

Shaping Our Shared Tomorrow World Future's Day 2026

At this year's World Futures Day, hosted by Envision Greater Green Bay at Oneida Hotel and Casino, futurist Garry Golden returned for this fifth annual gathering, arguably the largest of its kind in the world, and brought a simple but powerful message: The future isn't something that just shows up. The future is something we help shape.

And if we are not paying attention to the right things, we risk getting left behind.

Don't Get Distracted by the Headlines

Golden started by calling out something many of us feel every day; there's just *a lot* coming at us. New technologies, constant disruption, endless headlines. But here's the catch: Most of that is surface-level noise. The real changes? They're slower, deeper and already happening.

Things like:

- How our population is shifting
- What people expect from work
- How trust in institutions is evolving
- The way energy, housing, and systems are being rethought

His point: if we only focus on what is urgent, we will miss what is important.

It's Not About Predicting-It's About Preparing

One of the biggest mindset shifts Golden pushed was this: Foresight is not about predicting the future. It's about getting ready for it. That means learning how to spot early signals of change and then actually doing something with them. Not waiting. Not reacting late. But stepping back and asking: *Where is this heading—and what do we want to do about it?*

We Have More Control Than We Think

A theme that really landed in the room was this idea of intentional transition. Change is coming no matter what. But how do we respond? That is up to us. Communities like Greater Green Bay have a choice. We can either drift into whatever future shows up or actively shape a future that works better for more people. That is exactly the kind of work Envision Greater Green Bay is leaning into and helping people connect the dots and move from ideas to action.

Making It Real (and Local)

This wasn't just big-picture thinking. Golden led the participants through a dynamic exercise to engage with trend cards that were developed by the five Signals Teams of Envision Greater Green Bay. The result: a combination of insightful conversation and the creation of images that were later sent through a process of AI recreation to develop an attractive billboard, magazine cover or flyer.

Through the presentations and exercises with Envision's Signals Teams, the day connected those global shifts to what they actually mean right here at home:

- What does this mean for our neighborhoods?
- For jobs and opportunity?
- For health, belonging, and quality of life?

The truth is the future doesn't happen "out there." It shows up right here, in our communities.

So Now What?

Golden left us with a challenge that's hard to ignore: The leaders who will matter most in the next decade aren't the ones who wait for certainty. They're the ones who act even when things are unclear. That does not mean having all the answers. It means being willing to ask better questions, stay curious, and move forward anyway.

Conclusion

World Futures Day is not just about thinking differently for a day. It is about building a habit of looking ahead, connecting signals, and making more intentional choices together. Why? Because the future of Greater Green Bay is not set, it is evolving. And that's exactly the opportunity.