

# The Road to Recovery ... is Named Main Street





# The Road to Recovery is Named Main Street

*2010 Report on the Future of the South*

*by Linda Hoke*

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## *Message from the Executive Director*

This economic downturn is different. We have been challenged and confounded by an economy that has hurt Southern communities, big and small. We have faced economic transition and lost jobs before, but this time the losses came faster, reached further and have stayed longer. Jobs, companies, personal savings, home values, and local government revenues have all disappeared. Recovery has been slow and answers have been few and far between.

Even as some people and places have begun the long road back, others have yet to take the first step or even know the right direction. This year's Southern Growth Policies Board *Listening to the South* process asked communities to consider how they expected to both map and fuel their journey back to economic prosperity. Over 2000 Southerners told us what they thought.

This report summarizes those thoughts. Tip O'Neill once famously said that "all politics is local." What we heard was that local is also the geography of economic recovery. Communities felt that they needed to find ways to help themselves. They knew their answers would be found not on Wall Street but on Main Street. Nationally, we talk about creating jobs with place-based strategies, innovation clusters, expanding exports and improving regional competitiveness. Locally, while the language is different, citizens old and young, urban and rural told us they needed new ideas and needed to try new things. Their local economies were now different.

Over the next 12 months the Southern Growth Policies Board is committed to helping communities help themselves. We will share ideas, success stories and tools. We will also share this report widely with political, educational and economic leadership in the South. We encourage each of you to widely distribute this report and to contact us with your thoughts, ideas, and resources.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ted Abernathy'.

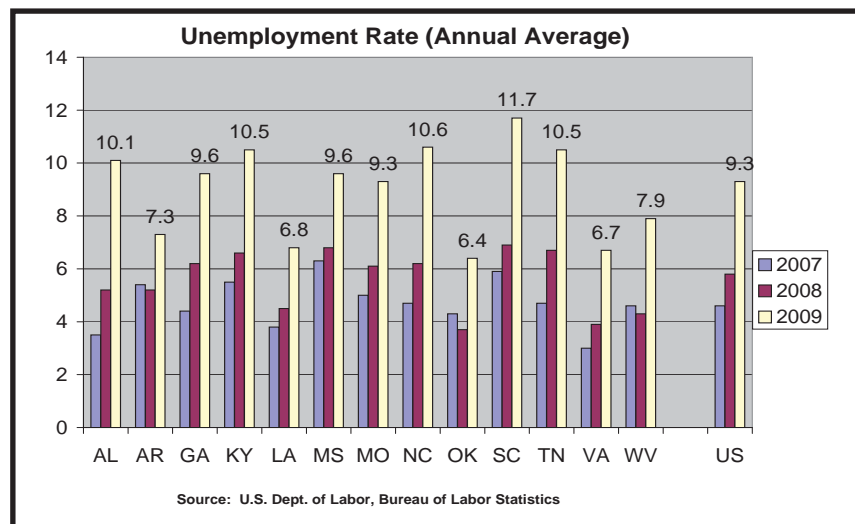
Ted Abernathy  
Executive Director  
Southern Growth Policies Board  
tabernathy@southern.org

## Introduction

Southern states have lost over one-and-a-half million in jobs in the past two years and unemployment rates are at or near record highs. In their most recent *Fiscal Survey of the States*, the National Association of State Budget Officers and National Governors Association emphasize that fiscal year 2010, “presented the most difficult challenge for states’ financial management since the Great Depression.” Collections of sales, personal income, and corporate income taxes were estimated to be 2.3 percent lower than 2009 collections (4.5 percent lower for Southern states)—on top of even larger declines between 2008 and 2009. The report predicts that states will face similar challenges in fiscal year 2011.<sup>1</sup>

What should communities do in response to the economic downturn? Forum participants picked the following as their #1 choice:

- 20% Identify local assets and strengths
- 16% Build partnerships
- 15% Revamp workforce training



If possible, the situation may be even more dismal at the local level. In its 2009 report on city fiscal conditions, the National League of Cities reported that “pessimism about the ability to meet city fiscal needs is at its highest level in the history of NLC’s 24-year survey.”<sup>2</sup> Among the reported responses have been hiring freezes, layoffs and furloughs of city workers, postponement of planned infrastructure projects, service cutbacks, and new or increased fees. Similarly, eight in ten county elected officials mentioned economic issues when asked in April and May 2010 about the most important problem facing their county. More than one in four rated the economy as fair or poor and expressed the opinion that it was still getting worse.<sup>3</sup>



For many communities, the light at the end of the tunnel is still distant. “Cities and counties are in sorry shape. What’s more they may be among the last entities to feel like they’ve emerged from the recession,” summed up a July 2010 report on National Public Radio.<sup>4</sup> “Local governments across the country are now facing the combined impact of decreased tax revenues, a falloff in state and federal aid and increased demand for social services,” reported the National League of Cities, National Association of Counties and U.S. Conference of Mayors in a July 2010 report based on a survey of 270 cities and counties from across the country. “The effects of the Great Recession on local budgets will be felt most deeply from 2010 to 2012,” they predicted.<sup>5</sup>

Not surprisingly, the economy is also a top concern among the public. In an August 2010 Gallup poll, nearly two-thirds of Americans mentioned some aspect of the economy as the country’s top problem.<sup>6</sup> Citing figures showing that nearly half of Americans rate current economic conditions as poor and 62 percent think things are still getting worse, Gallup researchers comment that “probably the most troubling aspect of the current economic confidence data is that they show no improvement from a year ago. In fact, Americans are slightly less optimistic about the future direction of the economy today than they were at this time in 2009.”<sup>7</sup>

What does all this mean in terms of economic development? What can communities do to respond to current economic challenges, while at the same time positioning themselves for success in the future? These were the questions that Southern Growth Policies Board posed to citizens around the South, encouraging them to gather with others in their communities to discuss not only challenges and concerns, but also priorities and potential solutions. The findings of this process, called *Listening to the South*, are highlighted below.

## Listening to the South: 2010

*The most important thing now is for our local community leaders to provide a voice of HOPE....We have such an overpowering message of doom and gloom from the national media that it does rub off....I think we can work together and come through with a much better local economy if we can get people on board.*

– Online survey respondent from North Carolina

Like the survey respondent from North Carolina, many Southerners have a sense of optimism about the future, despite current economic conditions. In all, more than 2,300 Southerners talked about community economic recovery as part of Southern Growth Policies Board's 2010 *Listening to the South* process. Over 1,060 participated in 56 forums that were held in communities across the region, nearly 135 attended state policy dialogues in three states and an opening regional retreat in North Carolina, and over 1,160 shared their thoughts and priorities via an online survey.

The picture they painted was one of concern, but not hopelessness. Approximately 92 percent of survey respondents reported that the economic downturn had had a negative impact on their community, with nearly a third of all respondents indicating that the impact had been *extremely* negative. Older people were more inclined to view the impact in a harsher light than younger people, with 38 percent of those age 55 and older vs. 17 percent of young people under age 25 saying the impact was extremely negative.

Sixty-two percent reported that their families had been personally affected. A forum participant in Riverdale, Georgia described how she and her husband had both lost their jobs, their car and then their home to foreclosure; a manufacturer in Chattooga County, Georgia said that nobody was buying and that 80 to 90 percent of his business was gone; and community residents in Waynesboro, Mississippi expressed concern about increased class sizes due to the cutback of about 50 teacher positions in their school district. Forum participants in Little Rock, Arkansas

talked about the impact of job losses on everything from self-esteem to perceived future career options for young people, while noting that income and academic achievement gaps were widening in the community.

About a quarter of online survey respondents felt that economic recovery was already underway in their community. However, an equal number felt that recovery was decidedly *not* underway and that the situation was still getting worse. Again, older people showed more pessimism than younger people, with 30 percent of those 55 and older vs.



less than seven percent of those under age 25 expressing the opinion that things were still getting worse.

