

NADO 2012 EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS LEADERSHIP FORUM

Leading an RDO in a world of change

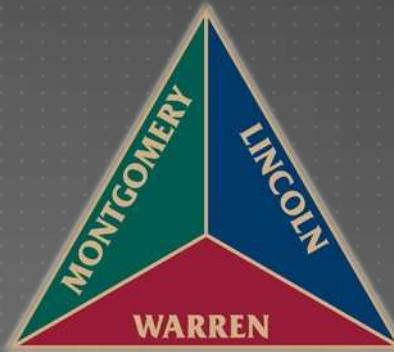
Accountability
Cooperation
Results
Professional
State Relationships
Institutional
Partners
Problem

knowledge
Collaboration
Consistency
Performance
Leadership
Community
Economic
Solvers

Value
Councils
Impact
Politics
Development
Strategies
Local Jobs
Association

INTRODUCTION

- Executive Director-
Boonslick Regional
Planning Commission,
Warrenton, MO
- NADO Treasurer
- Past President Missouri
Association of Councils
of Government



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- ▶ Day One
 - ▶ Peer learning
 - ▶ State assessment reports
 - ▶ Organizational culture
 - ▶ Board engagement
 - ▶ Executive Director qualifications
 - ▶ Missouri Story
 - ▶ Self Assessment discussions
 - ▶ Intertwined scenario discussions (real stories—names have been changed to protect the innocent)
- ▶ Day Two
 - ▶ Panel #1-What I wish I knew when I became Executive Director-panel of director ranging in years of service
 - ▶ Panel #2-I never thought of that—innovative approaches to organizational issues.

RULES FOR TODAY

- ▶ Active participation and engagement
- ▶ No domination of the conversation
- ▶ Respect others input and opinions
- ▶ Ask questions

ASSIGNMENT

- ▶ Biggest challenge facing your organization
- ▶ Biggest challenge facing your region
- ▶ Biggest challenge facing your state

CAN NOT USE FISCAL, FUNDING, MONEY, ETC—Assumed we are all facing some level of fiscal crisis.

PILLARS OF SUCCESS

REGIONAL RESILIENCE AND IMPACT



BACKDROP TO OUR DISCUSSION

- ▶ Federal budget cuts will continue, or at a minimum, funding will remain flat
- ▶ Federal focus on projects of national / regional significance
- ▶ Regional Council and local official relationships with Governors and states really matter in today's political and fiscal climates

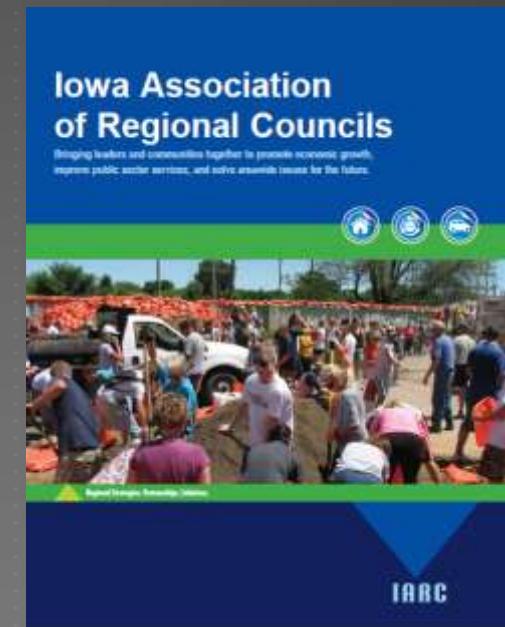
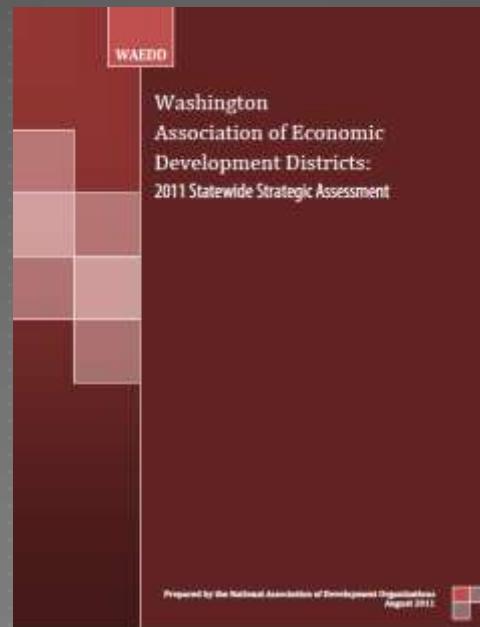
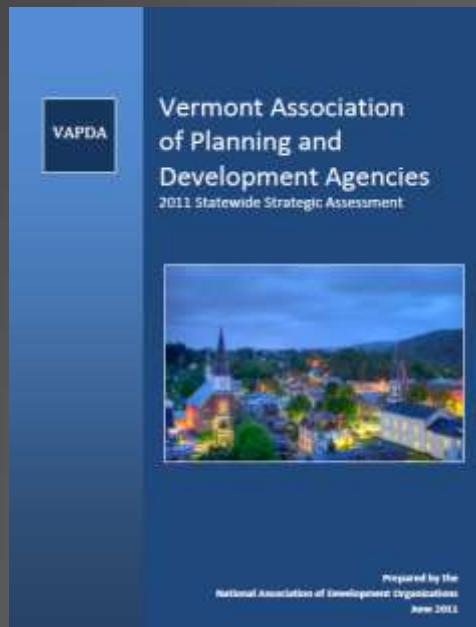
STATE ASSESSMENTS

► Process

- ▶ Interview Executive Directors
- ▶ Interview State Agency Directors
- ▶ Interview Governor's staff and State Legislators
- ▶ Interview Local Community Leaders
- ▶ Interview Economic Development Organizations

