



## **FUTURE OF WORK AGENDA**

A Free Monthly Newsletter  
October, 2004

[www.thefutureofwork.net/](http://www.thefutureofwork.net/)

### **THIS MONTH'S HEADLINES**

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Click on any Headline to go to the full story.

#### **1. [FROM JIM AND CHARLIE](#)**

This is our personal note welcoming you to the October 2004 issue of *Future of Work Agenda* and setting our theme for the month. This time we're focused mostly on economic development – how population demographics are changing, and what that means for communities, talent, and employers.

#### **2. [ANNOUNCEMENTS](#)**

We're very pleased to announce that **Accenture** has just joined *Future of Work* as a corporate member. **Dan Johnson** is the executive sponsor. We also are announcing a new service offering aimed at helping economic development agencies and local communities turn themselves into "boomtowns." Gate3 WorkClub holds its Grand Opening October 7-8. And we are now **actively seeking sponsors** for the 2005 *World Congress on the Future of Work*.

#### **3. [FEATURE ARTICLE: MICROPOLISES ARE WHERE THE ACTION IS](#)**

This is the first in a new series of articles we will bring you this year. During the past few months we have become involved in a number of economic development efforts, mostly at the request of local officials, state agencies, and, yes, even some politicians. And we've learned a lot.

#### **4. [READER FEEDBACK](#)**

Our rant last month about the importance of social capital actually produced a constructive but challenging response from **CJ Ware** (full disclosure: he's Jim's son, and we're extremely proud to share his insight with the community).

#### **5. [BOOK REVIEW: BOOMTOWN, USA, BY JACK SCHULTZ](#)**

Subtitled "7-1/2 keys to big success in small towns," this intriguing book focuses on just what small and medium-sized towns and cities must do to share in the economic good times. Schultz coins the term "agurbs" as a label for those areas outside the major influence of metropolitan areas that have historically been agricultural in nature. But that is changing, he argues...

#### **6. [THE FUTURE OF WORK IS ALREADY HERE; IT JUST ISN'T EVENLY DISTRIBUTED](#)**

In one form or another, the future of work is already here. This regular section provides you with notes from all over the world – stories about what's happening somewhere today that provides clues to what will be happening everywhere tomorrow.

## 7. [IN OUR HUMBLE OPINION: IT'S TIME TO DO SOMETHING](#)

We end each issue of *Future of Work Agenda* with a personal perspective – our chance to comment on issues and developments in the world of work that we find important and interesting. This is our “editorial” page, where we enjoy offering our opinions and predictions about what’s happening (or should be happening) in the world of work.

### THE FULL STORIES

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#### 1) FROM JIM AND CHARLIE

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Fall officially arrived last week (at least in the northern hemisphere) and the air is getting crisper, the leaves drier, and the days shorter (it even snowed recently in the Sierra Nevada mountains). And the pace of business has definitely picked up after the traditional August “lull.”

So too has our energy level. We’re *gearing up* for next Spring’s *World Congress on the Future of Work*, we’re *charged up* by the addition of **Accenture** to our *Future of Work* community, and we’re *jazzed up* by our new focus on economic and community development.

You see, we’ve recently realized that for the last several years we’ve been focused almost exclusively on the “demand” side of the talent equation.

We’ve been shouting from the rooftops to corporate executives (like many of you who read this newsletter) that things are changing – workforce demographics (and therefore values and interests), technology capabilities, workspace designs and usage patterns, and even the very nature of work (from an industrial focus on making things cheaper than anyone else to an information-age focus on thinking more creatively than anyone else).

We want you corporate types to start planning and managing for the new world that’s right around the corner (actually, it’s already here).

But while all that is still incredibly important, our recent work has brought us into much more intimate contact with the “supply” side of the same talent equation – the community developers and leaders who “manage” the cities and towns where all that talent you employers are looking for is choosing to live (although we’re not really sure that anything like a city or town can really be “managed”).

