

People First: Building Sustainable Communities

Action Strategies

Group #1: Economic Development

I. How do we make development work for the people and be conservation based, i.e. sustainable?

1. More emphasis on education (basic training and research) for the future.
2. Need a mechanism to communicate revolutionary ideas.
3. Productive workers earning wages at or above the national average.
4. Promote economic development that uses and conserves Louisiana's abundant resources.

II. What do we do about subsidies?

1. Consistent, visible criteria for subsidies.
2. Accountability program to track performance of subsidy recipients.
3. Study/review of subsidy programs with full citizen participation.
4. Subsidies only when benefits to Louisianians outweigh costs (full cost accounting).
5. List and report criteria for subsidies.
6. SECURE recommended phasing out the 10 year industrial property tax exemption
7. Shift taxes from "goods" to "bads."
8. Eliminate energy pricing subsidies.

III. Should the state provide increased support for small businesses? How should this be done?

1. Eliminate enterprise zones that do not meet sustainability criteria (jobs, accountability, environmental impact, resource conservation).
2. Shift preference for subsidies from big to small businesses.
3. Open up all aspects of economic development processes and programs.

Group #2: Energy

I. How do we gain the best, most efficient use of our energy resources to maximize public benefits?

Promote least cost planning.

II. How do we promote energy efficiency?

Declare war on subsidies.

III. What is the role of energy taxes, e.g. Senator Foster's proposed tax on processing?

To balance out costs that are now subsidized.

IV. Other ideas

1. Global warming: Louisiana has the most to lose (4500 square miles equivalent to an area slightly smaller than Connecticut) by the year 2100. To forestall this problem we should:

a. Tax sources of greenhouse gases.

b. Promote natural gas, energy efficiency, and renewables. Louisiana has abundant natural gas reserves, so it has the most to gain by this policy.

2. Deregulation: Will likely be bad for residential customers and the environment. No bailout, i.e. utilities should not be allowed to recoup their stranded nuclear investments by charging customers artificially high prices for energy.

Group #3: Waste and Pollution

Overall Issues

1. Reduce by not creating waste in the first place.
2. Use alternative sources of energy such as solar.
3. Change corporate charters to require reduction of waste.

I. What are the best ways to reduce waste and encourage materials efficiency?

1. Develop mechanisms to enable local government to utilize private business to reduce and recycle solid waste stream such as yard waste.(Yard waste 20% of waste stream in New Orleans.)
2. Encourage closed loop systems material - recycle - make recycled products.
3. Start recycling at home.
4. Identify companies that accept recyclables.
5. Require government entities to recycle (white paper). [City of NO - Recycles white paper.]
6. Cost of product should include disposal or recycling costs.
7. Local government should mandate all the businesses that use garbage disposal companies must also recycle (bottles, paper, newspaper, aluminum, steel).

8. Encourage creativity for use and marketing of these materials and their byproducts.
9. Educate the community on places that accept recyclables. (Delta Greens have that in their publication.)
10. Environmental director (in New Orleans?) to work with utilities to include education information in utility bills.
11. Go into schools, community, civic groups, elected offices to provide information on issues and counter " Recycling Does Not Help" message.
12. Mandate pollution prevention for big waste producers to encourage them to stop production of the most toxic kinds of waste.

II. Are there economic incentives we want that will reduce waste and pollution?

1. Tax pollutants and waste.
2. Tax incentive for pollution prevention!
3. Provide incentives for green industry.
4. Tax incentives should go towards companies that use recycled goods and reuse materials (such as coke bottles & milk bottles).
5. Tax those that do not recycle products they produce, such as paper companies, plastics companies, and tire companies.
6. Get rid of bad tax incentives.

III. What is the role of traditional environmental regulations and enforcement?

1. Remove enforcement from political influence.
2. Insure IT is implemented in every agency.
3. Enforcement should be separate from permit (totally different agency).
4. Oversight of enforcement at the local level by local people.
5. Education of District Attorney on their authority to deal with these issues.
6. Enforcement of existing laws by the appropriate agencies.
7. NAFTA and GATT have taken local control away. Remove preemption and let local government protect themselves.

