

Friday, October 23

4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Conference Registration**Saturday, October 24**

9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Conference Registration

12:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Mobile Workshop

- **Green Infrastructure “Walk & Learn”**

NADO is partnering with local non-profit Water Works LA to showcase examples of innovative water management techniques in New Orleans. This mobile workshop will showcase the importance of incorporating green infrastructure into existing “gray” infrastructure and aligning the built and natural environment in order to strengthen the city’s resilience to future flooding events. The tour will include an in-depth discussion of the Greater New Orleans Urban Water Plan. *(Pre-registration is required; \$35 additional fee; limited to 30 attendees.)*

11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

NADO Executive Committee Meeting

1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Concurrent Learning Labs

- **Telling the Story of Your Region**

Every community and region has unique qualities that we work to strengthen and highlight through investment and marketing strategies, but we can often feel at the mercy of external narrators who tell those stories “about” us. This hands-on learning lab will offer strategies and tools for both gathering and telling your own stories in compelling ways and packages that give you the power to share your story utilizing local voices and language. Additionally, this session will offer methods and tools for using story to engage regional populations in the planning process and how to access information and data from these efforts to share and report progress. *(This Learning Lab has reached its limit of 35 registered attendees, but waitlist registrations are still being accepted. While there is no additional fee to attend this Learning Lab, pre-registration is required.)* Please note: This session was formerly named “Telling the Story of Your Region.” The title and description has been modified to better reflect the session content.

- **Maximizing Your CEDS: Aligning Your CEDS Process with Other Planning Initiatives**

Many RDOs find they are working on multiple plans that incorporate similar components, causing them to allocate precious staff time to efforts that could better be accomplished in a collaborative spirit. But a growing number of RDOs are looking at ways to better align the various plans they are required to do, resulting in more cohesive and coordinated programs and services delivery mechanisms. Attend this session for a refresher on the CEDS requirements and to learn about innovative and resourceful approaches that your peers are taking to maximize their planning processes. *(While there is no additional fee to attend this Learning Lab, pre-registration is required.)*

4:00 – 5:30 p.m.

NADO Board of Directors Meeting

6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

**New Directors/New Board Members/New Members Reception
Hosted by the NADO Board of Directors****Sunday, October 25**

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Conference Registration

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Learning Lab/Mobile Workshop

- **From Eye Sores to Eye Candy: Introduction to Brownfields**

The US Environmental Protection Agency’s Brownfields Program offers opportunities for communities to clean up old industrial (and “not-so-industrial” sites), resolve historic environmental liabilities, and reposition the property for beneficial reuse. Redevelopment of brownfields sites is an area of economic development that can particularly benefit from tools and expertise at the local level. This session will help attendees: identify the causes and effects of brownfields sites and build community capacity to compete for brownfields funding; identify possible brownfields opportunities; and develop a vision of what sustainable revitalization can be. During lunch, there will be an opportunity to meet with EPA’s designated “Technical Assistance to Brownfield Communities” (TAB) providers to learn more about free assistance programs. After lunch, there will be an optional mobile bus tour which will visit several types of brownfields in various stages of redevelopment in the NOLA area. The workshop is co-hosted with the New Jersey Institute of Technology, Center for Creative Land Recycling, and Kansas State University Technical Assistance to Brownfield Communities (TAB) Programs. ***(Pre-registration is required; \$75 additional fee; limited to 50 attendees.)***

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Concurrent Learning Labs

- **Building Economic Resilience – One Business at a Time**

RDOs can play a critical role in strengthening the economic resilience of the region by helping small and medium-sized local businesses be better prepared to withstand and bounce back from disasters. This learning lab will walk attendees through an interactive exercise displaying the short- and long-term recovery obstacles businesses face and showcase some exciting main street economic resilience and business continuity work that is currently taking place in New Orleans. ***(While there is no additional fee to attend this Learning Lab, pre-registration is required.)***

- **Strengthening Your SWOT and Building Wealth**

Learn new approaches to completing the SWOT requirement for the CEDS process, using wealth creation as an organizing framework to identify new strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, identify wealth-building strategies and actions, and performance measures related to multiple forms of community wealth. Economic development staff and executive directors will gain new strategies to use in developing and implementing their region’s CEDS. ***(While there is no additional fee to attend this Learning Lab, pre-registration is required.)*** Sponsored by the Ford Foundation.