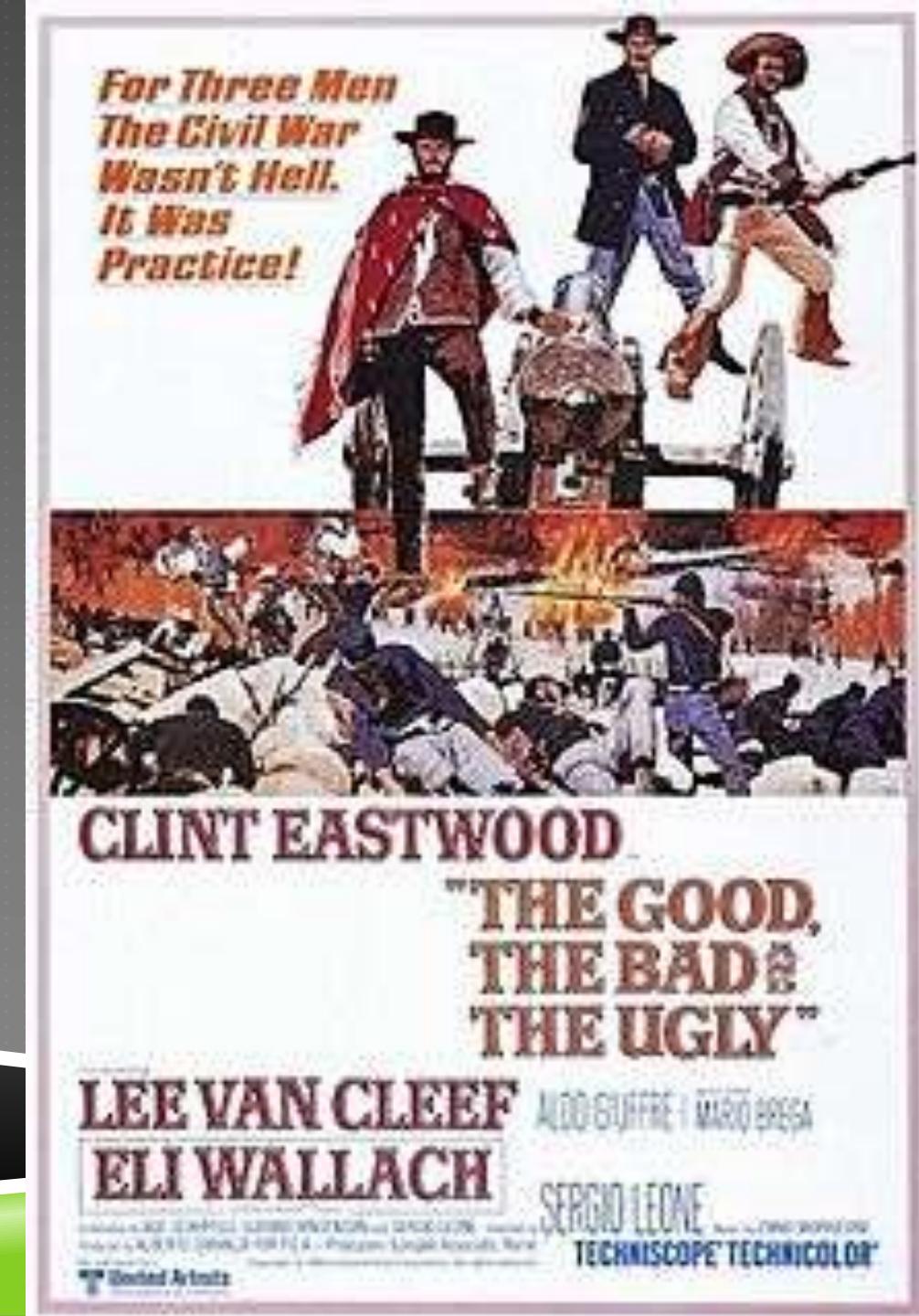
- ▶ Vermont
- ▶ Indiana
- ▶ Iowa
- ▶ Minnesota
- ▶ Oklahoma
- ▶ Texas

LESSONS LEARNED FROM RECENT STATE ASSOCIATION PROJECTS



How do your external partners, funders and competitors honestly view your statewide network, as well as individual Regional Councils within the state?

CONCLUSION



FUNDAMENTALS OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

Regional development organizations are political entities that must function politically to be highly effective, yet they must also act in a non-partisan manner.

- Regional Council Self-Assessment and Resource Toolkit (August 2009)

FUNDAMENTALS OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

- Regional Councils are knowledge-based firms.
- Presentation of data, concepts and ideas are our lifeblood.
- We are driven and judged by ideas, innovations, solutions and results.

RELATIONSHIP WITH FEDERAL AND STATE OFFICIALS

- More than 70 percent of the typical regional council budget originates from federal or state resources, according to NADO research

WHAT REGIONAL COUNCILS OFFER

- ▶ **Economies of scale** by pooling resources regionally
- ▶ **Results-driven public entrepreneurs**
- ▶ **Problem solvers** focused on translating strategies into action
- ▶ **Historical / institutional knowledge** of the region, plus mission to facilitate regional and intergovernmental collaboration

HOW DO WE LEVERAGE OUR CORE SKILLS AND ASSETS?

- ▶ **Create win-win** for elected officials at state and local levels
- ▶ **Focus on performance and peer accountability**
- ▶ **Offer a pro-active agenda with specific outcomes**
- ▶ ***Be willing to partner with others!***

VALUE

- ▶ How are you repositioning your Regional Council with your *local elected officials*?
- ▶ Why should your **Governor** care about partnering with you?
- ▶ Why should your *local EDCs* care about partnering with you?
- ▶ Why should the **private sector** care about partnering with you?

RELATIONSHIPS WITH LOCAL OFFICIALS

- ▶ Most regional councils, by law or executive order, are established as voluntary **councils owned and governed by local governments**
- ▶ **HOWEVER, in many cases local officials:**
 - ▶ Are unaware of regional council functions & programs
 - ▶ Do NOT realize regional councils are set-up to serve them
 - ▶ Do NOT consider themselves as owners and operators

“There are really very few roadblocks to creating stronger RPCs (i.e. Regional Councils). It is simple. They just can’t act like lone wolves. And, they need to focus on statewide consistency, have a positive attitude and focus on adding value.”

