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The logo for the Wisconsin Economic Summit II. It features the word "WISCONSIN" in a green, serif font, with a small globe icon replacing the letter "O". Below it, the words "ECONOMIC SUMMIT II" are written in a smaller, green, sans-serif font. To the left of the text is a faint, light blue outline of the state of Wisconsin.

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***Wisconsin's Economy at the Crossroads:
Building Higher Paying Jobs for the Future***

November 26-27, 2001
Midwest Express Center, Milwaukee

Highlights from Summit II:

Day 2

Smith Calls for Wisconsin Council on Competitiveness; Summit Ends on High Note

Regent President Jay L. Smith brought Wisconsin Economic Summit II to a close November 27 with a review of the five objectives for the meeting and a proposal for a new organization, "a nonpartisan entity that will work on a state agenda to strengthen Wisconsin's competitiveness while boosting the standard of living for all residents." He suggested calling this organization the Wisconsin Council on Competitiveness, "patterned after a very successful national model that brings together the three legs of the stool -- government, education and the private sector."

Among other tasks, such a council would help coordinate statewide economic growth efforts, serve as an information clearinghouse, monitor economic benchmarks, evaluate what other states are doing, and organize and conduct future statewide economic summits. "Much like the national council on competitiveness," said Smith, "this new state organization will seek to affiliate other organizations working on economic growth for the state."

Smith invited "others who have expertise and an interest in this new initiative to participate," noting the council would "work very closely with the Governor's interagency task force and with the state's political leaders in forming this entity. The council, he said, "must fairly represent all of our interests and be the captive of no one



Lt. Gov. Margaret Farrow: "It will take each one of us to move the economy forward."

interest." He added that "we urgently need something that pulls all these pieces together and makes the whole greater than the sum of its parts. We need something that will keep these discussions and our momentum rolling forward."

Government leaders offer perspectives

The final day of the summit began with remarks by Lt. Gov. Margaret Farrow. She followed up on Gov. McCallum's speech on Monday night, stating that "It will take each one of us to move the economy forward" in Wisconsin. Farrow



Congressman Mark Green: "The seeds of success for Wisconsin are here right now."

encouraged research on why some students are leaving the state, and urged a stronger connection between the workplace and schools. She also said businesses should invest in schools, and advocated a new image for the state: "We are no longer going to be the cheeseheads of the country, we're going to be the cream of the country!"

Next, Wisconsin Congressmen Tom Barrett and Mark Green spoke to the audience and answered questions on a wide range of federal funding issues. Green said it was not enough that Wisconsin's K-12 schools are good relative to other states. Educational competition is now global, and we must think that way, especially in math and science education. He also cited the need to focus on and close the achievement gap between minority students and others, and he endorsed efforts to increase the level of federal funding in the state. "Leadership in research and the application of discoveries" is key, said Green. "The seeds of success for Wisconsin are here right now if we can apply them."

Barrett said "federal funding is not a panacea" for Wisconsin, noting that some less attractive states receive substantial federal funding and "we wouldn't want to be like them." He urged the audience to recognize the strengths and limitations of the Congressional delegation, and to think like a baseball hitter rather than a free-throw shooter when it comes to funding proposals. "You have to take more swings at the bat" when you might only succeed 30% of the time. He described the legislative process as "sort of a human chess game" in its complexity. He encouraged state agencies to be more aggressive in seeking funds, and to be more realistic about the difference between "pork" funding and "bringing home the bacon." Barrett said he doesn't like voting no on a funding proposal, while other states "back up the truck and take all the money."



Congressman Tom Barrett: "You have to take more swings at the bat."

Concurrent sessions and Avante program

From 10 a.m. to noon, the audience attended a total of 16 concurrent break-out sessions in the Midwest Express Center. Topics included "Preserving Wisconsin's Economic Backbone," "Wisconsin's People Power," "The

Cluster Model for Economic Development in Wisconsin," "The Milwaukee Momentum," "Mobile Corporate Headquarters," "The Media and Wisconsin's Economy," "Successful Entrepreneurs," "Infrastructure Strategies," and "Educating Our Workforce and Training Workers."



Tod Linstroth of the Wisconsin Technology Council speaks at the "Lessons Learned (Part 2)" concurrent session.



Lynn Allen-Hoffmann of Stratatech speaks at the "Cluster Model (Part 2)" session. At right, Mark Bugher, University Research Park, UW-Madison.



