

# ROLE SUMMIT

## Follow-Up

### 1.14.09 Meeting Report

**RE-ENERGIZING  
OUR  
LOCAL  
ECONOMY**

*A Collaborative  
Action Summit*



released 2.27.09

CONVENED BY  
**SCOPE**



**Follow Up Meeting**  
**January 14, 2009, 8:00 p.m. – 10:00 a.m.**  
**Gold Coast Eagle Distributing**

*\*Thanks to Gold Coast Eagle for allowing us to use the facility.*

## Context

Many of the Re-energizing Our Local Economy (ROLE) Summit attendees, along with others concerned about our local economy, reconvened on January 14, 2009. For two hours, over 60 people discussed how to improve our local economy given the challenges we currently face. This report chronicles the meeting by providing transparent access to what occurred. We hope it will be a tool for moving the ideas that came out of the ROLE summit forward and for moving our community toward collaboration.

## Structure of the Meeting

Tim Dutton led the meeting. After everyone introduced themselves, he went over the structure of the meeting. The agenda is below.

- I. **Opening**
  - a. Introduction
  - b. Overview of October 3<sup>rd</sup> work
  - c. Structure of this meeting
- II. **Group Discussion**
  - a. Themes from ROLE Summit
  - b. What haven't we thought about yet?
- III. **Small Group Discussions**
- IV. **Report Out & Discussion**
- V. **Wrap Up**

## Opening & Group Discussion – Large Group Gathering

### October 3<sup>rd</sup>

The ROLE Summit on October 3<sup>rd</sup> produced four themes that would improve our local economy. They are:

1. Regulatory Solutions
2. Enhance Workforce & Talent
3. Support Businesses
4. New Frontiers
  - 4.1 Green/Sustainability
  - 4.2 Creative Center
  - 4.3 Aging

## **Between October 3<sup>rd</sup> and now**

Tim asked what had changed since the ROLE Summit was held. The group responded:

- Possibility of a federal stimulus package.
- State budget cuts.
- Market collapse dragged down venture capital and capacity of large donors.
- We know who the president and cabinet will be.
- Credit dried up for businesses and it is hard to renegotiate a credit line.
- The nation wants to take a look at energy policy.
- A lot of things are converging around green business. Nick Gladding, a member of the Florida Energy and Climate Commission, spoke about a few. He noted local green collar jobs are becoming closer to reality. He asked the group to focus on local action. Though we know we may be eligible for federal money, we do not yet know how it will be distributed. Because of this, it is in our best interests to begin to plan locally now, and planning must start today. The Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce Green Business Leadership Committee will be shifting focus soon to focus on bringing the different green initiatives together – not necessarily eliminating any, but being sure they all are “rowing together.” There is juice to all of the committees, but we need to move from talk to action.
- There is more housing stock and more unemployed workers. While this is being viewed as a bad thing, it could be a good thing as it provides possibility and workforce.
- The Manatee County commission changed – and when it did, the new commissioners interviewed key economic players (such as Manatee County EDC, Chamber, etc.) about where changes needed to be made, and then proceeded to actually make them.
- Things are bleaker – but we must put care, passion and pride at the forefront and not settle for 9% unemployment.

## **Now**

Members of local community organizations were invited to share the status of their organizations.

- **Sarasota Tomorrow:** They are working with the Venice Chamber for funding from the Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice on things that parallel ROLE outcomes, including developing an online tool to support small businesses. Sarasota Tomorrow is a new resource to support the efforts of businesses and working people in the community. *(Steve Queior spoke)*
- **Sarasota County Economic Development Corporation:** It is no fun to be a Florida EDC right now. They are working on updating the community economic plan. Though the EDC is administering the process it is not the EDC’s plan, rather it’s the communities’ plan as it affects us all *(Kathy Baylis spoke)*
- **Scruggs & Associates** (company doing community plan): The community must look at long-term plans and use our own unique assets. These include our passion for green, our aging demographics, and our reputation as the creative/design capital of Southwest

Florida. Our community must step it up and each resident must ask him or herself “What can I do?” What is our community willing to invest in economic development? The answers must be “BHAG:” Big Hairy Audacious Goals. (*Pat Scruggs spoke*)

- **City of Sarasota:** They are promoting local labor with a new ordinance to hire local laborers for city construction projects. (*Bob Bartolotta spoke*)

### Small Group Break-Out Sessions

As an introduction to the small group session, Tim shared one of SCOPE’s sayings: “Unless you’re part of the problem, you can’t be part of the solution.” We are all part of our economic situation and we need to learn to collaborate on solutions. If we can do so, we can use this downturn to pull together as a community.