2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Concurrent Learning Labs

- **Making Data Work for You and Your Communities**

This session will explore what free, open source data is available to you and your communities to make informed economic development, land use, and infrastructure decisions. Learn how the East Arkansas Development District and Civic Analytics are building a sophisticated online data warehouse that allows users to easily identify local trends and visualize future scenarios. The warehouse comprises primary and secondary data related to northeast Arkansas demographics, land use, infrastructure, education, and other economic indicators. Its interactive mapping technology enables users to view data in a geospatial context, explore layers, and download data sets. ***(While there is no additional fee to attend this Learning Lab, pre-registration is required.)***

- **Strategies for Exceptional Board Governance**

Today’s RDO board member typically wears many hats. In addition to serving as an elected official, running a local business, leading a nonprofit organization, overseeing an educational institution, or a combination of some of these vocations, they are also charged with making sure the RDO serving their region maintains its commitment to the community while also assuring its overall financial health and longevity. This session will dive into the critical components of board governance. ***(While there is no additional fee to attend this Learning Lab, pre-registration is required.)***

- **Strategies for Assuring a Successful Small Business Lending Program**

Participate in this interactive session—led by an industry expert—that will offer tips and strategies for enhancing your lending program, from attracting good borrowers to partnering with traditional financial institutions to working with borrowers to help them build strong and viable businesses, and much, much more! *(While there is no additional fee to attend this Learning Lab, pre-registration is required.)*

4:00 – 5:15 p.m.

Membership Regional Caucus Meetings

6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Opening Reception

Monday, October 26

7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Conference Registration

7:30 – 8:15 a.m.

DDAA Breakfast

8:30 – 10:00 a.m.

Opening Plenary

- **Regional Renaissance in Action: Re-building, Re-branding, Rejuvenating the Gulf Coast**

Throughout the past 10 years, New Orleans and the Gulf Coast have experienced major hurricanes, a devastating oil spill, and the impacts of a lagging national economy. But the city and communities along the coast and across the Greater New Orleans region fought back. During this plenary session, you will learn how the region came together to re-build, re-brand, and rejuvenate itself culturally, socially, and economically while also creating systems that are better prepared to withstand and bounce back from future natural and economic disruptions.

10 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Mobile Workshop

- **Back from the Brink: A Tour of the Broadmoor Neighborhood**

Broadmoor is one of New Orleans’ oldest and most diverse neighborhoods. It is also on some of the city’s most low-lying ground. After experiencing heavy damage following Hurricane Katrina, the city suggested a plan to convert the area to parkland. Strong opposition from local residents, community groups, and elected officials who had already begun rebuilding and repairing homes and businesses led to this plan being dropped. Efforts have continued to this day to support a thriving, healthy, and vibrant neighborhood. This tour, which will be led by staff of the Broadmoor Improvement Association, will showcase the tremendous progress occurring in the neighborhood, including a visit to the community’s “Education Corridor,” anchored by a charter school, arts and wellness center, library, and medical center. *(Mobile workshop is full, but waitlist registrations are still being accepted. Pre-registration is required; \$35 additional fee; limited to 30 attendees.)*

10:00 – 10:15 a.m.

Networking Break

10:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions

- **Preparing for the Future: Early Career Executive Directors/Assistant Directors**

NADO’s research has shown a trend in executive director retirements, which is not too surprising given the sheer number of baby boomers that are considering retirement in the near future. As today’s executive directors start to plan for their departure from their organization, there is a class of deputy or assistant directors in the wings ready to take on the challenges and opportunities that leading an RDO presents. This session will help emerging executive directors (those that have held the position for three years or less as well as those deputies that are gaining the needed experience to run an RDO) identify the characteristics of a strong and successful executive director and help them develop a strategy for assuring they become one in the future.

- **Developing a Brand: Tools for Marketing Your Region**

In today's world of virtual and visual information RDOs have the opportunity to harness technology to better tell their story. This session will showcase ways in which RDOs can develop a brand and market themselves to stakeholders in their region and beyond. Participants will view exciting examples of NADO members that have used video, web, and social media to increase their visibility, outreach, and awareness.

- **A Win-Win-Win: Collaborating Across Geographic Boundaries**

It's a common fact that many planning and development issues don't adhere to geographic or jurisdictional boundaries. As a result, many RDOs are recognizing the need to collaborate with neighboring organizations across state lines. This session will highlight the effort of a tristate RDO collaborative that is working together to tackle the loss of a major regional employer. Panelists will discuss the challenges RDOs face when attempting to collaborate across state lines and will also showcase the significance of these partnerships when dealing with development issues that go above and beyond the capacity of one organization alone.

