

## The Texas Lyceum Journal Editor's Letter

If he had more space, Jordan Cowman was going to say, "Economic development doesn't just happen." Well, in fact it does. All over the place. That isn't the point. Left alone, with no intervention, the market will work its way. But markets are known to be imperfect. And people are known to be impatient with the status quo.

And thus we are talking about economic development. But really we are talking about shaping our future, rather than leaving it to chance. We have choices to make that will affect education and skill levels, income levels, quality of life, wealth creation, and ultimately, the health and safety of our way of life. We celebrate entrepreneurship and innovation; we seek better ways of rallying resources to build the ecosystem that supports creativity, change and growth. As Dr. George Kozmetsky always said, the three legs of the economic development stool are talent, technology and capital.

Traditional economic development is a win-lose formula: recruit a company, beat out another place. Today's economic development is win<sup>2</sup>: by concentrating on growing indigenous companies, we create opportunity at no one's expense. We make pies bigger. We bake totally new pies.

The opponents of globalization eschew wealth creation. They don't understand capitalism and blame it for all of our ills. But capitalism is the only hope for creating new wealth, new resources, new technology, and innovation, all of which provide the hope that disease loses, hunger abates, children survive to grow and learn, peace prevails.

In this Journal, we present the future of economic development in Texas. Dr. Bill Cunningham and Sam Barshop call for another flagship university. We can't seriously execute on our economic development strategies if we don't have access to the level of education and research such institutions provide. As the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest state in the nation, shame on us if we don't invest directly in our future through better education at all levels. Susan Strommer, Wes Jurey, Jill Dickman, Steve Straus, and Bob Bolt point out that early stage capital is essential to startup and small company survival and growth and that Texas has a paucity of seed capital. They present practical solutions to this problem. Bill Sproull discusses the type of small businesses to support: gazelles. The Cluster article describes a coordinated, statewide initiative to support targeted sectors that have the best potential to thrive in Texas. Eliza Evans and Mike Sekora present a mapping strategy that builds deep knowledge of a region to identify growth strategies and link crucial players. My article on university commercialization describes the challenges in commercializing university research and some potential solutions. Shi Dinghuan and Ted Li give us back some lessons we should have learned better the first time! Gary Thompson presents us with a thought-piece intended to jolt us out of our still-20<sup>th</sup> century thinking about education and life-long learning.

With this Journal, we present a number of issues that supplement and reinforce the agenda of the *Economic Development Summit: Harnessing the Lightning*. It is a primer, a reminder, a resource. Please read it carefully. We hope to see you there!