



# ANNUAL REPORT

- 2025 -



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# ABOUT NADO

The National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) is a 501(c)(4) membership association that advocates for federal policies and programs supporting community development, economic competitiveness, rural advancement, and quality of place. Founded in 1967, NADO represents a national network of over 500 Regional Development Organizations (RDOs), which provide essential planning and development services to thousands of cities and counties. These services include workforce training, transportation planning, public infrastructure, affordable housing, disaster prevention, and more. Through our work, NADO strengthens regional collaboration and promotes sustainable economic mobility across the United States.

## About NADO Research Foundation

The NADO Research Foundation (NADO RF) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting and strengthening the national network of RDOs. Founded in 1988, NADO RF provides technical assistance, education, research, and training to promote innovative and effective approaches to regional community development. Through thought leadership and the production of practical resources, NADO RF helps RDOs enhance their capacity in areas such as transportation, infrastructure, organizational development, economic resilience, and more.



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## NADO MEMBERSHIP

Being a NADO member means joining a national network of Regional Development Organizations and economic development practitioners committed to strengthening communities through economic and community development. Members gain access to targeted federal advocacy support, exclusive publications, grant opportunity alerts, training resources, and discounted registration for conferences and webinars. NADO membership also opens doors to peer networks, national recognition through NADO's awards programs, and tools that help organizations collaborate, stay informed, and amplify their impact in regional development.

### In this Report:

- 2025 Advocacy Highlights
- NADO Conferences
- Regional Events
- Leadership Programs
- Tribal and Rural Technical Assistance
- Other Programming and Technical Assistance
- EDD Community of Practice
- Awards Programs
- NADO Team
- NADO Board of Directors

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## BY THE NUMBERS

**381** Total Members

2 Diamond  
11 Platinum Plus  
21 Platinum  
57 Sustaining  
236 General

Affiliate Members **54**

37 Associate  
17 Partner

For more information about NADO membership levels and benefits, visit:

[nado.org/about-nado-membership](https://nado.org/about-nado-membership)



Throughout 2025, NADO voiced support for programs that help facilitate community and economic development, transportation planning, workforce training, affordable housing, rural development, support for older Americans, urban and rural planning, disaster recovery, and more.

NADO worked strategically with other national associations and participated in coalitions pursuing shared goals such as the reauthorization of the Farm Bill, Surface Transportation programs, the Older Americans Act, and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Although these items did not get reauthorized in 2025, progress was made in terms of advocating for their importance and providing input on draft bill text and expert testimony at hearings. NADO will continue to work toward these goals in 2026 in tandem with other national partners.

## ADVOCACY

### Executive Committee Washington, D.C. Fly-in

In September 2025, the NADO Executive Committee traveled to Washington DC to participate in NADO's annual three-day advocacy fly-in. The Executive Committee met with senior agency officials from the U.S. Department of Transportation, Economic Development Administration, and U.S. Department of Agriculture. Additionally, they met with leaders from other national associations and think tanks to help strengthen key relationships and cement NADO's role as a national thought leader.



# ADVOCACY RESOURCES



To better equip NADO members for congressional outreach, NADO made significant enhancements to its advocacy resources throughout the year. We developed a comprehensive advocacy toolkit and launched a redesigned advocacy section of the website with improved navigation, making it easier for members to access critical materials. NADO continually updated resources on [www.NADO.org](http://www.NADO.org), including appropriations fact sheets and template letters that members can customize when contacting their Senators and Representatives. Additionally, NADO increased the frequency of blog posts to keep members informed on timely policy developments and advocacy opportunities. Learn more at [www.nado.org/about-nado-advocacy](http://www.nado.org/about-nado-advocacy).

