

Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune – Our View – March 8, 2008:

Our View – Civility project worth supporting

There's no question the south Wood County area faces challenges. That's not exactly a unique situation in this country.

People want jobs; they want expenses held in check, and they want their quality of life preserved. To make progress in any of those areas is going to take ideas -- and a lot of them.

Communication will be key to driving innovation. People with the ideas have to be matched up with those who have the resources to advance them beyond the concept stage.

Let's face it, some of these strategies will need tweaking; others simply won't work. But if people hesitate to share their thoughts and opinions for fear of being attacked, ridiculed or publicly embarrassed that serves no one.

At 4 p.m. Tuesday, March 11, at the McMillan Memorial Library, a group of volunteers will unveil Speak Your Peace -- The Civility Project, an effort to elevate issue-based discussion beyond personal attacks and personality-focused clashes.

Speak Your Peace, a community leadership project supported by Community Foundation of Greater South Wood County, seeks to introduce residents to nine tools of civility and will ask people to voluntarily commit to adhering to them as best they can.

It isn't a matter of discouraging disagreements; it's about encouraging people to communicate in an effective and productive way. This is really about giving and receiving respect. There are likely few people who would say they oppose that goal, but how many accomplish it on a daily basis?

For more details, attend Tuesday's kick-off or see future editions of the Daily Tribune for continuing coverage. The community has a lot to gain from this local project.