

BUILDING BRIDGES



THE MICHIANA COMMUNITY CURRENCY NEWSLETTER

WWW.MICHIANACURRENCY.ORG

Social Forum Process can Advance Community Currency Initiative

By Jackie Smith

Chairperson of Michiana Community Currency

The Michiana Community Currency project is pleased to be part of the Michiana Call to Action, which links our community to a global initiative called the World Social Forum process (see www.michianasocialforum.org). The World Social Forums have sought to build a global movement for social justice and since 2001, millions of people have participated in meetings and actions held in global, national, and local settings. Social forums help groups share ideas and resources as they nurture alliances that can help make "another world possible."

Community currency projects have been on the agenda of many social forums, providing a way for people to address problems arising from economic globalization. For Michiana residents, globalization has meant job losses and declining rights for workers, less local control over what is produced and consumed here, a tendency for elected officials to focus more on the demands of outside investors than on the needs and abilities of local people, and a growing reliance on energy as we consume goods produced further away.

"most harrowing is evidence that climate change may wreak havoc on our planet and all of its inhabitants. A community currency can strengthen markets for local goods and services and reduce our dependence on oil"

Today's news headlines are daily reminders that we need to find new ways of doing things. At the start of 2008, rising fuel prices and fall-out from the sub-prime mortgage crisis will increase financial pressures on many people this year, pushing many more into poverty.

A looming recession threatens employment prospects even for workers in traditionally more secure careers. But perhaps most harrowing is evidence that climate change may wreak havoc on our planet and all of its inhabitants. A community currency can strengthen markets for local goods and services, reduce our dependence on oil, and give us more power over decisions that affect our lives the most. It can help inoculate us from the inevitable shocks of volatile interest rates, plant closings, and resource depletion.

It's easy to become overwhelmed by the enormity of global problems, but the World Social Forums are an exciting source of hope. Please take part in the Michiana Call to Action and especially Saturday's program on "Michiana and the World Social Forums" and help make another Michiana possible.

Michiana Community Currency Goals for 2008

- Expand efforts to build alliances, meet neighbors, and cultivate network of community currency participants.
- Develop our organization beyond a core group of volunteers to support a paid staff member.
- Develop and launch a "Michiana Buy Local" website to promote local businesses.
- Sponsor 2 or 3 events - such as a youth-senior services exchange project, a community trades fair, or an environmental clean-up - to demonstrate how a community currency can work here.
- Move closer to-if not achieve-our aim of launching our own community currency.

To volunteer to help or to receive updates, contact michianacurrency@sbcglobal.net.

Local Week of Action Events

Saturday, January 19:

Earth Friendly Eating - Living Green 11:00 AM St. Joseph County Public Library, South Bend downtown branch (<http://evanced.info/stjoseph/evanced/eventcalendar.asp>)

Sunday, January 20:

Cool Cities Campaign The Progressive Town Hall will host this informational meeting at 4:00 p.m. at Fiddler's Hearth Public House.

Sunday, January 20:

Women's Action for New Directions (WAND) 3:00 PM at the former Art Matters, West Washington, Goshen. Contact Karen Jacob, jacob@wandni.org, 825-4654

Monday, January 21: Martin Luther King Day--

Michiana Peace and Justice Coalition's Call to end funding for the war in Iraq. US Rep. Joe Donnelly's office 4:00 p.m. at 4:45, US Sen. Bayh's office, and Federal building from 5-6 p.m.

Monday, January 21:

South Bend Equality— 6:30 p.m. at the First Unitarian Church, South Bend.

Wednesday January 23:

Jobs with Justice action for worker's rights. Help local workers achieve the international human right to decide whether or not to join a union. 5-6 p.m. at the South Bend Housing Authority, 501 Alonzo Watson Drive (off of Western, near Covaleski Stadium). Contact Joe Carbone at 574-292-8137.

