

SUMMARY REPORT
on
the Annual Training Conference of the
National Association of Development Organizations
Chicago *** August 30 - September 1, 2009

- **Northwest COG Representatives in Attendance**

- **Dr. Bill Hall** (City of Farmington), COG Board Chairman of the COG Board – accompanied by spouse
- **Louie Bonaguidi** (City of Gallup), COG Board Treasurer & 2nd Vice-Chair – accompanied by spouse
- **Jeff Kiely**, Deputy Director

[NOTE: Executive Director Patty Lundstrom was unable to attend the conference due to a death in the family.]

- **Key Points, Learnings & Themes**

- **The Opportunity Mentality:** “Stop planning to survive, and start planning to prosper.” – the late Dave Martin, The Northland Institute
- **NADO Membership:** New Mexico is now a fully represented “NADO State” – all 7 COGs in New Mexico are members of NADO. Our COG Deputy Director Jeff Kiely serves on the NADO Board of Directors as one of the members of the Southwest NADO Caucus.
- **Board/Staff Retreat Concept:** Southeastern New Mexico COG has started holding annual Board/Staff retreats, which have been very well received and greatly strengthened their District organization
- **New Environment of Opportunity:** NADO Executive Director Matt Chase emphasized that “everything has changed” since January 20th, 2009, with the new Administration. Whether you’re Democrat or Republican, it doesn’t matter: there is a huge change in opportunities for development in regions and communities.
- **Quality of Place:** This is becoming a very strong movement in community development policy. There is an unprecedented “White House Memo” signed by 4 key policy advisors to all Executive agencies, establishing “quality of place” as a priority concept regarding the kinds of initiatives that get support. Key points included:
 - “Regions” matter
 - Cooperation matters – time to break down the bureaucratic “stovepipes”
 - Integration matters – all social and economic programs need to be integrated around the goals, characteristics, assets and cultures of communities. Need to look at transportation, housing, land use and energy and how they all interact.
 - The White House is very serious about sustainable/livable communities – so the “laundry list” of federal programs will definitely change.
- **New Regionalism:** The “New Regionalism” was a constant theme. More and more regional councils are expanding the table of dialogue and collaboration – with colleges, hospitals, school districts, tribes, nonprofits, etc. The key concept is “thinking regionally, acting locally.” The key economic units throughout the world are not localities (villages, towns and cities), but regions composed of multiple cities, counties and other entities. COGs are increasingly called upon to “get around” to all of the programs and agencies in their regions, and serve as **connecting-the-dots facilitators** – to get all efforts moving in a common, synergistic direction.
- **Energy Efficiency/Alternative Energy/Conservation:** This was proposed as the new arena for regional and local economic development.

