

MAY 3 – 5, 2023

DoubleTree
New Orleans, LA



SWREDA
Southwest Region Economic Development Association



2023

SWREDA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The conference is being offered by the Southwest Region Economic Development Association (SWREDA) with planning assistance by the NADO Research Foundation and the Texas Association of Regional Councils with support from the U.S. Economic Development Administration Austin Regional Office.



U.S. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION



WELCOME



Conference Logistics

- Badges should be worn throughout the conference.
- Conference room temperatures vary; we suggest you layer your clothing and adjust as needed.
- Conference attire is business casual.
- The conference meeting rooms are located on two floors at the hotel:
 - The International Ballroom and Crescent Ballroom are located on the 16th floor.
 - Conference registration, the Madewood and Rosedown meeting rooms, coffee breaks, and evening receptions are located on the 2nd floor.

Stay Connected!

Stay connected during the conference using the free Wi-Fi throughout the conference area.

Network: hhonors_meeting

Password: meetings20

Talking about the conference? Use **#SWREDA23** in your posts and tag NADO!



Conference Registration

Conference registration will occur in the 2nd Floor Lobby. Stop by to pick up your conference packet and name badge.

Registration Hours

Tuesday, May 2

12:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday, May 3

9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Thursday, May 4

8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

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SCHEDULE AT-A-GLANCE

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Conference Registration
2nd Floor Lobby

1:00 – 5:00 p.m.
SWREDA Executive Director's Institute
Madewood

WEDNESDAY, MAY 3

9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Conference Registration
2nd Floor Lobby

10:00 – 11:30 a.m.
Plenary Session: EDA's New Platform for Grant
Submission and Management
International Ballroom

11:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
SWREDA Board of Directors Meeting
Rosedown

1:00 – 1:15 p.m.
Conference Welcome
International Ballroom

1:15 – 2:15 p.m.
Plenary: Build Back Better Regional Challenge
International Ballroom

2:15 – 2:30 p.m.
Break

2:30 – 3:30 p.m.
Plenary: Good Jobs Challenge
International Ballroom

3:30 – 3:45 p.m.
Break
2nd Floor Lobby

3:45 – 4:30 p.m.
Plenary: Federal Legislative Update
International Ballroom

5:00 – 6:30 p.m.
Welcome Reception
2nd Floor Lobby

THURSDAY, MAY 4

8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Conference Registration
2nd Floor Lobby

8:30 – 9:30 a.m.
Plenary Session: Creative Collaborations
International Ballroom

9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Mobile Workshop - Nims Center Studios
Hotel Lobby

9:40 – 10:45 a.m. **Concurrent Sessions:**
Broadband: The Next Connection
Crescent

The Power of Storytelling
Madewood

10:45 – 11:00 a.m.
Break
2nd Floor Lobby

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **Concurrent Sessions:**
Building Resilient Regions through Outdoor Recreation
and Tourism
Crescent

Communicating Water to Sustain Your Regional Economy
Madewood

12:00 – 1:30 p.m.
Plenary Luncheon: U.S. Economic Development
Administration Updates
International Ballroom

1:45 – 4:00 p.m.
Mobile Workshop: Café Reconcile
Hotel Lobby

1:45 – 3:00 p.m. **Concurrent Sessions:**
Affordable and Accessible Housing: Imperative for Strong
Economies
Crescent

Rethinking Your Website as an Important Branding Tool
Madewood

3:00 – 3:15 p.m.
Break

3:15 – 4:30 p.m.
Plenary - Stars of the Southwest: Lifting Regional
Economies
International Ballroom

5:00 – 6:30 p.m.
Star of the Southwest Reception
2nd Floor Lobby

FRIDAY, MAY 5

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.
Good Conversation Hot Buffet Breakfast
International Ballroom

9:15 – 10:15 a.m.
SWREDA Annual Business Meeting
Crescent

10:15 – 11:15 a.m.
Plenary Session: EDA State of the Region
and SWREDA Membership Meeting
International Ballroom

11:30 a.m.
Conference Adjourns



FULL CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

TUESDAY, MAY 2

12:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Conference Registration

2nd Floor Lobby

1:00 - 5:00 p.m.

SWREDA Executive Director's Institute

Madewood

Executive directors from across the SWREDA region are encouraged to participate in this afternoon of conversations and best practices. The afternoon will include examples from peers on strategies for building effective relationships with your board, human resources pain points and how to avoid them, and building or rebuilding a strong organization. The Institute will include opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and information exchange.

