

Despite losing three days in the office, Leadership Exchange participants stated uniformly that they gained tremendously from the experience. Talking, dining, and traveling together made for new partnerships — and friends.

GREATER
PHILADELPHIA
LEADERSHIP EXCHANGE

Chicago, Illinois September 21-23, 2005

Bringing It All Back Home

WHAT THEY SAY:

This group of participating civic leaders is now able to reflect on their common experience and draw lessons and new relationships among ourselves. New bridges among us will make attacking our challenges together more likely.

— *John P. Claypool, AIA,*
Executive Director, American Institute of Architects, Philadelphia Chapter

If Philadelphia is going to grow . . . Philadelphia is going to have to think big again. And we're going to have to learn . . . lessons from Chicago: act regionally, plan ahead, work together for one future, and think big. We are in competition not just with Chicago but with vibrant metropolitan areas throughout the nation and the world.

— *Andrew A. Chirls, Chancellor,*
Philadelphia Bar Association and Partner, WolfBlock

I think what I saw more than anything is the importance of what leadership means, particularly coming out of the mayor's office.

— *Dwight Evans, PA State Representative*

We learned that we ourselves could accomplish a great deal if only we could get past our self-imposed limits and give ourselves permission to go forward.

— *John F. Smith, III, Partner, Reed Smith LLP*

I was so struck by the mayor's insistence that arts and culture is the brand for the city (and the region) and without arts and culture it would be just another city. I think if our government and business leaders could understand that, we would be on our way to having great pride in our city — we certainly have the cultural product. I also think Ben [Franklin] would agree!

— *Peggy Amsterdam, Executive Director, Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance*

A Challenge to Take Action

As Editor Bernard Dagenais wrote a month ago, this region doesn't lack thoughtful analyses of Greater Philadelphia's challenges and opportunities. Nor do we lack accomplished individuals and organizations who wake up every day trying to improve our communities. Somehow, though, the analyses, the ideas and the doers often fail to meet in major sustained initiatives to improve our region.

That can change. Recently the Pennsylvania Economy League, on whose board we both serve, led the Greater Philadelphia Leadership Exchange, a team of 72 regional leaders — bank and college presidents, chamber leaders, CEOs of major arts and environmental organizations and board chairs of social service agencies — on a quest to Chicago to learn how things get done there.

We served as co-chairs of the exchange, and spent 12 hours a day for three days meeting with an equally broad range of Chicagoland leaders for a series of passionate, informed discussions of what works and why. We can now tick off several impressive regional accomplishments in Chicago: Millennium Park, a \$400 million downtown park and instant civic icon, built with significant private leadership and funds; the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, a gathering of mayors from 272 regional communities united to speak with a regional voice; a legislative victory to create a Regional Planning Board, championed by Metropolis 2020, a highly influential business-led regional civic organization.

We walked away with powerful lessons about how regions can compete and win.

Leadership matters. Leadership from Mayor Richard M. Daley's expansive vision, attention to details and insistence on first-rate execution are omnipresent; private sector leadership to rock the boat without sinking it; and leadership to champion issues across state political boundaries. Philanthropic leadership to connect people and ideas.

Think big, plan big, and stay on a positive message. Leaders in Chicago echo often the words of Daniel Burnham, the legendary Chicago architect and planner: Make no little plans. They have no magic to strike man's blood. . . . More than one Chicago speaker sent ripples through the crowd by referring to Chicago as the "Center of the World."

Talented leaders of good will must cross political boundaries, boundaries between public and private sectors, ideological boundaries, boundaries between boosterism and problem-solving.

We've returned with a renewed sense of our region's outstanding assets — history, culture, access and authenticity — and heightened determination to raise our collective expectations for our region. And we know that to realize those aspirations, we've got to organize and act. Maybe we didn't just conclude a trip, but instead began a movement.

*Tim Cost is executive vice president, Aramark Corporation
Daniel E. Fitzpatrick is president, Bank of America – Pennsylvania.*

Source: Philadelphia Business Journal,
Sept. 30 – Oct. 6, 2005

The Leadership Exchange . . . helped me to focus on not just thinking big, but knowing that we can actually accomplish big things by working in concert. I am truly convinced that the spirit of Benjamin Franklin is alive and well in Philadelphia and the entire region. We must now convert that spirit to action and momentum soon. I am very excited to be a part of it.

— *Christopher M. Veno, Principal, Trion Group, Inc.*

What an energizing experience. I really appreciated the opportunity and look forward to the action that takes place as a result of working with so many people who are committed to this region.

— *Kimberly A. Hall, Chester County Chamber of Commerce*

I have more positive energy and hope that together we can make significant progress for Philadelphia than I have for a long time. I feel privileged to have been a part of the experience, and I'm looking forward to the next bold steps.

— *J. Blaine Bonham, Jr., Executive Vice-President, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society*