- Energy is the lifeblood of the economy. The goal is to make it affordable, clean, accessible and reliable. Time to transform the energy mix. Huge changes in energy policy are underway under the Obama Administration.
 - New Energy is the centerpiece of the ARRA Stimulus Package – making a “downpayment on our energy future.” \$18.6 billion is being invested in energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.
 - Projects must be sustainable and of lasting value.
 - DOE subgranted to State Energy offices, who in turn are issuing subgrants. COGs can be very important in helping develop and manage Energy initiatives regionally.
 - The first key is to lower everyone’s Energy bills. Time to find out: “What do the people in your region spend on their energy bills?”
 - DOE Secretary Shu is considered a genius in this whole Energy arena.
 - The US Department of Energy is committed to a longterm partnership with State and Local government, with the COGs positioned to work collectively as regions.
 - We have technology today that can reduce energy consumption by 50%.
 - Need to move toward comprehensive energy retrofits on buildings.
 - “Pay as you save”: get consumers in the black from the get-go.
 - Develop options for community finance of energy conservation initiatives. Implement pilot projects: set a goal of retrofitting every building in the community.
 - The Administration’s Renewable Energy goals are very aggressive
 - to grow the percentage by Renewables from current 1½% to 12% in 2012;
 - an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.
 - 70% of all electricity consumed is in buildings – that’s where the biggest change must happen.
 - Huge new public investments (\$11.6 billion) in weatherization
 - Biggest challenge is creating a longterm mechanism for sustainability of the Alternative Energy movement – need mechanisms outside the appropriations process, including public-private partnerships. There just won’t be enough federal dollars to cover everything that needs to happen.
 - All of DOE’s “New Energy” dollars will be going to local and state government. Need to encourage inter-community collaboration. It will be absolutely essential that the Federal and State government work with regional alliances. COGs will be the key link between federal, state and local governments; they can identify, promote and implement best practices in their regions.
- **Upcoming Conferences/Policy Events**
 - NADO is hosting a ***Congressional “fly-in” conference*** in early October for NADO Board members, in order to be “in the conversation” during the bill markup period in Congress
 - RPO America’s Annual National ***Rural Transportation*** Peer Learning Conference will be held October 28-30 in Savannah, Georgia
 - The Annual ***NADO Washington Conference*** will be held March 1-4, 2010
 - NADO is hosting a ***Business Development Finance*** council-of-experts conference in May 2010, in order to evaluate, integrate and promote all opportunities for supporting small business development in our regions and communities
 - **Rural/Small Town Health Care:**
 - There is a 1-to-1 correspondence between poverty and poor health; a big part of that is lack of public health services including sanitation and medical care;

- 85% of high-poverty counties in the USA are non-metro counties.
- Health institutions are big-impact employers in rural/small town USA. Rural regions need to leverage the Health Industry to expand entrepreneurship and economic development.
- **Transportation:**
 - The Surface Transportation bill is moving toward authorization
 - Congressman Wall has an amended that strengthens **Rural Transportation Planning Organizations**.
 - **Transportation and Land Use Planning** – these will be “attached at the hip” from now on
 - Climate Change issues will increasingly impact transportation policy; the automobile-intensive transportation economy has been a primary polluter
 - The Administration’s **“Sustainable Communities Initiative”** will have major implications for local and regional transportation planning
 - There is a new EPA-DOT-HUD partnership focused on Smart Growth. Local land use policy will be very important in the shaping of sustainable communities. The time is now to start systematically implementing best practices in sustainability at the community and regional levels.
 - EPA can offer direct technical assistance to communities and regions in moving toward Smart Growth. **Smart Growth** needs to become “the predominant style of development” in the USA.
 - Key sustainability opportunities include: alignment of programs across disciplines; getting all transportation developments aligned with Smart Growth principles; focusing on **infill and brownfields redevelopment**.
- **Stimulus Funding Progress:**
 - Transportation and Transit dollars moved relatively quickly and smoothly, due to backlogs of ready-to-go projects in each State
 - Many States turned to the COGs to assist; New Mexico was cited as a prime example, due to former Governor Toney Anaya’s ARRA emphasis on working with the COGs
 - Brownfields funding moved quickly; Northwest **New Mexico COG** was noted as one of the nation’s top grantees, with a **\$1 million Brownfields Assessment** award.
 - The short-term shot-in-the-arm stimulus funding may have some negative side-effects – because it often conflicted with good planning and long-term thinking. What happens when all the money is spent? The challenge will be: how do we invest more in projects that support sustainability in communities?
- **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS):** All COGs throughout the country are called upon to develop, implement and manage CEDS strategies. Key themes, principles and best practices from the conference include:
 - Call upon civic leaders to head your regional Strategy Committee. Build your community with engaged people and strong working relationships. Your champions must be non-COG, non-government leaders.
 - Make ongoing public participation a key element of the CEDS – an ever-expanding circle of contacts.
 - Challenge: how get private sector involvement in a “governmental” planning process.
 - Challenge: Economic Development planning budgets are ‘way too small.
 - Your goal is: **a regional strategy for prospering in the 21st century**. Find ways to tie it all together. It’s about **PEOPLE***PLACE***PROSPERITY**.
 - Where do your people work? Live? Commute?
 - GIS mapping – an incredibly important planning tool. Make it the core tool of your process – show everyone what the region looks like (from many different perspectives), what the ideas are, what different scenarios look like. It’s got to be visual!

