

PHOTOS BY DAYNA SMITH—THE WASHINGTON POST

a Junior at DeMatha High School, Tyree Riley, a 10-year-old student at New Covenant Christian Academy, tours House in Bladensburg with the Port Towns Youth Initiative Committee.

ts, promotion of the environmental projects to ever clean. of the Prince George's the restoration of the Marina, a thriving trading point in Colonial the 1950s-era marina and overgrown with

State and county leaders already have devoted more than \$3 million to the effort, which includes bulkhead replacement, creation of a promenade and the addition of benches, lighting and landscaping. Workers also have begun tearing away dilapidated piers and have started building a new parking lot. Organizers have additional plans for a marina, museum, and bicycle and pedestrian

See PORT, B5, Col. 4

to verify the signatures. If the petition holds up, the board must schedule a recall election within 114 days, and, if that is successful, the board has 114 more days to schedule a special election for a new mayor.

The committee, which sports garnet and gold T-shirts, has guarded the number of signatures it has collected since April 22, when it began circulating the petitions. Seegers would say only that the group is "on the mark."

So far, the group has concentrated its efforts in wards west of the Anacostia River.

See RECALL, B9, Col. 3

Issue
Regional
TLF



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and their 16-month-old daughter, is an individual moral dilemma.

is owned by the Walt Disney

The resolution urges "every northern Baptist to take the stewardship of their time, money and resources so seriously that they refrain from patronizing the District of Columbia and any of its related entities." Those entities include CTV and radio, ESPN and E!

See BOYCOTT, B9, Col. 5

Consultants Urge Regional Rx To Resolve Common Problems

Approach Doesn't Play in D.C., Elsewhere

By Stephen C. Fehr
Washington Post Staff Writer

When people in the eastern Pennsylvania city of Reading look out their windows, they see Philadelphia heading their way.

"It's coming right at us like a tidal wave," says Kevin Murphy, president of a community foundation in the Reading area, where about 410,000 people live less than 30 miles from Philadelphia's outskirts.

Rampant suburban sprawl has hit Reading and, just as in many areas, people there don't have the slightest idea how to stop it.

Searching for solutions, Reading's leaders, like many others across the country, have turned to two Washington urban specialists who are apostles of regionalism, one of the hottest movements in cities today. The concept refers to the high-minded but elusive goal of uniting

city and suburban residents to resolve issues affecting everyone, from sprawl to crime to the decline of the urban core.

A unified Washington area agreed 30 years ago to build a Metro subway system, although there haven't been many examples of regional comity since.

As problems pile up, many officials give lip service to regional cooperation but undermine it, as in the recent attempt by Northern Virginia lawmakers to poach jobs from the District by relocating the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

"Regional problems can't be reversed voluntarily by one government. They have to be reversed collectively," says David Rusk, of Northwest Washington, a former mayor of Albuquerque turned urban therapist.

See REGION, B5, Col. 1

Tom,
In case
you missed
this yesterday
in the Metro
section of the Post.

Joe

It only makes me more inclined to believe this is consultants' speak.

Joe

Consultants See Regional Cure For Problems of Cities, Suburbs

REGION, From B1

Rusk makes house calls to ailing cities, and there's no shortage of patients. In the last five years, he has visited 90 cities, from Peoria, Ill., to Baltimore. He's currently helping Reading officials check sprawl, and one of his ideas is to draw regional boundaries and confine development inside those.

Rusk was the second major consultant hired by Reading. Neil R. Peirce, of Southwest Washington, preceded him. As Rusk puts it, "There's really quite a tag team of us."

Peirce is a nationally syndicated columnist and author whose studies of 14 cities, and visits to dozens of others since 1987, make him one of the most enduring of several proponents of regional problem solving.

Reading isn't alone in its troubles. In Buffalo, some leaders frustrated by the strife between the city and suburbs are suggesting that Buffalo's government be subsumed by surrounding Erie County. The county in which Pittsburgh is located has 130 separate local governments, a reason why a regional 911 emergency network hasn't been established there. In Atlanta, the city-county divisions are so sharp that the local newspaper has started a weekly section devoted to stories on regional topics.

"Regionalism is the driving issue in Atlanta right now," says Elise Eplan, a director at the Jimmy Carter presidential center. "We're not just talking about the problems of the city anymore. The suburbs face their own challenges, too. We have to get away from the division between city and suburbs and think about how the Atlanta region can be the best it can."

The approach is so in vogue among urban thinkers that since May 1, four national conferences have centered on the topic. The Brookings Institution recently set up a unit to study ways that cities and suburbs can pull together. The Urban Land Institute, which represents the real estate development industry, has launched a year-long study on regionalism, asserting that strong regions are key to the industry's future.