- Anonymous Quote from VAPDA Statewide Assessment Interviews, January 2011

STATEWIDE ASSESSMENTS: BACK TO THE BASICS

- ▶ If your RDO lost your EDA Economic Development District designation, for example, would you still have a role in economic development within your region?
 - ▶ Regional and local strategies, including GIS and data analysis
 - ▶ Infrastructure development
 - ▶ Access to capital and technical assistance
 - ▶ Workforce readiness and job skills training

SCENARIO DISCUSSION #1

- ▶ You are the Executive Director of a regional development organization. Due to large turnover in elected officials during last year's election your board composition has drastically changed.
- ▶ It is difficult to gain a quorum at the monthly meetings;
- ▶ some members “doze off” during the three hour meeting;
- ▶ all they seem interested in is what type of cookies await them upon adjournment.

▶ **As a director,
how will you
address this
situation?**

SCENARIO DISCUSSION #2

- ▶ You are the Executive Director of a regional development organization. Due to recent action by the federal government one of your key programs has been eliminated. You face the reality that at the end of this fiscal year you need to “trim” your organizational budget by more than 20% as a result of this action. As the director you will need to lead your organization through this transition.
- ▶ **What are some of the actions you will consider and how do you begin to tackle the challenge?**

SCENARIO DISCUSSION #3

- ▶ You are the Executive Director of a regional development organization, your region has just been impacted by a major natural disaster. How do you prepare and position your organization to assist with the disaster RESPONSE and the disaster RECOVERY
- ▶ What risks are you willing to take as an RDO?
- ▶ How do you get invited to the table?

STATEWIDE ASSESSMENTS:KEY FINDINGS

➤ Primary Areas of Strength

- ◀ Professional, dedicated & **apolitical** organizations
- ◀ **Valued link** to local communities
- ◀ **Think long term** about future of regions
- ◀ **Broad knowledge** about regions and local issues
- ◀ Provide **capacity to local communities**, especially with management and planning expertise

STATE ASSESSMENTS: KEY FINDINGS

- Major Areas of Concern
 - ◀ Inconsistency of quality, leadership and involvement (*“Some Regional Councils are invisible!”*)
 - ◀ Even when Regional Councils deliver high quality services statewide, still unacceptable level of diversity
 - ◀ Not interested in making life of funders easier!
 - ◀ Turf battles with local EDCs and state agencies
 - ◀ Perceived as irrelevant in some regions
 - ◀ Labeled as only planning and grant management entities, rather than problem solvers and doers!
 - ◀ Lack of Willingness to tackle issues statewide

STATE ASSESSMENTS: KEY FINDINGS

➤ Major Areas of Concern

- ◀ Some Regional Councils have become **DISCONNECTED from their local governments** and local elected officials!
- ◀ Some Regional Councils are **perceived as having a major sense of entitlement**, rather than earn the respect and attention of state and local officials
- ◀ Preach partnerships, **but don't practice themselves!**

STATE ASSESSMENTS: BARRIERS

► Too defensive and negative...

- ▶ “Hard to convince to play ball, especially with others!”
- ▶ “Always whining about administrative and staff costs, plus indirect costs, rather than getting the job done!”
- ▶ “Too many lone wolves in the pack. We want to work statewide with the entire team.”

STATE ASSESSMENTS: KEY FINDINGS

➤ Major Areas of Opportunity

- ◀ Provide statewide leadership and strategies on broad range of regional development topics
- ◀ Forums for stronger state interagency collaboration, especially with intergovernmental connections
- ◀ Implement key action items developed by statewide forums and study commissions
- ◀ Improve branding and awareness of Regional Councils (*i.e. Not another layer of government supported by tax money!*)
- ◀ Sharpen branding beyond just planning and grants--How you translate strategies into action!
- ◀ Tackle issue of peer accountability ***and tout it!***
- ◀ Establish an image of professional, credible organizations
- ◀ Share resources and staff across Regional Council boundaries – ***and market it with federal and state officials***

WORKING WITH STATE AGENCIES

- ▶ State agencies desire:
 - ▶ Statewide coverage
 - ▶ Consistency
 - ▶ Professionalism
 - ▶ Single point of contact

SCENARIO DISCUSSION #4

- ▶ You are the Executive Director of a regional development organization and as the result of participating in this fabulous workshop, you felt empowered as a statewide network and you aggressively pursued and landed a statewide contract to do infrastructure planning (with big dollars attached to the contract, of course). The scope of work is developed and shared with each RDO director in the State.
- ▶ Fast forward 12 months....The project is advancing quite well in most regions. The feedback you are receiving from the State agency that you have the contract with is that one RDO is woefully behind, and may not even have started work on the project yet (but somehow managed to bill for a large chunk of the funding) and another RDO has submitted work, but this work is obviously plagiarized from another RDO because they failed to edit out the names of the region and counties.

▶ **As a Director
in the State
how would
you handle
this situation?**

SCENARIO DISCUSSION #5

- ▶ You are the Executive Director of a regional development organization, due to budget constraints the State is “suggesting” that new RDO boundaries be formed to mirror the boundaries of some of the State agencies, and to reduce the number of RDO’s in the State.
- ▶ **As the Director of the RDO, how will you address this issue?**

SCENARIO DISCUSSION #6

- ▶ You are the Executive Director of a regional development organization and you have a strong relationship with a Department Director in a key agency within the State. The Director says the agency would utilize the network of regional development commissions but ABC development organization is known for its internal fraud, and poor performance and his/her agency wants no part of a relationship with that RDO.

▶ **How will
you respond
to this
situation?**

SCENARIO DISCUSSION #7

► You are the Executive Director of a regional development organization. You have recently been hired as the Director. After a month on the job, you realize that morale in the office is terribly low, productivity is down, innovation and creativity seem like illegal aliens. Employees are very protective of their turf—to the point they hesitate sharing information with you as the Director

► **As the Director how would you address this situation?**

NEXT STEPS

- ▶ Clearly define statewide priorities and policies internally
- ▶ Clearly define and communicate value to the external world
 - ▶ *Take control of your message, otherwise you are defined by others*
- ▶ Agree to focus on peer accountability and performance, including executive directors *and senior professional staff*
- ▶ Build on unique and shared assets and skills of your network

NEXT STEPS

- ▶ Face common needs, challenges and issues
- ▶ Improve consistency, quality and delivery of services
- ▶ Develop new partnerships, programs and funding
- ▶ Share best practices
- ▶ Practice what we preach about working across jurisdictional boundaries and overcoming turf wars



IDIOCY

NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF STUPID PEOPLE IN LARGE GROUPS.

