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The 2016 Regional Strategy Summit
Powered by the Mid-South Mayors' Council

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HALLORAN CENTRE • MEMPHIS, TN

EVENT REPORT



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The 2016 Regional Strategy Summit
Powered by the Mid-South Mayors' Council

Demonstrating the Power of Collaborative Regional Action

THE DEMOGRAPHER

Why What You Don't Know About Demographics Will Hurt Your Chances to Grow

Dr. James Johnson, professor of strategy and entrepreneurship at the University of North Carolina, explained some key demographic trends that he contends most people misunderstand, including:

- Our region is challenged by big changes in demographic patterns. The South is the fastest-growing region of the country, but the Delta region lags far behind that growth.
- In the heat of a political campaign, we misunderstand our most important immigration issues. Immigration is far more complicated than focusing on illegal immigrants – 40-45 percent of immigrants come with legal papers and overstay their visas. Jobs of all kinds are following population growth.
- The population is both browning and graying, and the number of men is decreasing. The median age of Hispanics at the last census (2010) was 27, and whites are not having babies at nearly the same rates: For the first time (in 2010), non-Hispanic white babies are less than 50 percent of the birth rate.



Dr. Johnson contends that we are not having an honest discussion about the cost of health care, who really needs aging care, and the impact of these changes on the age structure in our communities.

We need to be careful about how we portray family life, make human resources decisions, and put together leadership teams. All of these issues have huge implications for collaborative regional efforts, and everyone must understand the same demographic reality.

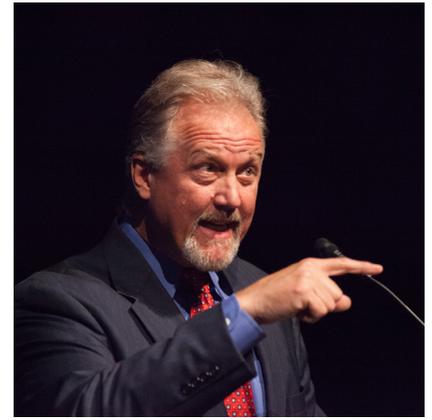
Questions for the Mid-South

1. In a region that is growing at a slower rate than its neighbors, what demographic trends do you watch most closely?
2. What's the easiest way to see the browning and graying of our region?
3. Our regional leadership does not reflect the demographic trends Dr. Johnson has outlined. What difference would it make if it did?

THE JOBS ADVOCATE

Why We Must Change Our Educational Model

From his vantage point as an experienced community college leader, Dr. Glen Fenter, President of the Greater Memphis Alliance for a Competitive Workforce, launched an impassioned dissection of the traditional high school education model. He believes it isn't working for either high school graduates or the companies who would consider locating to the Greater Memphis Region to hire those graduates. The one-size-fits-all model of high school education doesn't lead to a great job at the end, only to the obligation to continue the education process, an insane model, he says. Dr. Fenter is a big advocate for data – generating the best-in-class workforce trends information to determine what companies need, as well as what out-of-work people need. A hope for the future is the idea of working together across the region to develop programs that provide services (gas vouchers, food) as well as job training, or programs that combine the last two years of high school with two years of college and end up with skills and desire for a job that is waiting. Why hasn't this happened before? Dr. Fenter contends it's because the poverty and joblessness that affects high school graduates who can't find work haven't affected the people who need to make the change.



Questions for the Mid-South

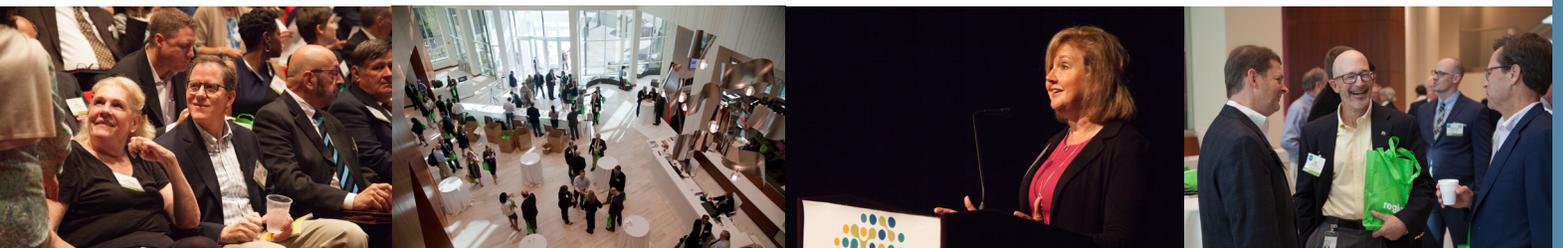
1. Where do people who have only a high school diploma work most successfully in your town or area?
2. What could change their prospects the most?

