



April 2009

Dear Public Official;

On behalf of the University of Michigan (U-M), I am writing to invite you and your local-government colleagues to at upcoming conference at the university called **“Urban-Rural Connections: Sustainability in a Volatile World”** on **Wednesday, May 13, 2009** from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

As you know, Michigan municipalities are increasingly struggling with shrinking budgets and tax revenues—all while still trying to balance planning and development goals within different jurisdictions. In such a volatile climate, it may be easy to overlook environmental-sustainability principles and practices. The university is offering this collaborative conference to help reduce the possibility of that happening.

In addition to presentations and panel discussions, the “Urban-Rural Connections” Sustainability Conference will feature case-study “brainstorming” sessions, with small groups involving public officials, urban and regional planners, research professors, public citizens, and others. Essentially, it will be a facilitated forum, through which stakeholders can collectively **frame key environmental sustainability challenges for the Great Lakes Region—then strategize on how to best address them.**

I know it’s not easy to take a day out of the office. With that in mind, I am enclosing an informational flier and agenda of activities—so you can get a feel what you’ll be doing and learning at this full-day event. I also invite you to visit the Graham Environmental Sustainability Institute website at <http://www.graham.umich.edu> to see the roster of national and regional speakers and panelists we have arranged for the event.

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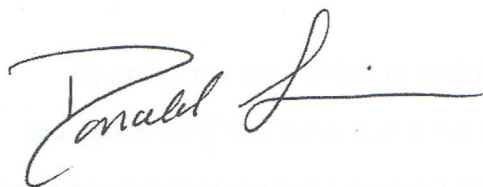
This Sustainability Conference is being organized and hosted by several U-M units, including the Graham Environmental Sustainability Institute, the Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, and the Office of Government Relations. Several external organizations are also helping to make the event possible. These include the Michigan Association of Counties, the Michigan Association of Planning, the Michigan Municipal League, and Washtenaw County.

The "Urban-Rural Connections" Conference will be held at U-M's Rackham Building at 910 East Washington Street in Ann Arbor, MI. For your convenience, if you register by **May 1, 2009**, we will mail you a parking voucher, so you can park in a parking structure less than one block from the meeting facility.

The conference registration fee is \$25 for non-profit organizations and municipalities (half the price of the business registration fee of \$50). This includes a Continental breakfast, a full lunch, light refreshments throughout the day, and parking when you register by May 1, 2009. For more information, or to securely register online with a credit card, please visit the Graham Institute website, or call **(734) 615-8230**.

I look forward to seeing you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donald Scavia". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Donald Scavia, Ph.D.,
Director of the Graham Environmental Sustainability
Professor of Natural Resources & Environment

"Urban-Rural Connections" Sustainability Conference Agenda

Rackham Building, University of Michigan, 4th Floor

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Tuesday, May 12

7:30 p.m.

Creating Self-Reliant Communities in a Global Age: A Public Talk Featuring Michael Shuman

Mr. Shuman is an attorney and economist, and is Vice President of Enterprise Development for the Training & Development Corporation of Bucksport, Maine. He has written, co-written, or edited seven books.

Wednesday, May 13

8 – 8:30 a.m.

Check-In & Continental Breakfast, Immediately Followed by:

8:30 – 8:45 a.m.

Welcome Remarks (Cynthia Wilbanks & Donald Scavia, U-M)

8:45 – 10:45 a.m.

Sustainable Urban-Rural Connections: Challenges and Opportunities (*opening plenary discussion*). Panelists include:

- Gerrit Knapp (University of Maryland)
- John Logie (former Mayor, Grand Rapids, MI)
- Matt Naud (Environmental Coordinator, Ann Arbor, MI)
- Kent Portney (Tufts University)
- June Thomas (University of Michigan)

Panelists will frame the challenges and opportunities of urban-rural sustainability and engage in facilitated dialogue. This will include Q&A with all conference participants.

10:45 – 11:15 a.m.

Networking Break

The sessions from 11:15 a.m. – 3:15 p.m. will be concurrent working group sessions, with each group consisting of 12-15 conference participants from diverse backgrounds. Each group will work toward identifying actionable solutions to urban-rural sustainability challenges within the context of the pre-prepared conference case study. Each Working Group will be assigned a professionally trained facilitator, who will pursue balanced participation across all group members.

11:15 – 3:15 p.m.

Group Working Sessions (*Break Between 3:15-3:45 p.m.*)

PART A: Facilitated group member introductions. Discuss group working process and objectives

PART B: Working lunch. Discuss case study. Brainstorm solutions.

PART C: Define opportunities and obstacles. Synthesize "take-aways."

3:15 – 3:45 p.m.

Sustainable Urban-Rural Connections: Challenges & Opportunities (*closing plenary discussion*). Presentation of synthesized and consolidated output of the working groups. Panelist discussion of challenges, opportunities, outcomes, conclusions, & recommendations. Q & A with all conference participants.

4:45 p.m.

Close and Adjourn

Urban-Rural Connections: SUSTAINABILITY IN A VOLATILE WORLD

PUBLIC LECTURE Free & Open to the Community

Tues., May 12, 2009 (7:30 p.m.; doors open at 7 p.m.)

FULL-DAY CONFERENCE For Registrants

Wed., May 13, 2009 (8 a.m. - 5 p.m.)

Rackham Bldg., U-M
4th Floor

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

ACTIVITIES

FREE LECTURE TUESDAY NIGHT

(5/12): Featuring Michael Shuman, Author of *The Small-Mart Revolution: How Local Businesses Are Beating the Global Competition*. Light refreshments before and after the speaker.

CONFERENCE WEDNESDAY (5/13):

This collaborative event will bring together public officials, professors, researchers, and community members for a case study-based workshop designed to translate the principles of sustainability into practical next-steps. See details online.

REGISTER EARLY

www.graham.umich.edu

(734) 615-8230

WHY ATTEND?

NETWORKING: You'll enjoy a valuable networking forum for broadening your pool of resources to call on when needed.

TAKE-AWAYS: You'll walk away with specific guidelines, research, and case-study data that you can apply in your community or research projects.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Through multi-disciplinary panel discussions and group brainstorming, you'll have the opportunity to expand your proficiency in this timely and important issue.

DISCOUNT REGISTRATION: The full-day event on May 13, 2009 is only \$25 for non-profits and municipalities when they register by **May 1 2009** (half the business registration fee of \$50). U-M personnel will be admitted at no cost

Space is Limited & Registration is Required!



U-M Government Relations



U-M Taubman College of
Architecture + Urban Planning