- **Brownfields: A Development Game Changer**

Does your community have an abandoned building, old gas station, or other potentially contaminated site that is impeding your future growth? Are there properties in your community that could help revitalize a business district, provide community space, or host a new housing development? Do you wonder where funding could come from to transform these properties into community assets? Come hear from experts in the national Technical Assistance to Brownfields Communities (TAB) Program to learn how brownfields can be cleaned up, redeveloped, and used to reignite your community's economic engine. In addition, you'll have the opportunity to engage directly with development organizations and local officials who have successfully completed brownfields redevelopment projects.

12:00 – 1:30 p.m.

Keynote Luncheon

1:45 – 4:30 p.m.

Mobile Workshop

- **New Orleans' Emerging Environmental Sector: Building an Industry on Resilience**
"Emerging Environmental" describes an industry that creates jobs and community wealth by providing products and services that help companies or governments address environmental challenges. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the Greater New Orleans region has positioned itself to become a leader in water innovation. This mobile workshop will feature examples of economic development, job creation, and workforce training taking place in the rising field of resilience. *(Pre-registration is required; \$35 additional fee; limited to 50 attendees.)*

1:45 – 3:15 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions

- **The RDO's Role in Cultivating Healthy Communities**

Fostering regional quality of life begins with health. Whether it's working to eradicate food deserts, developing parks, trails, and other opportunities for recreation, or supporting specialized community health initiatives, RDOs are able to build the necessary partnerships and programs to promote health and well-being throughout their regions. This session will showcase examples of RDOs working to cultivate a rich and healthy quality of life for residents in their regions.

- **Taking Your Workforce to the Next Level: Strategies to Support Incumbent Worker Training**

Developing the skills and competency of your region's current workforce is an important element in meeting production demands and attracting additional investment and expansion. Learn how regional development organizations are leveraging resources and supporting programs to assist incumbent workers with processing and manufacturing skills.

- **Conversation Café: Aging Programs**

Come prepared to talk with your peers about your aging programs, and to ask them for ideas and suggestions for resolving problems... or to offer your insights for overcoming obstacles or achieving successes.

1:45 – 4:30 p.m.

Learning Lab

- **Economic Gardening: A New Tool Helping Businesses Grow and Expand**

Spend your afternoon learning about the concepts of Economic Gardening: a “grow from within” strategy that targets existing growth companies and helps them grow to the next level by providing vital information to help them make strategic decisions, as opposed to matching them up with investors or other sources of capital. Economic Gardening is a way to help businesses in your regions make calculated decisions that can result in increased revenues and jobs.

Facilitated by a leading Economic Gardening expert from the Lowe Foundation, attendees will learn how to leverage research using business intelligence tools and databases that growth companies in your regions might not be aware of or simply cannot afford. Focus areas of Economic Gardening include: strategic market research, geographic information systems, search engine optimization, and social media marketing. Leave this session with new ideas for helping businesses in your region expand and grow by implementing new concepts and approaches.

(Pre-registration is required; session attendance is limited.)

3:15 – 3:30 p.m.

Networking Break

3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions

- **Changing Faces, Changing Places: Demographic Shifts in Small Towns and Rural Regions**

Regions across rural America are experiencing demographic shifts that are impacting communities in a variety of ways. Youth outmigration, aging residents, the arrival of new immigrant populations, and in some places the in-migration of young families are changing the face of rural and small towns. Hear how regional development organizations are working with their local partners in addressing the changing demographics in their regions, and the challenges and opportunities these new trends bring.

- **Innovate through Open Apps**

Innovation studies show that people who openly share ideas with others actually spawn more innovation. It is the same way with data. When a government agency shares data, it breeds innovation both internally and externally. But people no longer want only data; they want engaging apps that turn data into easy-to-understand actionable information. The benefits of having actionable apps are many, including: 1) finding the information you need, when you need it; 2) sharing it between departments and with other organizations and the public; and 3) drastically reducing the time spent on laborious tasks such as preparing for public meetings. The end result is increased civic engagement, improved transparency, reduced data costs, and defensible justification for decisions.

This session will show executive directors and senior staff all they need to know to increase innovation with ready-to-use apps, using technology the organization probably already has. These apps will empower government leaders to solve problems in forward-thinking ways, and help create places where business wants to be and citizens want to stay. *(Sponsored by ESRI)*

5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

Innovation Awards Reception

All attendees are invited to attend this reception and learn about the 2015 Innovation Award winning projects.

6:30 p.m.