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STATE ASSOCIATIONS

OUR MESSAGE

- ▶ **Message:** We are problem solvers!
- ▶ **Attitude:** We'll work out details later, we're ready to roll!
- ▶ **Partnerships:** We're ready to partner. We're not turf fighters.
- ▶ **Accountability:** We'll self-police & hold each other accountable.
- ▶ **Quality:** We'll deliver a consistent, high quality product.

Status quo is NOT an option!

Money is tight so we want to leverage existing resources and focus on performance-driven results.

STATE ASSOCIATION KEYS TO SUCCESS

- ▶ Need membership and engagement from all COGS/RPCS in the State.
- ▶ Need to pool financial resources and talent to be relevant.
- ▶ Need to make the most of your meetings. Association meetings should be more than a social gathering
- ▶ Don't wait for someone else to do your job for you. Promote yourself, make contacts with key legislators and policy officials, present ideas to State agencies for collaborative efforts to use regions to deliver programs and services.

STATE ASSOCIATION KEYS TO SUCCESS

- ▶ Relationships-constantly building new and reaffirming existing
- ▶ Responsibility-do what we say, when we say, with a high quality product
- ▶ RPCs don't all have to agree all the time, but we must rise above indifferences to work together.
- ▶ Work toward common goal of the State, not individual organizations or directors
- ▶ “Bad apples” may exist—work to prevent that from spoiling the entire “bushel”. Aggressively work to manage public perception.
- ▶ Constant education with agency leadership and legislators—reality is term limits, turnover, and elections.
- ▶ GO to agencies and legislators—Don’t wait for them to come to you.
- ▶ Become an extension or delivery agent for State agencies—especially during an era of tight budgets and limited resources.

IMPACT

- ▶ Impactful State Associations and Regional Councils are multi-faceted; They:
 - ▶ Do more than just lobby
 - ▶ Do more than maintain a “death grip” on existing programs and geography
 - ▶ Do more than just network among their peers
 - ▶ Seek out new partnerships
 - ▶ Seek out new and innovative ideas, programs and projects
 - ▶ Practice what they preach regarding collaboration and partnering

GOALS OF A STATE ASSOCIATION

- ▶ Create strong network of professional organizations, facilitate networking and peer exchange, and create opportunities for synergy (Power of working together is greater than the sum of our individual abilities)
- ▶ Develop a visible presence with policy officials and legislators
- ▶ Create partnerships at the State level with key agencies
- ▶ Strengthen and support individual members
- ▶ Elevate individual organizations and state association to become RELEVANT.

CHALLENGES WE CONTINUE TO FACE

- ▶ 20% of the people do 80% of the work
- ▶ Underperforming organizations give us all a bad name-weak link compromises the integrity of the entire chain.
- ▶ Turnover in elected officials at the local level means sustaining ownership in the organization becomes a constant education process (Retiring leadership/institutional knowledge & the need to cultivate new leaders/fresh perspective)
- ▶ Turnover in elected officials at the state level means constant education and promotion
- ▶ Turnover in directors of RPCs as current generation of leaders begin to retire
- ▶ FUNDING!!!- Funding not keeping pace with increased cost of operations
- ▶ Staffing-Limited pool of qualified candidates for available positions in regional planning.

PITFALLS-WHAT HASN'T WORKED WELL

- ▶ Don't expect all organizations to support new statewide initiatives.
- ▶ Capacity differences within organizations can cause “organizational envy”. Build up and share capacity to mitigate this issue before it erodes the cohesiveness of the state association.
- ▶ Don't “hope” that problems will fix themselves. Sometimes you have to roll up your sleeves and deal with issues.
- ▶ It is easy to “pile” work on state association staff-avoid this or expect staff turnover or limited impact.
- ▶ Can't force institutional change-change must come from within the organization.

SCENARIO DISCUSSION #8

► You are the Executive Director of a regional development organization. Recently you have discovered that an adjacent organization is providing services to your membership/constituents (in direct competition with your organization) using an affiliated organization to his/her regional development organization.

► **How would you handle this situation?**

SCENARIO DISCUSSION #9

- ▶ You are the Executive Director of a regional development organization and it has been brought to your attention by one of your legislators that a colleague of yours is attending fundraising events, and assisting with the campaign of a current legislator that is seeking statewide office.
- ▶ **What, if any, response would you make to the legislator?**
- ▶ **How, or would you, address this issue with your colleague?**

SCENARIO DISCUSSION #10

- ▶ You are the Executive Director of a regional development organization. Your state legislature is moving a controversial piece of legislation through the General Assembly.
 - ▶ The bill will result in obvious winners and losers in the State. Your network of RDOs is divided over the matter.
 - ▶ The sponsor of the bill has even invited one of the RDOs that is a proponent of the bill to testify.
- ▶ **As a Director of an RDO what is an appropriate strategy to navigate this situation?**



INEPTITUDE

IF YOU CAN'T LEARN TO DO SOMETHING WELL,
LEARN TO ENJOY DOING IT POORLY.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR QUALIFICATIONS

- ▶ High energy, ambitious, self starter
- ▶ Great communicator—one on one and in group settings
- ▶ Personal integrity and trustworthiness
- ▶ Creative entrepreneur—thinks outside the box, YET is a calculated risk taker. Entrepreneurial spirit to benefit region and constituents—not self.
- ▶ Ability to see and understand micro and macro perspective of issues—and manage and direct resources accordingly.
- ▶ Consensus builder and motivator—It is one thing to get people to agree, it is another to get them to act in concert.
- ▶ Open minded—considers and values others opinions, willing to accept constructive criticism, willing to transfer ownership, credit, praise to collective effort versus self.
- ▶ Results oriented—delivers, does what says will be done, follows through on large and small issues and sees things through to completion.

■ ALWAYS REMEMBER...

