

PANEL DESCRIPTION

Conversations on the Future of the South (Town Meeting)

Tuesday, June 3, 2003
10:00 am – 11:30 am
Beau Rivage Resort, Biloxi

Participants

1. Moderator: The Honorable Ronnie Musgrove, Mississippi
2. The Honorable Mike Huckabee, Arkansas
3. The Honorable William Winter, Former Governor of Mississippi
4. Glenn McCullough, Jr., Chairman, Tennessee Valley Authority
5. Anne Pope, Federal Co-Chair, Appalachian Regional Commission
6. Milton Segarra, Secretary of the Department of Economic Development and Commerce, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
7. Freddy Webb-Petett, Mid South Delta Initiative Regional Coordinator, W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Logistics

The panel will last for one and a half hours.

The set-up is informal in nature, with panelists seated in cushioned chairs rather than behind a table or podium. Each panelist will be fitted with a clip-on microphone.

This session will be taped and edited for public television. Please show up at least 15 minutes ahead of time to get wired for sound, and to check on any last-minute changes in the format. We will also ask you to remove your nametags for the taping in order to prevent glare.

Panel Description

This session will focus on the importance of leadership and civic engagement to the future of the South. The dialogue should reflect your sense of what the South can achieve with more and better-prepared leaders. .

Panel Format

Governor Musgrove will moderate an interactive dialogue in the style of a town meeting or talk show. He will pose a number of questions to the panelists to start off the conversation, and may draw in the audience as the conversation develops (e.g., inviting questions, asking for a show of hands, allowing members of the audience to briefly voice

their opinions). Sample questions are provided below, but the energy from these Town Meeting sessions always comes from the original ideas of the participants.

The tone of the panel should be relaxed and conversational. Responses to Governor Musgrove's questions should be kept very brief, preferably no more than one minute, but, with the permission of the moderator, you are encouraged to react or add to the other panelists' remarks, or pose your own question of the others.

The first question will be an open-ended invitation to give us your vision of leadership in the future. Each panelist will be allowed 2-3 minutes to comment before the discussion opens up to the Town Meeting format.

Suggested Questions

Overall Vision

1. Talk to us about your vision of what leadership and civic engagement should look like 10 years from now. How will leadership and civic engagement help determine the region's future?

Other Discussion Questions

2. Over the past two days, we have heard examples of how engaged and committed citizens have helped

transform their communities. Yet, in many communities the same people are always tapped for leadership positions. How do we create more business and citizen volunteer leaders, and involve a true cross-section of the population in public life?

3. One of the strongest messages we heard from the 600 Southerners who participated in our focus groups and on-line survey was that we need to focus on young people—to get them involved in their communities and build leadership skills from an early age. What approaches might we take in our schools and communities to better prepare youth for leadership roles?

4. Immigration is having an increasing impact on the South's rural and urban communities. How can we welcome and engage newcomers in community life? How can we build bridges between cultures in order to improve community life for all?
5. In each of the focus group discussions across the region that led up to the *Reinventing the Wheel* report, Southerners said that race relations—specifically black and white—was the “elephant in the room” that we were all ignoring, but that must be addressed if we are to secure our economic future. While the South has made genuine great strides in racial

equity towards overcoming its past, African-Americans are still not fully included in all aspects of the civic and economic life. They volunteer as much as any other race or ethnic group, but it does not translate into a strong presence within the mainstream leadership groups of the region. How can we do a better job of bridging black and white leadership structures? Of engaging African-Americans in all aspects of community and business leadership?

6. Some people say there is a growing disconnect between elected leaders and the general public, leading to cynical feelings towards government.

If this is so, how might we correct it?
How can we re-engage citizens who feel as though they have no voice in government? **(NOTE: YOU NEED TO MENTION YOUR 1-ON-1 SESSIONS FOR THE PUBLIC.)**

7. Today's economy is regional in nature, and many key issues, such as transportation planning, economic development, and environmental protection require action beyond the boundaries of any single town or county. In many cases, market areas extend across state lines and in no case does a market pay much attention to the lines established for a political jurisdiction. Yet, few leaders

are elected on a regional basis. How can we encourage leaders to take a regional perspective? **(NOTE: YOU NEED TO MENTION OUR RECENT PARTNERSHIP WITH ALABAMA IN EAST MISSISSIPPI.)**