

## STORY 5

### Growing a Greater Greencastle

*“You cannot manage change, only stay ahead of it.” Peter Drucker*

What will Greencastle look like in twenty years? In fifty? Who will live here? Where will they work? Will our traditions and heritage have been preserved?

Large and small, rural and urban, east and west, every community in America is stretching to develop the financial and human resources necessary to build strong economic and social foundations. Greencastle has developed a character and history over the past 30 years of preparing for the future. The Hometown Greencastle Alliance and Marketing Initiative (Alliance) is a continuing effort to prepare the greater Greencastle region for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and the information revolution economically and socially.

Over the past five days data gathered from an extensive internal and external survey has been published. Response has been far greater than expected. Now the data provides a road map and measurable facts with which to guide the Greencastle Hometown Marketing Project. Good towns don't just happen. The best towns take control of the future instead of simply letting competing communities, demographic and cultural trends to define them. “One dominant theme emerged from both the external and internal surveys,” recounted Ken Eitel, Facilitator of the Hometown Alliance. “Individuals and families are searching for a genuine ‘sense of community’.”

Good towns with stable economic foundations become that way because of thoughtful planning and, most importantly, community engagement and participation. “Residents must be engaged in the process of discovering and developing strategies for supporting our businesses, our employers and our non-profits,” stated Mayor Nancy Michael. “Ultimately, planning, marketing, residential growth, job creation and business retention will impact our schools, tax rates, property values, and human and financial resources in a positive way.” There are two

#### **Citizen Survey Quotes**

*A few of over 100 comments!*

“I can impact lives in Greencastle.”

“...needs a fresh look.”

“We love it here.”

“Quit talking...do something.”

“Let's stir the water a bit.”

“It's difficult to be accepted.”

“Grow Greencastle, Grow.”

“...more restaurants.”

“...need YMCA/community center.”

“...housing situation is terrible.”

“I love working at DePauw.”

“...need more white collar jobs.”

“...a good community for retirement.”

“...the potential of Greencastle is excellent.”

ways for the community to become engaged in the beginning of this process. First, the public is invited to attend a community information session Thursday, June 8, 2006, 6:00-7:30 p.m. at the Greencastle Middle School. Further, residents can send comments and suggestions via e-mail to Greencastle Chamber of Commerce at [gchamber@ccrtc.com](mailto:gchamber@ccrtc.com).

As we've seen in the series of articles, perhaps the biggest short term test for Greencastle -- based on market research conducted for the Alliance -- is building favorable awareness within the community and Central Indiana. In May of 2005, the Hometown Alliance brainstormed a conceptual vision statement for Greencastle that has guided the development of the marketing project.

*A welcoming and progressive Midwestern community  
developing cultural, educational, technological, and  
recreational opportunities for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

*Greencastle, Indiana, our hometown, a community of  
choice valued by families and individuals for life and  
work and growth.*

While not providing the Alliance a vision, the survey results also provided a benchmark for the work to be done internally and externally to maintain our community foundations. However, Greencastle is not in a position to purchase millions, or even thousands, of dollars on marketing messages to change perceptions and build new ones. The request of the Alliance is for F2/Inc. to provide a distinct conceptual theme for a public relations effort demonstrating the strengths and opportunities of the community in an organized plan and budget that utilizes a variety of traditional and uncommon media and methods. "With limited resources, we must craft clever and effective strategies to improve Greencastle's image and communicate its brand," assured Lynne Fuller, F2, Inc project manager. "This must be accomplished using messages that can be adopted and supported by the entire community."

In June of 2005, the Alliance adopted a set of mission statements to strengthen the economic and social foundations of the greater Greencastle region:

Increase the image and awareness of opportunities and the quality of life in our community.

Encourage citizens and business to reside in and participate in the community.

Focus the community on a vision for the future.

Develop the resources necessary to incubate professional, highly-skilled employment opportunities for the information age.

Build and solidify the economic and social foundations of our community for government, business, and social concerns for the next generation.

“Clearly, Greencastle and the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) are sensing the same trends,” stated Bob Hutchings, local resident, member of the Citizens Advisory Council for Industrial Development (CACFID) and the IEDC. Recently The IEDC released a strategic plan that states a goal of meeting the national average in per capita income and average annual wages by 2020. The strategies the agency seeks to employ include creating improvements in Indiana’s skilled labor force and nurturing a culture of entrepreneurship. The list of tactics include “place-making” for Indiana communities – focusing on an improved quality of life through the development of community amenities and civic tolerance.

Increasingly, states, counties, cities and towns are realizing that companies go to, and grow from, places that offer a talent pool that meets their needs. Progressive economic development organizations are shifting their emphasis from business attraction to people attraction. Municipalities are also forming public-private partnerships with organizations outside the community that may have a stronger influence in the marketplace, a more regional approach between rural and urban areas that discourages destructive competition between localities.

Even though business incentives remain the most common form of local economic development, recent research indicates that business may in fact benefit more from governmental investment in infrastructure, workforce development, and quality of life than they do from tax breaks. Moreover, development professionals are beginning to recognize that job growth is largely determined by the success of local firms. There is a new focus on the role of government and private institutions in providing technical support and economic infrastructure to local businesses, and designing strategic plans that encourage their competitiveness.

For Greencastle, solutions might include – as they have in other successful cities and towns -- economic development concerns partnering with community development organizations to promote neighborhood revitalization and workforce development. They might also work with not-for-profits with expertise in combining social support, training, and community organizational skills.

Greencastle might also consider how tourism plays a part in both its awareness and amenity development strategy. To become familiar with a community, one probably needs to visit it. Towns that are popular with visitors are most often places that offer a desirable lifestyle, and vice versa: towns that offer a great sense of place for their residents are the same towns that attract visitors. The success stories aren't only in Florida, Texas, or California. Petoskey, Michigan, for example, has seen residential growth over the last decade from people who were once regular visitors. People simply fell for this place, with its more than 100 restored Victorian homes and a quaint downtown, and decided to move there. Greencastle and Putnam County already have a tourism economy, primarily driven by covered bridges, the Covered Bridge Festival and DePauw visitors. Additional tourism product and infrastructure development in Greencastle could be an important strategy for increasing awareness as well ensuring a sustainable residential base.

In the long term, the community will need to understand, develop, and invest in its "sense of community." Could Greencastle offer a more authentic version of the New Urbanism, but at a more affordable price? "Fake" towns spring up in a year or two and are populated by strangers -- all looks and no spirit -- which in time makes them common. Real towns have distinguishing character, history, and economic diversity; which makes them uncommon. Greencastle has the opportunity to become one of the best small towns in the Midwest.

Jim Wallis, an author, recounts the story of Lisa Sullivan, a young African American, an effective organizer of communities, who died at the age of 40. She inspired, mentored, and challenged people who complained that we don't have any leaders today and when asked where the Martin Luther King's are now, with the statement, "We are the ones we've been looking for." A powerful call to leadership and responsibility: a community's hope for the future.

This is the final story in a series of five articles that have appeared daily this week to share the findings from Phase I of the Hometown Greencastle Alliance's marketing and development plan. The entire series can be accessed on line at [www.bannergraphic.com](http://www.bannergraphic.com). and [www.gogreencastle.com](http://www.gogreencastle.com)