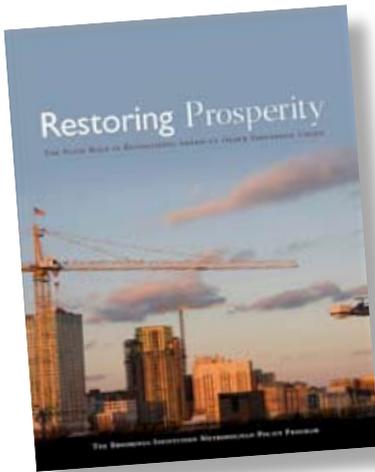


Looking At The ISSUES

June 1, 2007

Looking At The Week



The Time is “Ripe” to Revitalize Ohio’s Older Industrial Cities, says Brookings

For all their economic challenges, Ohio’s older industrial cities possess numerous physical, economic, and cultural attributes that, if fully leveraged, could be converted into vital competitive assets. – The Brookings Institution

Late last month the Washington-based Brookings Institution published a new study entitled, *Restoring Prosperity: The State Role in Revitalizing America’s Older Industrial Cities.*¹

Looking at the performance of 302 U.S. cities on eight indicators of economic health and residential well-being the report found that 65 were “lagging behind their peers.” Most of these cities, according to author Jennifer S. Vrey, are “older industrial communities still struggling to make a successful transition from an economy based on routine manufacturing to one based on more knowledge oriented activities.”²

Canton was joined by eight other Ohio cities (Cincinnati, Cleveland, Lima, Dayton, Mansfield, Springfield, Warren, Youngstown) on the list. Yet, Vrey noted that all these cities had characteristics and resources that if properly leveraged could become powerful competitive assets. What kind of assets? The list includes:

- Historic Properties
- Four-Year Colleges and Universities
- Two-Year Colleges
- Hospitals and Medical Facilities
- Museums
- Major League Sports Teams

Indeed, she argues that the time is “ripe” for the revival of urban economies. Cities such as Canton are a source of regional identity. They can create a sense of pride and place as changes in demographics, family structures, and what people value can contribute to the benefit of urban economies that offer the new amenities that people want.

The state, however, has to help. (Next week’s *Issues*: The State Role)

Nutishia Blake, a senior at Alliance High School, is one eight students in ten states selected for a Nelnet \$5,000 Scholarship administered through NCAN. She was recommended by Lynn Jackson, Stark Education Partnership’s OGAN College Access Advisor. Nutishia will attend Duke University.

Adele Gelb attended the Governor’s Conference on Increasing the High School Graduation Rate for African American Male Students on Wednesday, May 30.

¹ The full report and state of Ohio Profile may be downloaded from: http://www.brookings.edu/metro/pubs/20070520_oic.htm

² Vey, J.S. (2007). *Restoring Prosperity: The State Role in Revitalizing America’s Older Industrial Cities*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, p.4.