

**Two plus Two Equals Eight?
Why Build It? They're Going to Come Anyway!
Wayne's World II**

**Wayne Wedin
Wedin Enterprises
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The population of California will double in the lifetime of today's school children. Counter to this growth trend many cities have slow growth initiatives on their ballots, and in other jurisdictions it is very hard and a time consuming process to obtain building permits. Today the six county, Southern California region contains approximately 17 million people, or 6% of the population of the United States. Stated another way, one out of every seventeen Americans lives within a four-hour drive of this location (the Pacific Club, Newport Beach, CA).

You can not stop growth by refusing to meet the needs caused by growth itself. Governor Edmund Brown (Governor Jerry Brown's dad) said that growth was unavoidable, and we should prepare for it. There are a huge number of people who want to be here. The reasons are many, but to name a few, jobs and great weather.

But – the state of California has an aging infrastructure. Water transport systems and conveyances and a lack of quality electrical distribution systems are just two of them. Population growth in the next 30 to 40 years is expected to be up by about 2/3rds of the existing population. This translates to an annual growth rate of approximately 600,000 people per year. In the near term this means that two new cities, the size of Chicago will be needed by the years 2020 or 2025. The fact is that these are big numbers.

Growth is putting pressure on our infrastructure system. The cost of water may double. The amount of Colorado River water that we receive is not growing, but is staying stable or may decline as other areas seek their share of this water. Power plants, on the books after the power crisis of a few years ago, have not been started, and the distribution system for electricity is seriously old and inadequate. From an educational perspective, we will need at least 100 new schools per year for the next ten years, and that's not enough. Some estimates place this need as high as 230 new schools per year. This translates to 19 new classrooms every day for the foreseeable future, plus the need to renovate 22 classrooms every day into the future.

Transportation – we cannot build our way out of the 91 (Riverside Freeway, State Hwy 91) freeway congestion. Now the talk is about double decking it! Road congestion presents major problems. The illusion of morning and afternoon peaks in traffic is ridiculous. It's a peak that lasts all day long.

Inland Empire homes are now creeping up in price. Who would have thought that the average home in north Orange County would be priced at \$500,000? When's the bubble going to burst? As long as there is more demand than supply, prices will continue to creep up.

The net effect – Lambda Alpha is a professional real estate organization. What can we do about it when we only meet once a month? It's a group of people who respect each other, but as a practical matter is this something we really can do something about? I argue that we can, and I'm lobbying Lambda Alpha to do something about it.

There are a number of things we can do as individuals, or as a group.

- 1) Encourage research papers on urban development. Be supportive of bringing young people into the broadly defined real estate profession. Encourage scholarly work. Encourage professors to stimulate students to give their best thoughts and ideas about how we deal with this kind of challenge.
- 2) Do something as an organization to break through jurisdictional barriers. The Inland Empire has thousands of new homes and people only have one place to go, and it's west. We don't have the transportation infrastructure to deal with it because jobs are somewhere other than where people live. I'm not suggesting that we tell people where to work and where to live. I'm suggesting that it'll be helpful if we talk about it.

There are very fertile minds in this room and that by having an extended dialog we might be able to come up with ideas that other organizations might find interesting.

- 3) Talk with legislators about the way environmental laws are used, or abused in this state. Laws are used to stop development as well as to improve the environmental quality in the areas where development occurs.
- 4) Need to discuss Smart Growth. Is Smart Growth a legitimate way to respond to the numbers that are coming in, or is it a way in which we prevent a positive response to building houses? Those are discussions you can make on your own, but we need to talk about it.

The issue of growth is important. People who are lobbying for no growth are impacting major developments. If anybody is going to respond to this, it probably will not be at the political level. Looking at state and federal levels of government, Ross Johnson (State Senator, 35th district) states that long term planning at the state level is four years. It's frightening that the State of California, one of the largest corporate entities in the world, has not fiscal strategy. If there is no fiscal strategy then you can't be held responsible for the success or failure. Probably from a political point of view there is some rationale for that. We need to take a longer-term view.

I believe it will take the absolute best that the people in rooms like this throughout the state has to offer in order to come up with some kind of comprehensive response to the demands placed on the system. Am I being critical of everybody in the system? No, far from it. Are people trying to do a good job? Yes. I believe they are. The question remains though that we have systems that aren't as functional as they should be.

We're going to have to figure out some rational way to deal with the growth. That is better than it is at the moment. Is it going to happen overnight? I don't think so. Can we have a role in it? I think we can. Should we? Yes. Will we? That's something we'll have to decide as a group and as individuals as to where we stand on the subject of this type. The fact remains that there will be a

whole lot more of us next year, (600,000) than there are this year. The growth will require some comprehensive citizen involvement at a time when it is hard to get citizen involvement.

Tod Ridgeway offered a challenge to the members present at the meeting. “Are you prepared to put aside your personal point of view and get into the discussion on regional issues?” If we don’t develop a comprehensive plan locally – the Federal government will preempt airport planning and the State government will preempt transportation planning across county borders. Mr. Ridgeway also pointed out that SCAG (Southern California Association of Governments) thinks in terms of a 20 to 25 year horizon.

Following Wayne Wedin’s remarks and Tod Ridgeway’s challenge to the members a discussion of the various issues ensued between the members in attendance and Mr. Wedin and Mr. Ridgeway. Craig Williams stated that Lambda Alpha must be the catalyst to start the process of the discussion. He used examples of the Vancouver and San Diego Chapters and their involvement in local issues that ultimately led to constructive changes in their communities. Mr. Williams stated that a discussion should be started with the people who have the capability to make the necessary changes to meet the future challenges.

In concluding his talk, Wayne Wedin stated that he could not think of a better group than Lambda Alpha, an international land fraternity, to talk about these kinds of issues. Maybe we can help the political will somewhere to be strong enough to take the next step.