- Building Productive Relationships with Your Board: Chuck Wemple, *Executive Director*, Houston-Galveston Area Council, Houston, TX
- Effective Human Resources Practices: Shanna Burke, *Executive Director*, Southeast Texas Regional Planning Commission, Beaumont, TX
- Building a Strong and Stable Organization: Eric Bridges, *Executive Director*, Texoma Council of Governments, Sherman, TX
- Facilitator: Betty Voights, *Executive Director*, Capital Area Council of Governments, Austin, TX

WEDNESDAY, MAY 3

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Conference Registration

2nd Floor Lobby

10:00 - 11:30 a.m.

International Ballroom

Plenary Session - EDGE: EDA's New Platform for Grant Submission and Management

EDA has launched a new grant applications and management platform. Attend this session to learn more about the platform from EDA staff.

- Erika Ingram, *Management and Program Analyst*, US Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, Washington, DC
- Kristine Denzau, *Management and Program Analyst*, US Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, Washington, DC

11:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

SWREDA Board of Directors Meeting

Rosedown

1:00 - 1:15 p.m.

Conference Welcome

International Ballroom

- Sandy Chancey, *Chair*, SWREDA and *Executive Director*, Eastern Plains Council of Governments, Clovis, NM
- Jeffrey Roesel, *Executive Director*, New Orleans Regional Planning Commission, New Orleans, LA

1:15 - 2:15 p.m.

Plenary: Build Back Better Regional Challenge

International Ballroom

The Build Back Better Challenge, a highly competitive initiative aimed at helping communities and regions lift their economies, is the key component of EDA's American Rescue Plan. In 2022, the Biden-Harris Administration awarded 21 organizations across the country between \$25 million and \$65 million each to fund 123 projects in 24 states. Four of the finalists are located in the EDA Austin region; they will provide information about their individual awards—purpose, partners, funds leveraged, regional impact, national implications, progress to date, any lessons learned.

- H2theFuture: Lacy McManus, *Executive Director*, Future Energy, Greater New Orleans Development Foundation, New Orleans, LA
- Oklahoma Biotech Innovation Center: Madison Jackson, *Project Manager*, Oklahoma City Economic Development Foundation, Oklahoma City, OK
- West Texas Aerospace and Defense Manufacturing Coalition: Susannah Byrd, *Director*, Economic Development and Workforce Excellence Division, University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso, TX
- Tulsa Regional Advanced Mobility (TRAM) Corridor: Jennifer Hankins, *Chief of Strategic Partnerships*, Tulsa Innovation Labs, Indian Nations Council of Governments, Tulsa, OK
- Moderator: Craig Buerstatte, *Deputy Assistant Secretary for Regional Affairs*, US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, Washington, DC

2:15 - 2:30 p.m.

Break

2:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Plenary: Good Jobs Challenge

International Ballroom

Another key component of the American Rescue Plan is the Good Jobs Challenge which focuses on the importance of workforce development on the growth and sustainability of local and regional economies. In 2022, EDA awarded 32 awards to "industry-led, worker-centered training partnerships and systems around the country." The Good Jobs Challenge will address training voids, as well as look at solutions to daycare and transportation challenges faced by many prospective employees. Four Good Jobs Challenge Awardees will present about their projects: purpose, partners, regional impact, progress to date, any lessons learned.

- Grow the Biotech Workforce in North Texas to Meet Emerging Skill Needs via a Collaborative Partnership: Benjamin Magill, CECd, *Associate Vice Chancellor*, Economic Opportunity District Office, Dallas College, Dallas, TX
- Managing Apprenticeship as a Service - From Talent Consumption to Creation: Jennifer Carlson, *Co-Founder and Executive Director*, WTIA Workforce Institute and Apprenti, Seattle, WA
- Northern New Mexico Workforce Integration Network (WIN): Monica Abeita, *Executive Director*, North Central New Mexico Economic Development District, Santa Fe, NM
- Moderator: Betty Voights, *Executive Director*, Capital Area Council of Governments, Austin, TX

3:30 - 3:45 p.m.

Break

2nd Floor Lobby

3:45 - 4:30 p.m.

Plenary: Federal Legislative Update

International Ballroom

Even though the mid-term elections are in the rearview and the 2024 elections already in motion, Congress has a full agenda over the coming months. During this session, you will learn about the latest development impacting the federal agencies that you work with on a daily basis.

- Joe McKinney, *Executive Director*, NADO, Washington, DC

5:00 - 6:30 p.m.

Welcome Reception

2nd Floor Lobby

Join your peers from around the region, and staff from the EDA Austin office, for conversations over light snacks and beverages before you head out to enjoy dinner at one of New Orleans' amazing eateries!

THURSDAY, MAY 4

8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Registration

2nd Floor Lobby

8:30 - 9:30 a.m.