THE NATIONAL EXPERT

Today's Workforce Realities, and Why Education Policy (and Collaboration) is Critical

As one of the nation's leading experts on workforce development, Emily DeRocco, Principal at E3 Engage Educate Employ, says that America should have the world's best workforce, but we don't. The nature of work has changed dramatically, and it's time to re-engineer the jobs marketplace. We must act regionally and have all the players at the table for discussions of long-term strategies.

She urged us to consider that FOUR generations are in the workplace right now, each with different needs and goals. She pointed out that from now on there will be only working learners – work and school will be integrated, as with internships and apprenticeships – and that's a dramatic change from the past. It's important to understand the regional demand for workers, but not by sending out yet another survey; invest in high-end research and ask employers to



validate it. Workforce policy is education policy, and everyone across various business sectors has to buy in to that. Five years from now, DeRocco wants to point to the Greater Memphis Region as a thought leader in this very difficult work.

Questions for the Mid-South

1. What opportunities are there for working learners in your area – internships, apprenticeships? Do you know what you need to know about how to integrate working and learning?
2. What do you need to understand about the four-generation workforce that you don't currently know?
3. Where is the best source of data on education and opportunities? How can you collaborate on finding and sharing it?

THE CORPORATE LEADER

Stories of Success and Challenge

When Federal Express launched in April 1973, they had to have a “second” first night, because the real first night was so disappointing, said Richard Smith, Vice-President of Global Trade Services at FedEx Express. From there, FedEx has grown into a global logistics and transportation business and are in the midst of their biggest acquisition, TNT Global, in Europe. Though Smith's father grew up on Audubon Drive (and played football in the street with Elvis!), choosing Memphis for FedEx wasn't a foregone conclusion. Memphis offered the best combination of three critical factors: location, airport infrastructure, and politics. Smith and FedEx are big proponents of the Memphis Aerotropolis concept: a strategy that links the ramp (at the airport), river, rail, and road. One in four people in the region work in transportation and logistics.



Questions for the Mid-South

1. How does transportation and logistics impact your community?
2. Are most mid-southerners aware of the impact, and is there consensus around it?

THE COUNTY EXPERT

National Trends to Watch and Understand

Before he began to explain important national trends to watch, Matt Chase, Executive Director of the National Association of Counties, recognized that “regional work, especially for elected officials, is brutal. You have to be a statesman,” because a business's interest is not to create jobs, but to create return on investment. That said, there are global forces that will make coordination and connection imperative. Smart is the future, not low-cost, and change is happening more quickly than ever. The future is about connecting and sharing brainpower; the



workforce is your most precious resource. Technology is disrupting everything, and there are key forces to watch: the mobile internet, the automation of knowledge work, and the internet of things, where everyday objects are connected to drive our lives. Despite the quick and disruptive role of technology – Uber, now the world’s largest taxi company, owns no vehicles, for example – recovery for the largest counties in America has been slow. Only 17 of the 126 large county economies had recovered in four key areas by 2015 (jobs, economic output, home prices, and unemployment).

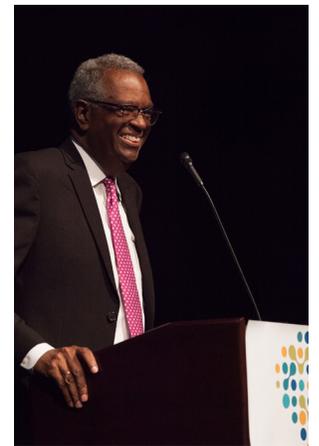
Questions for the Mid-South

1. Where do you most acutely feel the technological disruption that Chase referenced?
2. How aware are you of the technological opportunities and threats to your community and the region?
3. What’s the biggest drag on your county’s recovery?

