

## Presentation of the Innovators

June 1 , 4:00-4:30 pm

***Instructions:*** You will give a brief introduction, followed by recognition of each Innovator program. During the recognition portion, you will read a brief description of the program and invite the program representatives to the stage to receive a certificate. Jim Clinton will hand you the certificate to present to each Innovator after you finish reading the description of their program. Governors Huckabee, Warner and Henry will come up to present their states' programs with certificates, so you will not present certificates to Arkansas, Virginia or Oklahoma programs. Program representatives will return to their seats after they have been recognized and you will continue with the next program. After all programs have been recognized, you will give brief closing remarks to encourage attendees to talk with and learn from the Innovators at the reception that follows.

We are excited about the opportunity to showcase programs from across the South that demonstrate innovative approaches to engaging citizens and developing leaders for the betterment of our region. Each governor was invited to nominate two outstanding programs in their state to be recognized at this conference. I am confident that all of us will take home ideas

from these programs that will strengthen our own states as well as the South.

As I recognize each program, I would like for the program representatives to come to the stage to receive a special certificate.

I would like to begin with the Arkansas Partnership.

**The Arkansas Partnership's** mission is to develop and promote a common vision for economic development and related issues affecting Arkansas. The Partnership focuses on three key objectives: grassroots

legislative lobbying, grassroots awareness of economic development issues facing Arkansas, and grassroots promotion of economic development initiatives.

**LeadAR** is a two-year leadership development program whose objective is to teach Arkansas' emerging leaders interpersonal, communication, and leadership skills and to expose them to a balanced view of state, national and international issues. A unique aspect of the program is that it includes study tours to other states, Washington, D.C., and overseas. Each participant is expected to accomplish a

project or goal that serves others in the community or state.

**The Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership** in Lexington, Kentucky, trains parents to become informed partners with educators to improve student achievement. The Institute has been credited with raising the awareness of Kentucky parents about the educational process and the vital support role they can play. The Institute has trained more than 1,000 parents, 450 of whom serve on school-based decision-making councils and 21 on school boards.

**The Governor's Minority Management Trainee Program** in Frankfort, Kentucky, is a recruitment and professional development tool to increase the representation of minority managers in Kentucky state government. Participants receive in-depth, practical training through classroom instruction, on the job experiences, and special projects.

**Shreveport-Bossier Community Renewal** in Louisiana is a program whose mission is to restore the foundation of safe and caring communities by rebuilding the neighborhood system of caring relationships. Among the program's components is the building of

networks of caring, “block-by-block,” throughout the community by enlisting, training and nurturing volunteers who commit to contacting and building friendships with neighbors on their own block. Neighborhood Friendship Houses are located in the most injured neighborhoods, with committed full time leaders who move to live in the neighborhood to bring resources for growth and change to adults, children and youth.

**The Young Leaders’ Academy** of Baton Rouge, Louisiana builds the leadership and academic skills of young African American males through a rigorous program of

educational enrichment, leadership training and community service. Among the key objectives of the Academy are building self-esteem; teaching the skills necessary to make wise decisions; developing the academic, social and work skills necessary for effective participation in the workforce; and encouraging an appreciation and lifelong commitment to service. Some of the boys who were among the first group in the program as third graders are now completing high school. All are college bound

**The Montgomery Institute** of Meridian, Mississippi, is a nonprofit civic engagement

organization that focuses on community improvement activities in East Mississippi and West Alabama. The Institute strives to reconcile conflict and diminish cultural, racial and regional tensions by building bridges through dialogue and collaboration and by establishing trust and respect among the citizens and organizations of the region. It conducts leadership development programs, promotes strategic thinking about community issues, and disseminates information designed to promote human and infrastructure development.

**The Mississippi Center for Community and Civic Engagement** promotes civic



engagement in the state, particularly around issues related to improving educational opportunities and achievement. The Center has pooled resources, established partnerships and collaborated across agencies to get young people involved in addressing the needs of their communities. One such program that has received national attention is the Lighthouse Partnerships, which unites a college or university, a K-12 school, and a community-based organization to provide high quality, after-school service-learning opportunities to students from kindergarten through graduate school.

**The Sacred Heart Parish / Ferguson-Florissant School District Diversity Project**, also known as the Twinning Project, was established to develop cultural awareness and sensitivity toward others. Created in 1999, the Twinning Project connects children of different races and cultures to provide meaningful opportunities for developing relationships from which they learn that most of us have more in common than we have differences. Children from a predominantly African-American school are paired or “twinned” with children from a predominantly Caucasian school. Throughout the school year, students write to one another. As a culminating project, classes assemble in a nature area, where

they meet their pen pals and participate in team-building activities.

**FOCUS St. Louis** is a nonprofit organization that engages citizens in an array of leadership roles to bring about community change. The organization covers a 12-county area in Western Illinois and Eastern Missouri. FOCUS St. Louis provides a wide range of programs aimed at strengthening the leadership of its regions. It also works to build relationships and develop a sense of connectedness among diverse groups. Among its many programs are Leadership St. Louis, Youth Leadership St. Louis, Community Leadership for

Teachers, Experience St. Louis, Impact St. Louis and Bridges Across Racial Polarization.

**The North Carolina Rural Economic Development Institute** is a leadership development program targeted at rural leaders who are active in decision-making roles in their communities. The program's objectives are to build leadership capacity to improve the economy of rural communities, broaden and deepen the rural leadership base, strengthen the ability of rural institutions to foster and lead economic development initiatives, and foster peer and professional relationships that are

fundamental to rural development. Since its inception, the Institute has equipped more than 600 rural leaders with the skills and knowledge to bring about change and improvements in their communities.

