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Appreciative Inquiry as Community Engagement

by Barbara E. Lewis

Appreciative Inquiry is one of the techniques highlighted in IAP2's *Techniques for Effective Public Participation* course. As a technique, it is known for fostering high levels of community engagement and creativity. This article describes the technique and how it can best be used in public participation, and answers questions P2 practitioners may be asking about how to weave this approach into their work.

What is Appreciative Inquiry?

Appreciative Inquiry is both a philosophy and a methodology. As a philosophy, Appreciative Inquiry recognizes that human systems grow in the direction of what they study. When we focus on problems, we get more problems; when we focus on future hopes and possibilities, we get new opportunities. Appreciative Inquiry advocates focusing on what gives life to human systems when they are at their best.

As a methodology, Appreciative Inquiry is a process for co-creating positive change. As stated by Diana Whitney and Amanda Trosten-Bloom in the *The Power of Positive Inquiry*, "Appreciative Inquiry methodology begins and ends with valuing that which gives life to an organization. It fosters

open inquiry and dialogue among all of an organization's stakeholders and leads to a collaboratively-created future."

The method has four phases known as the 4-D Cycle: Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny. This article describes each phase in terms that relate to P2 processes and techniques.

Discovery – Appreciating the best of what is and has been. This typically involves developing an interview guide that hones in on the topics we want to study and then using the guide to



Teams draw future visions for their city during the Community Conversations segment of the "Focus on Longmont" project.

interview people who represent a microcosm of the "whole system." Topics are meant to be evocative and inspire curiosity.

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Report from the President

As I prepared to write my final report to you as president of IAP2, I happened to check my e-mail and found a message from a friend, Thaabit Albertus. I met Thaabit, who works for the South African parliament, at the recent IAP2 Skills Symposium in Scottsdale, Arizona, USA. Thaabit was kind enough to share photographs of his experience in Scottsdale. His

pictures say more about IAP2 than my words ever could. In one picture, two experienced trainers – a French-Canadian and an Aussie – hand a certificate to a young public involvement professional from North Carolina. Consider this tableau: a South African taking a photograph of a Canadian, an Australian, and an American, all of whom have come together to deepen their practices in the field of public participation. This is what IAP2 does when it is at its best – it brings people together from all walks of life and levels of experience to share experiences and learn from one another.

While the past year has provided many memories and milestones, I believe the moments that will remain with me are the moments when IAP2 created these networks, these connections among disparate groups of people who shared a commitment to public participation. I will remember sitting around the coffee table in Scottsdale with Thaabit and his colleagues from South Africa, as well as other IAP2 members from the US, Canada, Australia, and Scotland. I will remember that an IAP2 chapter in Ghana was conceived by local professionals in Acra, nurtured by a board member in Minnesota, mentored by a member in South Africa, and sponsored by a chapter in the Pacific Northwest of the United States. I will remember sitting in a café in Paris, a pub in

London, and a foundation office in Brussels – each time discussing public participation through the prism of the IAP2 Core Values. In each of these places over the past year, IAP2 has been a convener of a vibrant and progressive dialogue that will no doubt advance the practice of public participation at a time when effective citizen engagement is desperately needed.

But make no mistake – we've done more than talk. This has been quite a year for IAP2. We are larger than we were 1 year ago – both in terms of membership and chapters. We are more international than we were 1 year ago – with a thriving and independent affiliate in Australasia, a growing presence in Europe, a new chapter in Ghana, and new connections in South Africa. And we are positioned to make even more progress next year as we embark on a search for a managing director to lead us into the next stage of our development. Of course, none of these accomplishments would have been possible without the incredibly hard work of a dedicated board and a cadre of active volunteers.

Before I close, I want to thank all who labored on behalf of IAP2 this year. Your contributions have been absolutely essential – nothing happens in IAP2 unless someone steps up and says, "I'll do it." Lucky for us, we have scores of members who are willing to do just that. And I want to thank my fellow board members – I doubt any nonprofit organization has a more dedicated group of volunteer leaders.

And finally, I want to congratulate and wish my successor, Stephani Roy McCallum, good luck in her year as president. I have no doubt IAP2 will benefit from her passion and dedication.

