



Photo slideshow of
"Le Premier Palais des Femmes"
at Lanthorn.com

Lakers scorch
Dragons, 81



Grand Valley Lanthorn

Grand Valley State University

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Experts call for belief in economy

Panel of experts urge confidence at economic, commercial forecast

By Lauren Fitch
GVL News Editor

Consumer confidence is the remedy for the struggling economy, suggested area finance experts at the seventh-annual West Michigan Economic & Commercial Real Estate Forecast at the DeVos Place on Friday.

However, confidence will be difficult to muster in light of the continued recession predicted for 2009.

Representatives from local banks, schools, real estate companies and other businesses attended the forecast, sponsored by Grand Valley State University, Grubb & Ellis and Metropolitan Title Company.

Everyone present hoped being forewarned meant being fore-armed, as six speakers reported the predicted trends for 2009 in their areas of expertise.

"2008 was an interesting and challenging year," said Chip Bowling, an office adviser for Grubb & Ellis. Bowling delivered the Grand Rapids office report.

The combination of decreased vacancy space with a rise in rental rates, "is a good sign," Bowling said. "I hope to continue to see this trend in downtown Grand Rapids and in the suburbs."

"Retail has been the one bright spot in the past. Unfortunately, the wave of momentum has hit the beach."

DAVE DENTON
GRUBB & ELLIS
VP AND RETAIL ADVISER

However, the predicted phase of general and medical office space for 2009 is not promising.

The business cycle is divided into four phases: Recovery, expansion, hyper supply and recession.

General office space is currently in the recession stage but should move to recovery in 2009.

Medical space was in hyper supply as



Coming together: Students and staff gather for breakfast before the 2008 annual West Michigan Economic and Commercial Real Estate Forecast breakfast lecture. The speaker was Hari Singh, chair of the Economics Department in Seidman College of Business at GVSU.

doctors built new offices and abandoned out-of-date ones, which will cause the medical offices to move to recession in 2009.

Dave Denton, vice president and retail adviser at Grubb & Ellis, gave an update on the retail market.

"Retail has been the one bright spot in the past," Denton said. "Unfortunately, the wave of momentum has hit the beach."

From 2005 to 2007, the retail market was prospering in the phases of

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Inauguration Events

"America United:
A Grand Valley Celebration"
11 a.m. on Tuesday

President Thomas J. Haas, Jeanne Arnold, vice president for Inclusion and Equity, Gleaves Whitney, director of Hauenstein Center and faculty members Mark Richards and Louis Moore will speak at the ceremony. Live coverage will be broadcast.

Locations include:
Fieldhouse Arena, Allendale Campus
Eberhard Center, Grand Rapids Press
Teleconference Auditorium
Cook-DeVos Center for Health Sciences,
Hager Auditorium
Holland Meijer Campus, Room 104
Muskegon Regional Center, Room 1100
Traverse City University Center, Rooms 215 and 217

"Inauguration Day Celebration:
Acknowledging the Day's Historic
Significance"
7 p.m. to 10 p.m. on Tuesday

Rebroadcast of Inauguration ceremony and live music broadcast throughout the night.

Location:
Celebration Cinema
2121 Celebration Dr. NE
Grand Rapids, Mich.



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GVSU professor lays blame for global warming



AP Photo / Fredrik Blomqvist

Global warming: This photo provided Wednesday by the Monaco Palace shows Prince Albert II of Monaco, left, with South African adventurer Mike Horn, heading to the South pole Tuesday. The trip will last through Thursday and will include visits to 26 international bases on Antarctica to raise awareness about global warming. The blame for global warming has been increasingly levied on human activity.

Figen Mekik's 'Global Warming is Your Fault!' links climate change to human activity

By Paul LeBlanc
GVL Staff Writer

In the midst of bitter wind chills and continuous snowfall, the subject of global warming may not be a frequent topic of discussion.

Nevertheless, in a lecture held Wednesday at the Women's City Club in downtown Grand Rapids, Figen Mekik, an associate professor of biology at Grand Valley State University, spoke at length about the phenomenon — and laid the blame for it squarely on her audience.

In the lecture, titled "Global Warming Is Your Fault!," Mekik discussed the scientific evidence for climate change and how it can be linked to human activity.

The event was sponsored by the Center for Inquiry, an organization that works to "promote and defend reason, science and the freedom of inquiry in all areas of human endeavor," according to literature at the event.

Aided by a slideshow depicting graphs and photographs, Mekik laid out numerous pieces of evidence for the

causes of global warming.

Mekik noted how scientific analysis of ice cores — which contain air trapped from thousands of years ago — show a pattern of rising global temperatures corresponding with increased levels of carbon in the atmosphere.

Carbon is the primary "greenhouse gas" responsible for the phenomenon, Mekik said, as it and other gases released by industrial processes trap heat within the Earth's atmosphere.

Mekik — a climate scientist and oceanographer — emphasized the importance of raising awareness about the subject of global warming.

"(The lecture) gave me an opportunity to talk about this to lay people," Mekik said.

Mekik pointed out the consequences of global warming are dire, including droughts, increasingly intense weather and most prominently, rising sea levels that lead to massive flooding.

GVSU students made up a sizable portion of the audience at the lecture.

Among them was GVSU freshman Emily Tabaczynski, who had little background knowledge on the subject before attending the lecture.

Afterwards, Tabaczynski said she had become convinced global warming was in fact a man-made phenomenon.

"I think it is undeniable," Tabaczynski said.

Charles O'Donnell, director of the Grand Rapids Community College branch of the Center for Inquiry, said his belief that evidence for man-made

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global warming has grown over time.

"It was a lot easier to be skeptical of this information 15 years ago," O'Donnell said. "As time has gone on, evidence has gathered for global warming."

But not all audience members were convinced.

One audience member repeatedly challenged Mekik, insisting global warming was the result of the position of the moon

relative to the Earth.

In a rather humorous exchange, the man asked Mekik if she had grown up using a solar grill, to which the professor replied she in fact had.

During the question and answer session of the lecture, another audience member asked if global warming had already progressed too far to be combated.

Mekik said she believed further warming could be averted if the right measures are taken to prevent it.

Mekik went on to note she

believes younger generations are up to the challenge of reversing the trend, even if hers is not.

"I've been teaching at GVSU for 10 years, so I have met many students," Mekik said. "They are very bright and open-minded, and they have a sense that this is their world."

Mekik suggested a number of steps to be taken on an individual level to limit greenhouse gas emissions, including using public transportation and making use of non-incandescent light bulbs.

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