Plenary Session: Creative Collaborations

International Ballroom

This session will highlight examples of EDD partnerships with universities, Native American tribes, chambers of commerce, other regional and economic development organizations. You will also learn about ways the EDA is encouraging interagency collaboration for local projects.

- Errin Clocker, *Executive Director*, Grand Gateway Economic Development Authority, Big Cabin, OK
- Joe Willis, *Executive Director*, Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District, Harrison, AR
- Emily Martinez, *Director of Regional Economic Development*, Coastal Bend Council of Governments, Corpus Christi, TX
- Carolee Wenderoth, *Tribal Engagement Coordinator*, US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, Washington, DC
- Moderator: Apurva Naik, *Economic Development Integrator*, US Economic Development Administration Austin Regional Office, Austin, TX

9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Mobile Workshop - Ready, Set, Action: Nims Center Studios

Hotel Lobby

The 100,000-square foot Nims Center Studios has helped increase the state's visibility as a go-to location for filming movies and television shows. With funding from EDA, the studios were expanded through include a 5,000-square foot incubator facility where young and talented film industry entrepreneurs now work and UNO students, staff and alumni are able to take advantage of the studios' technology, industry internships and project development opportunities. The workshop will include a tour of the facility, and a presentation from key staff about the Center and its impact on the city, state and regional economies. The Nims Center, along with RPC of New Orleans and the University of New Orleans received a Star of the Southwest Award in 2018. Limited to 25 attendees; additional fee of \$35; pre-registration is required. Meet in the hotel lobby at 9:30 a.m. as the bus will depart promptly at 9:40 a.m. It will return to the hotel in time for the noon luncheon.

9:40 - 10:45 a.m.

Concurrent Sessions:

Broadband: The Next Connection

Crescent

As communities around the country work to capitalize on state and federal funding opportunities to expand broadband services in the most underserved locations, new challenges are emerging. In this session learn about digital equity and digital inclusion and how regional development organizations are ensuring that service expansions and implementations benefit those most in need.

- Rachael Godeaux, *Director of Community and Economic Development*, Acadiana Planning Commission, Lafayette, LA
- Thomas Tyler, *Deputy Executive Director*, ConnectLA, Louisiana Division of Administration, Baton Rouge, LA
- Gregory Ford, *Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs*, Southern University at New Orleans, New Orleans, LA
- Moderator: Mia Ruffin, Baton Rouge, LA

The Power of Storytelling

Madewood

Many economic development organizations (including Economic Development Districts, Councils of Governments, Regional Planning Commissions, and Regional Councils) are often not well-known entities in their communities despite their pivotal roles in regional development. Telling the story of your organization's role in successful projects and programs will build your community of supporters, encourage greater participation in your public engagement endeavors, increase the public's knowledge and understanding of your role as an economic development leader, and build confidence in your organization's abilities and impact among your many stakeholders. Learn from an expert in public relations and creative approaches to storytelling.

- Erica Allison, *Strategist & Founder*, Formation PR + Brand, Hendersonville, NC
- Moderator: Juan Rodriguez, *Executive Director*, South Texas Development Council, Laredo, TX

10:45 - 11:00 a.m.

Break

2nd Floor Lobby

11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions: **Building Resilient Regions through Outdoor Recreation and Tourism** Crescent

The outdoor recreation industry provides more than health and happiness to Americans; it helps drive the national economy with an economic output of \$862 billion and 4.5 million jobs. As regions look to build more resilient economies, outdoor recreation planning, development, and branding have emerged as impactful strategies. Join this session to hear regional approaches advancing the outdoor recreation economy and interactive peer discussion on regional goals and challenges.

- Priscilla Lucero, *Executive Director*, Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments, Silver City, NM
- Moderator: Jack Morgan, *Senior Program Manager*, NADO Research Foundation, Washington, DC

Communicating Water to Sustain Your Regional Economy

Madewood

Water is life, and economies hinge on a consistent and safe supply. But our future is predicted to be hotter and drier, and we are already seeing frequent and prolonged droughts throughout the southwest. So, why is it so hard to convince our citizens to protect and conserve something we can't live without? Join this experiential session to explore effective communications approaches, techniques, and tools to build a more water resilient future.

- Sarah Diefendorf, *Director*, Environmental Finance Center West, Oakland, CA

12:00 - 1:30 p.m.

Plenary Luncheon

International Ballroom

U.S. Economic Development Administration Updates

- Alejandra Castillo, *Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development*, US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, Washington, DC

1:45 - 4:00 p.m.

