

Kozmetsky: OR, region can lead era of 'Cold Peace'

by Ron Bridgeman
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The East Tennessee area should "construct a national experiment" that would transform the regional and national economy from "Cold War to Cold Peace" in the next three to five years, George Kozmetsky, nationally known technology guru, preached to the opening luncheon of the Oak Ridge Summit Thursday.

Kozmetsky, lauded by U.S. Rep. Zach Wamp as "the architect of Silicon Valley," called for the summit to develop a "results-oriented" plan to create wealth and jobs and said private business must take the lead to do that.

He cited the historical success of the Tennessee Valley Authority and Oak Ridge in winning the "Hot and Cold Wars" and said those models could be used to revitalize the regional economy.

"Science and technology are the tools to develop wealth ... (they are the) keys to political power,"

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KOZMETSKY: Emphasized leadership of TVA, Oak Ridge

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Kozmetsky said.

If the state and region can develop new ideas and ways to improve the economy, he said, "what is best for East Tennessee can also set the direction for America just as TVA and Oak Ridge have done in the past."

He emphasized TVA and Oak Ridge programs have been "leading-edge experiments in public-private partnerships (that were) unprecedented in scope."

That kind of success can be rekindled, Kozmetsky said, if the area's leaders — particularly business leaders — can develop radical new ways of thinking.

He said local leaders should look for ways to link science and technology with the regional economy, education and entrepreneurs.

That must be done quickly, he said, urging results "that must be transferable to other regions of the country" within the three- to five-year time period.

Although he emphasized that business people must take the lead, Kozmetsky said the federal government should "serve as a catalyst organization" and said the national laboratories are "impossible to close or completely privatize."

He said the government should continue its involvement, providing research and development funding and maintaining the country's nuclear capabilities.

The scientific and technical knowledge in Oak Ridge and at the labs is "difficult and expensive" to

develop and retain, he said, and only the federal government can do that.

Kozmetsky noted that after World War II, the county's "basic industries were still largely dependent on imported science and technology." That is no longer true, he said, and the country must continue to develop and support energy science and technology.

He said the Cold War was largely a battle between economic and political systems — socialism in the Soviet Union and the marketplace in the United States.

In the "Cold Peace," he said the battle is to develop a way to cooperate among countries in a "New World Order where we expect each country to develop its own market system."

He noted that the Department of Energy is in the midst of restructuring to streamline the agency and cut projected budgets by \$14 billion over five years. DOE is developing new missions centered on core competencies.

Kozmetsky urged local leaders to adopt a "corresponding and complementary plan ... done in concert with the DOE lab."

He declared, "Our nation's future prosperity cannot rely on population growth or the exploitation of natural resources."