

# columbusFUTURISTS

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## **Futurists' Top 10 Ideas to Revitalize Ohio**

Columbus, Ohio— Fourteen members of Columbus Futurists, the Columbus chapter of the World Future Society (WFS), have developed a top ten list of solutions to the question “What needs to be done to revitalize the State of Ohio and bring it back to its position as one of the top five states in the country?” They were responding to the frank assessment of the state of the state from U.S. Senator Mike DeWine (R-OH). The futurists engaged in a nominal focus group exercise that generated a list of ideas that the state should follow in order to revitalize Ohio. The top ten ideas are:

- 1) Significant reform to the P-16 education system, including raising the level of excellence to world class standards; reducing the costs, especially for those out of state; making education an adjunct to the state’s economic engine; and establishing more business/education cooperation programs.
- 2) Promoting a health care industry, including health care products and the renewal of the “health spa” for the 21<sup>st</sup> century (a form of health care tourism/recreation/entertainment).
- 3) Beginning a “Branding Ohio” campaign to promote and build a positive image of the state.
- 4) Embracing diversity in all its forms.
- 5) Promotion of the “New Urbanism,” discouraging suburban sprawl and making Ohio’s urban spaces attractive, thereby improving the quality of life and attracting new residents.
- 6) Improving air and water quality, especially for the health benefits it would afford.

7) Developing an Ohio Research Triangle between Cincinnati-Dayton-Columbus, linking together universities like The Ohio State University, Wright State University and the University of Cincinnati, with Wright-Patterson AFB and a number of corporations.

8) Luring the “creative class,” which Richard Florida defines as that class of workers—scientists, engineers, architects, writers, artists—who use their creativity to drive economic growth. Improving arts and cultural funding and embracing diversity are two ways to lure this class to Ohio.

9) Developing a system of collaborative governments and citizen focus groups to consolidate and streamline the sometimes conflicting or redundant levels of government, thereby eliminating duplication, waste and inefficiency.

10) Encouraging the development of renewable energy, especially windmills, biofuels (such as methanol) and fuel cells. ‘

Columbus Futurists was responding to the frank assessment of the state of the state from Senator Mike DeWine. As reported in the *Columbus Dispatch*, DeWine recently spoke candidly to a group of Ohio business leaders about the challenges the state faces. In the 1960s, Ohio was, by many measures, a wealthy and prosperous state, one of the leading states in the country in terms of economic growth, high levels of disposable income and educational attainment enjoyed by its citizens. Today, however, Ohio has lost more jobs than any other state, its citizens earning significantly less than the national average. Especially troubling is the fact that 79,000 people between the ages of 20 and 40 have left the state - more than any other state in the nation. “We must invest in the state’s future,” announced DeWine, “and embrace the changes necessary to move forward or risk falling victim to our own inaction.” The WFS members do not recommend a “silver bullet” approach to Ohio’s renewal, but rather longer-term social and infrastructural changes.

Columbus Futurists is the Columbus chapter of the World Future Society, and was reestablished in 2001. Members are professionals from many area companies including Nationwide, AEP, The Ohio State University, as well as from local consulting firms. Columbus Futurists meet monthly as an “informal think tank,” discussing and generating ideas about the future, especially in the realm of energy and the environment, education, technology and the future of Central Ohio. Its website can be found at <http://columbusfuturists.org>

The World Future Society was founded in 1966 in Washington DC, and is an association interested in how social and technological developments are shaping the future. The Society strives to serve as a neutral clearinghouse for ideas about the future including forecasts, recommendations, and alternative scenarios. These ideas help people to anticipate what may happen in the next five, ten, or more

years ahead. When people can visualize a better future, then they can begin to create it. Society members include sociologists, scientists, corporate planners, educators, students, and retirees. They are thinking people who seek a better future for themselves and society. The Society publishes *The Futurist*, a bi-monthly magazine of trends, predictions and ideas about the future. Its website can be found at [www.wfs.org](http://www.wfs.org).

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