Individuals self-selected into the topic area they wanted to focus on. The six topic areas included short-term actions on: Regulatory Solutions, Enhancing Workforce & Talent and Supporting Businesses. Long-term actions on: Green/Sustainability, Creative Center, and Sarasota’s Demographic Opportunities.

Each group had a facilitator and worked for an hour discussing **specific, actionable** and **concrete** ways to improve our local economy.

### Report out & Discussion From Each Small Group

The large group reconvened to discuss the ideas that came out of each small group. The conversation began by examining ideas at the federal and state level.

#### Federal Level Actions

Ideas requiring action at the federal level included monitoring the federal economic stimulus package to ensure it creates as many jobs as possible, reaches the level of small businesses, and affects the community as a whole and not individual organizations/corporations. Another recommendation suggested establishing a regional effort to use the money.

#### State Level Actions

State level ideas included changing the county procurement process to allow local contractors to be more competitive in county bids. Another suggestion pointed out the need to reexamine the financial aspects of the Request For Proposal (RFP) process to reveal barriers that exist for local businesses.

## Creative Economy

**Presenter: Grace Carlson**

### **SUMMARY**

The Creative Economy group focused their energies on finding ways to connect ideas from the creative/design communities with the business sector. One suggestion to increase communication between these groups would be to create a business plan competition at the Ringling Design Summit. Another tactic to increase connectivity urged Sarasota to develop a strategic plan. This would foster the creative economy by including a forum for regional business network discussion.

### **EXISTING INITIATIVES**

The group emphasized the need for collaborative involvement and suggested collapsing or concentrating the many groups that are working on creating/promoting a creative economy. They called this a 'new group moratorium.'

## Enhance Workforce & Talent

**Presenter: Steve Queior**

### **SUMMARY**

The Workforce Development group offered three specific ideas.

1. Help recently unemployed individuals reinvent themselves for the 'jobs of tomorrow' by connecting them with career training resources.
2. Launch an information blitz covering Sarasota County on available resources and jobs. This includes communicating resources to small businesses.
3. Evaluate our economy to determine the jobs, training, and skill sets that will come back on-line after the economic downturn. The results should be shared with the community through an event.

### **EXISTING INITIATIVES**

An upcoming event, (hosted by the Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce in partnership with the Economic Development Corporation, the University of South Florida and the Suncoast Workforce board) will take place in March. The event's purpose is to assist reevaluation of one's career, share available resources, and teach people how to look outside of the box when reinventing their careers.

## Business Support

**Presenter:** Emily Sperling

### **SUMMARY**

The Business Support group pointed out while most business resources are readily available, there appears to be disconnect between the resources and the businesses in need of help. The group endorsed three ways to bridge this gap:

1. Develop and maintain a consistent resource list and disseminate it through governments, trade organizations, or tax and utility bills.
2. Create a regional delegation to support local, state, and federal initiatives that promote our community. The group emphasized funneling federal stimulus package money to local level businesses. Also, representatives advocated involving the business development center.
3. Establish a collaborative communications effort among all groups working to support businesses.

### **EXISTING INITIATIVES**

Economic Development Council, Chambers, Business Development Center, Government, SCOPE, SCORE and we are sure there are others.

## Regulatory Solutions

**Presenter:** Del Borgsdorf

### **SUMMARY**

Regulatory Solutions representatives expressed concern over the length of time required to approve projects, often two years, and stated that this is a major issue facing our community. They recommended altering the political environment to pressure policy makers to expedite the process. This requires creating a sense of urgency in the community about the economy while still presenting our situation in a positive light. For example, creating a slogan along the lines of “We understand this is a recession and we choose not to participate” captures the regulatory solutions group’s stance. Governing bodies could proactively work to engage new people in this process, make Sarasota County the king of the hill, and build a positive campaign for regulatory change. Ultimately, the groups agreed that the state of the economy justifies an immediate and swift focus on employment, re-employment, and investment.

## Demographic Opportunities

**Presenter** Art Mahoney

### **SUMMARY**

Representatives from this group agreed on promoting the concept of a Sarasota Institute for the Ages (SIA). The institute is envisioned as a think tank, and also a place to test practical applications. The SIA would take advantage of Sarasota's unique age demographic and examine a plethora of aging issues including religion, transportation, insurance, and nutrition. Representatives from the group saw the institution as a powerful economic driver that would generate money from data and programming, create a second "season" for Sarasota, attract pharmaceutical and medical supply companies, and spur job creation. The aging group expressed a serious sense of urgency about creating the institute before other states (i.e. Arizona or North Carolina) capitalized on this opportunity. There are three ways in which this endeavor can currently be promoted:

1. Get community buy-in and encourage people this is a good idea.
2. Create a business plan and attempt to attract a planning grant.
3. Determine who will drive the idea forward.

