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Conference Explores Local Living, Sustainability

by Catherine M. Odell

Eco Catholic

Transition Michiana, a community conference to promote and explore sustainability and the challenges of living locally will be held at the Salvation Army Kroc Center at 900 West Western Avenue in South Bend, Indiana on Jan. 24-26.

Local food co-ops, farmers, the mayor's office, the University of Notre Dame Office of Sustainability, the Center for a Sustainable Future at Indiana University, South Bend and area transition groups have organized the event, hoping it will stimulate community interest in planning for a moral localized economy. Event sponsors say that looming global climate change and the diminishing supply of oil reserves will eventually necessitate local independence for food and energy.

A highlight of the conference will be a two-hour Skype exchange (9 to 11 a.m. EST on Friday, Jan. 25) with Rob Hopkins, British founder of the Transition Movement, a global movement focused on building or transitioning into strong local communities that produce and consume as locally as possible. Hopkins, a British permaculture designer lives and teaches near Totnes, a medieval market town in Devon, England. Making the point about the carbon footprint cost of air travel, Hopkins reportedly supports and speaks to transition events through Skype.

The conference will launch Thursday evening at 7 p.m. with the film ?In Transition 2.0,? a 66-minute documentary profiling transition initiatives developing since 2004 around the world but mostly throughout Europe. Among the profiled transitioning communities are those printing their own money, setting up their own power stations, and growing food in every available location. Transition communities, the film makes clear, need and flourish when a large percentage of the residents help to plan and execute development. A variety of workshops on gardening, recycling, and community government collaboration are also scheduled.

Registrants for the conference, open to all, are invited to choose their own registration fee ? from \$10 to \$150 facebook.com/TransitionMichiana or at the this website.

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