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Deadlines:

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May Issue: My Rewarding Career as a Public Participation Practitioner: How I got into the Field, Memorable Projects, and Advice for New Practitioners
Copy deadline: March 1, 2008

August Issue: Public Participation for Transportation Projects
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'Bring your kilt'

Appreciative Leadership and Participatory Planning

by Diana Whitney, Ph.D.



Dr. Diana Whitney

"The task of leadership is to align strengths in such a way that weaknesses are irrelevant."

Management guru, Peter Drucker

The foundation of leadership as it has been practiced for decades is cracking. No longer do the bricks and mortar of command and control create solid ground for organizing and directing the energy and effort of people. New

millennium processes for organization and community development such as inclusive dialogue among stakeholders, collaborative inquiry, and participatory planning have chipped away at the old practices of leadership and are loudly calling out for new ones.

Appreciative Leadership is uniquely suited to answer this call. Derived from the principles and practices of Appreciative Inquiry, Appreciative Leadership is a relational process for bringing out the best of people, organizations, and communities. The purpose of this brief essay is to introduce Appreciative Leadership as a viable model of leadership for participatory planning.

Whether you turn to the dictionary or Wikipedia seeking to define leadership, the most common definition is "a person or process that provides guidance and direction." Appreciative leadership is a process that is uniquely affirmative. As such, it provides direction and guidance toward that which is most positive and life affirming. Dr. James Ludema and I define Appreciative Leadership as:

The capacity to engage others in discovering, magnifying, and connecting all that is good and healthy in people and the world around them – in such a way that deepens relatedness, inspires transformational conversations, and mobilizes cooperative action toward life affirming social innovations.

As the definition suggests, Appreciative Leadership makes a positive difference. By discovering, magnifying, and connecting life affirmative potential, Appreciative Leadership fosters the creation of social innovations in support of a better world. The five practices of Appreciative Leadership are highly congruent with successful participatory planning. They can be summarized as: inclusion, inquiry, illumination, inspiration, and integrity.

Five Practices of Appreciative Leadership

- 1. Appreciative Leadership is Inclusive.** The people whose future it is are engaged in co-creating the future. Appreciative leaders ask, "Who else needs to be in this discussion? How can we engage all of our stakeholders? Who has previously been silent that needs to be heard?"

What are the many voices that constitute our organization or community?"

When participatory planning includes all stakeholders, a transformation occurs. There is a shift from a few with authority creating the future and "rolling it out" to "full voice authoring" of the future. Marv Weisbord and Sandra Janoff, authors of *Future Search*, say that people commit to what they help create. Appreciative Leadership invites commitment through inclusion.

- 2. Appreciative Leadership is Inquiry Based.** Recognizing that human organizations and communities grow in the direction of what they study, Appreciative leaders embed values in the questions they ask. Appreciative Inquiry teaches that the questions we ask are fateful. Appreciative leaders ask affirmative questions about the things most valued and wanted. In this way, they focus learning and development on what the organization or community wants to be, rather than the problems they want to overcome.

In the process of participatory planning, Appreciative leaders ask questions to uncover stories of high point experiences, to reveal images of the future, and to articulate compelling actions for organization and community transformation. In this way, participants are guided through a strengths-based approach to planning.

- 3. Appreciative Leadership Illuminates the Best of People, Processes, Organizations, and Communities.**

Appreciative leaders express appreciative intelligence by directing dialogue and inquiry toward assets and strengths. Professor Tojo Thatchenkery and Consultant Carol Metzker define appreciative intelligence as "...the ability to perceive the positive inherent generative potential within the present. Put in a simple way, appreciative intelligence is the ability to see the mighty oak in the acorn." Appreciative leaders have a bias for strengths and seek to help others discover and magnify inherent potential. As the quote by Peter Drucker suggests, Appreciative Leadership is about the alignment of strengths so that weaknesses are irrelevant.

Strengths-based participatory planning builds individual and collective confidence among organization and community members. Chilean Organizational Consultant Carlos Aguilera Muga realized that a group of community women he was working with had strong visions and little confidence in their own abilities to achieve their visions. When he had them interview each other to uncover and define their individual and collective strengths, he watched their confidence soar.

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The process of "strengths spotting" gave these women an opportunity to recognize their inherent abilities to achieve their most cherished vision – better lives for their children.