Rebecca Heidepriem of the Department of Electronic Government speaks at the "Infrastructure Strategies" session. At right, Brian Rude, Dairyland Power Cooperative, and Susan Stratton, Energy Center of Wisconsin.

At lunch, George Franco, chair of the Council on the New Economy, spoke about the work of the council and its efforts to plug low-income people into the financial system. He also provided an overview of his Avante television program, "Leaders in the New Wisconsin Economy," that recently premiered in Milwaukee.



Luncheon speaker George Franco gave an overview of "Leaders in the New Wisconsin Economy," a new Avante television program.

After lunch, the moderators of the 16 concurrent sessions came together to review the many thought-provoking ideas presented that morning. Examples of their comments:

Elizabeth Burmaster, Superintendent of Public Instruction: "Cutting education erodes the advantage that sets our state apart." The number one priority is closing the achievement gap, and not just in Milwaukee.

James Haney, Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce: It's important to retain corporate headquarters because of the prestige and the income. Increasingly, "they're located where managers and their spouses want to live," not where they have to live.

David Meissner, Public Policy Forum: The majority of Wisconsin newspapers are short on trained reporters in economics. There's a need to professionalize business/economic reporting, as well as a need to help business overcome its distrust of the media.

Kevin Reilly, Chancellor, UW-Extension: There is a widespread recognition of the need for regional economic plans, in order to create an "organized mosaic of economically attractive regions."

Linda Weimer, University Relations, UW

System: The "brain drain" is not just a youth issue. It also affects retirees, skilled labor, and those underutilized in the workforce. We need to use technology to better link students and alumni to jobs in Wisconsin.

John Torinus, Serigraph: We are starting to use industry clusters as an organizing concept in Wisconsin at the local, regional and state levels. An example is the health sciences cluster in La Crosse. "Knowledge-based industrial clusters help hold people here."

Linda Stewart, UW-Milwaukee: We need to develop a positive identity for Milwaukee that we can all share in. It's a "City of Colleges," with an accessible lakefront. "We in the city have to focus on positives" and "we have to sell young people on the benefits of living here."

Dennis Winters, NorthStar Economics: There is a need for better training of economic development professional. We need to overcome local parochialism and not use the number of jobs created as the only measure of progress.

Jennifer Reinert, Secretary, Department of Workforce Development: We have to understand that the shortage of workers is chronic, not cyclical. The shortage is driven by demographics, not economics.

Legislative leaders address the summit

The final session of the summit featured four principal legislative leaders: Assembly Speaker Scott Jensen, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Chvala, Assembly Minority Leader Spencer Black, and Senate Minority Leader Mary Panzer. Among their observations:

Spencer Black: Business may find government policies problematic, but government is an important part of the economic future. It can provide an environment for economic growth, making those investments that can only be made in common. He focused on investing in the UW System, creating a qualified workforce through K-12 education, enhancing the state's high quality of life, and energy policy.

Scott Jensen: He reviewed the successful economic policies of former Gov. Thompson's long administration, arguing for the need to reestablish an overwhelming bipartisan consensus for growth in Wisconsin. He described the last session of the legislature as "the most antibusiness session in 10 years."



Moderators of the 16 concurrent sessions reviewed ideas presented that morning.



Rep. Spencer Black



Rep. Scott Jensen



Sen. Mary Panzer, with panel moderator Tim Cullen.



Sen. Chuck Chvala

Mary Panzer: "We cannot tax our way out of the recession," she said. She commented on the work of the Wisconsin Technology Council, where she is the legislative representative. She stressed the importance of seeking federal funding, the need for more venture capital, and the value of cooperation. We have to think about how to grow ourselves into prosperity, she said, a process requiring at least a decade that identifies goals, how to attain those goals, and how to measure progress in order to hold each other accountable.

Chuck Chvala: He stressed the need to capitalize on the work being done at UW-Madison on biotechnology and bioinformatics. "We need to take advantage of what [stem-cell researcher] James Thomson has given us." He noted that he found Marsha Lindsay's 2000 summit presentation on "The Brand Called Wisconsin" very significant, and has asked her to speak on that subject at the Capitol.

Summit co-chairs offer closing thoughts



Katharine Lyall addresses the wrap-up session.

UW System President Katharine Lyall began the [wrap-up session](#), saying "It has been a stimulating two days. I think we all have a clearer picture of what's being done to move Wisconsin's economy forward." She noted that "at last year's summit the University of Wisconsin System made four very specific commitments and we have made progress on all four," i.e., creating a PK-16 council, addressing the brain drain problem, seeking more federal funding, and fostering economic development efforts throughout the state.

