

FUTUREtakes

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From the Desk of Tim Mack, President, World Future Society



I am pleased to report to you that the news for WFS International is positive. Once again, our membership numbers are higher than a year ago. This is the result of increased retention and our ongoing new member program. Our 2006 conference attendance was up over the 2005 conference by the largest increase in some time and registration for our 2007 Minnesota meeting is already running ahead of the Toronto levels.

The Learning Section organizational meeting in Toronto was a clear success. Attendance and enthusiasm were high, the brainstorming approach allowed a great deal to be accomplished in terms of planning for the coming year. As well, discussions are underway for several on-line courses on technology foresight and assessment.

We are continuing to work with an expanding range of groups to get the “Foresight is Valuable” message out to new audiences. In addition to presentations to several trade groups on international travel trends, I have spoken to both public and private high schools and community colleges across the US, an engineering association in Denver, and the US National Security Agency in Maryland. In Toronto, we met with the government of Singapore and Brazil, and discussed working more closely with both on upcoming events and publications.

I have long felt that interest in the future cannot begin at too young an age, and have also made presentations on space exploration and technology trends to middle-school groups and even an early childhood development center (pre-K). We are in discussions with Bowling Green State University about a strategic partnership where they will utilize our resources for ongoing futures research projects. And a group called the Future City Competition has approached WFS about joint programming. They are connected with National Engineers Week and the Society of Professional Engineers and hold a very successful middle-school competition on designing the city of the future. The national finals are held each year in the Washington DC area.

We have also added the Inter American Development Bank to our list of potential strategic partners. They and their partner organizations, the World Bank and IMF, have responsibility for achieving the UN Millennium (which is separate from the UN University’s Millennium Project) Development Goals for 2015, and see the World Future Society as a helpful partner. We are discussing articles on global economic futures (in cooperation with Taiwan’s *Journal of Future Studies*), conference presentations and other joint activities. As well, I was able to recently speak at a national strategic planning conference for Native American leadership and they were very receptive to our message of managing possible futures.

Concerning *Future Survey*, we are moving to 10 issues a year plus two special issues (in January and July) which contain mini-guide summaries by subject areas. As well, *FRQ* will soon publish a Mike Marien article on ‘Suggested Reading for World Leaders.’

We expect that the new WFS Web site should be ready to launch by the beginning of next year. Much of our present content has already been transferred to the new ‘under construction’ site, and the additional automated features and content should provide greater member value. In late August, WFS installed twelve new computer stations, a new server, and the related software, which were made possible by a gift from a private foundation. These have significantly increased the ease of Web design and content development.

Tim Mack
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