- 4. Appreciative Leadership Inspires Hope.** Much is written about the importance of vision. Confidence and hope that the vision can be realized is of equal importance as the vision itself. Without hope, people tend to lack enthusiasm, energy, commitment, and persistence. Positive change requires a great deal of positive energy and emotions: confidence, hope, belief, creativity and persistence. Appreciative leaders inspire hope by ensuring that visions are supported by a clear path forward and a collective sense of efficacy. They do this by engaging others in the process from vision to action.

Appreciative Leadership-guided participatory planning engages people in a process that includes the discovery of strengths, the articulation of images of the future, a vision and path forward, and the allocation of resources needed for implementation and successful realization of the vision. Appreciative Inquiry-based positive change leads to successful participatory planning.

- 5. Appreciative Leadership Exemplifies Relational Integrity.** The inclusion of multiple stakeholders demands that Appreciative Leaders value and understand diversity, that they encourage and find ways to create

harmony among differences, and that they define success as "everyone wins." Relational integrity challenges Appreciative leaders to be sure that all voices are heard and that all people are "whole" in the process and with the results. Whenever one person or group of people is compromised for the benefit of another person or group, the organization or community is out of integrity. Appreciative Leadership walks the essential line of integrity while balancing many diverse needs, akin to a juggler on a high wire.

Successful participatory planning requires relational integrity. When organization or community members are involved in a process, they expect, and rightfully so, that their voices will be heard, their dreams will be considered, and their lives will be enriched.

The values embedded in Appreciative Leadership are congruent with those of the field of participatory planning: engage all the stakeholders; use collaborative processes for inquiry, dialogue, learning, and decision making; discover and build upon assets and strengths; and design programs, processes, and practices that render social justice and environmental sustainability inevitable. Used together, Appreciative Leadership and participatory planning can create a new foundation and hope for the future – a future that works for all.

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IAP2 Thanks its Partners!!



Southern Nevada Water Authority, IAP2 Gold Partner

IAP2 has been fortunate to have the Southern Nevada Water Authority as a Gold Partner for the past 6 years. The Authority is a cooperative agency formed in 1991 to address Southern Nevada's unique water needs on a regional basis. Southern Nevada Water Authority officials are charged with managing the region's water resources and providing for Las Vegas Valley area residents' and businesses' present and future water needs. For more information about the Southern Nevada Water Authority, please visit their Web site at www.snwa.com.



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IAP2 thanks URS Corporation for its support over the past 4 years as a Silver Partner. URS is a global, full service organization, approximately 29,000 strong, with 300 offices in more than 20 countries. Their professional staff includes engineers, planners, architects, scientists, and program and construction managers. URS has a public involvement practice with over 60 professionals supporting projects ranging from water resources and chemical demilitarization, to transportation and hazardous waste management. For more information about URS, please visit their Web site at www.urscorp.com.

Einstein's Vision: Appreciative-based Public Participation

by Jim Ellsworth

Practitioners of public participation, those who utilize our services, and those engaged in our processes are well acquainted with deficit-based public participation. In the deficit model, the catalyst for public participation is a problem to be addressed, while the purpose of public participation is to generate responses that are technically and economically feasible as well as socially acceptable. The outcomes generated through deficit-based public participation serve to address problems with causes and solutions that are within the mandate and the resources of the public participation sponsor.

When we attempt to address complex issues with causes and solutions that are beyond the mandate and the resources of a single organization or level of government, public participation morphs into appreciative-based public participation. Public participation begins with a reactive policy orientation of react and cure, which morphs into a preventative policy orientation of anticipate and prevent. The metamorphosis is complete when a proactive policy orientation emerges and participants focus their efforts on building and sustaining those assets that characterize safe, healthy, and productive organizations, communities, and environments.

As public participation processes become proactive and focus on building and sustaining assets, problems are reframed as affirmative propositions. For example, illness reduction is reframed as health promotion, environmental remediation is reframed as environmental stewardship, crime

reduction is reframed as building safe communities, and poverty reduction is reframed as social inclusion. While this reframing might appear as simple semantics, it facilitates the integrated application of know-how and know-why.

Deficit-based public participation largely limits itself to the generation and application of know-how and the question of whether or not the right interventions are being used in the right way. While appreciative-based public participation also focuses on know-how,

integrated resource management rely heavily on appreciative-based public participation, as they must generate and work from a multi-use, multi-value perspective (know-why).

