



By: Rick Haglund

COLUMN: RICK HAGLUND

Following Rick Snyder's lead, Mackinac Policy Conference embraces 'measurable results'

Posted: Jan 27, 2011 at 5:50 AM [Jan 27, 2011]

Michigan's new symbol should be the yardstick. It seems as if everyone is appraising, benchmarking and gauging these days.

Gov. Rick Snyder set a strong example with his [Michigan Dashboard](#), a website that shows how the state is performing over time in five areas: economic strength, health and education, value for government, quality of life and public safety.

"We will measure and measure and measure, and that is how we will succeed," Snyder said in his [State of the State](#) speech.

On Tuesday, the nonprofit group [Data Driven Detroit](#) released its "[One D Scorecard](#)," which provides indicators of how the southeast Michigan region is doing in the areas of educational preparedness, economic prosperity, social equity and regional transit.

And on the same day, the [Detroit Regional Chamber](#) said its upcoming Mackinac Policy Conference will focus more on data and action.

"It fits in with the new governor's emphasis on measurable results," chamber president **Sandy Baruah** said at a news conference.

The call for action also is a result of growing criticism that the conference, held in June on Mackinac Island, has become little more than a food-and-alcohol-fueled schmooze fest for the roughly 1,500 business and political leaders who attend.

"The common complaint we hear is that nothing ever gets done on Mackinac," Baruah said.

That gripe, in part, led the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce to start the biennial [West Michigan Policy Conference](#) in 2008.

Participants each year develop a policy agenda that mostly requires action from Lansing. At the heart of that agenda is making Michigan a right-to-work state.

Building on Snyder's theme of "we're all in this together," Baruah said the Detroit chamber is reaching out to business leaders from other regions to forge a statewide revitalization agenda at Mackinac.

Conference chairman **Chip McClure**, chief executive officer of Troy-based auto supplier **ArvinMeritor**, has created a statewide CEO advisory committee to help develop a blueprint for action.

Among those from outside Detroit on the committee are Meijer Inc. President **Mark Murray** and **Michael Jandernoa**, a principal in Grand Rapids-based Bridge Street Capital Partners.

This year's keynote speakers at the Mackinac conference include Harvard Business School competitiveness expert **Michael Porter**, management guru and author **Jim Collins**, and education reformer **Geoffrey Canada**, CEO of the Harlem Children's Zone.

Jared Rodriguez, senior vice president of government affairs at the Grand Rapids chamber, said the Mackinac conference "just adds and builds upon what we have done" in the public policy arena.

"We're working together already, he said. "There's plenty of room for us to collaborate on the issues we have in common."

And even though right-to-work is unpopular in union-heavy southeast Michigan, there likely are many Detroit chamber members who are privately pleased to see the Grand Rapids chamber carry on the fight.

But, as the Beatles sang, there's no time for fussing and fighting.

"The economy's improving, the automotive business is coming back and we have a new governor," McClure said.

The hopefulness of that statement is hard to measure.

E-mail Rick Haglund at haglund.rick@gmail.com.

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ronaldduck at 7:14 AM on January 27, 2011

Why does Michigan need to be right to work? The national average for union membership is About 12% and just over 16% in Michigan. It's not like there is much difference.

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braggslaw at 10:38 AM on January 27, 2011

People should not have to join a union if they don't want to.

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ronaldduck at 2:35 PM on January 27, 2011

Everybodies pay and benefits are better because nonunion workplaces had to increase theirs in order to compete for the best employees.

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David Briegel at 8:00 PM on January 27, 2011

People should not have to work for slave wages with no benefits!
But I digress.

That is precisely why our sacred immigration laws are not enforced.

Slave labor for the

Upper Class White society.

Imagine if it were minorities violating our laws.....

Please "measure" who is breaking our laws by hiring illegals. Please !

Ronaldduck is so correct in his assesment.

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Cyclezealot at 10:09 AM on January 31, 2011

So whose doing the grading. Especially in terms of environmental issues such as water quality on Snyder's dashboard.. it would not be a surprise if the Koch Brothers weren't on the panel.

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