

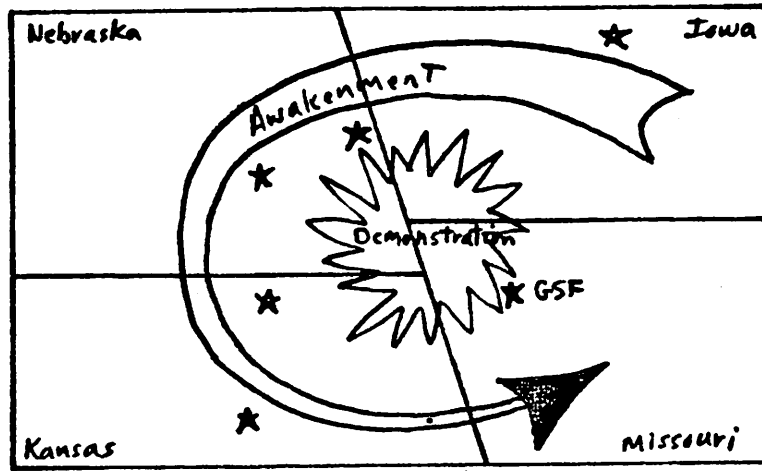
KANSAS CITY REGION - LORIMOR HDP

TRANSITION PLAN

Results of the Kansas City Regional Council

December 1, 1979

I. LONG RANGE REGIONAL STRATEGY:



The above image of a long range (4 Year) comprehensive strategy for the Kansas City Region was created at our regional council in September. It was created by looking at our advantages and disadvantages, and movement history in each state, and then discerning an overall phasing rational for caring comprehensively for the region in the next four years. Basically it says the following;

1. The GSD campaign should be concentrated in the "four corners" area of each state to maximize inter-change among signal communities, concentrate impact, and best use present advantages.
2. The GCF campaign including LENS should be phased as a sweep accross the four states beginning in Iowa.
3. The GSF campaign should focus on creating clusters of colleagues who are engaged regionally and globally, and are opening new sources of troops.

II. NEXT SIX MONTHS TRANSITION PLANS

The recent quarter II regional council took the above long range strategy, looked briefly at the four year vision, looked at present advantages and contradictions in each state, and created the following four part "transition plan":

1. Complete the role of full time Auxilliary in Lorimor.
This involves completing major visibility keystones, doing depth training with the core, clarifying the long range role and function of key structures, and connecting the community to the regional frame. Some kind of consult II event is envisaged in May or June.
2. Complete a Mass Awakenment Campaign in Iowa.
This involves completing negotiations with the Iowa Commission on the Aging for a contract for 40% of the campaign budget and involvement of their staff, completing private funding, and pulling together key endorsements and network assistance, some of which is underway.
The campaign

The campaign would include at least 150 town meetings set up through senior citizen groups, youth and womens forums, and a state assembly.

3. Initiate 8 Signal Communities

This would involve journeying several communities in the four corner area toward Human Development Training School participation, and a consult or module type of event next summer. The aim would be to end up with 3 more signal communities in Iowa, 1 rural community in Nebraska, Kansas, and Missouri, and 2 urban communities, probably in Kansas City and St. Joe Missouri. The journey would include town meeting documentation, town meetings, HDTs attendance, and an initiating event.

4. Hold a three week Human Development School in Lorimor.

This is recommended for several reasons. First, it is needed to do depth leadership training in Lorimor and establish Lorimor's future role in the region as a demonstration community. Second it would be a key experiment in training core leadership from other signal communities. Third, it would establish the Institute's credibility in grass roots training in the region. And finally, it would be the pivotal event that would launch the region into a dramatic new phase of work. To do the school in June would mean beginning immediately in January with basic funding, practices, and recruitment maneuvers.

Each of the above is fairly independent and could probably be done successfully without the others. The only one that we are firmly committed to at this time is the completion of the role of full time auxiliary in Lorimor by June. However, all four are possible and would be a clear transition into a new phase of the movement in North America.

III. CONTINENTAL AND AREA DECISIONS REQUIRED

1. Concrete HDP transition plans, consult II , etc.
2. Go or no go to the Iowa Campaign. To go ahead will require significant support from outside the region.
3. Yes or no to a Human Development Training School in Lorimor.
4. Guidelines for signal community experiments. Partial funding has been committed for one in Nebraska in 1980.