While there was some optimism about the future, with a third of survey respondents agreeing that, in two years, their community would be in a stronger position than it was before the downturn, the overwhelming majority felt that recovery would require new approaches—communities couldn't just wait it out.

More than eight out of ten forum participants also disagreed with the idea of waiting out the economic downturn, instead feeling that action needs to be taken now to plan for recovery. As a forum participant in Montgomery, Alabama remarked, "New days require new ways." The wait and see approach appears to have no risk, observed forum participants in Pocahontas, Arkansas, but may, in the end, be more costly than other approaches: trying to wait it out may reduce options and cause us to fall further behind, they said.

A number of communities, including Siler City, North Carolina, recognized that waiting wouldn't necessarily bring things back to how they were before—that fundamental economic shifts had occurred. Similarly, forum participants in Washington County, Georgia expressed concern that there had been substantive changes in regard to economic opportunity and that "waiting it out" might mean waiting for something that would never quite be the same as what it once was. As forum participants in Martinsville, Virginia spelled out, "the area needs to change—manufacturing jobs are gone and aren't coming back." But, perhaps the most colorful commentary on this subject came from Blountville, Tennessee. "Waiting it out means you are dead," said a participant there. "You just haven't fallen over yet."

So, what types of new approaches do citizens think communities need to take? Five key themes emerged from the *Listening to the South* process and are detailed below. Southerners told us that we need to:

- 1) Look beyond industrial recruitment
- 2) Reduce regulations
- 3) Identify and build on community assets
- 4) Revamp workforce training
- 5) Facilitate partnerships

## 1) Look Beyond Industrial Recruitment

*Stop thinking that attracting a new business to come here from somewhere else is the best solution to our economic problems.*

*—Online survey respondent from Louisiana*

"Government should strive to be more involved in local continued small business developments that are technology based and quit trying to 'hit



the home run!” said a forum participant in Henderson, Kentucky. “One home run is great until troubles arise; then it’s a disaster when lost,” they continued, emphasizing the benefits of economic diversification. “Stop looking for past success (such as textile manufacturing) to return and begin to look for new business opportunities to replace what has left,” added an online survey respondent from North Carolina.

“Build a strong ‘existing’ business program to ensure the health of our local businesses, and support a strong entrepreneurial development program to promote new business start-ups,” said an online survey respondent from Virginia, keying in on two strategies that generated a good deal of discussion among both forum participants and survey respondents.

“Local government should strive to help those businesses that have already invested in their community rather than bidding for large corporations with non-sustainable, expensive incentives,” commented a survey respondent from North Carolina. “If current businesses flourish, new businesses will follow,” they added. We need to “recognize that 90 percent of job growth comes from small businesses,” agreed a participant at the Oklahoma State Policy Dialogue. “Encourage and support local businesses by celebrating them, buying from them, and investing (organize and encourage local angel investments) in them where possible,” elaborated a survey respondent from Georgia.

Buy-local campaigns were discussed as a potential community-based response in a number of communities, including Alexander City, Alabama and Mendenhall, Mississippi. The discussion in Mendenhall prompted talk of a perceived racial divide in the community. An older black man had the impression that he wasn’t welcome in shops downtown. But, after a brief dialogue with a local business owner at the forum, he said he would shop locally and promote such an effort within the black community.

In addition to strengthening demand for existing businesses’ products and services through buy-local campaigns, forum participants in Albany, Georgia talked about helping existing businesses develop new niche markets. Forum participants in Searcy, Arkansas agreed with the need to help strengthen existing businesses. “Those businesses or organizations left standing will be the ones who have re-evaluated their entire operating processes, uniqueness or products/services, real leanest costs, and active markets, plus those who have found new market niches, created new customer services and made cuts in other areas to keep valued employees,” they said. In terms of future directions, they talked about working with the local chamber of commerce “to assemble key leaders (employers and consumers) to add a Quick Action Plan to their long-term strategic plan, which would focus on reasons to buy locally and heavily,

[and] promote volunteerism to help local companies and organizations.” Forum participants in Boone, North Carolina thought that “success story-telling”—involving people and businesses that have faced hard times but have made it—might be a helpful way of offering advice and encouragement to those who are continuing to struggle.

Forum participants in Bentonville, Arkansas talked about the need to develop a more diverse variety of businesses and outside retailers without diminishing current businesses. One of the options they discussed was making commercial space available at a more attractive price. Along the same lines, a survey respondent from North Carolina proposed that their community offer businesses in targeted niches free or reduced leases for the first two years of a five year contract. “If a small town has nothing to offer but tattoo parlors, beauty parlors with faded hairdo pictures plastered all over the windows and pawn and gun shops it will never be able to attract the type of growth that will spur economic recovery,” they observed.

The potential benefits of providing greater support for entrepreneurship and new business development were also discussed in many quarters, including the Louisiana State Policy Dialogue. “Stop building industrial parks focused on the next ‘big’ employer and see small entrepreneurship as a viable source of jobs and economic growth. Give those ‘big’ employer tax breaks to the small business to encourage growth,” said a survey respondent from Missouri. Forum participants in Searcy, Arkansas recommended implementing entrepreneurship/small business education in as many K-college courses as possible via small study modules and projects with local business, government and non-profits, while participants in Albany, Georgia suggested extending entrepreneurial training to displaced workers. Creating a more entrepreneurial-friendly environment was seen as a potential action step in Memphis, Tennessee.

## 2) Reduce Regulations

*Get out of the way...new taxes and restrictions on businesses and the community are making the situation worse.*

—Online survey respondent from Arkansas

Many saw reducing taxes and/or regulations as key to creating an environment that was more conducive to business creation and growth. “Get out of the way” was a phrase that was peppered throughout the survey responses. “Take it easy on the small business owners!!!!,” said a survey respondent from North Carolina. “They’re getting hit from all sides and having to make tough choices to keep the doors open.”

While many made general pleas, others proposed more specific solutions, such as:

- › Relaxing the tax burden on those employing less than 100 (NC survey respondent)
- › Offering a tax-free first year (AL survey respondent)
- › Providing temporary tax relief to encourage certain benchmarks. When they hit 5-10 employees, decrease or refund a certain percentage of taxes paid or to be paid. (MO survey respondent)
- › Undertake a top to bottom review of regulatory obstacles (VA survey respondent)

### 3) Identify and Build on Community Assets

*“Know thyself;” know where your strengths are and leverage them.*

– Online survey respondent from Virginia

When asked to choose from among 10 potential strategies that communities could take in response to the current economic downturn, the greatest number of community forum participants picked “Develop a community asset map to identify community strengths” as their top choice. As forum participants in Little Rock, Arkansas emphasized, there is no one size fits all approach that will work in every community.

Communities identified a number of assets on which they could build. Much of the discussion in Stillwater, Oklahoma for example, focused on how the community could better capitalize on the strengths of the university there, including faculty expertise, students’ energy and creativity, and research innovations that might lead to new business opportunities. Forum participants in Bowling Green, Kentucky talked about the possibility of growing green industries. And, participants in Boone, North Carolina talked about the potential to build on the Data Center Corridor developing with the location of Google and Apple in a neighboring county, while those in Douglasville, Georgia also saw strengths as a data and distribution center.



Opportunities to build on natural resources and develop agri-tourism strategies were also mentioned in a number of communities. “Our community needs to continue to develop synergistic business to our agricultural base. We are too far from any urban area to ever be anything but agriculture and we need to embrace it,” commented a survey respondent from Oklahoma. “Agriculture-related economic development is an overlooked jewel in community,” echoed a forum participant in Pocahontas, Arkansas, where there was discussion of ideas such as a farmer’s market expansion and creation of a signature event that would take advantage of the area’s natural

resources. Similarly, forum participants in Richmond, Kentucky suggested launching a *Taste of Richmond* event to highlight local agriculture, those in Mendenhall, Mississippi talked about the possibility of using a locally-owned commercial kitchen to market locally-produced goods, and those in Homer, Louisiana saw potential in using fallow farmland for organic farming and wind farms, as well as in identifying existing cottage industries and developing strategies to market them via e-commerce.