- Congress Greenlights Appropriations Package as Funding Deadline Looms**  
On January 15th, the Senate, in an 82-15 vote, passed a funding package that included three bicameral, bipartisan fiscal year (FY) 2024 appropriations bills: the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies; Energy and Water Development; and Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies bills. ...  
[Read More](#)
- New Federal Requirements for Website Accessibility: What You Need to Know**  
In April 2024, the DOJ released a final rule implementing Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for web-based government services provided by state and local governments. ...  
[Read More](#)
- Congress Reauthorizes Secure Rural Schools Program After Two-Year Lapse**  
On December 8, after a nearly two-year lapse, Congress passed the Secure Rural Schools Reauthorization Act of 2023 (S. 395), which reauthorizes the program for Fiscal Years (FY) 2024 – 2028. ...  
[Read More](#)
- Longest Government Shutdown in U.S. History Ends After 43 Days**  
On November 12, President Trump signed into law a stopgap funding package, formally ending the 43-day government shutdown that began on October 1. ...  
[Read More](#)
- Federal Government Shutdown and Resources**  
As of October 1, the federal government has officially entered a shutdown following Congress's failure to enact annual appropriations legislation before the end of the fiscal year on September 30, 2023. ...  
[Read More](#)
- EDA Releases Fiscal Year 2025 Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Notice of Funding Opportunity**  
On September 16, the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) released their Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance (PWEAA) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). This update, the first since October 1, 2024, was to "specify EDA's updated investment priorities and to make other technical changes." ...  
[Read More](#)
- NADO Past President Testifies at House Agriculture Committee Hearing on**
- Celebrating 60 Years of the Economic Development Administration: A Pillar of**
- Trump Administration Rolls out New Interagency Workforce Development Plan**





## 2025 NADO Washington Policy Conference

In March 2025, NADO held our annual Washington Policy Conference, which was attended by more than 400 participants. It was held as a joint event in conjunction with the Development District Association of Appalachia's (DDAA) Annual Conference.

During the joint event, attendees had opportunities to hear updates from and engage with federal agency leadership members of congress, national policy experts, and to participate in NADO on the Hill: a day of advocacy during which NADO members meet with their Senators and Representatives in Washington DC.

## CONFERENCES

### NADO Congressional Awards for Outstanding Leadership

During our 2025 Washington Policy Conference, NADO presented two awards to Senator Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia and former Senator Thomas Carper of Delaware.

Both Senator Capito and former Senator Carper were instrumental champions in the legislative victory of the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) being reauthorized for the first time in 20 years.





## 2025 Annual Training Conference

NADO's 2025 Annual Training Conference, held in October in Salt Lake City, brought together over 500 regional development organization staff and partners from across the country for four days of learning, networking, and exploring. Attendees participated in engaging plenary sessions, hands-on training, best practice presentations, and networking events, while nine mobile workshops showcased real-world examples of resilience and transformation throughout the region. With sessions addressing pressing issues such as housing, disaster recovery, workforce development, AI, and organizational capacity, participants returned home equipped with new ideas and a renewed sense of purpose to strengthen their local communities and regions. Planning has already begun for the 2026 ATC, scheduled for October 26-29 in Reno, NV.

## CONFERENCES

### 2025 National Regional Transportation Conference

The 2025 National Rural Transportation Conference was held July 15 – 17, 2025 in Des Moines, Iowa. Over 120 transportation planning professionals and stakeholders from across the country joined together to engage on topics ranging from funding opportunities, innovations in public transit, safety planning, to managing uncertainty. The conference was highlighted by commentary from Loren Smith, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy at the US Department of Transportation regarding national transportation issues in rural and small metro regions.



## 2025 Economic Development Conference for the EDA Denver Region

- April 14-17, Denver, CO
- Convened 230 attendees across the 10-state region and beyond

## 2025 Southwest Regional Economic Development Association (SWREDA) Annual Conference

- May 7-9, Las Cruces, NM
- Convened 179 attendees across the 5-state region and beyond

## REGIONAL EVENTS

Through partnerships with EDA Austin and Denver Regional Offices, NADO hosted regional events convening RDO leaders and other EDA stakeholders for training and networking, including workshop, plenary, and mobile workshop sessions.





## EDA-Denver Pilot TPEL Cohort

- 9 EDD staff representing 8 states
- Site Visits to Northwest Colorado COG, Region 9 EDD (CO), Northwest New Mexico COG, Southwest Iowa Planning Council, Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (NE), & Southeastern Regional Development Agency (UT)

## EDA Austin Cohorts 7 & 8

- 10 EDD staff representing 4 states
- Site Visits to Central Arkansas PDD, West Central Arkansas PDD, Apalachee RPC (FL), Southern Georgia Regional Commission, Mid-Region COG (NM), North Central NM EDD, South Central NM COG, & Wasatch Front Regional Council (UT)

## EMERGING LEADERS

Through partnerships with EDA Austin and Denver Regional Offices, NADO hosted cohorts for the Training Program for Emerging Leaders (TPEL), which connected aspiring EDD staff together for site visits, conferences, virtual training, and other networking and peer-learning.



## ERC FELLOWS

NADO continued to support fellows and RDO hosts through the Economic Recovery Corps program. We hosted monthly virtual learning sessions and hosted ERC Fellows at the 2025 ATC, SWREDA Annual Conference, and 2025 Economic Development Conference for EDA Denver Region.