THE FINANCIER

Creative Ways to Develop Underserved Communities

Michael Banner, President and CEO of Los Angeles LDC, Inc., grew up in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles, and knows the issues facing low-income communities and communities of color firsthand. He is also a banker and well-versed in the various financial instruments that can get a project going. Again, he says, collaboration is key, and in his work with ULI in LA, he has focused on housing, education, economic development, and transportation. All banks have obligations under the Community Reinvestment Act, and helping them understand ways they can better serve their customers gives the conversation a way to get started. His story of the California Reinvestment Coalition might give the Greater Memphis regional financial organizations some ideas: it was formed to monitor CRA funds and help banks make them more impactful in underserved communities. Always come with a value proposition, says Banner, and understand the needs of both communities and financial organizations.



Questions for the Mid-South

1. Do you know people in your community who can serve as a bridge between community need and financing to help projects happen?
2. What projects have been particularly good examples of creative coalition-building that involves banks or other financial organizations?



THE TRI-STATER

What Greater Memphis Can Learn from the Chattanooga Region

The three-state area around Chattanooga has quite a few similarities to the Greater Memphis region, says Bridgett Massengill, Executive Director of Thrive 2055, including the need to think across state lines when coordinating regional initiatives. The Thrive 2055 region has many municipalities (79) and mayors (95) as well as problems that are easy for everyone to identify. The prospect of Volkswagen opening a manufacturing plant in Chattanooga in 2008 super-charged Thrive 2055 by focusing attention on transportation issues and solving them, though it wasn't easy. "Progress happens at the speed of trust," said Massengill. The Chattanooga region is a hub for various types of transportation (sound familiar?), but also of crumbling infrastructure and worsening commutes. Business leadership stepped up to inspire each other to do bold things, including developing an inland rail port. UT Chattanooga plays an important role as the place where all data for the 16-county region is housed.



Questions for the Mid-South

1. What disappointments can lead to more cooperation and innovation? Are there grants and initiatives that need coordination for success?
2. What advantages can we gain by coordinating across state lines? What are the downsides?

THE FORMER MAYOR

Local Government Must Take the Risks That Matter

Tom Murphy, Senior Resident Fellow at ULI and the former mayor of Pittsburgh, echoed a number of the themes of the day, but quickly brought them to the local level. Cities that are succeeding are being intentional in the face of relentless change. Leadership is critical, and collaboration is key. He pointed out that, for the first time, jobs are going to where the talent is, so talent is the economic driver for cities and regions. Successful cities understand their competitive advantages. He admits that working in an entrepreneurial culture is tough for a mayor, who has constituents and stakeholders who resist taking big risks to move forward. The biggest lie, he says, is that progress doesn't have a cost, and he exhorted everyone in the room – "don't put it all on the mayors" – to be bold with a knowledge of financing tools and a commitment to design excellence. The story of Pittsburgh's revitalization came out of a devastating decline in manufacturing and population, and the renaissance was sparked by a tax increase voted on by the region in 1993, beginning the Pittsburgh Development Fund. The goal was to build a city that would keep and draw young families, and it was a huge risk that involved thinking strategically and building partnerships. Pittsburgh's success today reflects those risks and the will of a community to make progress.



Questions for the Mid-South

1. How can the economic development and education communities help you develop a visionary strategy for city progress?
2. Who else should be drawn into your visionary circle who isn't already there?

THE MAYORS ASK: WHAT'S NEXT



Chip Johnson, the Mayor of Hernando, Mississippi, passed the microphone to all 11 mayors seated on the stage for the final vision of the day. From “Tina Turner’s Hometown” (Brownsville, Tennessee) to “The Jewel of the Delta” (Forrest City, Arkansas), they introduced themselves. Then Mayor Johnson reminded the conference of the big picture: “State lines mean nothing when you are trying to run a business,” he said. “We need to cross those state lines.” Companies can locate wherever they want, and we need to work together to make our region as attractive as possible. “We can’t not like each other. ...That’s the spirit of the Mid-South Mayors’ Council.” He then challenged all of the conference participants to get involved, first by filling out a suggestion card, then by continuing to engage in this regional conversation.

**TO GET INVOLVED IN THE MID-SOUTH’S REGIONAL EFFORTS,
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