



For Immediate Release
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Steward's Earth Day Message Is Optimistic One of Possibilities

W. Cecil Steward, founder, President and CEO of the Joslyn Institute for Sustainable Communities, will bring a message of can-do possibilities to the 27th Earth Day Omaha festivities on Saturday, April 16 in Elmwood Park. Speaking on the Main Stage at 2:35 pm, Steward will present a message of innovative ideas and hope against a backdrop of serious impacts from climate change, population migration and growth, and over-demand on resources.

"There is hope for humanity's survival," says Steward. "It is and will be centered in individual communities. Not through political power, not nations or nation-states, and not single-minded ideologies."

There are challenges for communities to thrive both sustainably and resiliently, he says, including complexities of community development and values of community amenities, as well as the need for new theories and strategies of community design and communications design. But "we in the Midwest United States are in a unique position not only to accommodate the new realities, but also to influence this reality for a better future within other communities."

Steward will focus on a series of strategic solutions hammered out during the Joslyn Institute's recent Urban Thinkers Campus, which was part of the run-up to the global United Nations conference on habitat and the environment, Habitat III, to be held next October in Quito, Ecuador.

"The solutions for the growing urban - and rural - challenges we face are in us," he says. "Solutions come from people who care about the lives they are capable of creating together, both for themselves and for the common good." These include:

- Create Learning Communities through collaborative agreements between educational institutions, constituent groups, and whole communities;
- Define regional consortia, with regions defined not by political boundaries, but by natural ecospheres (model regional

establishment and operations after the existing Nebraska Natural Resource Districts);

- Designate resource conservation/climate change priorities as land, water, energy, materials and food;
- Implement a Sustainability Planning paradigm for regions and communities, guided by the EcoSTEP® principles; and
- Designate the use of systems of metrics to guide Sustainability planning, beginning with the Sustainometricssm EcoStep® model.

“Education about how to participate effectively, think critically, approach conflict constructively and build ideas together must begin early and continue throughout one’s life,” Steward said. “As the challenges become more complex, so too, are the solutions. No single human being can begin to know enough to solve today’s most perplexing problems. We must become skilled in the processes of creating, experimenting, adjusting and growing solutions together.”

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For more information, or to schedule an interview with W. Cecil Steward, please contact one of the three listed above as contacts. A photo of W. Cecil Steward is included here, and Diane Wanek (dwanek@sustainabledesign.org) will be happy to provide a high-res version.