IV. How do we use economics to address these issues?

1. Zero Discharge results in economic advantage.
2. Industry can select technologies - companies can do it the most economically.
3. 10 year plan, establish guidelines, monitor internally as well as public and industry. Regulators would have to do less monitoring.
4. Use trade and tariffs as tools to keep products out of country that are produced in an unsafe manner.
5. Develop economic issues to be used in permitting, compliance and legislative arenas by environmental community.

6. Develop alternatives that include economic aspects: for example, present the true economics of incineration to the public. (St. Charles)
7. Use economic data to present the true picture on proposed environmental facilities.
8. Reform the government, traditional - regulation and enforcement does not work well and are in fact licenses to pollute.
9. Need real examples of industries that do work economically.
10. Demonstrate viable alternatives.
11. Three areas in Vermilion Parish available for economic development due to EPA clean up. Encourage companies to participate in economic development in the area.
12. Economic development improves where the environment is clean.
13. Citizens need to go beyond what the government can do for us.
 - a. Government Watch Dog Group
 - b. Educate legislators with the facts.
 - c. Call and say thank you to legislators.
 - d. Do not be ugly to legislators.

Group #4: Information and Technical Resources

I. What kinds of information and technical resources do groups need?

1. Insurance rates/cost for given areas (zip codes, census block).
2. Medical costs per area.
3. Changes in property values per area (10 years-20 years-30 years).
4. Compare technology from state to state.
5. Sources that explain how to gather information and do research.
6. Profiles of existing and proposed facilities.
7. Descriptions of how siting decisions made by: (a) companies, (b) chambers of commerce (c) governments.
8. An outline of the responsibilities of city/state/parish regarding publicizing information about proposed facilities.
9. Clearinghouse of case studies on victories and defeats and persons involved.
10. Databases on the following subjects that are on line, searchable, and user-friendly. Also need hard copies for those without computer resources:
 - a. cancer
 - b. TRI
 - c. Dept. of Economic Development and tax breaks given
 - d. permit reporting data
 - e. news media (reporters and stations), whether they are friendly or unfriendly.
 - Need this for responding to stories and correcting misinformation
 - f. pesticides: the health impacts, ingredients, sales, and uses
 - g. asthma
 - h. school absenteeism broken out by parish

- i. health impacts of: (1) household products, (2) toxics in end products, (3) chemicals
- j. spills and releases and the resultant fines and enforcement actions
- k. fishing advisories
- l. financial impacts of water pollution
- m. workers health and accidents
- n. technical resources (people)
- o. legislative information (bills, lobbyists, etc.)
- p. campaign finances and contributions
- q. social, economic and environmental rankings and benchmarks.

II. Where do we get this information?

1. RTK Net, school boards, state Dept. of Education, bureaucracies.
2. Enact legislation to get it.
3. Continuing education on how to access databases, which databases are available, etc.
4. Universities, think tanks, other organizations, NGOs.
5. Intensive education, workshops, etc. for grassroots organizations and citizens.

III. What is the role of NGOs?

1. Train
2. Simplify
3. Make information accessible
4. Move the process, make government and industry do what they are supposed to do.
5. Provide speakers and technical experts.
6. Make information, laws, enforcement process, etc. transparent.
7. Disseminate information via web pages and networking.
8. Organizing.
9. Research.
10. Secure financial resources to carry out the projects.

IV. What would be the best of all possible worlds concerning information and technical resources?

1. Every interested member of every group should have a computer, modem, fax, and be on-line.
2. Government should provide subsidies to NGOs that equal industry subsidies.
3. Timely information in an available format.
4. Equal access to expert resources.

V. Economics to address the issues

1. Long-term commitment from foundations to support a sustainable community in Louisiana.
2. Correlate worker productivity with clean environment.
3. Pit small businesses against big businesses (use issues of tax subsidies).
4. Appeal to the special interests of different types of industries.
5. Try to get Bell South to provide free Internet service to NGOs.
6. Encourage green businesses by developing clients, demand for services and products, etc.

VI. It's the Education Stupid!