Forum participants in Washington County, Georgia offered a cautionary note, emphasizing the need for thoughtful planning. “Build on what we’ve got sounds practical, but in many cases it also involves risk that the assets of the community may or may not be in line with where true opportunity for the future lies,” they said. Forum participants in other Georgia communities agreed that local communities are looking for some direction from state agencies and state leadership; they are not sure what their local/regional growth strategy should be or how to pursue it. Speaking at the Louisiana State Policy Dialogue, officials pointed to the state’s new “Blue Ocean” initiative that identifies six key industry areas—ranging from “next generation automotive” to “renewables and energy efficiency”—that offer opportunities for growth through coordinated state and community efforts.

At the same time, citizens expressed a desire to play a central role in community planning. As a survey respondent from Arkansas commented, “Encourage the community to help themselves. Listen to what communities say they need rather than trying to push government office conceived ideas on them.” Participants at the State Policy Dialogue in Arkansas saw the City of Pine Bluff as a microcosm of the state, noting that it faces nearly all of the issues the state as a whole faces. There was a good deal of energy behind the idea of pulling together a diverse group of public and private stakeholders to work on the issues there—with the thought that this might offer lessons for other Arkansas communities.

#### 4) Revamp Workforce Training

*There has been no net increase in jobs, and the jobs that exist have CHANGED. We must re-career and re-train people for the positions that people need filled.*

—Online survey respondent from Kentucky

Revamping workforce training programs to prepare workers for jobs in up and coming industries ranked highly among potential actions that communities could take to respond to the current economic downturn. More survey and forum participants picked this among their top three strategies for recovery than any other strategy. This also held true for respondents from both rural and urban areas.



Education can be a particular problem for older workers who lost their jobs when manufacturing operations closed, observed forum participants in Galax, Virginia. Many of them do not have a high school diploma because it wasn't needed when they started their jobs, they explained. Now they need more current skills—especially in computer use and technology, they went on. Being a machinist used to be an unskilled position, but that day is gone, agreed participants at a forum in Edmond, Oklahoma. Now almost all manufacturing is high-tech, but we don't have the training system in place for these types of jobs, they said. We need to “convince individuals that waiting for a factory job to show

up is not the best way to prepare for the future. Green, technological and entrepreneurial efforts are where future growth will be,” said a survey respondent from North Carolina. A survey respondent from Kentucky talked about the need to change laws and regulations to help people “re-career,” noting that current regulations only let people deduct job hunting expenses for the same type of job they left, not for a new career.

Forum participants in Martinsville, Virginia talked about encouraging training in trades and services such as plumbing and HVAC that can't be outsourced elsewhere. Similarly, they saw health care as a potential growth industry and discussed the need to expand training and provide incentives for trained people to stay in the area. They were also among those who called for better coordination between workforce training and job development efforts, pointing out that, in the past, people have often been trained for jobs that do not exist in the community. The need to bridge the disconnect between education and jobs was also a topic of discussion at the Arkansas State Policy Dialogue. “Support programs that really prepare employees for the workforce,” agreed a survey respondent from Missouri. “Too much is spent preparing people for jobs that don't exist or training is on old equipment no longer used by employers.” Shifting workforce development is difficult, conceded forum participants in Georgia, noting that training and education are not as nimble as industry needs and generally can't immediately assist with the current downturn in the economy.

Many linked education to long-term workforce development, with K-12 education in particular emerging as a hot topic of discussion among both survey and forum participants. As a forum participant in Little Rock, Arkansas emphasized, “I think education K-12 is the key! Little else matters!” Likewise, forum participants in Homer, Louisiana lamented a high school graduation rate of less than 60 percent, and stressed the need for an educated and skilled workforce, while forum participants in

Riverdale, Georgia saw a need to improve the education system to enable children to compete on a global scale.

Concerns were expressed over the long-term impacts of cuts to education in the name of economic recovery. “Education can’t be cut if our community is to recover,” said a forum participant in Martinsville, Virginia. “We need more education, not less.” “Ensure funding for education is protected (and viewed as an excellent investment with a high ROI), regardless of the tight budgetary climate,” a survey respondent from Georgia concurred. A survey respondent in Louisiana raised potential pitfalls in cutting higher education as well, calling for leaders to “Resist the temptation to impede progress by slashing budgets in higher education and sticking to safe/traditional economic development approaches. We must continue pursuing innovation and development of technology-based business operations.”

## 5) Facilitate Partnerships

*The health of our community must begin with working together. We must make things happen. We must get to know one another so we will trust one another.*

—Community forum participant in Lake Charles, Louisiana

Partnerships were seen as imperative—be it across community lines or across agencies or sectors. As a participant at the Oklahoma State Policy Dialogue observed, “You can mix the pot up, but I don’t see the resource pool changing.” In other words, we may need to look to new partners and pooling of resources in order to make more effective use of limited funds. Participants at the Arkansas State Policy Dialogue emphasized the importance of “true public-private partnerships” where business has a seat at the table and the private sector takes a clear leadership role.

“I think that the biggest obstacle to overcome is the division of the communities that surround the lake,” observed a forum participant in Dadeville, Alabama. Likewise, forum participants in Lake Charles, Louisiana talked about the need “to get around the silos of different industry sectors and different communities.” We need to “reduce barriers for public/private partnerships and create ordinances and laws that promote partnerships among various forms of government agencies, i.e. easier ownership of common facilities that public schools, city government, and higher education could share,” emphasized a survey respondent from Oklahoma. We need to “work cooperatively with other governments to combine resources and streamline regulations,” said another. “Bolster inter-governmental relationships between the city, county, state and tribal governments to work together on tourism, business development, etc.” added yet another Oklahoma respondent. Speaking at the Oklahoma

State Policy Dialogue, the Chief of the Seminole Nation described “hit and miss” relationships with individual communities, noting that the “dialogue needs to continue.”

Despite the clear desire, many communities saw that it would likely take hard work to overcome barriers to cooperation. With seven city governments, county government, a chamber of commerce, multiple development groups, hospitals and other players, it is very difficult to create a comprehensive, unifying economic development strategy, observed those gathered at a forum in Sumter County, Georgia. State leaders gathered at a State Policy Dialogue in Oklahoma talked about the redundancy in government systems with multiple counties, municipalities, school districts and tribal nations serving a single metro area. State funding of local government and the lack of county home rule emerged as topics that might merit further exploration in terms of facilitating greater collaboration there.

“We debated a bit about our community’s ability to come together and work as one toward whatever goals we agree we should strive for,” reported the moderator of a forum in Henderson, Kentucky. “Our local government entities, economic development agencies and civic groups haven’t always been on the same page.” Yet there was recognition that, “Any real progress will only happen if we can work together.”

Creating opportunities for networking and communication between otherwise unconnected groups was seen as a potential next step in a number of communities. Forum participants in Rosedale, Mississippi, for example, saw a need for “more networking with citizens in adjoining communities,” those in Homer, Louisiana thought more could be done to take greater advantage of resources in the faith community, and participants in Little Rock, Arkansas emphasized the need to engage diverse populations across race/ethnicity, age, gender, and socio-economic background in any community planning efforts. Development of a strategic alliance resource map was recommended as a way of beginning to identify existing and potential partnerships in Bowling Green, Kentucky.



Several communities mentioned race relations as a stumbling block to collaboration. “The elephant in the room that never gets discussed is race,” said forum participants in Columbia, South Carolina. “It prevents us from working together—we need to find a way to break down barriers.” Forum participants in Mendenhall, Mississippi also raised the idea that communication within the community needed to improve in order to promote collaboration—particularly across racial barriers. The moderator of the forum there

expressed the belief that the forum itself might have “symbolically began a reconciliation process in the community, as an elderly black gentleman shared that in 30 years, he had never been invited to a meeting ‘on this side of the tracks.’”

