

2022 SWREDA Conference
Building Resilient Regional Economies
April 27 – 29, 2022 | Houston, TX
Revised: April 6, 2022
SUBJECT TO CHANGE



Tuesday, April 26

1:00 – 5:00 pm **EDA Austin Regional Office Staff Meeting**

Wednesday, April 27

8:30 am – 5:00 pm **Conference Registration**

8:00 am – 12:00 pm **EDA Austin Peer Reviews**
Peer Reviews were scheduled with EDA staff; the schedule is available at the conference registration desk.

9:00 am – 11:00 am **University Center Meeting**
Representatives from the EDA-funded University Centers in the EDA Austin region are invited to join EDA staff to share information about their programs and learn more about EDA's program objectives.

11:15 am – 12:15 pm **Regional Director Meeting with New EDD Executive Directors**
EDA Austin Regional Director Jorge Ayala invites all new Economic Development District executive directors (those on the job for three years or less) to join him for an informal meeting.

11:15 am – 12:30 pm **SWREDA Board of Directors Meeting**

1:00 pm – 2:15 pm **Opening Plenary: State of the State and Region**

- Conference Welcome: *Sandy Chancey*, SWREDA Chair and Executive Director, Eastern Plains COG, Clovis, NM
- Welcome to Houston: *Chuck Wemple*, Executive Director, Houston Galveston Area Council, Houston, TX
- Welcome to Texas: *The Honorable Greg Abbott*, Governor, Austin, TX (virtual welcome)
- *State of the State and Region: The Honorable Glenn Hegar*, Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, Austin, TX

2:15 pm – 2:30 pm **Break**

2:30 pm – 3:30 pm **Plenary Session: Federal Legislative Update**
Stay on top of the latest news from Capitol Hill effecting Economic Development Districts and others engaged in regional development. NADO Executive Director Joe McKinney will offer insights into current legislative efforts in Congress, as well as relevant updates about EDA and other federal agencies.

- *Joe McKinney*, Executive Director, NADO, Washington, DC
- *Moderator: Sandy Chancey*, SWREDA Chair and Executive Director, Eastern Plains COG, Clovis, NM

3:30 pm – 3:45 pm **Break**

3:45 pm – 5:00 pm Plenary: Build Back Better Showcase

In December 2021, EDA announced that 60 Build Back Better Challenge Finalists and been chosen from a pool of over 500 applicants, providing them with significant funding to fully develop their proposed projects and compete for additional funding to implement projects that focus on industry specific sectors. A key component of EDA's American Rescue Plan programs, the finalists proposed projects to develop regional industry clusters that create job and income opportunities, promote economic equality, and foster the United States competitiveness in the global economy. Finalists from the EDA Austin region will share information about their projects.

- *Moderator: TBA*

The E-Health Transformation Center: The Center is designed to promote economic growth and resilience through electronic health solutions; entrepreneurial health care technology; and equitable workforce development across Northwest Arkansas.

- *Amy Wenger, Vice-Chancellor, UAMS Northwest Campus, Fayetteville, AR*
- *Ryan Cork, Executive Director, Northwest Arkansas Council Healthcare Transformation Division, Fayetteville, AR*

Addressing the Nursing Shortage in Southeast and Deep East Texas: The project aims to address the nursing shortage within its health care services cluster through increased training programs for nurses, comprehensive recruiting strategies, and promoting entrepreneurship among nurses interested in launches businesses.

- *Ben Stafford, PhD, Vice President for Workforce and Continuing Education, Lamar State College, Port Arthur, TX*

Building the Oklahoma Biotech Innovation Center: A cross-sector coalition will tackle regional challenges associated with the global biotech industry by investing in labs and research facilities, workforce training, and strategizing to build the region's biotech services to better compete globally.

- *Jeff Seymour, Executive Vice President, Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce, Oklahoma City, OK*

Tulsa Regional Advanced Mobility Corridor: The Corridor will transform the region into a hub for R&D and the advanced mobility industry, boosting economic output and creating jobs.

- *Brian Bigbie, Principal Economic Development Planner, Indian Nations Council of Governments, Tulsa, OK*

Reclaiming Aerospace and Defense Manufacturing Dominance through Frontier Technologies: The project strives to close America's gap in aerospace and defense manufacturing capabilities through the creation of the West Texas Aerospace and Defense Manufacturing Coalition.

- *Annette Gutierrez, Executive Director, Rio Grande COG*

5:30 pm – 6:30 pm Reception: Build Back Better Roundtables

Over light snacks and refreshments talk with representatives of the Build Back Better finalist organizations and learn more about their collaborations, planned impacts on the communities, funding and more.

Thursday, April 28

8:00 am – 4:30 pm Conference Registration

9:00 am – 10:15 am Plenary Session: Trends in the Regional Economy and Opportunities for Economic Development

Trends in today's global economy are sending shockwaves to local and regional economies across the world and throughout the communities we all serve. From supply chain issues to workforce challenges, RDOs are being called on to work collaboratively across their regions to find solutions. Learn how the Federal Reserve Bank is working with communities to develop strategies and plans for meeting the demands of today's economy.