- ✓ *No one else cares as much about your regional council as you, and no one else has as much to gain or lose as you as the executive director.*
- ✓ *Regional councils are founded on the principle of promoting multi-jurisdictional and cross sector collaboration, therefore we must practice what we preach to maintain our credibility and standing.*

SCENARIO DISCUSSION #11

- ▶ You are the Executive Director of a regional development organization due to budget constraints your organization is doing more with less. As a director you are juggling multiple projects and initiatives in addition to running the organization—resulting in late nights at the office and spending weekends getting caught up. You are beginning to suffer “burn out” on the job
- ▶ **As the Director of the RDO, how do you prevent burnout, how do you recharge your batteries, how do you find the motivation to get the job done?**

SCENARIO DISCUSSION #12

- ▶ You have been the Executive Director of a regional development organization for the past 25 years. You have aggressively grown the organization to what it is today. You have strong board support and people, rightly or wrongly, associate the success of the organization to you. You have finally reached the point where you hope to retire in the next 6 to 12 months.
- ▶ **As the Director of the RDO how will you deal with this with your board and members?**
- ▶ **Should your approach be proactive, or let the board be reactive?**



MEDIOCRITY

IT TAKES A LOT LESS TIME
AND MOST PEOPLE WON'T NOTICE THE DIFFERENCE
UNTIL IT'S TOO LATE.

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BOARD MANAGEMENT

MANAGING THE CHANGING OF THE GUARD

► Orientation Ideas

- ▶ Meet with new elected officials and board members
- ▶ Ask board chair and key leaders to attend
- ▶ Share goals and mission of organization, *including explaining how RCs differ from local government*
- ▶ Stress importance of being a regional leader
- ▶ Talk about ownership of regional council
- ▶ Outline primary roles of policy board members
- ▶ Provide overview of key programs and services

KEYS TO BOARD MANAGEMENT

- ▶ Board engagement is essential. Get members engaged and keep them engaged by:
 - ▶ Seeking their opinion
 - ▶ Allowing them to take ownership in ideas
 - ▶ Providing value to them through information, and project results
- ▶ Board education is critical and constant.
 - ▶ Filter and interpret data to provide meaningful information
 - ▶ Immediate education and inclusion of newly elected officials and appointed board members.
 - ▶ Education is a continuous cycle.
- ▶ Have regularly scheduled meetings that encourage participation
- ▶ Have a structured meeting format to make the most use of their time and provide value to the members
- ▶ Utilize committees as appropriate to streamline the policy debate, make recommendations, and broaden board member engagement.
- ▶ Create Ownership by the Board—as appropriate with your enabling legislation. Constantly reinforce their ownership versus ownership by the Executive Director.
 - ▶ I have seen local boards not “assume” ownership due to a high performing organization or Executive Director
 - ▶ I have seen local board not “assume” ownership because they wanted to distance themselves from a “sketchy” organization or Executive Director.

SBA'S TOP TEN FATAL BUSINESS ERRORS

- 1. Overexpansion**
- 2. Poor capital structure**
- 3. Overspending**
- 4. Lack of reserve funds**
- 5. Bad business location/poor visibility**
- 6. Poor execution and internal controls**
- 7. An inadequate business plan**
- 8. Failure to change with the times**
- 9. Ineffective marketing and promotion**
- 10. Underestimating the competition**

TOP TEN ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS TIPS

1. Cultivate and engage leadership
2. Take care of the basics first
3. Pay attention to the details
4. Know your customer and their needs
5. Anticipate trends and PLAN accordingly
6. Develop products to meet the market
7. Advocacy = advertising and education
8. Mobilize your marketing team
9. Explore products and services that make sense for your organization and meets the needs of your customers.
10. Evaluate and benchmark performance.

I WOULD CHALLENGE YOUR BOARD MEMBERS:

- ▶ to gain a deeper understanding of your programs and services
 - ▶ because they are your products,
- ▶ to increase your familiarity with the agencies and legislators that oversee your programs
 - ▶ because these are your customers,
- ▶ to make it your responsibility to promote and market the RPC/EDD/COG
 - ▶ because you are the marketing team and,
- ▶ to be an informed and engaged board participant
 - ▶ because leadership is the key to success

SCENARIO DISCUSSION #13

- ▶ You are the Executive Director of a regional development organization. You have recently been hired for this position. A board member has approached you about a job for one of his/her family members.
- ▶ **How do you handle this situation?**

SCENARIO DISCUSSION #14

- ▶ You are the Executive Director of a regional development organization. You have recently been hired to run the organization. In your new position you discover that the organization has scant financial resources and has been deficit spending for a couple of years, nearly depleting the cash reserves.
- ▶ The current budget is over optimistic on revenues and still shows nearly a deficit spending level of 10% of projected revenues. When you were hired the board assured you the organization was financially strong and they want to keep it that way.
- ▶ **How will you manage this “situation” for the organization and how will you communicate with your board?**

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

► Foster culture of innovation and performance

- ▶ **Invest in policy officials and staff:** travel, professional development & peer exchanges
- ▶ **Break down staffing “stove pipes”** by program; Staff must be cross-trained and informed
- ▶ **Encourage collaboration** and leveraging of programs and resources (*legally!*)
- ▶ **Facilitate strategic planning** to gain input and buy-in, plus set regional priorities and action plans

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

■ Practice What We Preach

1. Build Partnerships
2. Nurture Partnerships
3. Promote Partnerships

Regional councils are founded on the principle of promoting multi-jurisdictional and cross sector collaboration, therefore we must practice what we preach to maintain our credibility and standing.

EVALUATING YOUR ORGANIZATION

► Back to the Basics

- Like a business, you make stay current and relevant. The key remains innovation, results, transparency, trust and integrity.
- Every day you should ask yourself... **how is our organization adding value to our local governments, communities, funders, partners, and federal and state local officials?**

SCENARIO DISCUSSION #15

- ▶ You are the Executive Director of a regional development organization and one of your staff, who is assigned to lead a critical regional project, is speaking negatively about your organization, its board, and its director in public.
- ▶ As the Director how will you handle this situation?

SCENARIO DISCUSSION #16

- ▶ You are the Executive Director of a regional development organization. You have recently been hired as the Director. As you begin your tenure as the Director you notice that the staff members come in whenever they want, take exceptionally long lunch periods, and spend a lot of time around the coffee pot. When 5:00 hits, there is a stampede by the back door to leave the office.
- ▶ **As the new director, how will you go about changing the culture of the organization?**

THE MISSOURI STORY



MEDIOCRITY

IT TAKES A LOT LESS TIME
AND MOST PEOPLE WON'T NOTICE THE DIFFERENCE
UNTIL IT'S TOO LATE.