- Put together a Technical Team of architects, builders, inspectors, community developers, engineers, environmentalists, etc. Their work will then be brought into your Citizens Team, which will look at goals, policy issues, etc.
- What's the strategy? What's the current condition? What's the Vision? How will the region address the core issues of Growth, Quality of Place/Quality of Life and Sustainable Communities? What are the financing needs? How will we get there?
- What are your land use priorities – regionally? Where do you want to encourage Growth?
 - Can you identify “Concentrated Development Centers”? Reserved/Protected lands? Open space?
 - What are your Strengths and Constraints?
 - How will you apply the Smart Growth principles
 - Sense of Place/Quality of Place
 - Sustainability
 - Density
 - Transportation Choices
 - Environmental Protection & Enhancement
 - How do you connect the various land use patterns in your region?
 - Map your strategy!!
- Set “Smart Growth” as your core principle. Move toward Intergovernmental Compacts in which all of your governments buy into the regional strategy.
- Target capital investments toward PRIORITIES. Get the Feds and the State to buy into the regional priorities.
- Develop an overall funding strategy for implementing the regional plan.
- Tie Brownfields redevelopment to your larger vision.
- Tie your Transportation strategies to your overall regional vision and plan.
- Develop an Economic Master Plan for the region.
- Establish a regional network of small business incubators and entrepreneurial support services.
- **Mayor Bob Dixon: The Story of Greensberg, Kansas** – totally destroyed by a tornado; the community decided to turn disaster into opportunity. Greensberg's goal now is to become the nation's first “green town.” Now that we “lost everything” except each other and our faith ... we start with what is important to us: Our relationships. It's our relationships that are truly sustainable: **Faith***Family***Friends**. It's about the People of the community. Everyone is involved, bought in, committed. We celebrate our successes. We Keep the Vision. We take care of the land, take care of each other, and we move together into the future.
- **Conference Sessions, Workshops & Highlights**
 - Breakfast Meeting of the NADO Southwest Regional Caucus – Deputy Director Jeff Kiely representing New Mexico
 - NADO Board of Directors Meetings, 8/30/09 and 9/1/09 – Deputy Director Kiely serves on the NADO Board
 - Plenary Session 1: “Winds of Change—New Directions in Federal Regional Development Policy”
 - Workshop Sessions 1:
 - “Engaging Your Region in the CEDS Process”
 - “Defining New Leadership Roles in a Green World”
 - Mobile Workshop, 8/31/09: Burnham Plan Walking Tour – Dr. Bill Hall, Louie Bonaguidi
 - Workshop Sessions 2:

- “Realities of Integrating Regional and Local Transportation, Economic Development, Energy & Land Use Plans”
 - “Managing a Multi-generational Staff”
 - Workshop Sessions 3:
 - “Demonstrating Return on Investment to Your Regional Council” – Jeff Kiely, Presenter; attendance by Dr. Hall, Louie Bonaguidi
 - Plenary Session 2: “Regional Innovation, Clusters and Entrepreneurship—Translating Buzz Words into Regional Practices and Applications”
 - Workshop Sessions 4:
 - “Building Regional Alliances”
 - “The Post-WIRED Era: Integrating Workforce and Economic Development”
 - Workshop Sessions 5:
 - “Regional Transportation Planning Innovations”
 - Plenary Session 3: “Building an Economically and Environmentally Sustainable Region”
 - NADO Annual Membership Business Meeting, 9/1/09 – Jeff Kiely, Dr. Bill Hall, Louie Bonaguidi
 - NADO President’s Award Banquet, 9/1/09
- **Presentations and Important Documents**
 - **NADO Legislative Overviews**
 - President’s FY 2010 Budget Blueprint: An Analysis of Federal Regional Development Programs
 - President’s FY 2010 Budget Proposal: Highlights for Regional Development Organizations
 - 2009 Appropriations and Policy Update: A Review of Federal Legislative Activity Impacting Regional Development Programs
 - 2009 Federal Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill: NADO Legislative Issue Brief, encouraging the Administration and Congress “to address, leverage and tap into the current and potential assets of *small urban and rural America* to advance our nation’s overall economic development, global competitiveness and quality of life goals.”
 - Legislative Brief on
 - the *Rural Transportation Planning Bill*, HR 2782, urging House members to co-sponsor; this would open up new gateways to federal transportation funding for RPOs and projects in small town and rural America;
 - House proposal to increase funding for the Economic Development Administration EDA;
 - Changes in EDA Public Works allocations, to focus funding on business incubators and regional clusters;
 - increased funding for the Global Climate Change Mitigation Fund under EDA;
 - EDA planning funds (the COGs);
 - EDA Economic Adjustment funds, with focus on regional innovation clusters;
 - EDA Technical Assistance funds to University Centers, with the goal of at least one University Center per State;
 - **NADO Legislative Priorities**
 - Economic Development Administration: “Urge Congress to Pass Multi-year Reauthorization Legislation”
 - NADO Testimony to the Economic Development Subcommittee of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee

