



Guest Opinion

Let's keep a positive mindset



Eiler

We're cornered, Michigan. We all have experience in economic ups and downs.

Now, Michigan is being lambasted over the effect that globalization and other parts of the already established or emerging world competition is having on "our" auto industry as well as other businesses of our once stellar state economy – K Mart, Visteon, Delphi.

We're in a mental funk because of this. All I hear in meetings is the negative aspects. The press leads the pack but is really just doing its job with these reports. But the "talk" looming out there permeates businesses, civic and social groups.

There is no voice commanding us to Norman Vincent Peale's old writing that urged "The Power of Positive Thinking." "Believe and you will achieve," he exhorted. A lesson learned was you become what you think you will become. You are what you say you are.

We must begin together to seek positive concepts and work in partnerships and as individuals to halt the negative tongue wagging.

Rick Snyder, noted entrepreneur (Ardesta, SPARK) and businessman, who happens to be chairman of one of the world's

largest computer companies, Gateway, urged this recently at a forum of the Ann Arbor Chamber of Commerce. He spoke on a panel with two other area leaders: Bob Ficano, executive of Wayne County; and Ken Rogers, executive director of Automation Alley in Oakland County.

Snyder decried the negative mindset that he sees and called for people to find and act on positive things.

The negative is generated across the state by two factors:

1. Realization that some very real-world competition already exists.

2. Awareness that we have come to a point where real choices are imperative and we must grasp them and fix and improve ourselves or fall into deep failure. We cannot just keep being negative.

We must adapt to the new "flat world" explained by New York Times columnist Tom Friedman in his new history of the 21st century, "The World is Flat." The provocative text examines the figurative "flattening" of the world and asks if the world has gotten too small and too fast for people and political systems to adapt.

We no longer live in a "sit back and enjoy it" economy. We have to get with it in the market where lots of others can already compete better than we can – or are equal to our capabilities but engaged in building their eco-

nomics engines because they are coming from a bad place.

Which leads to my final point: Coming from a bad place is where you learn the most.

You can learn more, be smaller and more cunning when you are cornered.

We're cornered, Michigan. Let's stop lamenting what has happened as the world has caught up, in some cases surpassed us in economic growth.

Let's build bridges across the chasms that exist. Let's deal with reality, step up and find good things, make them happen and get back into play, to compete. "World class" around here is nothing more than a bygone catchword.

We have a leg up to get this process rolling. The State (finally) just passed the 21st Century Jobs Fund. It provides \$400 million in loans, grants and capital investments for companies and organizations engaged in development of various technologies, equity and venture capital funds and loans by financial groups to small businesses.

Let's each one who reads this essay speak up at a meeting we go to, a class or some other organizations and get some positive ideas and thoughts flowing.

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