Thursday January 24:

Blue-Green Alliance Press Conference 10:00 a.m. South Bend UAW Hall, 1426 S. Main. www.bluegreenalliance.org/

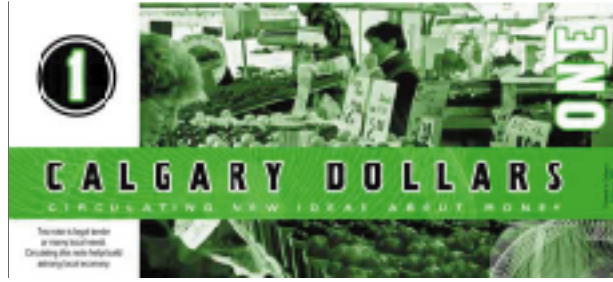
Saturday January 26:

Michiana and the World Social Forums—Meet from 12 Noon-4:30 at the St. Joseph County Public Library (At Main and Wayne Sts. in downtown South Bend) Learn about local groups, and hear from the organizations and campaigns that have been part of the Michiana Call to Action.

For more information, links, and past newsletters visit us at: www.michianacurrency.org

Remember...
 Just 15 cents of each dollar you spend at chain stores stays in our community. Buying from local shops and producers pays local dividends. Nearly half of what you spend "buying local" is re-invested in the local economy.

(Source: www.ci.greenbay.wi.us/SGB/landuse.html)



Currency projects from around the globe include Canadian Calgary Dollars from (left), Australia's Northern River local LETS units (center below), and the Argentinean Red global del trueque (bottom).

Other Economies are Possible!

Our increasingly globalized economy generates a "race to the bottom" that harms workers, communities, and the environment.

By structuring all of our economic life around a competitive search for profits, policy-makers shift attention, creativity, and ingenuity away from more cooperative and socially productive activities. Solidarity economies emphasize a social bottom line that places people, instead of profits, at the center. By rewarding activities that benefit the wider society, solidarity economies can strengthen social ties and encourage cooperation in response to crisis. To find out more, see www.dollarsandsense.org (July/Aug. 2006 issue).



You've heard of "Slow Food," how about Slow Money?

By Woody Tasch

Reprinted from: *More than Money Journal*, Summer 2004

As money circulates the globe with ever-accelerating speed, it sucks oxygen out of the air, fertility out of the soil, and culture out of local communities.

- Just as we need traffic calming measures to slow the traffic passing through our neighborhoods, we need money calming measures to slow the money passing through our portfolios.
- As the 20th century was the century of scaling up and speeding up, the 21st century will be the century of disaggregating and slowing down.
- What is the difference between the time it takes an investment to take off and the time it takes a new way of thinking to take root?

Thanks to everyone who helped to make our "Unplug Your iPod": night of community music last March at Elva's such a success

Help us plan the spring "Unplug your Ipod" party to celebrate Michiana artists. Contact us at michianacurrency@sbcglobal.net or 574 904 7192

Community Currency in the NEWS

You may not have heard from us in a while, but even as this edition of **Building Bridges** goes to press, our continuing work to lay the foundations for a community currency in our region is being followed in a growing number of press outlets. Recently our initiative was written up in the **Notre Dame Alumnae Magazine** (www.nd.edu/~ndmag/w0708/michmoney.html) and in the **Indiana Chamber of Commerce's Biz Voice** (www.bizvoicemagazine.com/archives/07mayjun/Shorts.pdf), as well as past features in the **South Bend Tribune** and **IN Michiana Magazine**. Clearly there is a growing interest in our initiative in many different sectors, and we suspect this interest will grow as we see discouraging economic forecasts ahead.

WE'RE IN THE MONEY! YOU CAN BE TOO!

WE HAVE THREE WORKING COMMITTEES, AND VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED TO HELP MAKE LOCAL MONEY.

IF YOU'D LIKE TO HELP RECRUIT LOCAL BUSINESS PARTNERS, HELP WITH ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS SUCH AS FUND RAISING, WEB SITE DEVELOPMENT, DATABASE MANAGEMENT, ETC., OR TO BE A REGIONAL COORDINATOR OR VOLUNTEER FOR TOWNS OUTSIDE SOUTH BEND, CONTACT JACKIE SMITH AT JACSMITH1037@SBCGLOBAL.NET OR 574 233-3928. TO WORK ON PUBLIC OUTREACH AND PUBLICATIONS, CONTACT WALDO MIKELS-CARRASCO AT WAMCAR@GMAIL.COM.

Contact Us: MICHIANACURRENCY@SBCGLOBAL.NET