As stakeholders package multiple beneficial outcomes within a single initiative, they generate new collaborative models. For example, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police and the Canadian Federation of Municipalities recognize that community safety, health, and well-being are

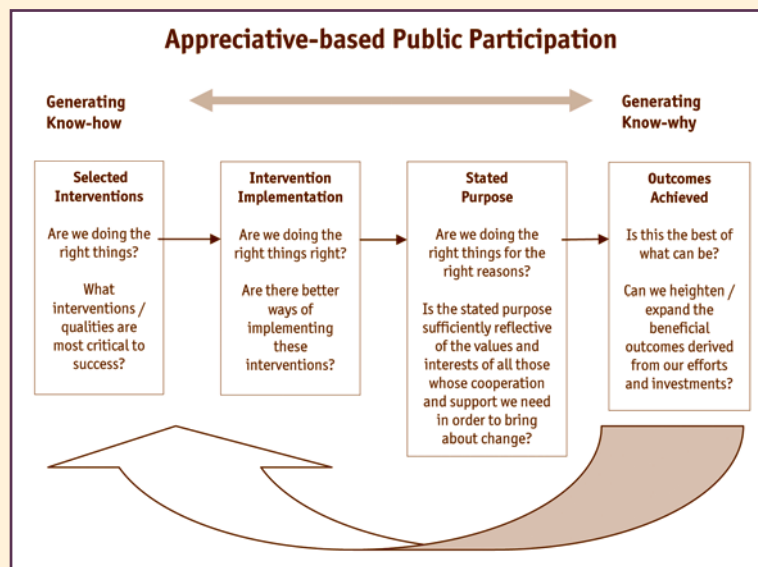
inextricably linked and champion the integrated pursuit of all three within a common framework. The resulting frameworks reflect both know-how and know-why.

Einstein maintained that science at its best could only explain the way things are. It cannot tell us the way things should be. He asserted that the latter must be derived from our values and interests. Einstein visualized a future where science was used for much

more than reacting to problems and predicted that some day science would be used proactively to assist us in realizing our preferred future – the best of what can be.

If he were alive today, Einstein would be a strong advocate of advancing know-how and know-why through appreciative-based public participation.

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that focus is on whether or not the most promising interventions are implemented using best practices. The latter enables participants to expand know-how beyond knowledge derived from their own experiences to include the import of know-how from other initiatives.

As appreciative-based public participation moves into the realm of know-why, the purpose of initiatives is scrutinised. Specifically, the stated purpose of an initiative is tested to see if it is sufficiently reflective of the values and interests of stakeholders to generate and sustain collaboration. Concepts such as integrated coastal zone management, ecosystem approach, and

The Appreciative Inquiry Summit: Unleashing Human Energy for Positive Organizational Change

by James D. Ludema, Ph.D.



Appreciative Inquiry Summits bring the whole system into the room to participate in the full 4-D cycle.

The Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Summit is a method for accelerating positive change by involving the entire organizational system in the change process. It is typically a single event or series of events that bring together a broad range of internal and external stakeholders to participate in: (1) reaffirming the organization's strengths and identity, (2) exploring opportunities for positive change, (3) generating specific ideas about how to enhance the organization's health and effectiveness, and (4) implementing and supporting change and making it work.

AI Summits have been used effectively with hundreds of organizations – corporations, non-profits, government, communities – in a variety of applications, such as strategic change, core business redesign, branding and culture change, quality and customer service initiatives, organization development and design, labor-management relations, values clarification, global learning, formation of joint ventures and collaborative alliances, and others. Some organizations have even begun to use the AI Summit as a regular way of managing.

There are at least six reasons that AI Summits prove to be more effective than

traditional approaches to change. First, they are quicker. They accelerate change because they produce a "critical mass" of involvement throughout the organizational system. They speed up the change process by directly engaging the entire organizational system in envisioning, designing, and implementing the change.

Second, they produce commitment. People will support what they help to create. When everyone is involved in the decision process, it is implemented with less resistance, and it is not necessary to tell, sell, or force change on organizational members.

