginia in the area of technology-based economic development, or TBED. Benedum initiated and funded a series of three meetings and invited a group of leaders from various sectors to examine West Virginia's tech-based economy. That led to the realization that not only was West Virginia way behind other states in developing a tech-based economy, but we also needed a more structured initiative.

In 2005, the group aligned with Vision Shared, becoming the Vision Shared TBED Working Group. In 2006, that group recognized a need to form a separate, nonprofit corporation dedicated to TBED in the State. That was completed in November 2008. Our formal name is The West Virginia Coalition for Technology-Based Economic Development. But since that name is a mouthful and a half, we came up with a shorter name — TechConnectWV.

VS: How are you funded? Who are your supporters?

DiGregorio: We are and have been funded by Benedum, but we've received funding for specific activities from Marshall University, West Virginia University, the West Virginia Development Office and the Chemical Alliance Zone and have received in-kind support from Steptoe & Johnson, Toothman Rice and Vision Shared. Our supporters include all those groups plus a number of others from the private and public sector, groups like NETL, MATRIC, INNOVA, Verizon, Parsons, West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, Mountaineer Capital and a number of small tech-based companies across the state.

VS: What is your mission? What are your goals?

DiGregorio: Our mission is to facilitate technology-based economic development in West Virginia to enable the creation of high-paying jobs. We are a coalition of groups and individuals working to create a better environment for West Virginia's tech-based economy and working to facilitate activities and initiatives that will lead to job creation in the tech sector.

We have six long-term goals or measures of success. Without all the specifics, they are:

1. To grow the West Virginia academic R&D base
2. Increase R&D funding in areas of West Virginia's technology strengths
3. Increase industry-supported R&D at West Virginia's universities and colleges
4. Increase the number of technology-based companies in the state
5. Increase employment in private-sector, technology-based companies in West Virginia
6. Increase the number of spin-off companies developed from technology created at West Virginia's universities

VS: Can you provide a short summary of the TBED blueprint?

DiGregorio: The TBED Blueprint is being done in two main phases. The first phase was released in March of 2007. We contracted with Battelle to look at WV's gaps and strengths. It was basically a gap analysis. The second part of the Blueprint focuses on what needs to be done to close those gaps and take advantage of West Virginia's strengths. There are a number of recommendations, so I won't go over those, but in March 2009 we released a set of general recommendations for things like capital formation and infrastructure and specific recommendations for two of West Virginia's four strength areas, the Energy and Biometrics platforms. We recently contracted with Battelle to develop blueprints for the other two technology platforms — Materials & Chemicals and Biotechnology.

Battelle identified four main gaps:

- (1) Talent — world-class technicians, skilled workers, scientists, engineers, executives and other professionals at all levels
- (2) Early-Stage Seed Capital — risk capital that entrepreneurs, small businesses and start-up firms must have to succeed and grow
- (3) Entrepreneurial Know-How — "serial entrepreneurs" who have successfully started and grown several technology companies and who can act as role models or mentors for aspiring entrepreneurs

(4) Image — negative stereotypes of West Virginia that persist and impact the state’s ability to raise capital, recruit talent and attract technology companies

In later work with statewide focus groups, we identified a fifth gap ...

(5) Leadership — an organization to provide overall guidance, direction, facilitation and broad leadership for the entire TBED effort across the state

We hope TechConnectWV is filling the void of this last gap. Battelle also identified four main technology strengths... or what we call technology platforms:

1. Advanced Energy and Energy-Related Technology
2. Advanced Materials and Chemicals
3. Identification, Security and Sensing Technology (Biometrics)
4. Molecular Diagnostics, Therapeutics and Targeted Delivery Systems (Biotechnology)

VS: What are your short-term plans for the first half of 2010?

DiGregorio: We have a number of initiatives for 2010. One of the big recommendations coming from Battelle is the development of an Institute around each of the state’s technology platforms. We’re launching two of those — one for Energy and one for Biometrics. We have Steering Committees in place, a leader for the Energy portion, and we’re looking for a leader for the Biometrics Institute.

We also will be developing Blueprints for the other two tech platforms — Advanced Materials and Chemicals and Biotechnology. And we are working with a communications firm, Mythology Marketing, to better communicate the need, importance and success of TBED across West Virginia.

In response to a question about the Institutes — they are not necessarily physical structures or centralized facilities. The Institutes would be a compilation of resources, talent and facilities that, as much as possible, already exist within the state. These Institutes would be multi-institutional, multi-disciplinary and would involve industry.

Visit www.techconnectwv.com for more information.