## TRIBAL AND RURAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

NADO RF and our partners at the Western Transportation Institute at Montana State University work in rural and tribal communities to identify and address challenges related to mobility and economic development with support from USDA Rural Development. During 2025, the NADO team served:

- 5 USDA Transportation Technical Assistance Grants
- 10 States (AL, CA, MN, MS, PA, SC, SD, UT, WA, WI)
- 8 RDOs (Humboldt County AOG, Headwaters RDC, Three Rivers PDD, East Central WI RPC, Upper Savannah COG, Planning & Development District III, Northern Tier RP&DC, South AL RPC)
- 5 Tribes (Ute Indian Tribe of Utah, Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians, Yankton Sioux Tribe, Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribe, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin)

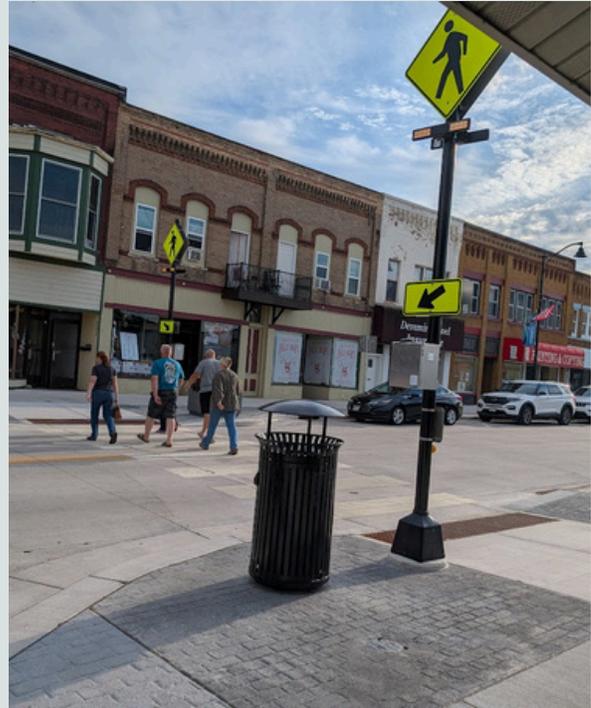
Projects include customized research, planning assistance, or capacity building tasks related to rural and regional transit, vanpool/carshare or other forms of mobility, bicycle and pedestrian, or related topics. In addition to online peer exchanges, training sessions, and sharing news and resources with rural practitioners, NADO and our partners developed 12 new written reports and tip sheets:



- [Wayfinding Signage Resources](#)
- [Quick-Build Project Resources for Rural Transportation](#)
- [Steps to Establish a Tribal Transit Program](#)
- [Complete Streets Policy Planning Process for Rural Communities](#)
- [Carsharing in Rural Areas](#)
- Alaska Marine Highway System – Business Impact Study (Elliot Bay Design Group/NADO)
- Supporting Active Transportation Mobility in LaBelle, Florida (WTI)
- Wiyot Tribe Mobility/Transportation Action Plan (WTI/NADO)
- Okolona (MS) Walk Audit Report
- Local/Municipal Bridge Program Review
- Humboldt Transit Authority Analysis (WTI)
- Strategic Planning and Revitalization for Communities: 2025 SPARC Program Summary (Ayres Associates)

## Thriving Communities Program Transportation Technical Assistance

The US Department of Transportation Thriving Communities program is an initiative focused on providing technical assistance to competitively selected communities across the country. The goal is to identify transportation challenges that can be addressed in a 2-year period with the assistance of new external technical partners. This work is accomplished with the support of a national network of technical assistance providers and local community partners. NADO is serving as a technical assistance partner, providing expertise in all areas pertaining to rural transportation and rural transportation planning. NADO completed eight written reports and guides in 2025.



- [High Injury Network Basics and Data Creation](#)
- Activity Density Basics and Data Creation
- Benefit Cost Analysis Tool
- Partner Map Tool
- Gap-to-Resource Mapping Tool
- [State Funding for RDO Administration \(PDF\)](#).
- Mountain Lynx (VA) Rural Transit Demand Memo
- Project Intake Form – NCRPC (KS)

# ADDITIONAL TRANSPORTATION WORK



## AASHTO Center for Environmental Excellence

The Center for Environmental Excellence is a FHWA-funded center devoted to a broad range of transportation-related environmental information. The center is managed by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), with support and content creation by NADO and other partners. NADO's 2025 work on this program has included training and peer exchange sessions as well as two issue briefs:

- [Rural Transportation Planning Organizations \(RTPOs\) public engagement process in rural areas \(PDF\)](#).
- [Natural Hazard Adaptation and Resilience in Regional Transportation Planning \(PDF\)](#).