While some communities saw significant obstacles to overcome in building effective partnerships, others saw themselves starting on more positive footing. In Jackson, Tennessee, forum participants reported that 10 counties in the region had already come together to pool their resources and employ staff and consultants to increase postsecondary education levels and retool the workforce in the region. Forum participants in Bentonville, Arkansas were positive about the way communities in their region have worked together in the past, noting that most citizens have various interests in many cities spread throughout region—perhaps living in one city, but working in another. Forum participants in Richmond, Kentucky could also point to strong existing community partnerships, but recognized that there were numerous opportunities for more. As a next step, they recommended developing a common vision and goals for the entire county. Other communities also saw promise in developing a shared vision for their region, with forum participants in Columbia, South Carolina noting that a regional strategic plan would create “one voice on a large scale.”

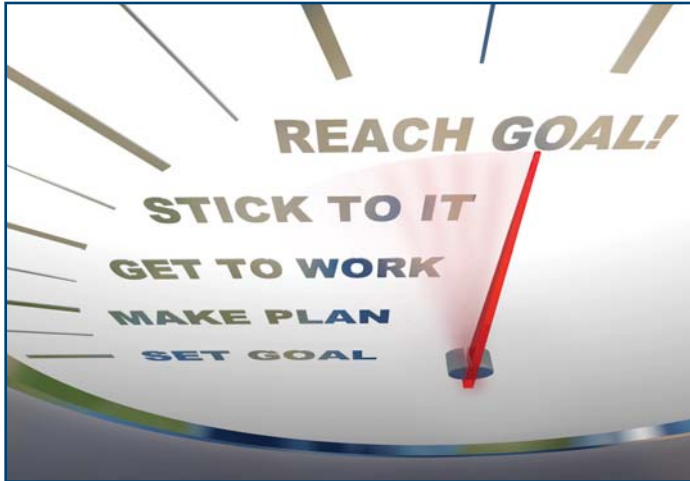
Talk of informal, or functional, means of cooperation and collaboration turned towards more formal, or structural, arrangements in some communities. “If we want less taxes, maybe we need to start thinking about merging counties, and similar,” said some in the Chattooga County, Georgia forum. “Cities and counties are duplicating services and driving up costs,” they elaborated. In other communities there was talk of consolidating school districts, with the thought that it might lead to better schools, higher quality teachers, and more resources. More than one group took the idea even further, suggesting consolidating entire smaller communities.

The potential benefits of collaboration are not limited to government services, pointed out forum participants in Searcy, Arkansas. They reported on collaborative efforts among local businesses that spread the risk in developing what are now several successful new products.

## A Sense of Optimism

*We have more tools available in our tool box than I thought.*

—Community forum participant in Dalton, Georgia



Despite current conditions, many of those participating in the Listening to the South process had a positive attitude about the future and stressed that this was a good time to look for new solutions. “Don’t think about this time as a ‘crisis’ but rather as an ‘opportunity’ to do things differently,” said one survey respondent. “People resist change but might accept a new way of doing things because of the economy,” they summed it up. We “need to think creatively/look at this as an opportunity rather than taking a fatalistic approach,” agreed a forum participant in Montgomery, Alabama.

Nearly three-quarters of those participating in community forums said that they saw ways for people to work on this issue that they didn’t see before their forum. “Discussion of different strategies helped me realize there are steps that can be taken locally,” explained a forum participant in Boone, North Carolina. “The overall experience...helped me look at economic development in a new way,” said the moderator of a forum in Starkville, Mississippi. “Community development for me has always been the responsibility of the local and state government, ‘the higher-ups;’ after participating in the SGPB forum, I know better.” An elected official at the same forum commented, “The forum was a great success. It allowed me to believe in the people more after this discussion. As an elected official it feels good to know more people care.”

What’s next? Hopefully this is just the start of communities coming together to plan for recovery. “This group needs to continue to meet and get others involved. The saying about ‘strength in numbers’ is certainly applicable. But everyone needs to do his/her part,” concluded a forum participant in Dadeville, Alabama.

## Implications for State Policy Leaders

The *Listening to the South* process has resulted in some key ideas to help communities respond to current economic challenges. What, then, can state policy leaders do to support these types of community endeavors?

### Build Local Capacity

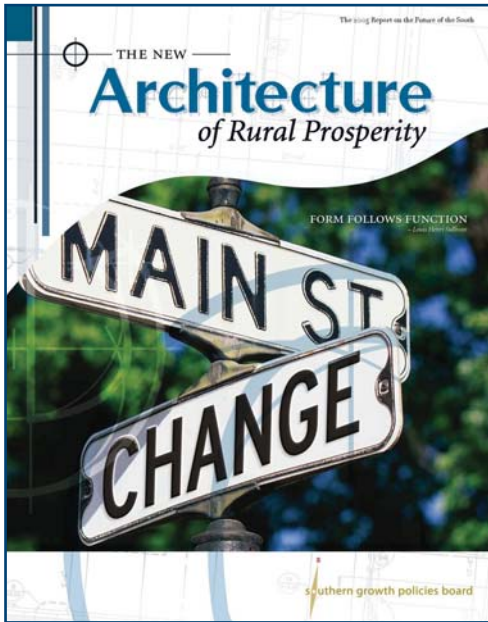
“Rather than seeing themselves as helpless victims of globalization and economic transition, some rural communities have figured out how to bounce back from the brink of economic ruin and create a renewed prosperity. These communities look inward and make the most out of what they have,” say the authors of a 2009 article entitled “Homegrown Responses to Uncertainty in Rural America.” Among their recommendations for policy makers are to help build local capacity to manage economic change by connecting communities to ideas, resources and opportunities. One way they see to do this is to more fully utilize institutions of higher education as sources of technical assistance and training.<sup>8</sup>

In the South, university-based public service institutes, under the umbrella of the Southern Consortium of University Public Service Organizations (SCUPSO), offer just such resources to local communities. SCUPSO member centers and institutes provide training and assistance to more than 35,000 local, state and regional government and nonprofit leaders each year, along with research and policy analysis on key challenges and issues.<sup>9</sup> For example, in addition to ongoing training and assistance programs in areas such as leadership development and community problem-solving and collaboration, the School of Government at the University of North Carolina recently developed a webinar series aimed at helping local governments navigate current fiscal challenges. The School also manages the North Carolina Local Government Service Corps and the Carolina Economic Recovery Corps, both focused on bringing the University’s resources into economically distressed communities across North Carolina. Unfortunately, many of the region’s university-based institutes and centers have been hard hit by funding cutbacks, at a time when communities most need their help.

### Facilitate Partnerships

The Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City is among those that see opportunity in new ways of cooperating to deliver services. Talking about rural America’s fiscal challenges in the June 2010 edition of *The Main Street Economist*, they state that “the challenge has a bright side for rural America—an opportunity to foster a new round of innovation in service delivery through consolidation, cooperation, and privatization of services.”<sup>10</sup>

In fact, many communities—both rural and urban—are already exploring partnerships in order to share limited resources and reduce service delivery costs. Entering into cooperative arrangements to reduce service costs was the most frequent action that county officials reported taking when asked in April and May 2010 about their responses to current economic challenges. More than a quarter said they had consolidated services and more than half reported that their county had cooperated regionally to reduce costs. Another 22 percent said that they were engaged in discussions about such approaches.<sup>11</sup>



In its 2005 Report on the Future of the South, *The New Architecture of Rural Prosperity*, Southern Growth Policies Board identified a host of actions that could be taken to encourage regional collaboration.<sup>12</sup> Identifying regionalism as a key to success was among the actions highlighted. The report points out that Tennessee, for example, has identified forming a regional partnership as a “strategic action” that garners a community bonus points as part of its Three-Star community and economic development planning and certification process.

