



## Metro-York must lead the leaders

The civic reform group is in the best position to assure progress in our county.

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Jan 13, 2008 — Admittedly, it's an awkward subject.

Some key York County business leaders - sometimes referred to as "the movers and shakers" - are in the fourth quarter of productive lives, and at some point in the not-too-distant future will not be around to champion social and economic progress in our community.

That assumes, of course, you believe the movers and shakers have guided our community progressively - which, with a few exceptions, we do.

But when they're gone, who will replace them as leaders?

It's an intriguing and important question - one that local social service agencies, which have depended upon the generosity of a handful of very wealthy individuals to help fulfill their missions, have been quietly asking.

And while there are a wealth of wealthy individuals in York County, few are in a position to engage in the level of philanthropy the current leaders bestow upon our community.

It's worrisome. It means that others will need to step up. And not just a few. The ranks of leaders will need to widen by an order of magnitude.

In a sense, that's a good thing. It's more democratic and less autocratic. It means the community itself is deciding to a greater degree where the community will go.

But we still need leaders of the leaders - people who can guide us toward the greater good, despite our all-too-human tendency toward parochialism and self-interest.

Who will they be? And how can today's movers and shakers give them a boost - investing in tomorrow's leaders?

To be sure, there are many places to invest, places that help care for the less privileged and that develop a new generation of leaders. Leadership York, for instance, has long worked to foster a new generation of trailblazers. The York County Community Foundation is one of many excellent local vehicles to funnel wealth to worthy causes - and the United Way is another.

But ultimately, perhaps the best thing today's leaders can do to assure continued progress in York County is to even more deeply invest in the success of the Metro-York plan.

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Many working on the Metro-York initiative may not have the wealth of the movers and shakers, but they have in their hands the best blueprint we've seen to build a better York County.

Their efforts to save the city from oblivion through regional cooperation are noble and well-crafted. Their bid to create a shared regional police force among the inner-ring suburbs is well underway. Their ideas to improve educational opportunities are smart and forward-looking.

They've already secured the support for these ideas from many municipal officials.

But selling the overall populace on the plan will be difficult. Too many York countians live with the delusion that they can ignore the city's woes and that those problems will never come to their suburban neighborhoods. Getting the majority to pull in the direction of regional cooperation will be the challenge of this - and maybe the next - decade.

What can the movers and shakers - who, we should acknowledge, are among the driving forces behind YorkCounts and Metro-York - do to see that this new generation of leaders can succeed?

Can they invest in an educational endowment like the one in Metro-York proposal No. 6?

Can they expend some of their political capital to see the creation of true regional land-use planning or regional tax reform?

Ultimately, it may not be enough to just put the solutions on the table. They may need to help their successors by giving these proposals the kind of push that only true "movers" can do.

#### ON THE WEB

Read the full text of the Metro-York recommendations at <http://www.yorkcounts.org/metro>

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#### EIGHT STEPS TO A BETTER YORK

1. Establish a Metro-York consolidated police department.
2. Engage in additional meaningful regional planning, ideally incorporating all of the municipalities in the heart of York County.
3. Reform local taxation through a local tax study commission.
4. Study ideas for modernizing York County's form of government.
5. Establish a permanent and well-funded Metro-York Schools Consortium to research, develop and implement new public school models and make all schools in York County truly world-class.
6. Attack the root problem: A school district can't succeed when poverty and its related problems are concentrated the way they are in

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the York City schools.

7. Invest \$3 million per year in each of the next 10 years in "intensive care" for at-risk students: intense, targeted programming to at-risk students, as they enter grade school to keep them focused and/or in middle and high school to keep them from thinking that dropping out is an option.

8. Use the soon-to-be-established Office of Workforce Development as a catalyst to strengthen relationships between employers and the Metro-York workforce.

- Source: Metro-York

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