However, we’ve been reminded that the quality of residential communities isn’t a given, and that town leaders actually can do all kinds of things to make their geographic location more attractive to the kind of creative talent that is beginning to dominate our economy.

So that’s what our newfound focus on economic development is all about. We’re working with several community leaders to help them develop strategies that will make their areas more attractive to high-quality talent – and that in turn will help us provide more value to employer organizations as well.

With that, here’s what this issue is all about:

Our Feature Article, "[Micropolises are Where the Action Is](#)," focuses on a new-fangled economic statistic the United States Census Bureau is now using, the identification of "micropolises" around the country.

Charlie's [Book Review](#) discusses Jack Schultz's *Boomtown*, which offers "7-1/2" things you can do to turn your community into a roaring growth engine; and our monthly rant, "[It's Time to Do Something](#)" challenges you – our dearly beloved readers – to take your community's future into your own hands.

And scattered among all that you'll find our regular sections: [Announcements](#), [Reader Feedback](#), and [The Future is Already Here](#).

So, on to the rest of the newsletter. Enjoy! And let us know what you think.

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### 2) ANNOUNCEMENTS

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#### **Accenture Joins the Future of Work Program**

We're very pleased to announce that **Accenture** has signed up as a corporate member of *Future of Work* for the 2004/5 program year.

**Dan Johnson**, Global Director of Accenture's Corporate Real Estate Workplace program, will be the executive sponsor. He is currently sorting out who the other Accenture representatives will be.

Based in Accenture's San Francisco office, Dan heads a global team of five workplace strategists who develop policies and standards for housing and provisioning Accenture's worldwide staff of over 80,000 professionals. His thoughtful questions and insightful perspectives will be a welcome addition to our ongoing conversations about the future of work

Please join us in welcoming Dan, his team, and all of Accenture to the *Future of Work* community!

#### **Work Design Collaborative Announces New Community Development Service**

Elsewhere in this issue ([In Our Humble Opinion](#)) we have set forth a challenge to communities and businesses to improve themselves by focusing on economic development, or what we like to call "building social capital."

We have to answer our own challenge, and tell you just what we are going to do about the issues and opportunities we've described. As usual, we will be providing the members of the *Future of Work* community with improved access to analytical tools, a social network of experts, and the knowledge we derive from our own research.

But we are also developing a more focused approach and service offering aimed specifically at economic development agencies and executives around the country.

The Work Design Collaborative's foray into this new area of inquiry starts with answers to some basic questions. These are questions we can help you answer today.

1. What are the characteristics of both general and local labor demand for the next five to ten years (i.e., skills, competencies, compensation profiles)?
2. What "hidden talent" currently exists in your regional labor pool?
3. What infrastructure will be required to support the emerging new world of work (i.e., technology, physical plant, transportation, tax incentives)?
4. What public policy programs will be required to support the workforce of the future?
5. What is the readiness of local communities to develop themselves into "talent magnets"?

Our plan is to develop a new set of analytic, quantitative tools that will help local officials develop high-potential communities, build a business case for investment, and specify the physical and social resources necessary to connect local talent with global needs. We believe many of these same tools will also assist corporate executives making locational decisions to locate those high-potential communities and tap all that "hidden talent."

If you are interested in working with us to develop these new tools, or apply them to your community, please contact [Charlie Grantham](#) directly.

### **We're seeking Sponsors for the 2005 *World Congress on the Future of Work***

We invite you and your organization to participate as a select partner in the presentation of the second annual *World Congress on the Future of Work*.

The 2005 World Congress will be held **April 26 – 28, 2005**, in Philadelphia, hosted and co-sponsored by the **General Services Administration**.

This incomparable, invitation-only executive forum will bring together more than 120 director and C-level decision-makers in the fields of human resources, IT, and operations/facilities management from the world's leading organizations, all joining together to craft a set of design principles that will enable organizations to make the vision of the future of work real in their organizations.

We look forward to an historic meeting venue in our nation's first capital, in the shadow of Independence Hall, and including a tour of one of the GSA's innovative new facilities that make the future come alive right now.

