

# Leadership counts in York

We must not let the visionary YorkCounts effort fall victim to this bad economy.

Daily Record/Sunday News

Posted: 02/19/2009 01:00:00 AM EST

Editorial

In recent editorials we have put forth the idea that local business, political and civic leaders should come together to formulate a new kind of "York Plan" to help our community address the economic crisis.

The situation is too dire for us to wait for state or federal leadership and initiatives.

We live here.

We work here.

We raise our families here.

The problems affecting us may run across the globe and may not be fully solvable on the local level.

But we should "do what we can with what we have," as the York Plan slogan urged.

We can be part of the solution. We can emulate our forbears who, during World War II, came up with innovations that spread nationwide and helped win the war. We can look for ways to strengthen our local economy and community -- keep people working, get them the training and education they need to succeed. Improve our government and civic structures. Take care of our own.

These have long been hallmarks of our generally prosperous community.

But that prosperity depends on enlightened and progressive leadership.

And what better way to describe the YorkCounts initiative?

People from across the business, political and civic spectrum came together to study the problems of our community, engineer solutions and work to implement those ideas.

It is, in a sense, it's own kind of York Plan -- a plan to make a better York for all, from education to housing to health and safety.

But the effort appears as if it might be endangered by the economic crisis.

The York County Chamber of Commerce, one of YorkCounts' eight partner organizations, recently discussed funding for the organization at a breakfast meeting. The question: Do members, all of whom are affected by the economic slump, want part of their dues to continue to support YorkCounts?

We hope -- pray -- that chamber members will continue funding YorkCounts, as well as the other member groups.

As YorkCounts chairman Eric Menzer said, "Support of the business community matters now more than ever."

Pulling funding for this visionary effort would be, as the cliché goes, penny wise and pound foolish. It could amount to years of wasted time and effort -- as the initiative would be difficult to restart down the road when economic times are better.

The group is working on initiatives that transcend temporary economic slumps. And perhaps its work could even blaze paths back up the mountain of prosperity.

YorkCounts runs a lean organization. Much of the work is donated by volunteers. But it still needs financial support from the leaders of this community to move forward to success.

If we can't count on that support, we're in far worse shape than we thought. It means that our leaders are not leading. They're hunkering down. Rather than joining together to meet the challenges, as the architects of the York Plan did, they're running scared.

We find it hard to believe that will happen.