More work will be done in each area during 2002, she said. Specifically, the UW System dedicates itself to these four areas:

1. Regional Economic Development.

"Our campuses and UW-Extension will continue to encourage and support their regional and community partnerships. From Milwaukee, the Fox Valley, Kenosha, Superior, La Crosse and elsewhere, there are exciting new regional initiatives under way. In this next phase, we will seek to engage more students in these activities and in service learning in our communities. There is nothing like learning by doing!

"We will help advance the cluster approach by stimulating more partnerships with our faculty and staff who have pertinent special expertise. And we will work with our campuses and GMC to explore the concept of a new medical research incubator along I-94, anchored by GE Medical Systems, as part of a new Milwaukee-Madison-Chicago economic Triangle."

2. Brain Drain.

"We will respond to the Governor by creating a statewide jobs network - Wisconsin Jobs for Wisconsin Grads - to market job opportunities in Wisconsin to our students and alumni. And we will develop programs to bring home alumni and their children who want to learn and settle in Wisconsin.

"Our 'Return to Wisconsin' package will include more robust marketing of Wisconsin job opportunities to our alumni, and tuition incentives for the children of alumni to return and attend UW campuses."

3. Federal Dollars.

"We will strengthen our efforts to bring federal money to Wisconsin by working with the state and our federal delegation to create a Federal Center for science or technology in Wisconsin. As Congressman Green said: we have an opportunity to make Wisconsin a focus for technology research and technology transfer. And, we will collaborate with the state and private sectors to obtain Wisconsin's fair share of funding and jobs that may become available through the federal economic stimulus package.

"We will also work with our Congressional delegation to host a series of `Wisconsin Idea Forums' on issues of national importance throughout the state to give Wisconsin more national visibility; and to raise consciousness of federal opportunities like those described by Congressman Barrett. And in January, we will brief our delegation on the outcomes of this summit."

4. Faculty and Alumni Involvement.

"We will make UW faculty and staff expertise more available to assist the state's economic development strategy by creating a cadre of `Wisconsin Idea Fellows' - faculty and staff who will be given release time to work on important state priorities, such as Congressman Green's paper institute idea. At the same time, we will create a Corporate Advisory Board involving alumni from around the nation and around the world to work with us on growing Wisconsin's economy and recruiting new businesses here."

Lyll welcomed Jay Smith back to the podium, thanking him "for his strong leadership over the past two years in getting us all to think hard about Wisconsin's economic future. He is the motivating force of this summit and he has helped make the university a much stronger partner with government and the private sector in stimulating the state economy."

"At last year's summit," said Smith, "we laid the groundwork for these past two days. The challenge has been to turn that talk into action, and it's starting to happen." The five challenges this year were:

1. Report on what's been done since the December of 2000 - Summit I.

2. Identify a series of benchmarks by which we can measure our goals and progress. He suggested five:

- Per capita income;
- Federal dollars;
- Venture capital;
- Percentage of our adult population with a college degree; and
- Lower personal income taxes



Many thanks to Tom Still of the Wisconsin State Journal for serving as summit moderator!

3. Broaden and strengthen existing partnerships and get more people involved and working on these issues.
4. Seek specific commitments from the university, business and government leaders on actions they will take to help Wisconsin's economy grow.
5. Identify the next steps.

Smith announced that he and Lyall will "convene a team at the conclusion of the summit that will bring these strands of information together into a comprehensive planning document. We will take the best ideas from this conference and seek input from the public and private sectors to create this document." The final report will be posted on the summit website by February 1, 2002.

Smith then outlined his proposal for the Wisconsin Council on Competitiveness. "We will ask our summit committee to guide in developing this new effort," he said, noting that "When all is said and done, the Council . . . may be subsumed by an existing organization -- one willing to modify its mission -- or it might become a new umbrella organization. There is no pride of authorship here; we want to focus on getting the job done!"

Smith closed by noting that he will retire from the Board of Regents next June, after serving for seven years. Nonetheless, he said, "I will continue to be committed to this work from the private sector."

He encouraged summit participants to "give us your ideas and your feedback on this meeting by writing us or by visiting our summit website. We need your input. With the energy, wisdom and concern that I have seen here this week, we can and will make great strides."



A second consecutive well-attended Wisconsin Economic Summit brought together leaders of business, government and higher education statewide. The final report will be posted by February 1, 2002 at the summit website.

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