THE MISSOURI STORY

- ▶ 19 RPCs
- ▶ 17 non-metro, 2 metro (KC & STL)
- ▶ State Association is Missouri Association of Councils of Governments (MACOG)
- ▶ MACOG has been active for more than 25 years—functioning in varying capacities
- ▶ MACOG hires a lobbyist-management firm
- ▶ MACOG employs a staff person that serves as our planner.
- ▶ RPC/COG created by State Legislature
- ▶ State Funding provided-maximum \$25,000, typically \$10,000



MACOG NETWORK

► **Strong RPCs-**

- ▶ serve as regional conveners,
- ▶ well staffed,
- ▶ strong local buy-in,
- ▶ large array of programs and services

► **Mediocre RPCs-**

- ▶ function, but do not excel,
- ▶ only adequately staffed,
- ▶ moderate local buy-in,
- ▶ provide basic programs and services with a few specialty services.

► **Weak RPCs-**

- ▶ perform below average,
- ▶ minimally staffed,
- ▶ minimum local buy-in,
- ▶ provide only basic services

► **Dysfunctional/Non-existent RPCs**

- ▶ no staff
- ▶ no presence,
- ▶ no local buy-in,

CHALLENGES WE HAVE TACKLED IN MISSOURI

- ▶ Re-establishing 2 inactive regions to achieve statewide coverage
- ▶ Assisting with Executive Director recruitment, including providing MACOG staff to serve in the interim.
- ▶ Enhancing underperforming RPCs
- ▶ SWOT analysis as requested by individual regions.
- ▶ Loan pool to help struggling RPCs manage cash flow challenges
- ▶ Fraud and misuse has been an issue in the State-work with local boards to address problems. Best done on a board member to board member level.
- ▶ Addressed issues of non-compete agreements with RPCs soliciting work outside their region

THE MISSING LINKS

- ▶ Organization that became defunct for one reason or another and closed their doors.
 - ▶ Delinquent tax payments
 - ▶ Lack of local support
 - ▶ Inept leadership
- ▶ “Holes” in the State was a major obstacle in dealing with state agencies for program delivery and the legislature for program funding
 - ▶ State Capitol area (Legislators would always point to this area that didn’t have coverage)

WHAT MACOG DID TO ADDRESS THE MISSING LINKS

- ▶ Show-Me Valley
 - ▶ with local government backing divided up this three county area to the surrounding RPCs.
- ▶ Mid-Missouri
 - ▶ MACOG took an active role in educating local officials of the benefits of an RPC.
 - ▶ Key drivers
 - ▶ Disaster Recovery, Transportation Planning,
 - ▶ MACOG helped local committee restart organization, develop staff descriptions and qualifications, assisted in director recruitment and screening
- ▶ Pioneer Trails
 - ▶ MACOG provided their planner to serve as interim director till organization was established and director hired
 - ▶ Have done this twice for this organization
 - ▶ Key driver
 - ▶ Transportation planning



REGRET

IT HURTS TO ADMIT WHEN YOU MAKE MISTAKES-
BUT WHEN THEY'RE BIG ENOUGH, THE PAIN ONLY LASTS A SECOND.

THE WEAK LINK

- ▶ MACOG makes available a SWOT team to help identify problems and provide peer review and technical support for organizations that are struggling
 - ▶ A VOLUNTARY process-Director or Board of RPC must request SWOT
 - ▶ Typically look at financial practices, board engagement, operation procedures, and staff responsibility and performance
- ▶ MACOG-Revolving Loan Fund was established to help weak organizations get a handle on their cash flow—Borrower is required to have a SWOT analysis
- ▶ SWOT analysis is performed by a team of RPC directors (usually 3 or 4), and a policy official.

STATEWIDE ASSOCIATION EFFORTS

- ▶ Adopted Minimum Standards for RPCs and Executive Directors (Self imposed requirement to receive State appropriation) Requires annual audit, functioning board, budget, work program, minutes, etc
- ▶ Adopted Financial Management General Practices and Minimum Standards (Self imposed requirement to receive State appropriation)
- ▶ Financial Practices certification
- ▶ Conduct yearly professional development training (Self imposed requirement to receive State appropriation)
- ▶ MACOG members adhere to a Code of Ethics
 - ▶ Addresses conflict of interest
 - ▶ Prohibits political activity
- ▶ Non-Compete Agreement
 - ▶ Cooperative agreement to respect regional boundaries among the state network
- ▶ Developed template and outline for Regional Transportation Plan
- ▶ RPCs are responsible for allocating transportation planning dollars among the RPOs.
Developed a matrix based on performance standards

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

- ▶ MACOG Annual Retreat (Annual event)
 - ▶ Develop work program, strategic plan & legislative agenda
- ▶ MACOG Professional Development Conference (Annual event facilitated by Government Training Institute-MARC)
- ▶ Bi-State Retreat (IA & MO)-EDA funded
- ▶ Four State Professional Development Conference (IA, KS, NE & MO)-EDA funded
- ▶ Topic have included:
 - ▶ Human Resources
 - ▶ Finance & Accounting topics
 - ▶ Liability and Insurance
 - ▶ Advocacy training
 - ▶ Community engagement
 - ▶ Board management strategies
 - ▶ Organizational management
- ▶ NADO Self Assessment Guide

STATE ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

- ▶ MACOG meets monthly in Jefferson City.
 - ▶ Primarily Executive Directors or key staff members. Very few policy officials.
- ▶ State agencies are invited to attend and given a few minutes on the agenda
- ▶ MACOG has developed a concurrent meeting held each quarter for fiscal staff of RPCs to provide learning opportunities and sharing best practices
- ▶ MACOG developed a quarterly meeting format for planners.