AI Summits Enrich Learning

Third, they provide immediate and broad access to information and innovation. In any organization, knowledge and information is widely distributed, and people at multiple levels throughout the organization have the information most critical to organizational success. AI Summits, by involving a broad spectrum of people, gain access to a wide range of ideas and information that enrich organizational learning and spur innovation throughout the system.

Fourth, they promote a "total organization mindset" and more flexible

modes of organizing. In order to support intelligently the success of the entire enterprise, organizational members need a clear understanding of how their individual contribution fits into the big picture. Rather than relying on the slow and disjointed process of passing this information up and down the chain of command, AI Summits create a forum in which organizational members gain a direct and immediate connection to the logic of the whole system.

Mission and Values Reaffirmed

Fifth, AI Summits strengthen corporate culture and brand awareness. As organizations become more decentralized and diverse, the issues of how to maintain a clear corporate mission, strong organizational identity, and a coherent set of strategies become increasingly critical. AI Summits help to sustain a strong organizational identity by bringing the entire organizational community together in face-to-face dialogue to reaffirm, in direct and personal ways, the organization's mission, vision, and core values.

Finally, they result in inspired organizational action. Organizations change most effectively and most sustainably when all their members are unified behind a common image of the future. Much like a movie projection on a screen, human systems are forever projecting ahead of themselves a horizon of expectation that brings the future into the present as a causal agent. AI Summits create the human energy for action by connecting individuals to the organization's positive guiding image of the future.

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Appreciative Inquiry

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The whole system is everyone who affects or might be affected by the organization. This is similar to identifying stakeholders or publics for a public participation program. In a community, the whole system involves all different segments of the population (i.e., age, ethnicity, gender, income, time in the community, etc.) and the many different interests related to the topic at hand (e.g., business, environmental, neighborhood, schools, faith-based community, etc.). For industry, the whole system might involve employees, management, customers, and suppliers.

The “data” from the interviews are studied in a process called “meaning making,” when people come together to share stories and images that organically inspire positive change. The difference between this process and what might typically happen in summarizing public comment data is that the focus is on stories and a microcosm of the public participates in a process to share the stories and make meaning of them. This process ends up producing an understanding of the positive core of an organization or community and it is important that the positive core elements are owned by the public.

Dream – Imagining what might be. The dreaming phase invites people to indulge in big picture “out of the box” thinking. To quote Albert Einstein, “Imagination is more important than knowledge.” In dreaming, people build upon the positive core identified in discovery to create generative and hopeful images of the future.

Often, dreaming begins by taking participants through a future dreaming exercise or having small groups discuss the dreams that were captured in the initial interviews they conducted. Each small group discusses the dreaming elements and creates their collective dream. To engage their right brains, groups use creative enactments to depict their dreams – in skits, murals, collages, songs, and poems that capture and dramatize the positive possibilities for the future.

Design – Determining what should be. During Design, participants draw on discoveries and dreams to craft design principles that reflect their ideal organization. Design principles, which are also called provocative propositions, are compelling statements of what an element (e.g., leadership or infrastructure or communications) of the organization or community will be like in its desired future. The principles are evocative and draw people toward the future, inviting the community or organization to redirect policies and operations toward them.

For example, local government might generate the following provocative proposition on communication:

Communication with our community is the cornerstone of a responsible local government. We openly and honestly communicate with the residents of our community using equitable and participatory processes. We actively solicit ideas and feedback and guarantee a response. Systems within our organization are designed and redesigned with input from the community.



Summit participants prepare creative enactments of their hopes and dreams for the future.

Principles of Appreciative Inquiry

The Constructionist Principle

Words create Worlds.

The Simultaneity Principle

Inquiry creates Change. The moment we ask a question, we initiate change.

The Poetic Principle

We can choose what we study...and what we choose to study makes a difference.

The Anticipatory Principle

Image inspires action....Human systems move in the direction of their images of the future.

The Positive Principle

Positive questions lead to positive change.

The Wholeness Principle

Wholeness brings out the best.

The Enactment Principle

Acting “as if” is self fulfilling... be the change you want to see.

The Free Choice Principle

Free choice liberates power... and commitment to action.

