

Livonia Democratic Club

General Meeting

11-14-07

The meeting opened at 7:00 pm by President, Pat O'Neil. To recognize Veterans Day, Pat asked for a moment of silence to be observed in honor of our troops.

Pat introduced Carol Larkin, 11th District Chair. She stated that we should know in a few days if Michigan will have a primary or caucus in January. The issue is in the Court of Appeals now. If we have a primary, it will be on January 15th. She invited all in attendance to the 11th District Holiday party on December 6th, at 38200 Michigan Avenue. It will be a pot luck dinner and canned food drive.

Guest Speaker:

Bob Ficano, Wayne County Executive, joined us this evening to discuss Economic Growth in the area. He spoke about an Aerotropolis – an airport city that becomes a driving force for trade and becomes an economic engine. He stressed that we are in a Global Economy. We're not merely competing with other US cities for business, we're competing with the rest of the world. Other comments expressed:

- Although there is no doubt that there's a downturn in the auto industry, autos will still be made.
- China is the 4th largest economy and will soon be #2. We can't make the same mistakes that we made with Toyota and Japan by shunning other companies. Now Toyota has reached the number one spot, and there's not a single Toyota plant in Michigan.
- Ford and GM are doing well in China. Profits are brought back to the US to offset losses in the US. The positive results of joint ventures with the Chinese will result in additional US jobs.
- The top three Michigan Universities (U of M, Wayne State and MSU) are a big draw to the Chinese. So are our road systems. But so is trade with Canada. We need to capitalize on our advantages.
- Our job is to create the environment which will help logistics companies become more efficient. Right now all shipments from China go to Chicago before coming to Michigan. But Chicago's capacity is tapped. We're at 60% capacity and have room to grow.
- We can't do things the old way. Perhaps waiving landing fees or eliminating taxes on warehouse space and a 30 max. permit process will help businesses move to our state. The process must be streamlined. All of this must be coordinated with the seven communities along I-94.
- Light rail from Ann Arbor will exist only if it will make money and has people to ride it.
- We should capitalize on all the business generated at the Auto Show. It generates 540 million dollars each year and there are 6000 members of the press who attend. Cobo Hall imposes a lot of stipulations however, which limits us.

Bob Ficano stated that we have quality education here and that there are more engineers in the Detroit metro area than anywhere in the US. Building relationships is where it's at.

Pat thanked Bob Ficano for coming. He then introduced Lily Cavanagh who spoke about the Michigan Spanish Speaking Democrats group and upcoming events.

There will be more info to follow on our LDC Holiday party.

Frank Kalinski thanked the many club members for their support on his campaign for a seat on the City Council.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting closed at 8:45 pm.

Linda Lieder