Other actions suggested in the Southern Growth report included:

- › Providing seed or incentive funding for regional efforts
- › Delivering economic development services regionally
- › Providing grant funding on a regional basis
- › Encouraging regional planning
- › Examining regulatory impacts on regionalism
- › Addressing financial issues, such as providing mechanisms for communities to share directly in the financial costs and benefits of joint activities
- › Using the private sector to champion regionalism

## Support Entrepreneurial Development

Pointing out that small businesses make up 99 percent of all employers and account for about three-quarters of all net jobs, the authors of a recent book on state and local economic development strategies identified entrepreneurial support as one of five keys to positioning communities for economic success in tough times.<sup>13</sup> In fact, according to data from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, from 1980 – 2005, firms less than five years old accounted for all net job growth in the United States.<sup>14</sup>

In its *Resource Guide to Technology-based Economic Development*, SSTI (a national non-profit organization focused on improving state and regional economies through science, technology and innovation) outlines several strategies for cultivating entrepreneurship. These include:<sup>15</sup>

Facilitating access to critical resources:

- › Technology
- › Know-how
- › Capital
- › Social networks
- › Facilities

Providing a continuum of support services to entrepreneurs that:

- › Assist start-ups
- › Drive deal flow
- › Promote capital formation
- › Promote a culture of entrepreneurship

Georgia's Department of Economic Development has been working with communities since 2004 to encourage them to make entrepreneurship part of their overall economic development strategy. More than 120 communities have since undertaken efforts to plan for and support local entrepreneurship, in turn receiving designation as an "Entrepreneur Friendly" community under the state's Entrepreneur Friendly Communities program.<sup>16</sup> In Tennessee, the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development has partnered with the University of Tennessee's Institute for Public Service and UT Extension to launch a pilot program to build community capacity in the areas of entrepreneurship and small business development. Called CREST—for Creating a Rural Entrepreneurship Program in Tennessee—the program provides training to community teams via distance learning, coupled with intensive on-site technical assistance from a broad coalition of providers. The program is designed to culminate with the development of community strategic plans to address small business opportunities and needs.<sup>17</sup>

Other states and communities are aiming entrepreneurial efforts specifically at those most impacted by the economic downturn. In March 2009, for example, INNOVA, an initiative of the West Virginia High Technology Consortium Foundation, announced plans to offer the Kauffman Foundation's FastTrac LaunchPad entrepreneurial training program to laid off workers or entrepreneurs finding a need to retool their businesses. Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, North Carolina launched a similar effort in July 2009. A year later, 80 percent of the 60 unemployed workers who completed the training are either in business or pursuing business ownership and 18 percent have hired at least some part-time employees.<sup>18</sup>

## Promote Citizen Engagement

“Some governments are better prepared to deal with the crisis because they meet certain pre-conditions,” observed public administration expert Jim Svava, writing on “Innovation and Construction Change in Cutback Management” in a paper commissioned by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA).<sup>19</sup> First on his list of steps that communities should consider taking in advance in order to be better prepared for a crisis down the road was:

*Understand community values and establish priorities to guide choice of programs and services to be preserved or reduced.*

Another publication from ICMA also speaks to the importance of citizen engagement, offering five ways to keep citizens engaged—especially in tough financial times.<sup>20</sup> These include:

- 1) Focus on the possibilities instead of on problem solving
- 2) Start small; even if only a handful of citizens are involved, it’s a start
- 3) Move away from treating citizens like customers; instead, engage them as partners
- 4) Specifically ask citizens about budget priorities and cutbacks
- 5) Be a catalyst; mostly listen rather than present

By engaging citizens and listening to their values and priorities, communities and policy leaders participating in Southern Growth’s *Listening to the South* process have taken an important step towards responding to the current economic crisis and better positioning themselves for the future. Now the challenge will be to act on these ideas.



In an environment of meager financial resources, citizen engagement and participation will be more important than ever. Most communities cannot afford to do everything, so choices will have to be made. Southerners have said clearly that it is time to make those choices and take actions to help their communities begin the process of economic recovery.

## Towards More Effective Citizen Engagement

### **A working group organized by the Kettering Foundation offers the following insights based on the group's collective experiences in engaging citizens.<sup>21</sup>**

- Citizens must be engaged if communities are to solve some of their most difficult problems. Such problems (e.g., youth gangs, poverty, racial conflict, crime) have multiple causes and can't be solved with a technical fix (unlike repairing streets and bridges). Effectively addressing these problems requires citizens to act—and keep on acting.
  - Engage citizens to address community problems.
- Citizens often think about problems differently than institutions or professionals. Not only do people feel more empowered when they are encouraged to identify and frame the issues related to a problem or opportunity, but they often uncover different solutions than institutions or professionals who are looking at the problem from the lens of their own particular expertise.
  - Recognize the limits of professional expertise.
- People become engaged only around issues or problems that are of particular interest or concern to them. It's not realistic to assume that all citizens will be engaged in all issues. The definition of "community" is therefore dynamic and ever changing, with groups of people—who may or may not be connected by geographic borders—coming together to solve a problem or take advantage of an opportunity.
  - Start with what people care about.
- Citizen engagement—and governance—is a skill learned only by practice. It's important to create mechanisms that allow for sustained citizen engagement rather than just one-time events. As citizens gain experience and see that they can make a difference, they may be drawn into issues beyond their initial areas of interest—particularly as they begin to see how many community issues are interrelated.
  - Establish structures that sustain engagement.
- It's often most effective to engage citizens within the organizations and networks they are already a part of; we don't have to start from scratch. It's likely that they are already talking about a particular issue in these networks and may have the capacity and connections to implement solutions.
  - Engage existing networks.
- Networks and connections between organizations can multiply the power of civic initiatives and make them truly community-wide, or "public." Yet, these connections typically don't happen by themselves—active intervention is often needed to connect groups that might, at first glance, seem to have very different interests. Even groups working on similar issues often have weak connections.
  - Connect existing networks and stakeholders.
- When a group of people comes together for a community conversation, there will be tensions between goals, ideas, and values. What may at first seem to be tensions between groups may, with further examination, be seen as common values that everyone shares—such as a desire for freedom or security. Tensions and conflicts do not have to necessarily be resolved as long as everyone shows respect for diverse positions. It's important to recognize tensions from the beginning of a community conversation.
  - Recognize and value tensions.

## Alabama



### DesignSeed

**Objective:** To create businesses in rural and distressed areas of Alabama that are based on innovative product designs created by Auburn University's Industrial Design students.

DesignSeed, a collaboration between Auburn University's Office of University Outreach, Technical Assistance Center (ATAC) and Industrial Design program, creates businesses in rural and distressed areas of Alabama that are based on innovative product designs created by the university's Industrial Design students.

The DesignSeed process has four key phases:

1) Discovery: community members come together to identify natural resources and community assets. Auburn MBA students and/or university staff research market opportunities based on these assets and recommend product categories that could serve as the basis for a startup business.

2) Product Development: undergraduate industrial design students translate the product category into hundreds of potential product design sketches before developing physical product prototypes. Students also create product packaging and a business brand identity.

3) Enterprise Development: MBA students research the operational, financial, and workforce needs and create a startup business plan. A search for an entrepreneur to launch the business and a facility in which to locate the business also takes place.

4) Launch: the business begins, with royalties on sales eventually returning to support the DesignSeed program. The startup business has a lifeline back to Auburn through ATAC business and training assistance for 12 months.

## Arkansas



### Fayetteville Forward

**Objective:** To engage the entire community in creating an action plan to build and foster economic development in the community.

The Fayetteville Forward program is an innovative, collaboration-based initiative that engages the entire community in creating an action plan to build and foster economic development in Fayetteville, Arkansas. The program was launched to continue the work of—and community spirit generated by—a March 2009 economic development summit that involved more than 500 participants representing over 330 different groups.

The formal leadership of the organization includes representatives from the City of Fayetteville, University of Arkansas and the Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce, along with 11 community volunteer leaders. In addition, there are 11 action groups that focus on specific topic areas that were identified during the 2009 summit. These focus areas include economic incentives, land use and green infrastructure, green economy, creative economy, transportation, local food, historic and heritage preservation, public education, health, citizen empowerment, and inclusion. Monthly meetings are held to report on action group efforts and collaborate on city-wide initiatives that bridge traditional interest divides.