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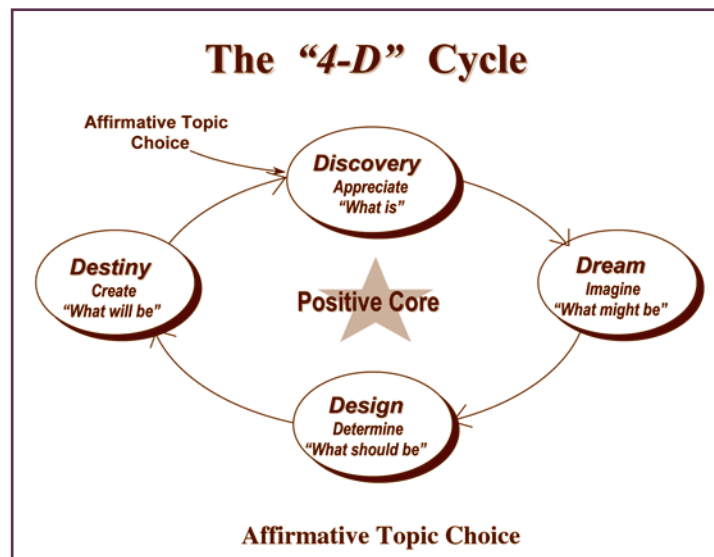
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Destiny – Creating what will be. In Destiny, we organize to get the job done. Destiny is about putting ideas into action and matching personal responsibility with passion. The technique of Open Space Technology is often used to help individuals connect their passions with commitments and action plans. Small groups work on areas that require collaboration.



People of all ages gather in small groups to share their stories and discover what gives life to Longmont at its best.

In Destiny, people sign up to work on the initiatives that interest and excite them. They plan the people, resources, and



milestones that need to happen to make the initiative happen. They also plan celebrations to recognize progress along the way. Many different initiatives may be charted on a future timeline to reflect major steps along the way and explore how the different initiatives can coordinate.

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Sample Projects Using Appreciative Inquiry

Focus on Longmont Citywide

Strategic Plan: The Appreciative Inquiry process for the citywide strategic plan provided a community connection to the plan, resulting in increased community awareness and commitment to the plan's policies. New voices began to be heard in city planning processes. New boundaries were crossed, like giving the city a strong message to play a part in improving area schools. (IAP2 2006 Core Values Project of the Year)

Cameron Church Future

Visioning: This community church is small but cohesive. Recognizing the trend in faith-based organizations to become larger and larger, the Cameron community has twice used Appreciative Inquiry to re-create itself – to strengthen

relationships, create new programs, and foster new energy. The previous inquiry led to programs that link spirituality with the arts. The current initiative is exploring the relationship between the congregation and the adjacent community and the world at large.

City of Denver Budget

Shortfall: Some people think that Appreciative Inquiry only works for feel-good community visioning projects. In fact, the opposite is true. Consider the City of Denver's project, "Thriving in Turbulent Times." This initiative responded to the city's estimated \$70 million budget shortfall. The initiative was designed to generate grassroots commitment to addressing the shortfall by studying financial best practices and identifying

revenue-generating opportunities in the city. A team of 200 people were trained to interview city employees, local businesses, and community members. After completing 600 interviews, they came together in a 1-day mini-summit to articulate best practices, envision a stable financial future, and design and initiate cost-saving initiatives and new revenue-generating programs. Outcomes included savings through service consolidation, reduced fleet services, a new incentive retirement program, and employee commitment to potentially controversial cost-saving measures.

Knox Area Revitalization: The Knox Area in Pennsylvania is using Appreciative Inquiry in its effort to revitalize Knox Borough and Ashland, Beaver,

and Salem townships in Pennsylvania. The mission of this collaborative effort is: *"To revitalize the Knox area, by enhancing the community in ways to make our community highly desirable for businesses and families."*

Youth Engagement: We often speak of wanting to engage youth in our work. At the 2004 IAP2 conference, Bliss Browne described "Imagine Chicago," where youth interviewed the 140 leaders in Chicago about their hopes and dreams for the future of the city. The Imagine process is now a worldwide movement. (See www.imaginechicago.com.) In Hutchinson, Minnesota, Appreciative Inquiry is being used to educate teams of students about issues and opportunities related to energy. (See www.swmnfoundation.org.)

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How initiatives are pursued will vary for different organizations, but the key is to mobilize action and plan a mechanism for coordinating the different initiatives.