- HUD Community Development Block Grants: “Restore Funding for Local Development and Infrastructure Projects”
- Livable Communities Initiative: “Support Resources for Sustainable Regional Development Planning and Project Implementation”
- 2009 SAFETEA-LU Reauthorization: “Strengthen Rural Local Official Roles in Statewide Transportation Planning and Programming Processes”
- **NADO Tools for COGs**
 - Self-Assessment and Resources Toolkit for Regional Planning Councils, co-authored by NADO and the Missouri Association of Councils of Governments
- **Presentations and Important Documents**
 - White House Joint Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies (*signed by Office of Management & Budget, Domestic Policy Council, Office of Urban Affairs, and National Economic Council*) on Developing Effective Place-Based Policies for the FY 2011 Budget
 - Pioneer Valley Plan for Progress: Strategy to Develop a Green Regional Economy, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, West Springfield, Massachusetts
 - Quality of Place and Job Growth: A New and Needed Maine Investment Strategy, by Governor Baldacci’s Council on Maine’s Quality of Place
 - Mobilize Maine: Statewide initiative with the COGs to develop regional capacity that will build a strong, growing & sustainable **knowledge-based economy** for all of Maine
 - Small Wonders: “How the creative drive of entrepreneurial small businesses is combating the recession, creating new economic growth, solving energy problems, fighting global warming and protecting the environment”
 - The Grand Vision: Land Use & Transportation Strategy for 6 Michigan Counties
 - Virginia’s Region 2000 Partnership, Annual Report: Innovation, Collaboration, Economic Growth
 - Strategic Economic Plan for Sonoma County, Final Report by the Sonoma County Innovation Council, California, January 2009
 - Publications of the NADO Research Foundation
 - “Leveling the E-Field: Local Development Districts Promote Forward-Thinking Investments in Appalachia’s Broadband Communications”
 - Kentucky Council of Area Development Districts: “Progress in Motion: Regional Strategies, Solutions and Partnerships that Achieve Economic Growth and Improve Local Communities”
 - Michigan Association of Regions: “Bringing Communities Together through Regional Strategies, Partnerships and Collaboration”
 - “Recharging Local Economies: New Perspectives on Regional Energy Efficiency Solutions,” by the NADO Research Foundation
 - “Pennsylvania’s Energy Partnership: Regional Approaches to Efficiency, Conservation and Innovation”
 - “2009 National Scan: Rural Transportation Planning Organizations”
 - “Local Development Districts: Pursuing Transportation-Led Economic Development”
 - “Metropolitan and Rural Transportation Planning: Case Studies and Checklists for Regional Collaboration”
 - Rural Local Officials Consultation Assessment Guide: “Evaluating Your Knowledge and Input into the Statewide Transportation Planning Process”
 - “Role of Transportation Planning in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Process: A Nationwide Scan”