In 2009, citizens volunteered more than 6,000 hours to the Fayetteville Forward program, leading to results such as a monthly cultural arts event known as First Thursday Fayetteville, the establishment of a Green Jobs Training Center, and the creation of a website on the community's history.

## Featherbone Communiversity

**Objective:** To provide collaborative, real-time learning in an intergenerational setting.

In 2005, when the Warren Featherbone Company in Gainesville, Georgia, sold its infant's apparel business rather than move the business to China, it faced the practical question of what to do with 128,000 square feet of production space and the manufacturing legacy that went with it. Working in partnership with six civic-minded visionaries, the company emerged with a plan for a community learning place. The founding educational partners were Lanier Technical College, INK (Interactive Neighborhood for Kids), and Brenau University.

Since its official dedication in fall 2007, the Communiversity's core programs have grown to include: a business incubator that is operated by Lanier Technical College in collaboration with the University of Georgia Small Business Development Center and the Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute; INK village, which includes masterfully built exhibits of real-world careers that are interactive, kid-sized and replicate the world of work; and Brenau University's programs in nursing, theater and dance, as well as senior adult education programs through Brenau's Life-Long Learning Institute. Collaboration is encouraged between the partners, so Brenau nurses, for example, can train at the Interactive Neighborhood for Kids.

In addition to the core programs, numerous public events are held at Featherbone Communiversity throughout the year—from Earth Day celebrations to meetings of young leaders—making this truly a community learning center.



## EntrePaducah®

**Objective:** To serve as a central source for small business and entrepreneurial development in the Paducah/McCracken County, Kentucky area.

EntrePaducah® was first envisioned by a group of civic and community leaders that came together as a think tank committee in 2007 to identify strengths and weaknesses in the local economic development effort. There was a sense of urgency to this undertaking, in that the area was facing the eventual closing of one of the community's largest employers—even before the full force of the recession. The committee's findings revealed existing strengths in industrial recruitment and business advocacy, but a splintered approach to small business and entrepreneurial development. With those findings as the focus, the think tank was transformed into a working committee that conceived and launched EntrePaducah.

EntrePaducah has quickly become known as the starting place for small business endeavors in the area. Staff serve clients by offering free counseling on everything from business plans to regulatory issues to marketing strategies. EntrePaducah's mission also includes development of a local venture capital fund; a network of mentors to assist entrepreneurs; and a culture change initiative to make entrepreneurship a more widely-accepted career option for future generations. EntrePaducah has also stepped in to address new needs resulting from the recession, including assisting established small businesses seeking help and offering entrepreneurial counseling to workers facing layoffs.



## Louisiana



### IDEAcorps

**Objective: To connect the nation's brightest minds with high-impact entrepreneurs in New Orleans.**

IDEAcorps was founded in 2007 by the non-profit organization The Idea Village in partnership with Tulane University. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the city needed not only physical help from volunteers, but brainpower to create innovative new ways to address the city's most pressing challenges.

The program began by linking volunteer MBA students from Tulane with businesses in industries critical to rebuilding the New Orleans economy. The IDEAcorps program now connects volunteer teams from prestigious business schools and corporations from around the world with high-impact entrepreneurs in the city in intensive one-week work sessions. This program is a component of Idea Village's annual program, The Entrepreneur Challenge, in which the organization works with entrepreneurs in a close consulting relationship over the course of the year.

To date, The Idea Village has engaged nearly 300 students from eight universities worldwide to accelerate the growth of over 100 entrepreneurial ventures through the IDEAcorps program. This investment in entrepreneurship represents a diversification of the New Orleans economy, as the tumultuous oil and gas and tourism industries have long been the city's lifeline. By supporting entrepreneurs, IDEAcorps is helping to foster a more resilient New Orleans economy and has also helped to cement the city's status as a laboratory for new ideas.

## Mississippi



### Rural Place Building Initiative

**Objective: To upbuild people, places, programs, and the region of West Alabama and East Mississippi.**

The Montgomery Institute's (TMI) Rural Place Building initiative is helping rural communities in West Alabama and East Mississippi cope with the economic downturn through efforts to identify and build on community assets, promote entrepreneurship and new business development, and bring community leaders together to focus on regional issues and strategies.

The initiative can already point to a number of successes:

To date, nine communities have held workshops that have brought citizens and professionals together to identify community assets and build a common vision or plan for the future. The Mississippi Main Street program has adopted this process for communities throughout the state.

TMI has worked with area community colleges to develop the MyBiz Alabama-Mississippi Network and related website, MyBiz.AM, to help communities develop "grow your own" business strategies as an alternative to industrial recruitment. Today, 2,888 registered users can access 213 service providers through MyBiz.AM.

Rural communities have also banded together to develop regional workforce training programs, such as the Amatrol Anytime Anywhere e-Learning System that provides online access to over 450 virtual training modules.

TMI continues to promote regional solutions by hosting quarterly meetings of mayors from 33 communities as well as summits on entrepreneurship, forestry, and regional competitiveness to help regional leaders understand common opportunities and challenges.

## Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship

**Objective:** To provide opportunities for collaboration among tenants, faculty, staff, and students while promoting economic growth in the region.

Northwest Missouri State University's Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE), which opened its doors in September 2009, provides collaborative research and grant opportunities for industrial tenants, faculty, staff, and students in an environment that nurtures young companies and advances economic growth in the region.

The Center's state-of-the-art, mixed-use facility houses classrooms and student and faculty research laboratories related to Northwest's new undergraduate degree program in Nanoscale Science as well as a business incubator with emphasis on science and technology based start-up companies. CIE supports the University's academic mission by providing students with opportunities for real-world experiences through research, internships, and employment with CIE tenants. At the same time, it connects promising new businesses to the University's scientific and research resources.

The incubator facility currently hosts five tenants, including Carbolytic Materials Company, a manufacturer of carbon black replacement material, which is produced from shredded automotive tires and has a wide range of applications in the rubber and plastics industry.

## Missouri



## Latino Community Credit Union

**Objective:** To improve the financial condition of the Hispanic/Latino community through the delivery of affordable financial services and financial education programs.

Founded in 2000 to improve the financial condition of the Hispanic/Latino Community, the Latino Community Credit Union (LCCU) has become a national model for credit unions and community development financial institutions seeking to serve unbanked, immigrant communities.

LCCU serves members of the Latino Community Development Center, a statewide non-profit organization that promotes financial literacy, access to financial services, and economic development for the low income immigrant Latino/Hispanic population in North Carolina. LCCU now serves over 50,000 members in eight branches across the state. The majority of LCCU's members are low-income and had not ever had an account with a financial institution when they first joined the credit union.

Education is a fundamental part of LCCU's mission. Everyone in the community, members and non-members, has access to LCCU's free workshops offered in each branch every week on topics such as how save and create a budget. More than 10,000 participants have attended these workshops since 2000 and 450 have graduated from the full series of six workshops since 2006.

By focusing on providing bilingual, bicultural, affordable financial services to its members, LCCU has become the fourth largest community development credit union in membership throughout the United States.

## North Carolina



## Oklahoma



### Center for the Creation of Economic Wealth

**Objective:** To commercialize emerging Oklahoma technologies by engaging interdisciplinary students, researchers, and entrepreneurial mentors.

Formed in 2006, the University of Oklahoma's Center for the Creation of Economic Wealth (CCEW) provides an interdisciplinary environment for researchers, entrepreneurs and students to collaborate in growing, strengthening and diversifying Oklahoma's economy through the nurturing of technology-based enterprises.

An internship program is at the heart of CCEW's approach. Students from a wide variety of disciplines are selected for a one-semester internship that incorporates work with other students and outside mentors in commercialization teams as well as academic coursework that focuses on the entrepreneurial process. The semester culminates in a final presentation in which the interns present their findings and recommend the path each technology should follow to move forward in the commercialization process.

It is CCEW's interdisciplinary approach that sets it apart from commercialization programs at other universities. While some programs may be housed in business or engineering colleges, CCEW selects top students from all academic disciplines, ranging from arts and sciences, journalism, and engineering to business, law, and fine arts.