When and How to Use Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry achieves high-level community engagement and mobilization. Consider using Appreciative Inquiry when:

- 1. Different voices of the community or organization need to share perspectives and see common ground.** The interviews connect the community through their values and ideals more successfully than traditional approaches. Intergenerational activities are especially powerful.
- 2. The organization needs to regenerate and envision its future.** The process of sharing stories about when the organization is at its best is empowering and generates hope for the future.
- 3. We truly want new ideas and energy.** Appreciative Inquiry is about co-creation. It creates new possibilities and builds momentum for action by connecting passions with personal responsibility. Following an Appreciative Inquiry process, organizations are often delighted to hear new voices in community meetings and surprised to see who emerge as the new community leaders. The process lays a strong foundation for action within the community.

You can begin applying Appreciative Inquiry by thinking through how you can use appreciative questions in working with both clients and publics, and then build to using the full 4-D methodology. Ask about times when public participation has been at its best. Ask about wishes for the future. Avoid questions about what went wrong. *The Encyclopedia of Positive Questions* by Diana Whitney, David Cooperrider, Amanda Trosten-Bloom, and Brian Kaplan is a good place to start.

Barbara Lewis is a member of the Colorado chapter and a Master Trainer for IAP2. She is the principal of Catalyst, Inc. and an Associate with the Corporation for Positive Change. Barbara can be reached at 303-871-8850 or catalystbel@comcast.net.



The “Focus on Longmont” coordinating team share a moment of laughter as they use a fishbowl technique to select topics for the Appreciative Inquiry process for their project.

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Appreciative Inquiry Commons:
www.appreciativeinquiry.cwru.edu/

AI Practitioner:
www.aipractitioner.com

Case Western Reserve University
Weatherhead School of Management:
www.cwru.edu

Corporation for Positive Change:
www.positivechange.org

Imagine Chicago:
www.imaginechicago.org

Rolling the Dice for Participation: Examining One Company's Unique Board Game

by *Katya McClintock*

The nature of public participation in Alberta's oil and gas industry is unique. Companies are required to consult with stakeholders, who are mostly rural landowners. However, the government directive does not indicate how this consultation should be done, but rather leaves the interpretation to individual companies. The magnitude of oil and gas development in the province of Alberta is also producing more informed landowners who expect more from the companies seeking to do business with them. Thus, the level of consultation is increasing as companies seek to comply not only with regulations, but to build more meaningful relationships with their stakeholders.

Trident Exploration Corp (Trident) is a private company based in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Founded in 2000, it is dedicated to the discovery and production of natural gas from coal, also referred to as coalbed methane. In the oil and gas industry, it is important to determine what a company's message to stakeholders will be, as well as how it will be communicated. In Trident's case, building strong and meaningful relationships is paramount. In building relationships, Trident believes it has a responsibility to ensure their stakeholders are informed about the oil and gas industry as it relates to them. The Community Engagement and Social Responsibility (CESR) department was created in 2002

to address these corporate goals and further Trident's commitment to public education.

Building Relationships

The CESR department is tasked with developing relationships in the communities where Trident operates and educating people about its natural gas from coal operations. The CESR

gas from coal and an accompanying handbook. Trident believes that elevating the level of public understanding of the industry generally, and company practice in particular, is critical. Informed stakeholders allow for public participation and a more meaningful dialogue. Over the past few years, as relationships have been developed in the surrounding communities, the CESR department

expanded its commitment to public education by supplementing the adult information they provide with information aimed at youth. Youth are as affected by oil and gas operations as adults; their opinions, concerns, and questions matter today and, increasingly, tomorrow as they become landowners and business partners.

Trident employees, from geologists to drilling supervisors, give school presentations or on-site drilling rig tours, supplementing Alberta education's natural resources curriculum. Students who participate are better able to put into perspective the oil and gas activity they see taking place in their communities.

As part of Trident's drive to provide educational opportunities, a CESR employee and a geologist with a passion for education brainstormed and came up

with fun and meaningful activities for young people, initiating an 18-month



department has created a series of innovative programs beyond the conventional project update newsletters and community open houses that includes a half-day workshop on natural

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long project that grew to involve the entire company. This effort resulted in two board games aimed at reinforcing existing knowledge of the oil and gas industry while facilitating discussions. The game *Race for the Rights* was presented at the 2006 IAP2 conference in Montreal to an audience of practitioners from around the world. The second game, *Drills & Thrills*, is designed for younger ages and is a variation on *Race for the Rights*.