Young Professionals Meetup**Tuesday, October 27****7:30 – 8:45 a.m.****Executive Committee Breakfast**

8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Conference Registration

8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Mobile Workshop**Port of New Orleans: The World’s Busiest Waterway**

Over 5,000 oceangoing vessels move through New Orleans on the Mississippi River each year, with 1,800 of them calling at the Port of New Orleans. The port is responsible for over 160,000 jobs, \$8 billion in earnings, \$17 billion in spending, and \$800 million in taxes statewide. Learn how this economic engine operates and connects to other transportation modes. This tour will interest RDO board members, planning and economic development staff, executive directors, and others, with a waterside glimpse of port activities from the port’s own fireboat. ***(Mobile workshop is full, but waitlist registrations are still being accepted. Pre-registration is required; \$35 additional fee; limited to 20 people.)***

9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

Concurrent Sessions

- **The Entrepreneurial RDO: Alternative Funding Strategies for Your Organization**

Every RDO needs strategies to bring in much-needed revenue and sustain new programs that do not have grant support. Learn about the revenue-generating programs, institutional arrangements, and business models that RDOs have used to monetize solutions to regional problems. This session will bring new insights to executive directors, senior staff, and board members of RDOs and their partner agencies.

- **A Primer on the New OMB Guidelines**

Like it or not, the new OMB grant guidelines are here and they will impact every organization that receives federal grant funds. This session will walk attendees through the major components of the guidelines and help you better understand the changes that will affect your organization.

- **Weathering Economic Downturns: The Importance of Diversifying the Regional Economy**

Time and time again, we have seen examples of regions suffering from the downturn of an industry or sector that they were overly reliant upon. Currently, many communities are grappling with the downturn of the coal industry and identifying ways to rethink economic investments and prioritize diversifying their regional economic portfolio. This session will highlight three unique examples of regions that were once reliant upon a specific industry, negatively impacted by that industry’s decline, and have since found ways to diversify and re-imagine their economic futures.

- **Conversation Café: Disaster Preparedness & Recovery**

Stop by this Conversation Café to talk with your peers about your organization’s role in disaster preparedness and recovery efforts. Exchange information and ideas in this informal, yet facilitated, session aimed at pure peer-to-peer learning. Come prepared to ask questions and offer solutions!

10:30 – 10:45 a.m.

Networking Break

10:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions

- **Preparing for Your Annual Audit**

Your annual audit doesn’t have to be the most dreaded event of the year. Attend this session and learn how you can be prepared for the audit in a manner that helps you sail through it with little to no heartburn. Get a sense of what your auditors will be looking for, what information you need to have ready to share with them, and what steps you can have in place and follow throughout the year to assure your audit is as smooth as possible.

- **Making Main Street Work: Case Studies in Downtown Redevelopment**

Across the country, small towns are rediscovering and reclaiming their main streets and downtowns by pursuing innovative community and economic development projects. Once-abandoned sidewalks, storefronts, and plazas are now bustling with activity as residents find their way back downtown, again making these spaces the social, civic, and economic centers of their communities. Learn how regional development organizations are supporting efforts to

transform downtowns and main streets, improving both quality-of-life and economic opportunities for residents and businesses.

- **Transportation Safety: Moving the Nation Toward Zero Deaths**

Although traffic fatalities have significantly decreased in recent decades, crashes are still responsible for causing over 32,000 deaths in the United States each year. Learn applicable lessons from local, regional, and national-level efforts to decrease fatalities in this session for RDO executive directors, planning staff, and board members.

- **Conversation Café: Small Business Loan Funds**

Experiencing a high default rate? Looking for new ways to recruit businesses ready to borrow? Struggling with providing technical assistance to your borrowers? Wondering how other loan funds are managing to make solid loans and help businesses thrive? Attend this Conversation Café and talk shop with your peers. Come ready to find answers to your challenges and share your solutions and experiences!

12:15 – 1:45 p.m.

Lunch on Your Own

1:45 – 2:45 p.m.

Closing Plenary Session

- **Tapping the Unique Power of Story and Narrative**

This plenary session will explore how narrative and storytelling can motivate your audiences and advance your cause and mission as a regional development organization. Learn the elements of a good story—whether in a Hollywood screenplay or a one-on-one conversation—and how to build a storytelling culture within your organization and board of directors. This presentation will also develop your ability to communicate in “story packages”—combining a compelling story, a great piece of data, and a clear call to action. *(Sponsored by Three Rivers Planning Development District, MS)*

2:45 – 3:00 p.m.

Networking Break

3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Annual Business Meeting

followed by 2015/2016 NADO Board of Directors Meeting

The Annual Business Meeting and Board of Directors Meeting are open to ALL NADO Members. We encourage you to attend!

5:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Innovation Award Photo Session

6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

President’s Award Dinner