

President Russi at the Rochester Hills Business Council Meeting

February 23, 2007

Thank you. Good morning and welcome to Oakland University. Rochester Hills is faring very well during these tough economic times, and it's a testament to your mayor and city council. We are proud Mayor Barnett calls Oakland University his alma mater.

As Michigan faces an uncertain future, Oakland University is dedicated to the community and believes that strong local and regional partnerships are key to a thriving economy. Today, I would like to talk to you about the Collaborative Community Model of Economic Development. This occurs when resource providers, education, government and industry work together to create synergy. Examples of this model can be found in innovative, successful regions, such as the Silicon Valley, Boston's Route 128 and the Research Triangle in North Carolina. The network is positioned around centers of excellence, education institutions, strong companies, and areas that provide a high quality of life.

Oakland University is privileged to be a part of the local network, which also includes the Rochester Regional Chamber of Commerce, Rochester Hills, Oakland County and Oakland County industry and financial institutions. Together, we can strengthen and grow our network of partners by engaging industry clusters and connecting them with each other. Together, we can provide innovation and commercialization of new technology. Together, we can spin out and develop new businesses and create jobs. A prime example of this is Oakland University's SmartZone Business Incubator (OU INC). OU INC has six resident companies and is getting about five calls a day from potential clients. OU Inc will expand very rapidly to at least 50 incubator companies. It is bringing the 21st Century Jobs Fund Program, "Pre-See Capital Fund" to Rochester Hills and the OU community. This investment fund program allows our early-stage client companies to apply for as much as \$500,000 in seed capital. We are committed to assisting start-ups and spin-outs to locate and secure technology development and increase access to venture, angel and other forms of capital.

Permit me to give you one example of an application of the collaborative community model of economic development. When the Fermi 2 nuclear power plant near Monroe, Michigan was shut down at a cost of \$1 million a day because of a problem with a bolted joint, our Fastening and Joining Research Institute was called in to assist. FAJRI is a collaboration between Oakland University, the U.S. Congress, National Science Foundation and DaimlerChrysler. The FAJRI team created a model of the Fermi 2 joint problem in the lab and found a solution the same day. The Collaborative Community Model of Economic Development is working in Oakland County thanks to the spirit of cooperation and the willingness of each of the partners to share their expertise.

With your support and continued open communication, the network will continue to thrive and the entire community will benefit. Thank you for your time this morning.