These efforts have translated into new companies, intellectual property, licensing agreements, and over \$4 million of funding to propel Oklahoma technologies forward.

## South Carolina



### NEXT Innovation Center

**Objective:** To provide a hub for emerging companies to connect and grow in Upstate South Carolina.

Formed in 2006, NEXT is a collaborative of regional organizations dedicated to attracting and promoting the growth of high-impact knowledge-based companies, as well as accelerating the entrepreneurial culture in Upstate South Carolina.

NEXT offers entrepreneurs a single-point of access to support organizations and also fosters the development of the regional infrastructure critical to entrepreneurial success. The collaborative has played a leading role in launching a regional network of investors, initiating the creation of incentives such as a business license abatement fee, and organizing peer mentoring networks where like-minded groups can come together and bounce ideas off one another.

NEXT partners worked with the Hughes Development Corporation to create the NEXT Innovation Center in Greenville in 2009, providing space for emerging companies to interact and grow, as well as a venue for NEXT's educational and networking programs and services. The Innovation Center is also home to support organizations such as the Upstate Carolina Angel Network and Michelin Development Upstate, an economic development program that provides funding and business expertise to socially and economically disadvantaged small- and medium-sized businesses.

## Tennessee Three-Star Program/TNCPE Partnership

**Objective:** To engage Tennessee communities in an in-depth evaluation and feedback process that identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement that are applied to strategic plans and economic development initiatives.

Administered by the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (ECD), the Three-Star Program assists local communities in their efforts to achieve excellence in community and economic development. Participating communities are guided through a strategic planning process that is designed to help them build stronger communities with more diverse economies and greater job opportunities.

In 2007, the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence (TNCPE), an economic development non-profit, entered into a partnership with ECD to provide services to Tennessee communities that participate in the Three-Star program. TNCPE uses the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence—a proven tool used by international corporations like FedEx and Caterpillar Financial Services—to assess the strategic plans developed by participating communities. In addition, TNCPE provides coaching and feedback to help the communities implement and improve their plans.

So far, communities have benefited from nearly 500 hours of performance improvement coaching and examiner teams have contributed almost 1000 hours to community assessments and feedback—all free of charge.

## Tennessee



## Scholarships and Loan Forgiveness

**Objective:** To support the creation of a world-class workforce throughout the historically tobacco dependent regions of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission created college scholarship and loan forgiveness programs to promote economic development in Virginia's tobacco region by increasing the education and skill levels of the region's residents.

There are two key programs:

- 1) The Southwest Burley Tobacco Scholarship Program assists current Southwest Virginia residents who were former Burley tobacco quota holders or growers and their direct descendants with up to \$2,500 for tuition and academic fees per year.
- 2) The Southside Tobacco Loan Forgiveness Program encourages native Southside Virginians to complete a degree and then return to and settle in a locality within Southside Virginia. Current residents of Southside Virginia localities can receive up to \$3,750 for tuition and academic fees per year. Once completing their education, loan recipients are given one year of loan forgiveness for each year of documented full-time employment in one of the 24 Southside Virginia localities.

## Virginia



## TechConnect WV

**Objective:** To provide prosperity and diversity by advancing technology-based economic development in West Virginia.

TechConnect WV brings public and private partners together with a goal of diversifying West Virginia's economy by advancing technology-based economic development. The organization began informally five years ago, when several entities involved in research, technology transfer and commercialization joined to assess West Virginia's capacity and explore how other states had made progress in the innovation economy. This loose coalition of universities, foundations, federal labs and economic development organizations quickly saw that the state needed to build infrastructure to support the technology entrepreneur, assist with commercialization and promote economic diversity.

As it matured, TechConnect WV achieved non-profit status in 2008 and built a strong coalition of partners. Working with the Battelle Institute, the organization produced a plan for the growing innovation economy in March 2009. The *Blueprint for Technology-Based Economic Development in West Virginia* outlines a series of strategies and actions that are designed to help the state build on its existing strengths to promote economic diversity and create value.

The creation of Innovation Institutes built around two of the four key strengths identified in the Blueprint marks a strong start for the organization. The Advanced Energy Institute and Biometrics Institute are focused on actively building new research and development projects in areas that have clear commercial potential.



## State Policy Dialogues & Community Forums

Southern Growth Policies Board wishes to extend a special thank you to all the communities and organizations that hosted dialogues and forums on the topic of community economic recovery.

### State Policy Dialogues

#### Morrilton, Arkansas

Winthrop Rockefeller Institute;  
Accelerate Arkansas; Governor's  
Workforce Cabinet

#### Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Baton Rouge Area Chamber

#### Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Office of the Governor; Oklahoma  
Secretary of Science & Technology;  
The Oklahoma Academy

### ALABAMA

#### Alexander City

Central Alabama Community  
College; The Lake Martin Area  
Economic Development Alliance

#### Dadeville

The Lake Martin Area Economic  
Development Alliance

#### Montgomery

Design Alabama; Alabama State  
Council on the Arts; David  
Mathews Center for Civic Life;  
Caroline Marshall Draughon  
Center for the Arts & Humanities  
at Auburn University

### ARKANSAS

#### Bentonville

NorthWest Arkansas Community  
College; Bentonville/Bella Vista  
Chamber of Commerce; Rogers/  
Lowell Chamber of Commerce

#### Little Rock

Beverly Divers-White, Arkansas  
Cradle to Prison Pipeline Initiative;  
Clevon Young, Arkansas Human  
Development Corporation; and  
Freeman McKindra, Arkansas  
School of Public Health

#### Pocahontas

Black River Technical College

#### Searcy

Arkansas State University-Beebe;  
White County Industrial Training  
Council

### GEORGIA

#### Albany

Albany-Dougherty County  
Economic Development  
Commission

#### Americus-Sumter County

University of Georgia's Archway  
Partnership

#### Brunswick-Glynn County

University of Georgia's Archway  
Partnership

#### Clayton County

University of Georgia's Archway  
Partnership

#### Dalton-Whitfield County

University of Georgia's Archway  
Partnership

#### Douglasville

City of Douglasville; OneGeorgia  
Authority; Georgia Tech Enterprise  
Innovation Institute

#### Hartwell-Hart County

University of Georgia's Archway  
Partnership

#### Hawkinsville-Pulaski County

University of Georgia's Archway  
Partnership

#### Moultrie-Colquitt County

University of Georgia's Archway  
Partnership

### Community Forums

#### Riverdale

Timmy Walker

#### Sandersville-Tennille-

Washington County  
University of Georgia's Archway  
Partnership

#### Summerville

Chattooga County Development  
Authority

### KENTUCKY

#### Bowling Green

Western Kentucky University's  
College of Health & Human  
Services; WKU Center for  
Entrepreneurship & Innovation;  
WKU ALIVE Center for  
Community Partnerships

#### Henderson

Henderson-Henderson County  
Chamber of Commerce

#### Richmond

Eastern Kentucky University;  
Richmond Chamber of Commerce;  
Berea Chamber of Commerce; the  
Madison County Schools

### LOUISIANA

#### Homer

Pineview Community Education  
and Development Corporation

#### Lake Charles

SWLA Economic Development  
Alliance

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Bay St. Louis  
Hancock County Development  
Commission

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La'Kitha Bledsoe Hughes

Greenwood  
Mississippi State University  
Extension Service; Leflore County

Heidelberg  
Mississippi State University

Laurel  
1st, 2nd, & 3rd Avenues  
Neighborhood Association

Gulfport  
Mississippi State University; Lynn  
Tincher-Ladner

Mendenhall  
Mississippi State University

Prentiss  
Mississippi State University,  
Extension Service

Richton  
Richton Board of Alderman; Jones  
County Junior College

Rosedale  
West Bolivar Scholars

Starkville  
Margaret M. Jordan; Oktibbeha  
County Extension Office

Waynesboro  
Mississippi State University

West Point  
Geraldine Rich; Mississippi State  
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High Country Workforce  
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WTVI (PBS)

