

Visioning 2026 Technology Focus Group Notes

November 13, 2006

6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Chamber of Commerce

Present: Mark Hall, Pam Carlson, Larry Wenzl, John Witkowski, Bob Arkfeld

Participants were given an overview of the Visioning 2026 process. Participants discussed different aspects of the ongoing process.

Participants were asked what of the 16 trends that were distributed would have the greatest impact on technology. Energy, natural resources – such as water, time and space, partnerships as pertaining to funding and resources and communications; especially wireless, were mentioned and discussed.

Participants also discussed innovation versus repairs or usage. There was some discussion on how the perception of the generations coming up is as users of products and not so much creating anything ‘new’. Critical thinking needs to be a big part of education. Technology needs to be used to connect people and to help with social consciousness and the mind set of humanness. That was also related to an entrepreneurial spirit and risk taking and how to develop a climate for that in Northeast Nebraska. Perhaps to have a class with research and development with businesses to give learners an opportunity innovate and some funding and for businesses to stay on the cutting edge without as much capital outlay and for an eye to sustainability through the collaboration.

How could Norfolk/Madison County position itself technologically to be seen as a “place” to be and stay? Perhaps by becoming a hub of connectivity, through infrastructure and innovation – come to Norfolk to connect to the world – have more providers and cell phone data links – perhaps some sort of data storage center.

Using connections and synergies that already exist – like the University – identify critical pieces for creating our own jobs and then help others to do just that – perhaps through virtual reality or other connective technology. Have a big idea like a virtual theme park.

Participant commented that more minds were needed to discuss these issue and see a bigger picture.