If you are interested in becoming a Sponsor partner of *Future of Work* for the World Congress please download the 2005 Sponsorship Prospectus: [2005 World Congress on the Future of Work Prospectus](#)

We offer several different levels of sponsorship opportunity. Please direct inquiries about Sponsorship of the World Congress to:

Jen McClure  
Albrycht-McClure Partners  
Phone: (510) 796-1475  
[jenm@ampcomm.com](mailto:jenm@ampcomm.com)

### **Gate3 WorkClub Grand Opening is October 7-8**

*Future of Work* member **Neil Goldberg** is pleased to announce the grand opening of **Gate 3 WorkClub** – a premier example of a “third place.” Gate 3 WorkClub is located in the San Francisco Bay Area at 1285 66th St. (at Hollis), Emeryville, California.

There was also a wonderful story about Gate3 in the September 26 issue of the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Click [here](#) to read the story online, or [here](#) to download a pdf copy of the Chronicle story.

**PARTY:** Thursday, October 7, 6-9PM. Complimentary wine, hors d'oeuvres, live jazz, and WorkClub tours.

**TALK:** Friday, October 8, 8:30-10AM. Complimentary continental breakfast and WorkClub tours. **Michela O'Connor Abrams**, President & Publisher of [Dwell Magazine](#), will speak on "New Spaces to Work Better, Live Better."

Gate 3 WorkClub is a flexible, “out of the office” workspace, designed to meet your needs - whether you work for a corporation or for yourself. In a beautiful 14,000 square-foot environment full of natural light and the latest furnishings from Herman Miller, Gate 3 WorkClub members discover an alternative to noisy cafes and the isolation of home offices.

*Gate 3 offers all the services of a corporate office:* T-1, WiFi, workstations, conference rooms, expert IT and administrative support, copiers, printers, phone, mail service and more. *Members can work solo, mingle with a diverse group of colleagues, or take a Gate 3 Learning Community class to enhance their businesses or their personal lives.*

For more information about membership and the grand opening, go directly to the Gate 3 website, [www.gate-3.com](http://www.gate-3.com).

### **Future of Work Program Actively Seeks Individual and Small Business Members**

*Future of Work* now offers several levels of membership that depend on your status and needs: *Individual and Small Business, Corporate, and Implementation Partners*. We also offer special discounts to nonprofit, educational, and public sector organizations.

These membership programs are described in more detail on the [Future of Work website](#), or feel free to [contact us](#) directly for more information about fees and benefits.

Our newest individual member is **Becky Porter**, Chief Information Officer of Multnomah County, Oregon. Welcome Becky!

All individual members of our community are now listed on the *Future of Work* website, in the [About Us/Members](#) section. We encourage all our readers to consider joining the community.

Please visit our website and apply for membership today.

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### 3) FEATURE ARTICLE: *MICROPOLISES ARE WHERE THE ACTION IS*

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*By Charlie Grantham and Jim Ware*

This is the first in a new series of articles we will bring you this year. During the past few months we have become involved in a number of economic development efforts, mostly at the request of local officials, state agencies, and, yes, even some politicians.

Not that we are without total experience in the area (see for example Bressler and Grantham, [Communities of Commerce](#), McGraw-Hill, 2000), but we didn't actively seek out this niche.

So, you may be asking, "Just what does economic development have to do with the future of work?" In our opinion, economic development represents the supply side of the talent equation. You business types who are concerned with recruiting and retaining quality talent – the demand side – know you have to pay attention to where that talent is, and where it's going to be in the future. Well, the economic development folks are the ones who focus on attracting and retaining both talent and your business operations to their specific geographic area.

Since we're now hearing from both sides of this equation, and in keeping with the spirit of this newsletter we thought this would be a good time to say something about just *where* we believe work in the future will take place.

Traditionally, economic development was characterized by the public service equivalent of the white-shoed used car salesman. "Come on down, bring your factory (or, more recently, your Wal-Mart) to our nice little suburb." What we see happening with the evolving future of work is going to change that approach, and rather dramatically.