KANSAS CITY REGION - LORIMOR HDP TRANSITION PLAN

	January	February	March	April	May	June
I. Complete Auxiliary Role in Lorimor	Complete Community Center, Emergency Service, and other major keystones Leadership training - Internal & external framing - Clarify core, Boosters, and LCDC roles.					Consult II Celeb.
II. Iowa Campaign	Funding/Auth. & Publicity	Systems & Trng	150 Town Meeting, CYF, GWF	State Assembly	Commission Report	
III. Signal Communities	Four corner TM Documentation	Town Meetings	Participation Decisions	Community Preparation	(HDTs)	Initiation Events
IV. Lorimor HDTs	Announce Dates	Funding, Practics, and Recruitment maneuvers	Complete funding Recruitment followup	Final Recruitment	Set Up	HDTs

His Plan Is What Doctor Ordered For Small Towns

By George Koppe
A Member of the Staff

You could almost call L.E. Philbrook Sr. a small-town doctor.

He doesn't treat patients, prescribe medicine or perform surgery, but he does bring small towns back to life.

Philbrook, a Methodist minister by trade, supervises the Kansas City office of the Institute of Cultural Affairs, which describes itself as an international non-profit "research, training and demonstration group concerned with the human factor in world development."

Simply stated, the institute is a spin-off of the multi-denominational Ecumenical Institute. Its operations range from a neighborhood improvement project in a Chicago ghetto to a school in a Venezuelan village.

Philbrook is no stranger to the institute's far-flung projects. He started in its Fifth City project in Chicago and recently returned from Maliwada, India, where the institute is studying the possible uses of a new farm vehicle manufactured in Marshfield, Mo.

But his forte—and that of the volunteers he supervises—is small towns. Take Lorimor, Iowa, for instance. It was a dying farm town whose population had declined from 800 during World War II to less than 400, but it has experienced a rebirth in the last year as a result of efforts by its citizens and Philbrook's institute.

A weekly newspaper, a health care task force, refurbished storefronts, a restored park and new businesses have made Lorimor a prime example of the institute's work.

What started Lorimor's revival was something called a town meeting.

"A town meeting is a cultural event, a community happening, a revitalization of human spirit," says Philbrook, who works at an imposing Hyde Park area home he shares with the Ecumenical Institute. "We set out to cre-

ate an event in which a town creates its own experience of unity. We try to help them create their own hope. We like to think of it as a catalytic happening."

Philbrook and the volunteers have participated in 114 town meetings in Missouri, Kansas, Iowa and Nebraska in recent years, most recently in several dozen such meetings in the four counties in the northwest corner of Missouri—Atchison, Andrew, Holt and Nodaway.

The meetings are chaired by a volunteer, usually a prominent person from a nearby community who is familiar with the town but not a part of it.

Philbrook says the town meeting format draws on the Fifth City project in Chicago, where the institute began in the 1960s. The institute's efforts in the 40-block area resulted in the establishment of a business association, a community crime-watch program and other improvements.

Not every community can or should be the scene of a major project such as those in Fifth City and Lorimor. For most small-town residents, improvements start with a town meeting, which can last three hours or a whole day.

At a meeting, residents first are asked to focus on the community's strong points, then asked to list its weaknesses.

Unsightly junk yards, bad streets, poor utilities, stray dogs, business stagnation and other gripes often heard in small towns are not problems, Philbrook insists. He says they are challenges to be met.

The residents propose ways to meet those "challenges," and the meeting ends with a celebration. One group writes a short history of the communi-

ty, while other groups create a city symbol and song.

A town meeting won't bring a new industry to a small town filled with unemployed persons. Nor will it be enough to bring stores back to a town too small to support them. But Philbrook says a town meeting often helps reduce the impact of major problems by getting residents to focus on the challenges they are capable of handling.

It doesn't always work, though, Philbrook admits.

"Sometimes all you can say about people in a town is that they met," he says.

Sometimes they don't even meet at all. Brad Gerber, president of the Lions Club in Helena, Mo., a town of 200 persons 13 miles northeast of St. Joseph, was the only person to attend the Helena town meeting a few months ago.

"I went through the whole thing," Gerber recalls. "But I passed on the song bit."

In Fairfax, Mo., a town of 836 persons in Atchison County, residents found the town meeting "very informative," said City Clerk Shirley Wenhlan.