- *Chris Schreck*, Community Engagement Manager, Federal Reserve Bank, Houston, TX
- *Moderator: Betty Voights*, SWREDA Secretary-Treasurer and Executive Director, CAPCOG, Austin, TX

9:00 – 11:30 am Mobile Workshop to the East End Maker Hub

The Urban Partnerships Community Development Corporation and TXRX Labs collaborated to launch the East End Maker Hub (EEMH), state-of-the-art makerspace and manufacturing center. The partnership leveraged \$37 million—including support from the EDA Austin Regional Office. EEMH is expected to generate over \$150 million in annual economic impact to the Houston economy, create over 400 jobs, support locally-owned businesses, and provide a slate of career and trade skills training programs. EEMH leadership will provide an overview of the Hub and a tour of the space. ***The Mobile workshop is limited to 28 attendees and there is an additional fee of \$40 to participate.***

10:15 am – 10:45 am Break

10:45 am – 12:00 pm Concurrent Sessions

Expanding Opportunities for Entrepreneurs and Small Businesses

Learn about interesting approaches to promoting entrepreneurs and small businesses: Sparkyard, an initiative of the UNT Health Science Center, is a no-cost platform that connects entrepreneurs to resources; the Amarillo College Innovation Outpost, is a new approach to a makerspace that is based in a public library; and the Houston-Galveston Local Development Corporation assisted small businesses with CARES Act funding and is part of the Equitable Lending Leaders Initiative.

- *Marco Johnson, MBA*, Sparkyard Network Builder, UNTHSC, Fort Worth, TX
- *Russell Lowery-Hart, PhD*, President, Amarillo College, Amarillo, TX
- *Omar Fortune*, Manager, Houston-Galveston Local Development Corporation, H-GAC, Houston, TX
- *Moderator: Priscilla Lucero*, Executive Director, Southwest New Mexico COG, Silver City, NM

Creating Opportunities for Innovation

Attend this session to learn about best practices for promoting innovation including the Tomball Innovation Lab which provides entrepreneurs 3D, robotics, coding and subliminal printers in a unique makerspace lab, and Greentown Labs, a climatech start-up incubator focused on clean energy applications.

- *Kelly Violette*, CECD, PCED, AICP, Executive Director, Tomball Economic Development Corporation, Tomball, TX
- *Janna Hoglund*, MLIS, Director, LSC-Tomball Community Library, Tomball, TX
- *Juliana Garaizar*, Vice President of Innovation, Greentown Labs, Houston, TX
- *Moderator: Jamie Setze*, SWREDA Vice Chair and Executive Director, Capital Region Planning Commission, Baton Rouge, LA

12:00 pm – 1:30 pm Plenary Lunch

- *Alejandra Castillo*, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development, U.S. Economic Development Administration, Washington, DC
- *Moderator: Jorge Ayala*, Regional Director, U.S. Economic Development Administration, Austin, TX

1:45 pm – 3:00 pm Concurrent Sessions

Surviving Economic Shock: Resiliency Strategies for Small Businesses

Learn about different approaches to helping small businesses survive the effects of natural or man-made disasters: Coastal Bend COG's risk assessment and resiliency program integrates data with hazard information

to assess risk for project locations, and Lamar University's Small Business Toolkit for Resiliency which helps small and medium size businesses use risk management assessments.

- *James Slaydon*, PhD, President, Lamar University, Beaumont, TX
- *Gevorg Sargsyan*, PhD, Assistant Professor of Finance, Lamar University, Beaumont, TX
- *Emily Martinez*, Director of Regional Economic Development, Coastal Bend COG, Corpus Christi, TX
- *Katya Wowk*, Senior Scientist and Director of Texas OneGulf, Harte Research Institute, Texas A&M, Corpus Christi, TX
- *Moderator*: Kyle Ingham, Executive Director, Panhandle Regional Planning Commission, Amarillo, TX

Local Approaches to Small Business Development

From mobile small business boot camps to retrofitting Quonset huts into food incubators to bringing Main Streets back, learn creative avenues for helping local businesses succeed.

- *Veronica Dimas*, Executive Director, Brownsville Wellness Coalition, Brownsville, TX
- *Cheryl Mergo*, Manager, Community and Environmental, H-GAC, Houston, TX
- *Chuck Vanderbilt*, Community and Economic Development Manager, East Texas Council of Governments, Kilgore, TX
- *Moderator*: Renee Dycus, SWREDA Immediate Past Chair, Executive Director, Southwest Arkansas PDD, Magnolia, AR

3:00 pm – 3:15 pm **Break**

3:15 pm – 4:30 pm **Plenary Session: University Center Showcase**

EDA's University Center (UC) program recognizes the vital role that colleges and universities play in regional economic ecosystems across the nation. The panelists will share information about their unique programs and how they are designed to support innovation, resiliency, and inclusiveness.

- *Jeff Howlett*, Executive Director, East Texas Entrepreneurship Center, University of Texas, Tyler, TX
- *Krist Swimberghe*, Dean, Chair, Associate Professor of Marketing, University of Texas at Tyler, Tyler, TX
- *John Gamble*, PhD, Mary & Jeff Bell Endowed Distinguished Professor of Business, Texas A&M, Corpus Christi, TX
- *Ron Garza*, Associate Vice President—Workforce and Economic Development, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Brownsville, TX
- *Moderator*: Susan Geist, Management and Program Analyst, U.S. Economic Development Administration, Austin, TX

Friday, April 29

7:30 am – 9:00 am **Good Conversation Continental Breakfast**

Enjoy breakfast as you discuss topics of interest to you with your peers from across the five-state region.

- *Jamie Setze*, Moderator

9:15 am – 10:30 am **Plenary Session: Putting the CEDS into Action**

Learn ways to use the CEDS document as an action plan, including strategies for measuring impact.

- *Brian Kelsey*, Assistant City Manager, City of Edinburg, Edinburg, TX
- *Moderator*: Heather Urena, Executive Director, Kisatchie-Delta Regional Planning and Development District, Alexandria, LA

10:30 am – 11:00 am **Hotel Checkout**

11:00 am – 12:30 pm **Plenary Session: SWREDA Membership**

- Jorge Ayala, EDA Austin Regional Director, State of the Region
- Sandy Chancey, SWREDA President, SWREDA Business Meeting

12:30 pm **Conference Adjourns**

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