The surge in interest reflects the sense that many Americans want their cities to be different. They're tired of sprawling suburban development that contributes to higher taxes, traffic-choked roads, dirty air and loss of green space. Residents of declining older suburbs and the central city want to reverse the concentration of poverty that reinforces poor schools, higher crime rates, racial segregation and the decline of downtown.

"They're all joined by one thing: a great commitment to their community," Rusk says. "They want life to be better, and they know it isn't working now."

Piecemeal attempts to change the character of cities have been made in recent years, including a trend toward pedestrian-friendly town centers and more compact communities instead of shopping malls and scat-

neighborhoods; limits on growth; and jobs for everyone.

Underlying this vision is a belief that regions, not nations, are the players in today's global economy. Peirce labels them "citistates," an updated reference to the ancient Greek city-state.

"Only cohesive, efficient urban regions are going to make it in the new world economy," Peirce says.

In many regions, factions—pro-growth business leaders vs. stop-sprawl environmentalists, for example—so distrust each other that they find it easier to bring in Peirce or Rusk, who have the cachet of being neutral outside experts.

"As I travel, everyone wants help in overcoming this fragmentation," says former Indianapolis mayor William Hudnut, explaining the appeal of Peirce and others.

For a fee of as much as \$150,000, Peirce and a team of researchers come into an area for a few weeks, listen to residents gripe about their home town and then offer possible remedies in a long report that is usually splashed across the front page of the local newspaper. Rusk has started doing the same thing in some cities.

Peirce, who has visited cities as large as Philadelphia and as small as Owensboro, Ky., has been alternately celebrated and scolded for his brutally candid assessments.

St. Louis, Peirce's most recent stop, "is a deeply flawed region" with timid leaders "who retreat to their parochial caves to decide if they even want to think about new subjects," he wrote. The city is "hostile to innovation, unwilling to step out, think big, take risks. And on top of that," he concluded, it has "some of metro America's most severe racism."

Peirce and collaborator Curtis W. Johnson, a Minneapolis regional government official, swoop down on each city—literally. They begin with a helicopter ride to inspect a region's physical layout. In Phoenix, they saw a city spreading in every direction, "with huge gobs of empty land in between—Sprawl Inc.," Peirce says. In Dallas, their tour revealed the disparity in wealth and class between geographic areas—"society and its money running away from the folks it didn't like."

Although it's still too soon to measure results in St. Louis, Peirce can point to modest gains elsewhere. Dallas built a campus downtown that is shared by the region's universities, a Peirce proposal. Indianapolis took Peirce up on a suggestion to form a regional citizens organization. Phoenix developers formed an organization to repair their negative image. Charlotte leaders are braking sprawl in some areas and challenging the need for new roads.

The real value of Peirce's reports could be the kick in the pants they give cities.

"This isn't an exact science," says Reading's Murphy. "It was time for a wake-up call, and Peirce certainly started the conversation."

"We're not here to solve anything," Peirce recently told an audience of 1,600 real estate leaders in St. Louis. "Our role is to stir up a fresh

over an underlying reason why: race. Many whites move to the suburbs to distance themselves from the central city's problems, and inner-city leaders, many of them minorities, hardly see a stake in sharing power with suburban neighbors who left.

"Race is the American dilemma," Peirce says. "Very often we say if whites and blacks work together, then natural camaraderie will follow. I still believe that, but I'm not sure it's enough."

In the Washington area, one of the most racially divided regions in the country, Peirce tried to make some headway, arguing five years ago for a panel that would tackle regional problems. The idea fizzled; most Virginia, Maryland and D.C. leaders prefer to work out issues individually.

Locally, "the idea that we live on separate planets is pretty popular," Peirce says.

"I look at other cities and see changes and I get very impatient," about metropolitan Washington, he says.

The area's congressional delegation holds the key, he says.

"They could come together and lead the discussion. If they said no to a commuter tax, they need to step forward and say what the substitute for a commuter tax would be. They're the obvious players."

"Regional collaboration isn't a guarantee of success, but it makes it much more likely."

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Recently, th gotten involve the Port Town mittee. "You g parents," said of New Coven: Jesus Christ i leads the youth parents; you ge

Yesterday's effort to teach area's rich hist ler, co-chairv Towns Revita mittee. "All of the history," sl

Bladensburg, site of the Batt Aug. 24, 1814, drove back At their successf ington. And fro 50 duels wer: Manor's duelin table was an 1 Commodore S val hero, was ki an embittered 1

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BRIDA

expo

Don't miss our fantastic Brida featuring great tips on how to your new home from the edit your favorite bridal magaz There will be in-store giveaw product demonstrations, a ch to win a fabulous honeymoon and much, much more.

Saturday, July 1