People in Oregon, Mo., in Holt County are still singing the praises of the Town Meeting, crediting it in part with improvements to the city park and community center and spurring downtown Oregon businesses to sandblast the exteriors of six buildings.

And a plug for the town meeting format even came from a community where the meeting really didn't jell. Attendance was sparse at a meeting in Pickering, Mo., on a snowy December night, but the city's big problem—a lack of sewers—was addressed, Mayor Jim Ware says. A survey of residents in the Nodaway County community of 245 persons, however, later showed that while most people want the sewers, few are willing to pay for them.

Ware now says he'd like to have another meeting—but with better weather.

DES MOINES SUNDAY REGISTER ■ DECEMBER 17, 1978

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Town's gift to itself: Community spirit

By SHERRY RICCHIARDI/Photos by DAVE PETERSON



Carolers parade behind a golf cart carrying Santa and the king and queen, Bill and Maxine Orwan.

LORIMOR, IA. — The residents of this little town decided to give themselves a special gift this year: A genuine community Christmas.

Spirit has run high here since the townsfolk voted last summer not to roll over and let Lorimor die. They drew up a four-year plan to revitalize the community of 380.

Then, like magic, Christmas arrived to give their plans a boost. "Christmas provided a wonderful incentive for togetherness," said Lillian Dowler, Lorimor's historian. "It's been a long time since I've seen people pull together this way. Nobody's an onlooker. We're all pitching in."

Indeed, Lorimor's celebration seems to have a magical touch and well could be the script for a Christmas play.

Snow fell lightly the night Lorimor's Christmas queen and king, Maxine and Bill Orwan, were crowned in front of a tinsel tree on main street. Girl Scouts made the glittering cardboard crowns and

turned ordinary bed sheets into flowing royal robes.

The Lion's Club Santa arrived in a white golf cart draped with gold garlands and chauffeured the royal couple to the 100-foot water tower where they officiated at a "Festival of Lights." Townspeople followed singing "Silent Night."

Businesses agreed to stay open until 9 p.m. on Fridays during the Christmas season and to decorate their windows. Criss's Food Store even has a mechanical display — a Santa set in motion by an oscillating fan.

A week ago, there was a community Christmas Ball. Every weekend, Lorimor's community center turns into a Christmas mall, a combination flea market and bake sale. On Dec. 23, Santa will return to town with candy for the kids and hams and fruit for elderly residents.

"This is the first time in years that I haven't been able to find a parking place on main street on a Friday night," said Vern Goodside, a

long-time resident.

"Forty years ago, this town was always full of crowds like this. It's great to see Lorimor buzzing again."

Mayer Lonnie Miller was among the carolers during opening night festivities. Afterwards, he recalled, "We've always had a Santa and a few lights downtown, but that was piddling compared to this. It's wonderful to see people enjoying each other and cooperating for the good of the town."

Church groups and women's clubs began having bake sales weeks ago to raise money for decorations. An appeal went out for people to donate strings of lights for the trees on main street. Children gathered in the community center after school to string pine cones and make ornaments.

Judy Mount, a high school senior, designed a community Christmas card that featured the town's

COMMUNITY

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Lights deck tower for Christmas

COMMUNITY

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decorated water tower. The card, sponsored by the Booster Club, went along with a Christmas newsletter to Lorimor residents last week.

According to Margaret Krause, editor of the "New Lorimorian," community life had just about fizzled out in Lorimor before the rebirth plans. "People just weren't getting together much anymore. We decided community projects would give everybody a boost."

"We wanted something that would knock people out — something they didn't expect to see in a small town. We just got the ball rolling for Christmas a month ago, but look around. Isn't it amazing? This proves Lorimor's not just a shanty town."

Residents have rallied around two points of town pride. The first involved turning the water tower into a gigantic lighted Christmas tree. Several men stood atop the tower stringing lights in the midst of an ice storm to have it ready in time.

The second involved elderly craftsmen who volunteered to restore the "Happy Valley Little Church," which had been a Christmas tradition in Lorimor since 1937. Vandals destroyed the miniature church during Christmas 10 years ago.

"The old people are excited about seeing the church tradition revived. But to the young, the Christmas tree atop the tower represents town pride. People five miles from here can see Lorimor's Christmas tree lights twinkling at night."