## Innovative Toolkit for Quantifying Rural Transit Benefits

In rural areas, public transportation costs often exceed revenues, and the financial outcome is difficult to quantify. The objective of this project is to develop a toolkit that identifies and quantifies the benefits of rural public transit. The project team is led by the firm EBP, with support from NADO and C2G. In 2025, NADO hosted three focus groups with practitioners to define how the toolkit is likely to be used. The toolkit should be finalized in 2027.





## RURAL ENERGY ACADEMY

In 2025, NADO launched a new partnership, the Rural Energy Academy, in collaboration with the National Association of Counties (NACo) and Mana Group Consulting. The Rural Energy Academy serves as a national resource, training, and peer network to educate and empower regional and local leaders on energy planning and development. Listening and learning sessions with NADO members began in 2025 to identify member roles, success stories, and support needed. Future training will include virtual and in-person learning and site visits.

## VAPDA: STATEWIDE REGIONAL PLANNING NETWORK ASSESSMENT

The Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies (VAPDA) retained the NADO Research Foundation to complete a statewide assessment of regional planning commissions (RPCs) as part of a statutory requirement adopted by the Vermont Legislature. As part of this assessment, NADO evaluated the network of organizations across six areas of focus; governance, funding, program and service delivery, equity, accountability, and staffing. This report was finalized in February 2025 and submitted for review to the state legislature shortly after its completion.



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (EDD COP)



**EDD CoP**  
Economic Development District  
Community of Practice

Now in its third year, the Economic Development District Community of Practice (EDD CoP) continues to offer EDD staff a wide range of learning and networking opportunities, both in-person at conferences and workshops and online through virtual convenings. Funded through a cooperative agreement from the U.S. EDA, the EDD CoP is led by the NADO Research Foundation with support from the National Association of Regional Councils, University Economic Development Association, and First Nations Development Institute.

A wide range of webinars, reports, case studies, and issue briefs provided information and best practices on core EDD focus areas, including the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS); disaster preparedness and recovery; downtown redevelopment; wealth creation and asset-based approaches; manufacturing strategies; organizational development; and more. In 2025, the EDD CoP also took a deeper dive into some of the most pressing issues facing regions today by examining the challenges and opportunities posed by housing, childcare, and artificial intelligence. The EDD CoP also embraced fresh approaches to sharing information and resources for EDDs, including creating a mapping archive and video series. All resources developed over the past year are available in NADO's Resource Library.

In 2025, the virtual peer learning cohorts established through the EDD CoP continued to expand and strengthen their impact. These cohorts are designed to build and nurture bonds among EDD staff across the country. The *Collaborative Learning Group* (CLG) brought together 37 early-career EDD staff (those with two years or less at their organization) to learn from one another and build confidence in navigating their roles. The *CEDS Peer Exchange* program included 102 EDD staff and provided a collaborative, EDD staff-driven environment for sharing common challenges and opportunities in the CEDS planning process. The second cohort of the *Executive Director Mentor Program* brought together 15 mentors and 16 mentees from all six EDA regions, meeting in small groups to exchange knowledge and expertise in organizational leadership. The *Wealth Creation Learning Cohort*, the newest learning cohort, was launched in August and includes 12 participants that are exploring topics including CEDS and wealth creation, understanding demand, value chain mapping, and leveraging underutilized assets.



## NADO AWARDS PROGRAMS

### Aliceann Wohlbruck Impact Awards



The Aliceann Wohlbruck NADO Impact Awards program showcases the meaningful work of NADO members in strengthening communities through regional planning and economic development initiatives.

This year's 90 awardees were recognized at the 2025 Annual Training Conference in Salt Lake City and are featured in an awards StoryMap. Throughout the year, projects are shared with federal agencies, highlighted on Capitol Hill, and used as models for peer-to-peer learning. NADO members are encouraged to apply for 2026 Impact Awards when applications open in early spring.

### Excellence in Regional Transportation Awards

The Excellence in Regional Transportation Awards, a program of NADO's RPO America and the NADO Research Foundation, recognizes noteworthy projects and programs in rural, small metropolitan, and larger areas that help meet regional needs through various program areas. In 2025, NADO and RPO America recognized 14 projects from 14 organizations in 14 states.