We have pointed out time and time again that workers (especially highly-talented and in-demand knowledge workers) are going to migrate to *where* they want to live first, and then economic opportunity will follow.

One of our patron saints, Richard Florida, was one of the first to document this new migration pattern in his now-classic [The Rise of the Creative Class](#). Joel Kotkin in his book on the [New Geography](#) ([reviewed in these pages](#) just last month) was another pioneer.

A new spate of like-minded tomes has appeared more recently: [Boom Town USA](#) by Jack Schultz ([reviewed by Charlie this month](#), below) and [Life 2.0](#) by Rich Karlgaard are among the best. (By the way, for the record, the links embedded here will take you to each book's description on the Amazon.com website. We offer these links merely as a convenience to our readers; we have absolutely no financial interest in whether you buy any of the books we mention, or where you buy them).

Just where are these oases of talent going to be? Each of these authors offers a different perspective. And we think they are all right in one way or another. One of our research pathways this year is going to include putting a little more specificity on how the economic development profession, and the public they serve, can identify emerging talent centers around the country (and the globe, for that matter). We want to help communities morph themselves into places where people want to live and raise their families; that will help bring the economic prosperity of the new world of work to those areas.

So we're going to start in one of the least likely places to get a clue about what's going on in the labor market in the United States: The Bureau of Census. Talk about dry, those guys sometimes seem to have invented boredom. As a young graduate student one of us (Charlie) relished working with census data precisely because it was so unglamorous. Almost no one was interested in "economic geography" as it was called back then. It was easy to find something new because very few people were looking at the data at all (and that's a terrific opportunity for a graduate student).

Well, just over a year ago, in the summer of 2003, the Census Bureau actually created a new geographic classification. We have all heard of Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSA's), rural areas, cities and megapolises. Now, believe it or not, we have a new designation to contend with: *micropolitan* areas.

First let's talk about what micropolises are and then why we find the concept so fascinating. A micropolitan area is defined as a geographic location that has at least one town of between 10,000 and 50,000 people, with proportionately few residents working outside the area (see <http://www.census.gov/population/www/estimates/00-32997.pdf> for details).

These are not suburbs. These are typically those areas lying slightly beyond the influence of the much larger SMSA's. Says Michael Ratcliffe of the Census Bureau: "Out in the vast nonmetropolitan part of the country, there are urban population centers that are quite important. Some of these communities were in effect lost to our analysis."

Where are these micropolises? Actually, they're all over the country. Try Granbury, Texas; Defiance, Ohio; Alamogordo, New Mexico; and Elko, Nevada, to name just a few examples. There are 567 of these micropolitan areas in the United States; 28 million people live in them. Over the last decade the total population growth across those 567 micropolises was 8%, well below the 13% for the United States as a whole.

If you want all the details go to <http://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/phc-t29.html>.

But that average of 8% conceals some major differences among the micropolitan areas. 16% of them actually experienced negative growth rates. But a number of them were actually "boom towns." 30%, or 215 of them, have had above-average population growth rates, while 38 specific locations each grew at 30% or more in the last decade. Now that's an economic developer's dream!

Why are these micropolitan areas so important? Two things strike us. First, these are areas that talented people (the key future work force) will find attractive. These areas are, and will continue to be, the first stops (and often the last as well) on their migration journeys.

Now, admittedly, it's a bit more complicated than that. You have to take many more factors into consideration, but if you could combine the key ideas in everyone's work in this arena and throw in a couple of social capital indices, you'd be most of the way towards figuring out what the geographic landscape of the future work force will look like by the next census in 2010. That's our task for the coming year.

But it is perhaps even more important to stop and think about why the US Census even bothered to go through all those machinations to create this whole new category. It's the money! The re-distribution of wealth and investment in developing social capital in the United States takes places through a process in which funds move to geographically defined areas. You can't send tax dollars (or private investments either) to New York

City unless there is a specific location called “New York City.” It’s like you can’t get a letter unless you have a street address or a PO box number.

