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I mentioned last year that:

“The range of life sciences activities in Kansas and in Missouri is astonishing...under recognized, insufficiently coordinated but holding incalculable promise.”

It was also suggested that activities conducted under the life sciences banner could “convert the historic barrier of State Line Road” into a competitive regional advantage.

Leveraging Stowers Institute research with the University of Kansas in the bio-science arena was identified as an opportunity.

As were our clinical capabilities that would connect basic research to the marketplace and spur high grade economic development.

This translational connection rod from bench to patient is the landing gear that brings much of our life sciences activity down to the tarmac of economic development.

So we come again—to a different place—but with the same aspiration...for our region ...our institutions and for our residents.

We come to assess where we are...knowing, as we do, that converting factionalism to regionalism is enormously difficult...

That transcending historic boundaries and attitudes is rare.

We should be honest and realistic in this self-assessment...too much is at stake to be otherwise.

In 1947 President Truman said this to the Board of MRI:

“There must be no retrogression in the march forward to develop the resources of the Midwestern states to make to the national economy the full contribution of which she is capable.”

Sixty years later, what would Harry Truman say to us? Have we moved forward?

I think he would be impressed. But he would say there is more work to do and other cities and other states are not standing still.

You will hear about our emerging position in the animal health sector.

You have read that the DOL has selected the KC region as one of five as a demonstration site for a technology transfer pilot project.

You may have heard that the 10 KCALSI stakeholder institutions spent a combined \$600M on research last year...a dramatic increase.

Any great leap forward—in almost any field—requires three things and they are rare:

- A lofty...even an unlikely vision.
- Faith that the vision can be achieved.
- And the courage to proceed—even in the face of risk...in other words, leaders who believe faith is evidence of what we do not yet see.

Much has been written about the affiliation discussions that have been going on between KUMC, KUH and SLH.

I can report that Letters of Intent have been signed between these institutions to affiliate for purposes of teaching and research.

These letters will be submitted to the Boards of both hospitals at their February meetings.

The signed agreements describe a collaboration around teaching and research which would leverage the complimentary strengths of each institution.

There is enormous promise in this.

But, not all issues have been resolved—as they must be for a master affiliation agreement to be concluded. Gaps exist between KUMC and KUH on key issues.

Importantly, however, the Chancellor of the University of Kansas unequivocally assured me and asked me to assure you that resolving these remaining issues will be top priority for KU. He will dedicate his full effort to that end.

He further advised that the clear goal of the University is to complete this process and fulfill our vision of a national recognized life sciences center.

This clear and unequivocal commitment by Chancellor Hemenway recognizes a central reality: there is one purpose of these affiliations and only one.

And that is to accelerate and elevate medical research and patient care in our region...to the benefit of our residents and beyond.

That is the only reason for affiliation.

And it is every reason.

To let parochial institutional interests, bureaucratic complexities or individual agendas to supersede our regional opportunity—even our obligation—would subvert the very purpose and hope of this conference.

The Chancellor has said he will not let that happen.

In a remarkable statement of support for the affiliation concept, a combination of foundations and businesses have committed a pool of approximately \$150M—and that could grow—to this effort...so long as the institutional leadership pursues a truly collaborative effort.

You should know the names of those who have stepped forward in such unprecedented fashion.

Cerner
DST
Embarq
GKCCF
Great Plains Energy
H&R Block
Hall Family Foundation
Hallmark
Kansas City Southern
Sprint
YRC
Three anonymous

Hopefully their leadership will be mirrored by that of University of Kansas and KU Hospital.

This has not been easy...nor will the execution of such an undertaking be easy.

Truman and UMKC have legitimate questions that will need to be addressed.

If this gets done, it could be our first bridge across the state line.

And with this beginning, I can see a time when there will be bridge after bridge...

Where streams of opportunities and benefits flow back and forth beneath them.

A time in the future when people will pause one day and say:

“You know there was once a barrier here that divided our two states...

A barrier that sapped our strength and diminished our possibilities.

Hard to remember, they will say, looking now—from this bridge—but those who designed and built these elegant connections in the early part of the 21st century, would be pleased with the legacy they created.”

A final thought.

Economic development and consequential quality of life enhancements are contact sports...competitive on national and international levels.

For us to thrive—even survive—in that environment, cooperation across the state line is not a choice...it is a necessity.

I may have said last year that even Sea Biscuit would lose with a 400 pound jockey on his back.

State Line has historically been that 400 pound jockey.

Bi-state, regional collaboration is our Sea Biscuit.

I think the short version of what you will hear today is that our jockey could get down to fighting trim.

St. Crispin's Day: “All things are ready if our minds be so.”