MACOG STAFFING

- ▶ State Association has two support elements
 - ▶ Lobbyist/Management Firm
 - ▶ Planner/Staff
- ▶ How do we pay for these services?
 - ▶ Lobbyist-paid primarily from membership dues.
 - ▶ Dues are currently \$650 per quarter
 - ▶ Planner
 - ▶ Initially paid with a dues increase (went from \$500/quarter to \$650/quarter)
 - ▶ Sustained through a 3% fee on all statewide contracts that we secure

STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES IN MISSOURI

- ▶ Transportation Planning
- ▶ Coordinated public transit human services plan
- ▶ Hazard Mitigation Planning
- ▶ Electric Coop Hazard Mitigation Planning
- ▶ Homeland Security Planning and Administration
- ▶ 16/17 Rural RPCs are EDDs
- ▶ 12 have Revolving Loan Funds
- ▶ GIS capacity varies across the State
- ▶ Most do CDBG administration and grant writing.
- ▶ Most administer solid waste management districts
- ▶ Some deliver housing and workforce development programs
- ▶ Statewide water quality planning (604b)
- ▶ Statewide on-site septic RLF
- ▶ CDBG Land use planning grants
- ▶ Broadband Planning

MACOG STRATEGIC PLAN

- ▶ First developed 10 years ago.
 - ▶ Goals included:
 - ▶ Increased state funding
 - ▶ Reactivating RPC
 - ▶ Strengthening statewide network
 - ▶ Improving relationships with State agencies
 - ▶ Adding professional staff capacity
 - ▶ Everything that we identified and set out to accomplish we have!!
 - ▶ Lesson: As planners we often fail to plan for ourselves and organizations. Planning for our state association should be a top priority. Where this is no direction-there is little accomplishment



PROCRASTINATION

HARD WORK OFTEN PAYS OFF AFTER TIME,
BUT LAZINESS ALWAYS PAYS OFF NOW.

HOW MACOG ADDRESSES “CONSISTENCY” AMONG RPCS

► Transportation

- Created model for Transportation Advisory Committee “TAC”
- Worked with MoDOT to develop Transportation Planning Framework
- Created document template, outline, and data sets for Regional Transportation Plan
- MACOG reviews annual work programs and allocates planning dollars
 - Developed matrix for allocating funds-includes past performance, prior expenditures, etc.

HOW MACOG ADDRESSES “CONSISTENCY” AMONG RPCS

► Hazard Mitigation Planning

- ▶ MACOG developed a document template and data sets inventory for each plan so the content and format was consistent
- ▶ MACOG facilitated training with SEMA for the development of hazard mitigation plans
- ▶ MACOG negotiated with SEMA to develop plans for all 114 counties within 3 years.
- ▶ RPCs shared resources to address GIS requirements within the plans.

CHALLENGES WE CONTINUE TO FACE

- ▶ 20% of the people do 80% of the work
- ▶ Will technology replace relationships-tele/video conferencing vs. on-site meetings
- ▶ Underperforming organizations give us all a bad name-weak link compromises the integrity of the entire chain.
- ▶ Turnover in elected officials at the local level means sustaining ownership in the organization becomes a constant education process (Retiring leadership/institutional knowledge & the need to cultivate new leaders/fresh perspective)
- ▶ Turnover in elected officials at the state level means constant education and promotion
- ▶ Turnover in directors of RPCs as current generation of leaders begin to retire
- ▶ **FUNDING!!!**- Funding not keeping pace with increased cost of operations
- ▶ Staffing-Limited pool of qualified candidates for available positions in regional planning.



RISKS

IF YOU NEVER TRY ANYTHING NEW,
YOU'LL MISS OUT ON MANY OF LIFE'S GREAT DISAPPOINTMENTS.

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PITFALLS-WHAT HASN'T WORKED WELL

- ▶ Don't expect all organizations to support new statewide initiatives.
- ▶ Capacity differences within organizations can cause "organizational envy". Build up and share capacity to mitigate this issue before it erodes the cohesiveness of the state association.
- ▶ Don't "hope" that problems will fix themselves. Sometimes you have to roll up your sleeves and deal with issues.
- ▶ It is easy to "pile" work on state association staff-avoid this or expect staff turnover or limited impact.
- ▶ Can't force institutional change-change must come from within the organization.

SCENARIO DISCUSSION #17

- ▶ You are the Executive Director of a regional development organization and you have discovered that one of the staff in your fiscal department seems to have a gambling issue—an issue that has reached the point, where he/she is making wire transfers to an out of country bookie. To your knowledge, there has been no misappropriation of agency resources.
- ▶ **As the Director of the RDO, how will you address this issue?**

SCENARIO DISCUSSION #18

- ▶ You are the Executive Director of a regional development organization and you have been informed that two of your major funders are in disagreement with how the organization handles indirect costs. One agency is putting a maximum on the indirect cost rate that you can use, and the other agency is disallowing your indirect cost proposal.
- ▶ **As the Director of the RDO, how will you address this issue?**

SCENARIO DISCUSSION #19

- ▶ You are the Executive Director of a regional development organization and are attending a statewide conference. As part of the conference activities you and a group of your colleagues go out and play a round of golf at an exclusive country club and have dinner and drinks in the clubhouse after.
- ▶ One of your colleagues is using his/her company credit cards to pay the bill and explains that he/she will just charge it to their EDA planning grant since you discussed “economic development” over drinks.

▶ **What, if any, response should you as a fellow director make?**

SCENARIO DISCUSSION #20

- ▶ You are the Executive Director of a regional development organization and it is brought to your attention by your planning director that one of your planning staff members is using their position to solicit work for his/her consulting practice, that provides planning services.
- ▶ **As the Director how will you handle this situation?**

NADO SELF ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

The image shows the cover of the "REGIONAL COUNCIL SELF-ASSESSMENT AND RESOURCE TOOLKIT". The cover is white with a green border. At the top, the title is written in a serif font. Below the title are three small square images: a map, a street sign reading "MAIN ST REGION PL", and a building. At the bottom, there is a small amount of text and the date "JANUARY 2009".

REGIONAL COUNCIL
SELF-ASSESSMENT AND
RESOURCE TOOLKIT

JANUARY 2009

Accountability
Cooperation
Results
Professional
State Relationships
Institutional
Partners
Problem

knowledge
Collaboration
Consistency
Performance
Leadership
Community
Economic
Solvers

Value
Councils
Impact
Politics
Development
Strategies
Local Jobs
Association

DISCUSSION TOPICS

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- ▶ What are your major personal strengths as Executive Director?

- ▶ _____
- ▶ _____
- ▶ _____

- ▶ How do you use these strengths to improve the organization?

- ▶ What are your major weaknesses or shortcomings as an Executive Director?

