

2025 SWREDA Conference
May 6 – 9, 2025 | Las Cruces, NM
***DRAFT* March 7, 2025**

SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Tuesday, May 6

12:00 – 6:00 p.m. Conference Registration & Information Desk Open

1:00 – 5:00 p.m. Executive Directors Leadership Institute

Based on interest from EDD executive directors—and those in position to fill the role—the Executive Director Leadership Institute (EDLI) will return for the third year in a row. Content is designed specifically for both emerging and existing EDD executive directors no matter how new or far along in the position. The EDLI is structured to offer training from subject matter experts and allow for peer-to-peer exchanges throughout the afternoon. *There is no additional cost to attend, but pre-registration is required.*

2:00 – 5:00 p.m. Regional Storytelling and Grant Writing Workshop

Building a strong narrative that tells the story of your region and your vision for regional success can be pivotal for securing vital program funding from state and federal funding agencies. EDD program staff are encouraged to attend this Storytelling and Grant Writing Workshop to learn how to tell their region's story through state and federal grant applications and learn tips and tricks from leaders in the storytelling and grant writing fields. *There is no additional cost to attend, but pre-registration is required.*

5:30 – 6:30 p.m. Welcome Reception

Wednesday, May 7

7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Conference Registration & Information Desk Open

8:00 – 9:30 a.m. SWREDA Board of Directors Meeting

9:00 – 10:45 a.m. University Centers Meeting with EDA

EDA-funded University Center staff are encouraged to attend this important opportunity to meet with EDA Austin Regional Office staff to talk about your programs.

9:30 – 10:45 a.m. Calling All Cohorts: Training Program for Emerging Leaders Gathering

Participants from all seven cohorts are invited to gather with EDA and NADO Research Foundation staff to share your experiences in the program and its impact on your current position with your EDD. As we near the 10-year anniversary of the program's launch, feedback from participants will be invaluable as we consider strategies to provide future leaders with relevant training and access to a widening network of peers across the region and the nation.

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. SWREDA Membership Annual Business Meeting

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.

- Jamie Setze, Chair, SWREDA and Executive Director, Capital Region Planning Commission, Baton Rouge, LA

12:00 – 1:30 p.m. Plenary Lunch

1:45 – 2:30 p.m. Opening Plenary: EDA Southwest State of the Region

U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) Austin Regional Office Director Jorge Ayala will provide his annual report on the innovative and impactful work being done by EDA grantees and stakeholders across the region.

- Speaker: Jorge Ayala, Regional Director, EDA Austin

2:30 – 2:45 p.m. Break

2:30 – 4:30 p.m. Mobile Workshop: New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum

The agriculture industry has been a vital economic driver for the New Mexico economy for decades. Come to the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum to learn about the history of the agriculture industry in New Mexico, what roles agriculture plays in the modern New Mexico economy, and where it will go from here. The New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum features interactive museum exhibits, several barns and animals on-site, an amphitheater, and the Heritage Garden project. *There is an additional fee of \$40; pre-registration is required; limit of 30 participants.*

2:45 – 3:45 p.m. Concurrent Sessions

3:45 – 4:00 p.m. Break

4:00 – 5:00 p.m. Concurrent Sessions

Thursday, May 8

7:15 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. Conference Registration & Information Desk Open

7:45 a.m. – 1:00 pm Mobile Workshop: Spaceport America

An abundance of acreage and near-perfect year-round weather provide the perfect location for Spaceport USA—the first purpose-built commercial spaceport in the world. Spaceport expands over 18,000 acres next to the U.S. Army White Sands Missile Range and has access to 6,000 square miles of restricted airspace. Join this mobile workshop to visit Spaceport to learn about its critical role in the commercial space industry: what companies have located there, how it impacts the economy, future plans, financing, and much more. *There is an additional fee of \$65; pre-registration is required; limit of 30 participants. Because the bus will need to leave the hotel at 8:00 am, we will provide a box breakfast to attendees on the bus.*

8:00 – 8:30 a.m. Continental Breakfast

8:45 – 10:15 a.m. Concurrent Sessions

10:15 – 10:30 a.m. Break

10:30 – 11:45 a.m. Concurrent Sessions

12:00 – 1:30 p.m. Lunch on Your Own

1:45 – 3:00 p.m. Concurrent Sessions

3:00 – 3:30 p.m. Break

4:00 – 5:00 p.m. Plenary Session: Star of the Southwest Award Showcase

The 2025 recipients of the Star of the Southwest Award will share the ingredients of their successful projects: partners, funding, strategies, impact, and much more. This session is a prelude to the Roundtable Reception which follows immediately afterward...during the reception you can meet one-on-one with the awardees for a deeper dive into their projects.

5:00 – 6:30 p.m. Star of the Southwest Award Roundtable Reception

Celebrate the 2025 Star of the Southwest Award recipients and learn more about the five Star of the Southwest Award projects over light snacks and beverages.

Friday, May 9

7:45 – 11:00 a.m. Conference Registration & Information Desk Open

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. Good Conversations Breakfast Buffet

9:15 – 10:30 a.m. Federal Legislative Update

The change in the Administration will have implications for federal grant programs and services, including those managed by grantees across the EDA Ausitn Region. Attend this session to learn about the latest developments on Capitol Hill and in DC from both the national and regional perspectives.

- Speaker: Joe McKinney, Executive Director, NADO
- Speaker: Chris Brown, Executive Director, Sulphur Springs (TX) Economic Development Corporation and Immediate Past President, NADO

10:30 – 11:00 a.m. Hotel Checkout

11:00 – 11:30 a.m. Closing Remarks and Conference Adjournment