

Fuel the Fire Speaker Series Concludes with Brad Segal

Wichita, Kan. - 10/30/2014 The 2014 Fuel the Fire Speaker Series concluded this week with a presentation by Brad Segal, President of Progressive Urban Management Associates. Three different sessions have been held, beginning with Carol Coletta of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation in August and James Chung of Reach Advisors in September. The series is a collaborative effort between the Wichita Community Foundation (WCF), the Wichita Downtown Development Corporation (WDDC) and the Wichita Metro Chamber of Commerce. Each session was open to the public at no charge. Organizers estimate that total attendance for all three sessions was approximately 1,000.

Aimee Geist, Executive Director of Arts Partners, attended the sessions. “This series really helped connect the people in Wichita who want to make it a more vibrant community. The speakers provided examples of other cities that have overcome some of the same barriers and issues that we’re dealing with here: job loss, transit needs, cultural funding cuts, and the importance of downtown development. I’ve never felt so connected to the city or to the people who want to roll up their sleeves and work together to make something positive happen.”

WCF President and CEO Shelly Prichard said the series ignited community discussions about national trends about talent, opportunity and place. “We accomplished our goal of stimulating community thought and discussion about how to retain our talent and competitively position Wichita for the future.”

Suzie Ahlstrand, Executive Vice President of Community Development at the Wichita Metro Chamber of Commerce, and WDDC President Jeff Fluhr were pleased to see a broader and younger audience engaging with the speakers. Fluhr said, “We loved providing the opportunity for connecting the unique insight of the speakers with local young professionals who have creative new approaches for enriching Wichita.”

Video of the first two sessions may be viewed at FueltheFireSpeakerSeries.com, and the final session will be posted at a later date. Comments about the series may be found on Twitter at #FueltheFireICT.

The Fuel the Fire Speaker Series was made possible through a grant from the Knight Foundation Fund at WCF, as well as funds from the WCF, WDDC and the Chamber’s Leadership Council.

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