- ▶ _____
- ▶ _____
- ▶ _____

- ▶ How do you compensate or try to improve these shortcomings?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

PLANNING FOR THE ORGANIZATION

- ▶ Are you a firefighter or a planner/implementer? Planners and planning organizations tend to provide great planning services to their clients but often overlook creating executable plans for their own organizations.
- ▶ Does your organization have a strategic plan? Long term or short term?
- ▶ Danger: It is easy to become a “victim” of our own success. That leads to board disengagement and they let the Executive Director take sole responsibility and authority for moving the organization forward.
- ▶ Term limits and high turnover rates with elected officials are changing over the “forefathers” of regional councils. Does your organization have a plan to deal with this change or an orientation program to get newly elected officials to buy in to the concept of regional organizations and take ownership?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

AUTHORITY AND DECISION MAKING

- ▶ How much authority has your board granted to so you can navigate quickly through the requirements of certain projects, programs or launching new initiatives? Or are you required to take everything to the board? What is an appropriate balance of authority?
- ▶ How or what methods do you utilize to make sure that policy members are making decisions with consideration of all the facts?
- ▶ What would diminish the level of trust and confidence people have in you as the Executive Director?
 - ▶ Board Members
 - ▶ Staff members
 - ▶ General public
- ▶ How do you provide an opportunity for the board to provide “constructive criticism”?
 - ▶ Board retreats?
 - ▶ Evaluation tools?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

OFFICE SPACE AND IT ISSUES

- ▶ Do you own or rent your office space?
- ▶ Does your office space communicate a professional image to your customers?
- ▶ How do you filter your IT needs vs. wants? How do you know what is essential?
- ▶ How do you schedule IT or software training? In house? External?
- ▶ Discuss options and schedules for data backup. On-site, cloud, etc. Do you verify data backup occurs?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

PROGRAM DELIVERY

- ▶ Can too much fee for service activity brand you as a consultant?
- ▶ Does all or most of your work appear to be self-serving?
- ▶ How much latitude do you give your professional staff in developing and implementing project and initiatives?
- ▶ How do you evaluate what programs to deliver to your region?
 - ▶ Community Impact?
 - ▶ Administrative revenue to the organization?
- ▶ How do you prepare your organization and staffing capabilities to respond to large initiatives such as disaster recovery or stimulus programs?
- ▶ What is an acceptable amount of reserve funds?
- ▶ How do you establish and communicate acceptable levels of risk with your board for pursuing new initiatives and programs?
- ▶ How do you avoid operating in “crisis mode”?
- ▶ Are you or your organization viewed as proactive or reactive?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

STAFF ISSUES

- ▶ What are process and schedules for staff meetings?
 - ▶ Agenda, Format, Schedule, Attendees
- ▶ Who do you “allow” to attend state or national meetings?
- ▶ Do your support and participate in peer groups for staff level positions?
- ▶ What are some creative ways to recognize staff without financial compensation?
- ▶ How many hours and dollars do you budget for professional development for:
 - ▶ Senior staff
 - ▶ Programs staff
 - ▶ Management and support staff
- ▶ Do you set allowances or limits on professional development?
- ▶ Do you require staff to report back or share ideas from conferences and professional development with other staff members or supervisors?
- ▶ Do you have a professional development plan for each staff members? If so, is it part of their performance review?
- ▶ What are your priority areas for professional development? General skills, specific/technical skills, or team building?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND IMAGE

- ▶ Image, reputation and results are vital to the success of our organizations. How do you manage this element?
- ▶ How do you balance quality control without micro-managing your staff?
- ▶ Does your staff make presentations on behalf of the organization? If so, as Director, do you preview and approve presentations?
- ▶ What are some new innovations to control printing and design costs?
- ▶ What method of communication works best for you in communicating with funding partners?
 - ▶ Email
 - ▶ Telephone
 - ▶ In person
 - ▶ Other

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

EMPLOYMENT ISSUES

- ▶ Do you do credit check and criminal background checks for all new employees? Some new employees? Only those involved with finances?
- ▶ How do you verify that stated degrees are legitimate?
- ▶ Do you research social media sites for applicants and/or employees?
- ▶ Do you have a staff manual that includes personnel policies, statement of benefits, organizational charts, etc?
- ▶ What strategies have you used to reduce turnover rate?
- ▶ What are effective tools that you use to provide employee evaluations?
- ▶ Do you make “cross training” a priority or is staff in functional silos?
- ▶ What measure(s) do you use to evaluate the competitiveness of your salaries and benefits?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

ORGANIZATION FINANCES

- ▶ How do you talk accounting lingo with non-accountants?
- ▶ Do you know who your cognizant agency is?
- ▶ Remembers a financial statement is only a snapshot of a specified period of time. It may be necessary to provide trend data for you and the board to understand long term implications.
- ▶ How do you handle delinquent invoices or dues from members?
- ▶ Do you have an accounting procedures manual? If so, does your fiscal staff understand and abide by it?
- ▶ Do you have offsite storage for paper and electronic records?
- ▶ Who is your financial software vendor?

RELEVANCE

- Does your phone ring?
- Are you asked to the table on major regional and local initiatives with public, private and non-profit sector leaders?
- Are you the convener or forum for public officials, along with private and non-profit leaders, to work together on problems and solutions for the region?

OWNERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

- ▶ Is it clear who owns your regional council?
 - ▶ Local governments
 - ▶ Federal, state and local funders
 - ▶ General public
 - ▶ All of the Above
 - ▶ *Note: It isn't the Executive Director!*
- ▶ Is your organization board-driven, customer-driven, staff-driven, program-driven or a mix?

OWNERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

- ▶ Does your enabling legislation and/or executive order limit your role and functions?
- ▶ Is your board structured to attract the “**movers-and-shakers**” of the region?
- ▶ Is your regional council structured to take a “**holistic**” approach to regional development and overcome *program stovepipes* and *turf battles*?

RELATIONSHIPS WITH LOCAL OFFICIALS

- ▶ As executive director, do you:
 - ▶ Dedicate significant time to personal outreach to local elected and appointed officials, both county and municipal?
 - ▶ Encourage your local officials to use your regional council for services, rather than outside consultants?
 - ▶ Participate in statewide and regional associations of county and municipal officials, as well as interest groups? This includes serving on task forces and working groups.



National Association of Development Organizations (NADO)

and the NADO Research Foundation

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