Now these high-growth, high attractor areas have an “address” where the investors and the public officials can send the check. And it hasn’t been lost on Federal, State, and local governments (and politicians) that these micropolitan areas are becoming far more politically active as the population demographics shift in their direction. There’s a lot of votes out there, folks (and, of course, tax revenue potential as well).

We believe these micropolitan areas, and nearby smaller metro areas, will be the final destination of the migrating talent in the US over the coming decade. They are the hot spots – and the cool communities – to watch.

We’ll be writing more about these new communities and the talent that’s moving there, and why, in future months. And we’re committed to digging out more information about that talent and how corporate folks can find and leverage it, whether you ever locate an actual corporate facility there or not.

And, as always, we invite your commentary and opinions. What’s been your experience with these independent, small “micropolitan” areas? Do you live in one? Are you looking for one? We’d love to tell your stories in the coming months.

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**4) READER FEEDBACK**

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*This is where we reprint letters and comments from our readers. We actively encourage everyone to let us know what you think of our articles, book reviews, rants, and anything else related to the future of work. We also encourage you to become a regular reader of, and contributor to, our weblog. That’s an even better place for ongoing conversations about the issues we are all facing every day.*

Here’s a comment from **CJ Ware** (Jim’s son), reflecting on our [September 1 rant](#) about the need to make building social capital an important goal of public policy (and practice):

“I agree with everything you are saying here and like the concept [of social capital], but what does it really look like, and how would it really work? Our government at this point doesn’t seem to even acknowledge the concept of capital, even in a simple accounting sense.

I live the idea and can’t help but feel like it is in some way tied in with evolving towards “full cost” accounting.

Thanks for all the hard work, CJ”

*We completely agree with you, CJ. The government seems to have no sense at all of what capital is, whether it’s investments in buildings, roads, military equipment, operational capability, or people. Perhaps the first step in transforming our thinking about social capital is to start accounting for public tangible capital like roads and buildings the same way private businesses do and recognizing that at least a portion our past tax dollars have actually created something of lasting value. We do indeed need to move to “full cost” accounting. Thanks for the insight!*

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**5) BOOK REVIEW: *BOOMTOWN USA***  
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by Jack Schultz (National Association of Industrial and Office Properties, 2004)

*Reviewed by Charlie Grantham*

Subtitled “7 1/2 keys to big success in small towns,” Schultz’s book focuses on just what small and medium-sized towns and cities must do to share in the economic good times.

Schultz coins the term “agurbs” as a label for a new kind of economic development. “Agurbs” are those areas outside the major influence of metropolitan areas that have historically been agricultural in nature. But that is changing, he argues, as more and more people seek a good life in these outlying areas. The population is moving and economic development is sure to follow. However, Schultz cautions that not every community will prosper. If they are to compete successfully in this new kind of development market, Schultz suggests that cities must:

1. Adopt a “can do” attitude;
2. Shape their vision;
3. Leverage their resources;
4. Raise up strong leaders;
5. Encourage an entrepreneurial approach;
6. Maintain local control;
7. Build their brand; and
- 7½. Embrace the teeter-totter factor.

We won’t steal Schultz’s thunder here; rather, we encourage you to buy the book to find out more about his seven and one-half keys to success. The “teeter-totter” factor is especially interesting.

But there are some really interesting facts in the book. Consider these:

From 1990 to 2000 metro areas produced 10% of the population growth and 9% of jobs in the United States. In contrast, “agurbs” produced 20% of the population growth and a stunning 24% of employment growth! Well, what about high-tech areas like Silicon Valley, Austin, TX, and those other creative-class Mecca’s?

Here’s the real kicker. High-tech areas (much like metro areas) gave the United States another 10% of population growth but just 12% of employment gains. The Top 100 agurbs (in terms of growth rates) showed a 28% increase in population and 32% of job gains. That means that one in three new jobs in the United States over the last decade came from the top 100 agurb areas.

No wonder we are so hot on those “micropolitan” areas we discussed last month (see this month’s [feature article](#), above). There is a very high positive correlation between Schultz’s “agurbs” and the Census Bureau micropolitan areas.