Charlotte  
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Social Fellowship, Incorporated

Siler City  
Chatham County Economic  
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Goals

Ardmore  
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Goals

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Oklahoma; Oklahoma Academy for  
State Goals; Oklahoma Center for  
the Advancement of Science and  
Technology

Fairview  
The Oklahoma Academy for State  
Goals

Hobart  
The Oklahoma Academy for State  
Goals

Miami  
Four States Regional Partnership  
of WIBs and Chambers: Southwest  
Missouri, Northeast Oklahoma,  
Southeast Kansas, and Northwest  
Arkansas

Stillwater  
Stillwater Public Library, Stillwater  
Speaks

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Greater Columbia Chamber of  
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Carolina

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First Tennessee Development  
District; Northeast State  
Community College

Dyersburg  
University of Tennessee Institute  
for Public Service; The Federal  
Reserve Bank of St. Louis -  
Memphis Branch; The Northwest  
Tennessee Workforce Board

Jackson  
University of Tennessee Institute  
for Public Service; The Federal  
Reserve Bank of St. Louis -  
Memphis Branch; Southwest  
Tennessee Development District

Memphis  
University of Tennessee Institute  
for Public Service; The Federal  
Reserve Bank of St. Louis -  
Memphis Branch

## **VIRGINIA**

Galax  
Crossroads Institute

Martinsville  
University of Virginia, Weldon  
Cooper Center for Public Service;  
New Civic Leaders Alumni

Martinsville  
University of Virginia, Weldon  
Cooper Center for Public Service;  
New Civic Leaders 2010

Williamsburg  
University of Virginia, Weldon  
Cooper Center for Public Service;  
Lead Virginia

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Boise Cascade, L.L.C.

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Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce

The Westervelt Company, Strategy and Planning

University of Alabama, Alabama Innovation and Mentoring of Entrepreneurs

University of Alabama, Office of Research

University of Alabama, Alabama Small Business Development Center Network

University of Alabama – Huntsville, Office for Freight, Logistics and Transportation

West Alabama Regional Commission

## **ARKANSAS**

Arkansas Educational Television Network, Education and Government Affairs

Arkansas State University Beebe, Workforce Training

Arkansas State University Newport

Mid-South Community College

North Central Arkansas Regional Economic Development Corp.

Southern Arkansas University

Southern Arkansas University Tech

University of Arkansas, Little Rock, Institute of Government

University of Arkansas, Little Rock, Institute for Economic Advancement

University of Central Arkansas, Center for Community & Economic Development

## **DELAWARE**

University of Delaware, Institute for Public Administration

## **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

Southeastern Universities Research Association

## **FLORIDA**

Florida State University, The John Scott Dailey Florida Institute of Government

University of Central Florida,  
University Economic Development  
University of Florida, Office of  
Research  
University of Florida, Institute for  
Food and Agricultural Sciences

## **GEORGIA**

Forest Landowners Association,  
Inc.  
Georgia Electric Membership  
Corporation, Government  
Relations & Communications  
Georgia Forestry Commission,  
Forest Energy and Development  
Georgia Institute of Technology,  
Center for Quality Growth and  
Regional Development  
Kennesaw State University, A.L.  
Burruss Institute of Public Service  
and Research  
Market Street Services, Inc.  
Oglethorpe Power Corporation,  
External Affairs  
OneGeorgia Authority  
Plum Creek Timber Company  
Technical College System of  
Georgia  
University of Georgia, Public  
Service and Outreach

## **ILLINOIS**

Gas Technology Institute,  
Gasification and Gas Processing

## **INDIANA**

Ball State University, Bowen Center  
for Public Affairs

## **KENTUCKY**

Eastern Kentucky University  
Green River Area Development  
District, Workforce Development  
Kentucky Cabinet for Economic  
Development, Kentucky  
Department of Commercialization  
and Innovation  
Kentucky Chamber of Commerce

Kentucky Energy and Environment  
Cabinet, Kentucky Division of  
Forestry  
Kentucky Power Company,  
American Electric Power  
Western Kentucky University,  
Department of Communication

## **LOUISIANA**

Cenla Advantage Partnership  
Consortium for Education,  
Research & Technology of North  
Louisiana (CERT)  
Lafayette Economic Development  
Authority

## **MARYLAND**

University of Maryland, Institute  
for Governmental Service and  
Research

## **MISSISSIPPI**

Central Mississippi Planning &  
Development District  
Community Development  
Foundation  
CREATE Foundation  
Economic Development Authority  
of Jones County  
Hinds Community College  
Lower Pearl River Valley  
Foundation  
Mississippi Farm Bureau  
Federation  
Mississippi Gulf Coast Community  
College  
Mississippi State University,  
Stennis Institute of Government  
Mississippi Technology Alliance,  
Strategic Biomass Solutions  
Monroe County Chamber of  
Commerce  
Tunica County Chamber of  
Commerce  
University of Mississippi, Office of  
Research and Sponsored Programs

## **MISSOURI**

Heartland Foundation  
New Madrid County Port  
Authority, Multi Modal  
Transportation

## **NORTH CAROLINA**

CED  
Charlotte Regional Partnership  
Eastern Carolina Workforce  
Development Board, Inc.  
e-NC Authority  
Forsyth Technical Community  
College  
GlaxoSmithKline  
Greater Durham Chamber of  
Commerce  
Greater Raleigh Chamber of  
Commerce  
Morrisville Chamber of Commerce  
Nash Community College  
North Carolina Arts Council  
North Carolina State University,  
Southern Association of  
Agricultural Experiment Station  
Directors  
North Carolina State University,  
Department of Forestry and  
Environmental Resources  
Regional Technology Strategies,  
Inc. (RTS, Inc.)  
Research Triangle Regional  
Partnership  
SJF Advisory Services  
UNC Chapel Hill, School of  
Government  
UNC Chapel Hill, Kenan Institute  
of Private Enterprise  
UNC Chapel Hill, Office  
of Economic and Business  
Development  
Wake Technical Community  
College

## **NEW YORK**

CEM Machines, Inc.

## **OHIO**

Ohio University, Voinovich School  
for Leadership and Public Affairs

## **OKLAHOMA**

Autry Technology Center

Oklahoma State University,  
Institute of Technology

OSU/A & M Board of Regents

Rural Enterprises of Oklahoma,  
Inc.

The Oklahoma Academy for State  
Goals

## **PUERTO RICO**

INDUNIV Research Consortium

## **SOUTH CAROLINA**

Clemson University, Strom  
Thurmond Institute of  
Government & Public Affairs

CTC Public Benefit Corporation,  
Economic Development Initiatives

## **TENNESSEE**

Cornerstone Foundation of  
Knoxville

Genera Energy, LLC

Knoxville Chamber of Commerce,  
Workforce Development &  
Education

Oak Ridge Associated Universities,  
Scientific and Technical Resource  
Integration

Oak Ridge National Laboratory,  
managed by UT-Battelle LLC

Southern Alliance for Clean Energy

University of Tennessee, Institute  
for Public Service

## **TEXAS**

Workforce Solutions of West  
Central Texas

Zilkha Biomass Energy, LLC

## **VERMONT**

Leonard Bull (*Individual Member*)

## **VIRGINIA**

C2I, LLC

Institute for Advanced Learning  
and Research

Southwest Virginia Higher  
Education Center

University of Virginia, Weldon  
Cooper Center for Public Service

Virginia Tech, Outreach and  
International Affairs

Wise County DEVELOP Program

## **WEST VIRGINIA**

Marshall University, Information  
Technology/CIO

West Virginia University, Research  
and Economic Development

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## Endnotes

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- 21 The working group includes representatives from the Auburn University Economic & Community Development Institute, Esquel Group, International Institute for Sustained Dialogue, Kettering Foundation, National Civic League, New Mexico First, Southern Growth Policies Board, University of Tennessee-Chattanooga, and the West Virginia Center for Public Life.





phone 919-941-5145 / fax 919-941-5594

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