**The North Carolina Civic Education Consortium** unites diverse partners across North Carolina to revitalize the civic engagement of its young people, ages five to 18. The Consortium, which is housed in the School of Government at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, is a privately funded, non-partisan partnership of more than 190 organizations from the public, nonprofit and private sectors. The

Consortium has just released the nation's first statewide Civic Index, a snapshot of civic competencies in the state.

### **The Oklahoma Academy for State Goals**

serves as a catalyst in the development and implementation of public policy designed to improve the quality of life for Oklahomans.

The Annual Town Hall meeting is the centerpiece of the Academy. Each annual Town Hall meeting focuses on a specific issue that is critical to Oklahoma's future.

Approximately 130 to 150 participants, representative of the state's diversity, are selected for each Town Hall meeting. Over the course of three days, participants

discuss and arrive at recommendations to address the issue under consideration. In keeping with the organization's motto, “Moving Ideas into Action,” participants actively work towards implementation of the recommendations after the meeting.

## **The Oklahoma Institute for Child**

**Advocacy** promotes issues, programs and policies that improve the health and well being of the state’s children and youth. The Institute operates under four broad programmatic categories — advocacy, early childhood care and education, maternal and child health, and positive youth development. Its activities include training,

publications, communications, legislative monitoring and advocacy, conferences, community leadership development and community-based technical assistance.

The Institute's greatest accomplishment is the development of a statewide network of advocates who have succeeded in bringing about numerous important reforms.

## **The University of South Carolina**

**Salkehatchie Leadership Center** focuses on stimulating economic development in a five-county area in Southwest South Carolina.

Recognizing that dynamic leadership is essential for the creation and sustainability of economic development, the first



responsibility of the Center upon its establishment was to develop and implement a variety of leadership programs to build human capacity in rural areas. The Center now provides 12 leadership programs that serve more than 400 people annually. These programs serve both youth and adults, and range from basic leadership training for the emerging leader to advanced training for existing leaders. Basic to these programs is an emphasis on community involvement and connectivity.

**Penn Center**, located on historic St. Helena Island in Beaufort County, South Carolina, has a long history of working to build self-sufficiency among the Island's African

American community. Started in 1862 as a school for freed slaves in the area, the Center has evolved to become a resource center that seeks to preserve the unique history, culture and environment of the Sea Islands. Among its programs are a Teen Leadership Institute that provides career planning, academic assistance, summer internships and leadership training for youths ages 13-18, and a Land Use and Environmental Education Program that has empowered residents to develop and work towards a long-range vision not only for their own property, but also for the community as a whole.

**WestStar Leadership** was established in 1989 as the first regional leadership program in the state of Tennessee. The program is sponsored by the University of Tennessee-Martin and serves the 22 counties of West Tennessee. WestStar has been successful in recruiting a diverse leadership class, using an annual “African American Leadership Conference” as a key recruiting tool.

**Youth Leadership Jefferson County**, in Dandridge, Tennessee, combines the well-known chamber of commerce leadership program model with a high school academic program. Sponsored by the Jefferson

County Chamber of Commerce, the program has become part of the curriculum at Jefferson County High School. Youth leadership participants attend a semester long class during which they participate in team building activities, keep a journal, complete a class project, and visit the State Capitol for government day. Activities outside of the classroom include required visits to a county commission meeting, a city council meeting and a school board meeting.

**The Governor's Partnership for Achieving Successful Schools** was launched in 2002 as a catalyst for

partnerships among educators, businesses and communities to help boost student performance in academically at-risk schools in Virginia. The most notable feature of the program is its emphasis on promoting collaboration among parties who may not have shared resources effectively in the past.

**The West Virginia Center for Civic Life** is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization whose goals is to increase citizens' capacity to talk about and set directions for working together on public problems. The Center works with West Virginia communities to convene and moderate community forums

and to report on the forums to the public, elected officials and the media. The Center also partners with other organizations in West Virginia to create frameworks for community dialogue on problems facing the state. The Center is part of a larger, nationwide network of organizations that promote deliberation about public issues in National Issues Forums around the country.

**The Community Collaborative** was formed in 1995 when ten groups joined together to create a new non-profit network for the purpose of supporting economic and community development in West Virginia. The Collaborative is unique in that it

combines the efforts of state and federal government agencies, a land grant university and a collection of nonprofit organizations. Community Collaborative has been providing community leadership training for six years. The Collaborative also develops and provides customized community training programs in the areas of community development and community organizing.

I would also like to recognize the following programs that couldn't be with us today:

- Envision 2020 from Montgomery, Alabama, a regional strategic planning process that has engaged more than

1700 participants in developing a vision for Alabama's River Region;

- Puerto Rico Youth at Risk, a program that helps at-risk youth take control of their lives and become productive, caring members of the community;
- The “You Are Important To Me Club,” an initiative of the United Way of Puerto Rico that promotes volunteerism among young people; and
- The Coalition for Virginia's Future, an alliance of 15 statewide and regional



business advocacy organizations  
dedicated to raising public awareness of  
the challenges facing the  
Commonwealth of Virginia.

I encourage each of you to look for the  
Innovators during the reception that follows  
as well as the remainder of the conference.  
The teal colored ribbons on their nametags  
will help you find them. Each of these  
programs is to be commended for their hard  
work, dedication, and ingenuity – and each  
has a lot to offer that we can take home to  
our own communities.