Where are these agurb areas? In terms of density per state the highest number of them are found in Colorado, Wisconsin, Michigan, North Carolina, and Georgia. Hmm, interesting political implications here. Texas, Minnesota, Missouri, and other mid-western states also rank high on the index.

The implications seem rather obvious for economic development professionals. Look to areas that are characterized by high-quality communities; don't focus on low wage rates and tax incentives.

We are particularly intrigued by Schultz's work because he seems to say that real job creation is occurring exactly where we would predict: in areas that have high quality of life and clean environments, and that tend to be non-urban. Duh! Not only are people moving to these areas (according to the US Census), but they are becoming centers of job creation and, hence, wealth. We think Schultz is definitely on to something here.

What this book does is provide a primer for community leaders in these areas. His message is simple: get with the program or be left behind. When we look at Schultz's seven (and one half) factors we see qualities that separate successful developing areas from those that are not successful. And to loop back to our lead article, it is precisely these factors that make a difference between micropolitan areas that flounder (almost 50% of them) from those that are growing at tremendous rates.

*Boomtown* is another must-read if you are at all concerned about building social capital in your community. And Jack Schultz's checklist of keys to success may lead community leaders to an honest evaluation about whether they are positioned to succeed in tomorrow's economic reality.

And if I'm a corporate real estate executive or relocation specialist, guess what my first seven (and one half) questions will be about when the Mayor and Chamber of Commerce hosts me for dinner in West By God, Anystate, USA?

*Boomtown* is available online from Amazon.com at [this link](#).

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### **6) THE FUTURE OF WORK IS ALREADY HERE**

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*In one form or another, the future of work is being written about, discussed and debated, and experienced all over the world. Below are just a few references to recent reports and commentary we've come across (each of these reports **has already been posted** on our [Future of Work weblog](#); the best way to stay really current is to [check the blog](#) regularly).*

#### **Philadelphia: One Big Hot Spot?**

The city of Philadelphia is considering investing \$10 million in a city-wide WiFi network that would enable anyone in the greater metropolitan area to log on to the Internet - for free.

There have been a number of stories in the press about this idea over the past several weeks. The most recent, and one of the best we've found, appeared several weeks ago in [eCommerce Times](#). See "[Philadelphia Plan Would Give WiFi Access to the Whole City](#)."

As the author, David B. Caruso, points out, a free city-wide hot spot would give traditional ISP's like Verizon and Comcast severe competition. Why pay \$40 - \$50 a month for an Internet hookup when you can get a wireless connection for free anywhere in the city?

We're sure that fact alone will make Philadelphia's concept controversial, at least within the business community.

But we're even more interested in the possibilities that a wide-area wireless network opens up. Consider these questions:

How would a free network like this affect the conduct of business? Would meetings start happening anywhere and everywhere?

Will WiFi foster a new growth spurt in small businesses? The reduced cost and ease of Internet access will lower the barriers to entry for many startups.

How will this kind of access affect the already booming growth of distributed work? Businesses won't have to debate with their employees any longer about who will pay for home office high speed access.

What do you think? Send your comments to [comments@futureofwork.net](mailto:comments@futureofwork.net).

### **The Demographic Time Bomb**

The [New York Times](#) on August 29 included two stories about the aging population and workforce:

1. "[Coming Soon: The Vanishing Work Force](#)"  
(summary only; full article available for purchase from the *Times* archives)
2. "[Demographic 'Bomb' May Only Go 'Pop'!](#)"

There's no question that in the next few years the "fit" between the jobs the economy has to offer and the people available to do those jobs is going to shift dramatically. To be short and sweet, the aging Baby Boomers will be leaving the full-time traditional workforce in such great numbers over the next ten years that there will be a massive shortage of skilled talent.

And birth rates have declined so drastically in recent years that in many developed countries the total population will drop significantly over the next several decades – their citizens just aren't reproducing fast enough to replace themselves.