Race for the Rights explores what is involved in the operation of an oil and gas company. The playing board consists of mineral rights properties. Players move around the board and have the opportunity to lease the mineral rights when they land on the property. As players move around the board they could land on other squares that offer more insight into oil and gas company practice. Landing on the various squares teaches players details they may not have otherwise thought about when it comes to running an oil and gas company – with special focus on stakeholder issues such as noise, the environment, and surface rights. As players acquire mineral rights, they are also able to drill wells on their properties. The production component of the game allows for discussions on the quantity of wells and their surface locations, as well as the unknown elements associated with geology and drilling. At each stage of the game there are opportunities to discuss issues and questions that may arise.

Company Learns from Players

The game has been an enormous success. Trident believes that this

success comes from players having an opportunity to increase their understanding of the day-to-day details of running a company such as Trident. *Race for the Rights* has been played at schools and events across the province, with each session yielding changes and improvements to game play and questions. The fact that Trident is open to amending the games lends to the participatory process by providing a forum for young people and adults alike to discuss concerns and questions with Trident staff. In addition, the company has the opportunity to hear some unique perspectives with respect to its development plans.

In the summer of 2006, the CESR department had two masters of teaching students from the University of Calgary



working on further improvements. Their input with regard to age appropriate questions and themes proved to be incredibly valuable. They also spent time working on Trident's second game, *Drills & Thrills*. This game removes the elements of buying mineral rights and drilling wells and focuses on player's basic knowledge of the earth, science, and oil and gas, as well as the examination of specific stakeholder issues.

The board games created by Trident are more than educational materials. While they do offer a unique way to

encourage an understanding of the oil and gas industry, their true value lies in the discussions they elicit and the understanding they encourage. The group dynamics that emerge when playing a board game allow for opinions and concerns to be expressed without focusing on specific or personal issues.

Games are Powerful Tools

As opposed to a more customary question-and-answer session, playing these games allows for active participation as well as a chance to discuss a wide range of issues. Although, the games were designed for youth, they have proven to be powerful tools for discussion among adults as well. As Trident and CESR staff continue to develop other ways to engage and educate the public, these games continue to provide opportunities for collaboration, innovation, and fun.

The oil and gas industry is beginning to change how it consults with stakeholders. With a growing number of companies exploring avenues for establishing more meaningful stakeholder relationships, Trident's board games show how companies can involve their stakeholders in a unique way. Community consultation strives to involve an entire community, and by creating these games, Trident has created an alternative and interactive forum for everyone potentially impacted by the company's operations. IAP2 members who are interested in the specifics of the games' creation and how they are played can contact me by e-mail or phone to learn more.

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IAP2 Training Calendar

January 2008

Calgary, Alberta Canada

January 21-22, Planning for Effective Public Participation
January 23, Communications for Effective Public Participation
January 24-25, Techniques for Effective Public Participation

Milwaukee, WI, USA

January 28-29, Planning for Effective Public Participation

February 2008

Washington, DC Metro Area, USA

February 4-5, Planning for Effective Public Participation
February 6, Communications for Effective Public Participation
February 7-8, Techniques for Effective Public Participation

London, UK

February 4-5, Planning for Effective Public Participation
February 6, Communications for Effective Public Participation
February 7-8, Techniques for Effective Public Participation

Madison, WI, USA

February 19-20, Planning for Effective Public Participation

March 2008

Madison, WI, USA

March 5, Communications for Effective Public Participation
March 6-7, Techniques for Effective Public Participation

London, UK

March 10-11, Planning for Effective Public Participation
March 12, Communications for Effective Public Participation
March 13-14, Techniques for Effective Public Participation

April 2008

London, UK

March 31-April 1, Planning for Effective Public Participation
April 2, Communications for Effective Public Participation
April 3-4, Techniques for Effective Public Participation

June 2008

Washington, DC Metro Area, USA

June 9-10, Planning for Effective Public Participation
June 11, Communications for Effective Public Participation
June 12-13, Techniques for Effective Public Participation

Visit IAP2's Web site for locations and registration information: www.iap2.org