Mobile Workshop: Café Reconcile Builds Hope and Changes Lives

Hotel Lobby

Café Reconcile provides paid workforce development training to young adults interested in seeking careers in the hospitality field. Founded in 1996, the program has three priorities: support young adults in the development of their self-confidence, help them attain financial stability, and earn education or employment opportunities suited to their skills sets. Café Reconcile's workforce program has seen over 2,000 young adults (between the ages of 16 and 24) graduate. During this workshop you will learn about the program. Limited to 20 attendees; additional fee of \$35; pre-registration is required. Meet in the hotel lobby at 1:30 p.m. as the bus will depart promptly at 1:45 p.m. It will return to the hotel in time for the Star of the Southwest Reception.

1:45 - 3:00 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions: **Affordable and Accessible Housing: Imperative for Strong Economies** Crescent

Accessible and affordable housing for existing and prospective workforce housing is a challenge nationwide. Lack of housing presents challenges to communities and regions that are hoping to attract new businesses and industries, not to mention meeting the needs of current residents. During this session you will learn about successful approaches to creating housing opportunities from across the Austin region.

- Debora Glasgow, *Executive Director*, SWODA, Burns Flat, OK
- Michael Ryburn, *Deputy Executive Director, Director of Business Development*, SWODA, Burns Flat, OK
- John Boudreaux, *Regional Vitalization Manager*, South Central Planning and Development Commission, Houma, LA
- Moderator: Michael Parks, *Executive Director*, Brazos Valley Council of Governments, Bryan, TX

Rethinking Your Website as an Important Branding Tool

Madewood

Is your website doing its job? Is it providing the right information to your stakeholders? Is it easily found on search engines? Can users navigate it easily, finding the information they need? Does it look fresh and current? These are questions that should be considered as part of your public relations and outreach programs. This session will walk attendees through the elements of a good website, and provide tips on how to determine if your website needs a refresh.

- Erica Allison, *Strategist & Founder*, Formation PR + Brand, Hendersonville, NC
- Moderator: Kelly Davila, *Director of Regional Services/Economic Development*, South Plains Association of Governments, Lubbock, TX

3:00 - 3:15 p.m.

Break

3:15 - 4:30 p.m.

Plenary - Stars of the Southwest: Lifting Regional Economies

International Ballroom

Each year, the SWREDA Board of Directors selects five Star of the Southwest Awardees—one from each state—to showcase their positive impact on a community's or region's economic vitality. Learn about the projects, including funding, partnerships, impact, and future plans during this session. During the Star of the Southwest Award Reception immediately following this session, you will be able to meet with the winning organizations.

- PEAK Innovation Center: Sasha Grist, *Executive Director*, Western Arkansas Planning Development District, Fort Smith, AR
- Reconstitution of the Red River Leadership Institute: Mary Beth Rudel, *Deputy Director*, Ark-Tex Council of Governments, Texarkana, TX
- Prewitt Industrial Cluster Master Plan and Design: Michael Sage, *Economic Program Manager*, Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments, Gallup, NM
- Aerospace Technology Training Center: Steve Mills, *Executive Director*, Southern Oklahoma Development Association, Durant, OK
- Louisiana Broadband Initiative Targeting Strategy: Jamie Setze, *Executive Director*, Capital Region Planning Commission, Baton Rouge, LA
- Moderator: Sandy Chancey, *Chair*, SWREDA and *Executive Director*, Eastern Plains Council of Governments, Clovis, NM

5:00 - 6:30 p.m.

Star of the Southwest Reception

2nd Floor Lobby

Learn more about the five Star of the Southwest Award projects over light snacks and beverages.

FRIDAY, MAY 5

8:00 - 9:00 a.m.

Good Conversation Hot Buffet Breakfast

International Ballroom

Using the whiteboard in the conference registration area, share what topics you would like to dive into with your peers. There will be tables during this breakfast dedicated to a conversation about submitted topics. Examples: something you learned about during the conference that you want to explore further with your colleagues, challenges you are facing that would benefit from crowd sourcing with your peers, or do you have a successful program or initiative that you would like to share with your peers?

9:15 - 10:15 a.m.

SWREDA Annual Business Meeting

Crescent

All Economic Development Districts from the EDA Austin region are encouraged to attend this meeting to learn more about SWREDA's governance, membership benefits, and future plans for the organization.

- Sandy Chancey, *Chair*, SWREDA and *Executive Director*, Eastern Plains Council of Governments, Clovis, NM

10:15 - 11:15 a.m.

Plenary Session: EDA State of the Region and SWREDA Membership Meeting

International Ballroom

EDA's investments in the Austin region over the past year have been significant. As the conference winds down, hear from Austin Regional Director Jorge Ayala as he recounts the success of the past year and shares insight into the coming year.

- Jorge Ayala, *EDA Austin Regional Director*, State of the Region

11:30 a.m. Conference Adjourns



BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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