



Interview with...

C J Fishman

C.J. Fishman is the 2009-2010 chair of the Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County and the President of Fishman & Associates, Inc.

The **Institute for the Ages** is in its formative stages, the initial vision emerged from SCOPE's Aging: The Possibilities initiative. The goal of the Institute is to create bold initiatives that will promote inquiry, reflection, and research about ways to optimize a community's responses to a population that is older. Areas of likely focus include the physical environment, market research, the development of new products and services, public policy changes, and evolution of our workforce. It will position Sarasota County as a national leader in policy and actions that help our communities make the most of an increasingly older population.

What excites you about the Institute for the Ages?

Three things excite me about this. First, this is an opportunity to capitalize on one of the greatest assets we have, an older demographic. We can use the asset of an older generation to bring the younger generations to our community.

Second, all parts of Sarasota County and even other counties around us can embrace this. The development of the Institute for the Ages can bring us together and unify us to really build something not only for today but for years to come.

Third, the marketing potential while we are in this infancy stage of planning is tremendous. This can be global and we can be the leader. This presents an incredible opportunity for economic sustainability and diversity in which everyone will benefit.

What do you feel are the economic ramifications of an institute of this caliber for Sarasota County?

We can't even grasp how great the economic potential can be. There simply is no down side. Baby boomers are aging and as the economy improves, they will purchase goods and services that they want and need to create a great quality of life. Entrepreneurs will develop products. The success of an entrepreneur is to find a niche market and develop it. I want us, as a County, to be a leader in developing these niches. If we don't do it, someone else will.

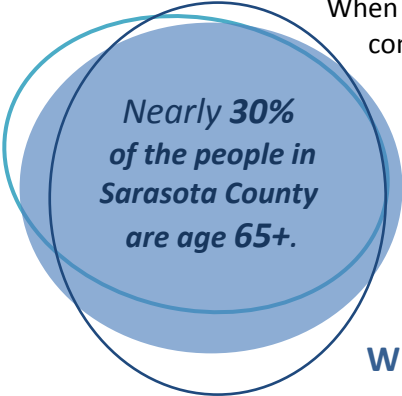
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How does this relate to the 5-year economic development community plan developed by the EDC? What is the EDC's role in the development of the institute?

The five-year plan is a community-wide plan. Hundreds of people helped develop it and the big focus was to capitalize on our existing assets. One of the platforms that emerged was to build on the assets of

our older population. The whole purpose of the EDC is to develop a diversified and sustainable economy. The Institute for the Ages will diversify and stimulate the economy and improve our quality of life. This fits exactly with the mission of the EDC. We are going after a niche of talent and provide them the opportunity to develop products and services with a central target market right here as well as the ability to export worldwide.

When people come for Institute-related functions, they will stay, shop, eat and want to come back.



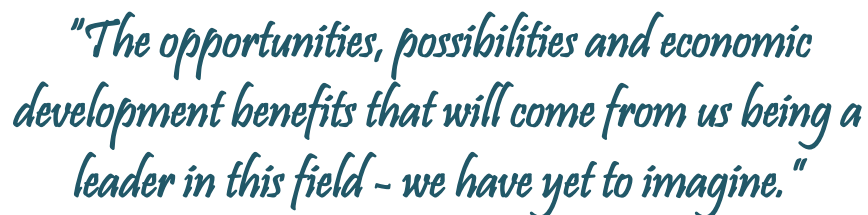
*Nearly 30%
of the people in
Sarasota County
are age 65+.*

EDC will be a major player in this. We will provide resources, facilitation if needed, asset-mapping, assign a staff person to this platform and participate. From North Port and Englewood to north Sarasota, all partners will come together and participate. With this countywide effort we will develop an Institute for the Ages that is second to none.

What strengths/assets (in the community, in yourself, etc.) do you see that will help make this happen?

Positive Mental Attitude. (PMA) I believe we as a community have the will, resources and commitment to make the Institute for the Ages a reality. When we citizens of Sarasota County come together to accomplish something, **we do just that**. In the past we have been fractional and didn't necessarily stick together. This is a doable project without an exorbitant amount of money to be spent by the county. Many outside corporations will want to invest in this. All of our county assets that contribute to our quality of life will keep people here once they are attracted by the new institute.

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Connects and Inspires Citizens to Create a Better Community

To learn more about the Institute for the Ages, visit www.scopexcel.org

To read the **Five-Year Economic Development Strategic Plan for Sarasota County**, visit the Data Center at www.edcsarasotacounty.com

Interview by Suzanne Gregory, Associate Director, SCOPE