

Willits Economic Localization WELL Membership and Outreach Program

Jan Stephens ~ Amy Marshall ~ Freddie Long

Introduction

During the 4-5th.March 2006 WELL Retreat, a WELL Team took on the responsibility to research and propose a membership and outreach program. The following is the proposal.

Preamble

The focus of WELL is “**economic** localization”. The WELL membership and community outreach programs are designed to promote economic localization through local citizenry and all existing and emerging community groups, businesses and service organizations whenever possible. Through this endeavor the vision of WELL becomes a reality. Affordable, low cost membership fees will secure predictable income for WELL’s expenses, and represent a commitment to WELL’s vision for the community.

It has become apparent that, in order for WELL to govern, raise funds, grow, thrive and do great works, there must be a more formal membership policy. The key areas of the policy are:

- A working membership.
- A general or subscribing membership.
- Common membership fees.
- Membership drives and outreach for the public, community groups, businesses and service organizations.

All WELL Members

- Will receive a WELL membership card (numbered) and a WELL Handbook
- Will receive special rates at WELL local events
- Will receive discounts from businesses in the WELL Business Network coordinated and in cooperation with other business organizations offering member discounts.

Requirements for WELL Membership:

- Primary residence is within the 95490 zip code area.
- Pay membership dues of \$10/year (individuals), \$20/year (family)
 - Membership form will have a separate section where people may choose to donate more than the required \$10 membership dues. Such additional amounts may be tax deductible.

- All WELL members must sign an agreement endorsing the WELL vision and mission statement which are as follows:

The WELL Vision – An enduring local economy that provides health and security for our community.

The Mission of WELL is to foster the creation of a local, sustainable economy in the Willits area by partnering with other organizations to watch for opportunities and vulnerabilities, incubate and coordinate projects, facilitate dialogue and action and educate our community.

Working Members

Working Members are people who want to actively participate in the operations and governance of WELL. These members will be able to vote for Coordinating Committee members and will approve the policies of WELL (refer to WELL “Governance” documents). As working members they qualify to be on the slate for election to the Coordinating Committee.

- A working member commits to being an active participant on a committee or project aligned with WELL’s vision and mission statement.
- A working member may vote and participate in the governance of WELL. Voting Mechanisms, as established by Governance, will be stated in the WELL Handbook.
- Working members will receive a special membership card, designating their eligibility to vote. This must be brought to all meetings where votes are being cast.

Requirements for Working Membership:

Because of the power vested in the decisions made by working members, their commitment to and knowledge of the localization effort is crucial. Requirements, therefore, include:

- Taking on a fair share of the work of at least one of WELL’s committees or approved project groups.
- In special cases where working members are out of town when a vote is being taken, absentee ballots can be provided and must be received at least 3 working days before a vote is taken at a meeting.
- Working members must sign a liability waiver.

Subscribing Members

Subscribing Members are people who want to support WELL with a general membership, but who are **not able** or willing to actively participate or volunteer their time. By offering this type of membership, WELL demonstrates that it seeks to include all people in the Willits 95490 area.

- A subscribing member is **encouraged**, but not required, to attend WELL meetings and participate on a WELL committee or project.

APPENDIX A:

DRAFT WELL Membership Outreach Program

The WELL Newsletter

- The WELL newsletter will be posted on the WELL website and printed in a regular column in The Willits News (as agreed with the editor of TWN on 6/6/06). Also, it will be posted on agreed sites around the community.

Monthly Meetings

- We propose to reinstate the monthly meeting open evening for the public to view the film, **Peak Oil Imposed by Nature**. This film is 30 minutes long and will be followed by a facilitated discussion to enroll people to join WELL and engage in one of the project teams. Both working and subscribing members are encouraged to bring a friend to these special open monthly meetings.

Community Groups

- A small number of community groups have already experienced a presentation on Economic Localization. It is proposed that we now plan a more systematic outreach to all the service organizations, churches, schools and community groups. We have a number of outreach materials including a PowerPoint Presentation on WELL, with collateral materials for handouts. These will be augmented with a WELL leaflet to give out to people along with a membership form.

Former WELL Attendees

- We propose that a special outreach be made to bring back the many WELL supporters who no longer come to WELL meetings. They may, of course, be engaged in projects and activities that contribute to our vision. As we formalize our membership and governance, we have an opportunity to re enroll our friends and supporters. We can do this by phone tree outreach, potlucks, and offering updates on WELL's progress through our newsletter

Special Events

- We propose that at special events, such as speaker events and film showings, that there be a special rate given to members, and that non-members who sign up to join WELL be given the discounted rate at that time.

Outreach into the Community at large

- Building on the success of the ‘Localize Now’ stickers, we should create window, car stickers with the WELL Logo to give to community citizens as part of the membership outreach campaign. Also a leaflet on WELL, covering our mission, vision and values, contact information, website, the WELL Business Directory with its benefits and project work in the community. The outreach campaign needs to be something that we all get behind. Each working member could take responsibility to cover their street, local area and meet with friends and neighbors to secure their enrollment and collect membership fees. We can also promote membership through our local radio, channel 3 and newspapers. By agreeing on enrollment targets, we should be able to make a significant difference to WELL membership within 9 months and then keep going until we reach a critical mass of the community. It is important to remember that by creating large numbers of supporters in the community, WELL will be in a position to influence the many issues we face now and in the future.

The WELL Business Directory

- WELL will invite businesses and service organizations that reflect the goals and vision of economic localization (all or in part) to offer a discount of services and/or goods to all WELL registered members. (10% to 15% suggested; on days to be determined by the business).
- **The business** benefits by creating more regular customers and building a greater customer loyalty base. It receives a WELL sticker (**I’m a WELL-LOVED business**), to display in its premises a certificate celebrating its commitment to create economic localization in our community.
- **WELL members** benefits by receiving discounts off-setting their membership dues and beyond.
- **The community** benefits by seeing economic localization in action (more goods and services that are produced locally are consumed/used locally)

Addendum to WELL membership

Please note, that when seeking funding from granting institutions, it is beneficial to demonstrate support from the greater community. Offering a general membership will increase the number of supporters and stakeholders and increase WELL’s funding opportunities.