

# **MEDIA ANNOUNCEMENT**

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September 7, 2007

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## **Will our young people choose to work in Green County? The Future of Green County to be Discussed October 11**

If you are a graduate of a Green County high school, think for a minute. What percentage of your graduating class still lives and works in Green County? If you work in Green County, what percentage of your fellow workers are between the ages of 25 and 45?

Now picture what the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development predicts for the year 2020—13 years from now. Their estimate, from their Green County Workforce Profile—2000-2020, states, “The share of the population over 55 years old in 2020 will increase from 23.4 percent in 2000 to 32 percent in 2020 as the population under 20 years old declines from 28.8 percent to 25.3 percent.”

Where will all the young workers go? That is the question that companies nation-wide are asking right now. Rebecca Ryan, Next Generation Consulting, will lead Green County residents in just such a discussion on Thursday, October 11 at 7 PM at the Monroe High School Performing Arts Center. Ryan is a dynamic and energizing speaker. She was named *Communicator of the Year* by Women in Communication. Her company does consulting to help companies and communities realize what they have, what the Generation X workforce needs and how to retain and draw that workforce to their company and community.

Companies in Green County are looking ahead at what they want to accomplish, how they want to grow and where they will get the workforce to fuel that growth.

For companies like Swiss Colony, Kuhn Knight, Inc. and Monroe Clinic, a creative educated workforce is vital to their health and growth.

“We have some very sophisticated and proprietary technologies that really give us an edge in the direct marketing industry, but, in the end, it still comes down to people,” said John Baumann, president of The Swiss colony, Inc. “It still comes down to the team, the vision, the willingness of people to work hard and stay focused on moving the ball forward so the company can grow.”

In 2005, four members of the Green County Leaders Class studied the issue of “Brain Drain,” reporting statistics and making suggestions for keeping Green County’s young workers in the area. In their report, they asked high school guidance counselors if they kept records on their graduates and if they knew whether their graduates returned to the area. Although most counselors felt that students wanted to return to Green County after leaving to pursue four-year degrees, they reported that 50 percent of the students leave Green County to pursue 4-year degrees.

For the students that stay in the area, Blackhawk Technical College offers a good option for young adults, according to BTC Monroe Campus Dean Christine Wellington. Statistics from BTC show that 72.4 percent of the students that graduate from programs at BTC find jobs in the Green-Rock County area.

The “Brain Drain” study identified two issues that that are very important to bringing our young workforce back to the county. After surveying the schools, they reported that even the administrators believed that there was not enough opportunity for students in Green County. The Green County businesses are perceived to be small or insignificant relative to national peers, which leads to the thought that there is more opportunities elsewhere. Yet, how many large companies in Green County were started by a resident entrepreneur? Students, teachers and parents can be challenged to look at how our Green County businesses rank relative to national peers. “When students and teachers realize what kind of important businesses reside in their backyards they will have a seed planted in their minds to more seriously consider Green County businesses when they start a job search,” noted “Brain Drain authors Luke Buholzer, Ryan Kubly, Kevin Callahan, Patty James and Amanda Kloepping.

Second, the group reported a local negative perception to working in the same community where you grew up. The group felt that students should be challenged to

consider making a difference in the community that gave them their start in life. Interestingly enough, most of the “Brain Drain” team are young people who chose to return to Green County to work and live.

Wellington and others feel that it is important for students to experience the “big world” but would like the students to bring what they have learned back to the Green County area. And in bringing our own back, we can attract other young workers to the area.

“But as important as it is to bring those young people, we don’t want to forget the people that stay here,” Wellington said. “They people are a very important asset to our community. We need to make sure that we have opportunities for personal and professional growth here in Green County. Blackhawk Technical College is working to make sure those opportunities are there for our current residents and for those who return to the county.”

This Future Forward! Green County event is open to anyone interested in taking action to ensure the future of Green County’s businesses, schools, organizations and communities. Green County Development Corporation is able to bring this event to Green County without charge because of a generous grant from the R. Kubly Family Foundation. The goal of the R. Kubly Family Foundation is to increase the quality of life in Green County by increasing the number of highly educated individuals living and working in the area.

For more information about the Future Forward! initiative, please contact Green County Development Corporation at 608-328-9452 or by email at [gcdc@tds.net](mailto:gcdc@tds.net).

The Green County Development Corporation (GCDC), a multi-jurisdictional economic development corporation, was formed to bring professional economic development expertise to its member communities to create a competitive advantage to spur job creation and new investments. The organization leverages the resources of the county and its municipalities to ensure economic health and success of Green County communities and businesses. Visit the GCDC web site at [www.GreenCountyEDC.com](http://www.GreenCountyEDC.com).