## Green Technology

**Presenter:** Lee Hayes Byron

### **SUMMARY**

This issue is incredibly large and complex, and could be broken into several subgroups. Today, the group focused primarily on developing green jobs. There are many other areas and groups working on "green," but information often does not flow easily. It may be appropriate to have an umbrella organization (an organizational role the Green Business Leadership council may soon fulfill) to oversee "green." The group presented the following ideas on green job creation:

- All groups must coordinate to maximize their local acquisition of federal stimulus money.
- A way forward is to develop a green jobs training program through SCTI, the school board, and other local colleges. This program could train students to retrofit existing businesses and homes. This provides an opportunity for unemployed construction workers to retrain as green jobs specialists.
- Sarasota County is in a special situation with regards to green technology in that we have events like the ROLE Summit, the SEA Summit, get EmPOWERED, and many others. If our community can capitalize on the energy of these events and work toward synergy, we can further strengthen our green reputation.

## Wrap-Up

This will be the last meeting for ROLE. Tim encouraged everyone to continue talking and sharing ideas.

## List of Participants

**Betty Alpaugh**, *Sarasota Extension Service*  
**Larry Arnold**, *Sarasota County Government*  
**Bob Bartolotta**, *Manager, City of Sarasota*  
**Kathy Baylis**, *EDC Sarasota County*  
**Danny Bilyeu**, *Congressman Buchanan*  
**Sarah Blanchard**, *SCAT*  
**Del Borgsdorf**, *Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce*  
**Jack Burden**, *SEA Water Committee*  
**Lee Hayes Byron**, *Sarasota Count Government*  
**Grace Carlson**, *Grace Unlimited*  
**Casey Colburn**, *Kirk Pinkerton*  
**Will Cox**, *Abel Band*  
**John Cranor**, *Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce*  
**Javier Curiel**, *Exit Realty*  
**Suzanne Daigle**, *NuFocus Strategic Group*  
**Suzanne Dameron**, *Aspire PR*  
**Jeff Davis**, *Lutgert Insurance*  
**Rae Dowling**, *FPL*  
**Paula Dumas**, *Venice Area Chamber*  
**Tim Dutton**, *SCOPE*  
**Larry Face**, *Next Level Achievement*  
**Andrea Ginsky**, *Sarasota County Libraries*  
**Nick Gladding**, *Ruden McClosky*  
**Denise Greer**, *King Engineering*  
**Larry Hale**, *Clifford M. Scholz Architects Inc.*  
**Virginia Haley**, *Sarasota Convention & Visitors Bureau*  
**Kevin Hicks**, *Gator Paving*  
**Amy Hunt**, *Bank of Commerce*  
**Kate Irwin**, *SCOPE*  
**Rex James**, *Solar Direct*  
**Roxanne Joffe**, *CAP Marketing*  
**Ed Kaberna**  
**Margaret Kaberna**  
**Kerry Kirschner**, *Argus Foundation*  
**Chris Kohatsu**, *Sarasota County Government*  
**Allan Lane**, *City of North Port*  
**Shawn Leins**, *A&M Engineering*  
**Rob Lewis**, *Sarasota County Government*  
**Bonnie Limbach**, *Eric Mower and Associates*  
**Yvette Little**, *Simply Green Solutions*  
**Art Mahoney**, *SIA Committee Member*  
**Jeff Maultsby**, *Sarasota County Government*  
**Joan McGill**, *EDC Sarasota County*  
**Jeff Orenstein**, *Living Out East Magazine*  
**Carolyn Piano**, *Insurance*  
**Karen Potts**, *Nielsen*  
**Mark Pritchett**, *Gulf Coast Community Foundation*  
**Steve Quieor**, *Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce*

**Kurt Rachwitz**, *Habitat for Humanity*  
**Lyn Rogers**, *Raymond James and Associates*  
**Doug Ross**, *Collaborative Solutions*  
**John Ryan**, *Venice Area Chamber*  
**Michelle Ryan**, *Venice Area Chamber*  
**Ron Schapo**, *Ruden McClosky*  
**Gretchen Schneider**, *Sarasota County Government*  
**Pat Scruggs**, *Scruggs & Associates*  
**Misty Servia**, *King Engineering Associates*  
**Anita Shelare**, *Realtor*  
**Emily Sperling**, *EDC Sarasota County*  
**Mel Thomas**, *Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce*  
**Pam Truitt**, *Truitt Consulting*  
**Barry Tuchfield**, *SIA Committee Member*  
**Vicki Vega**, *Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce*  
**Daisy Vulovich**, *Manatee Community College*  
**Kim Weaver**, *SCOPE*  
**Kent Webb**, *New College*  
**Dale Vollrath**, *TRC Staffing Services*  
**Caroline Zucker**, *School Board*