Combine that coming reality with the frustration and dissatisfaction that many workers already feel about their current work situation, and employers are going to be in an incredible bind. Some surveys indicate that over 50% of current workers (and managers) are so unhappy with their current employer that as soon as the economy picks up a bit more, they expect to have their résumés on the street as they look for better opportunities elsewhere.

It really is about to be a whole new world.

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## **7) IN OUR HUMBLE OPINION: IT'S TIME TO DO SOMETHING**

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*Commentary by Charlie Grantham and Jim Ware*

This whole newsletter has been devoted to the topic of economic development. It's an area we have decided to focus on because, guess what? People are calling and asking us to do this kind of work.

We'd like to tell you we were really gifted, foresighted, just plain smart, and saw this one coming. But, nah, to tell the truth, it didn't work that way. We got several phone calls that pulled us into conversation with economic development specialists – and at least we were awake enough to say, "Hey, there's something going on here."

Now that we have slapped ourselves on the forehead and said, "Whoa, looky here: this is a way to focus on where the jobs of the future will be," it's time to figure out what to do about our new knowledge.

So this month our rant is *very* simple. We're asking *you*, "What are *you* going to do to build more social capital in your community?" Or, if you represent a corporation that needs new talent, the question becomes, "What are you going to do to find the communities where the talent is congregating?"

The timing for these questions couldn't be more perfect, as we are in the final stages of an election here in the United States. Both sides are slinging mud back and forth, trading insults, obfuscating (we learned that word in college), and generally displaying behaviors that would get an 8-year old in trouble. A little clarity, folks!! One more time: What are you going to do?

Well, we at least are not waiting for answers from Washington DC or our local State capitols. Because those answers will arrive about the same time that the famous place way down under freezes over.

These developing communities we're discovering and writing about that are going to be the homes, and havens, for the talent our economy will need, are going to be a grass roots affair. We've been out there giving our speeches, watching others do the same, and listening carefully. What we hear over and over again from our clients is one simple plea: "What do we need to do?"

We're not looking at a replay of the Beverly Hillbillies here, people. The talent is there. What's missing is *direction*.

Remember that game you used to play as a kid (assuming that you are an adult now) where you would blindfold someone, spin them around a bunch of times, and then let them go so you could watch them wander into trees, water-filled ditches, and cow pies?

Well, take that image and think of communities in America as being in the same state of affairs. They are still being twisted around, but the turning is about to stop. We've heard it all before from the likes of Richard Florida, Rebecca Ryan, Joel Kotkin, and now, more recently, from Jack Schultz (see the [book review](#), above) and of course, our humble selves.

What we are challenging *you* to do now is to be someone who grabs your own community and points it in the right direction before your town leaders go butt over teacups into the ditch and manure patch (pardon the language, but we're in metaphor

mode this month). In a way we're throwing down the gauntlet about leadership. The two of us can't go out there and become the leaders of all these communities. But perhaps you can. Or at least, you can help figure out a way to develop the leadership that is required.

Big deal, you say? The times they are a-changing, baby. Nobody is going to parachute into West Wacklehack and go "poof, everything is now hunky-dory."

And the great bobble-head bureaucratator isn't going to wave a royal hand, sprinkle fairy dust all over your local "micropolis," and double employment overnight. Nope, we're afraid it's got to be *you*, babycakes, that makes that happen.

So, there's the question. What are *you* going to do about this incredibly important challenge/opportunity? We'll be back with some more specific ideas and suggestions of our own in another month....

But please let us know what you dream up. If we get enough people out there off their duffs and actually making stuff happen we'll open a community dialog about it on our weblog.

If not, we'll just keep shuffling down the road kicking over more rocks and kissing more frogs...

All comments should be directed to [comments@thefutureofwork.net](mailto:comments@thefutureofwork.net). We'd love to publish your thoughts and suggestions.

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This issue of *Future of Work Agenda* was produced by Jim Ware and Charlie Grantham of the Work Design Collaborative, LLC.

We encourage your comments, suggestions, and submission of materials for possible future publication. Please contact us at:

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