# The NADO Team

Joe McKinney, *Executive Director*  
Mirielle Burgoyne, *Deputy Executive Director*

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## **COMMUNICATIONS**

Katie Allison, *Associate Director, Communications*

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## **OPERATIONS**

Krystal De Leon, *Director of Operations*  
Kar'ron Grant, *Operations Specialist*  
Rachel Katorkas, *Associate Director, Finance*  
Jamie McCormick, *Senior Manager, Events and Member Services*

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## **GOVERNMENT RELATIONS**

Michael Matthews, *Director of Government Relations*  
Juliette Wilder, *Manager of Government Relations*

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## **PROGRAMS**

Bret Allphin, *Associate Director, Data and Research*  
Ryan Collins, *Program Manager*  
Joe D'Antonio, *Program Manager*  
Carrie Kissel, *Associate Director, Transportation*  
Krishna Kunapareddy, *Senior Program Manager*  
Melissa Levy, *Wealth Creation Specialist*  
Jack Morgan, *Director of Programs*  
Haley Schultheis, *Program Manager*  
Brett Schwartz, *Associate Director, Economic Development*  
Ethan Simon, *Research Fellow*  
Dion Thompson-Davoli, *Program Manager*  
London Weier, *Research and Writing Fellow*

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# The NADO Board

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Matthew Dolge, *President*, Piedmont Triad Regional Council (NC)  
Charlie Baker, *First Vice President*, Chittenden County RPC (VT)  
Robert Venables, *Second Vice President*, Southeast Conference (AK)  
Russell Devorsky, *Treasurer*, Heart of Texas Council of Governments  
Rick Hunsaker, *Immediate Past President*, Region XII Council of Governments (IA)

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## **CENTRAL CHAPTER**

Tom Bliss, Southeast Nebraska Development District  
Rachelle Howe, Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission (IA)  
Randall Hrabe, Northwest Kansas Planning & Development Commission  
Cindy Hultz, Mark Twain Regional Council of Governments (MO)  
Laura Lewis Marchino, Region 9 EDD of Southwest Colorado  
John McCurdy, Southwest Iowa Planning Council  
Amber Metz, Lake Agassiz Regional Council (ND)  
Nichole Moore, Chariton Valley Planning & Development COG (IA)  
Paul Tuss, Bear Paw Development Corporation (MT)

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## **EAST CHAPTER**

Robert Clark, Northern Maine Development Commission  
Sean Davis, Plan RVA (VA)  
Jill Foy, Northwest Commission (PA)  
Beth Gilles, Lake Champlain-Lake George Regional Planning Board (NY)  
Jeremy Holmes, Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission (VA)  
Tom Kennedy, Mount Ascutney Regional Commission (VT)  
Amy Kessler, North Central PA Commission  
Martha Shickle, Plan RVA (VA)  
Shane Whitehair, Region VII Planning & Development Council (WV)

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## **MIDWEST CHAPTER**

Jeff Hagan, Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional PDC (MI)  
Melissa Badtke, East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission  
Alene Carr, Southeastern Illinois RPDC  
Steven Ray, North Central Indiana Regional Planning Commission  
Chasity Schmelzenbach, Buckeye Hills Regional Council (OH)

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# The NADO Board

## **SOUTHEAST CHAPTER**

Joe Barker, Southwest Tennessee Development District  
Jarrett Haley, Kentuckiana Regional Planning & Development Agency  
Kimberly Hobbs, Southern Georgia Regional Commission  
Randall Imler, Catawba Regional Council of Governments (SC)  
Calvin Newsom, Southern Mississippi PDD  
Chris Rietow, Apalachee Regional Planning Council (FL)  
Lori Sokol, East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission  
Danna Stansbury, Foothills Regional Commission (NC)  
Anthony Starr, Western Piedmont Council of Governments (NC)  
Waylon Wright, Lake Cumberland Area Development District (KY)  
Jason Vincent, Pennyryle Area Development District (KY)  
Rick Yakubic, East Tennessee Development District

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## **SOUTHWEST CHAPTER**

Kevin Belanger, South Central Planning and Development Commission (LA)  
Shanna Burke, Southeast Texas Regional Planning Commission  
David Cleveland, East Texas Council of Governments  
Errin Clocker, Grand Gateway Economic Development Association (OK)  
Kelly Criswell, South Plains Association of Governments (TX)  
Lonnie Hunt, Deep East Texas COG

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## **WEST CHAPTER**

Lisa Dawson, Northeast Oregon EDD  
Jeff McCurdy, Frontier Community Resources (ID)  
Ryan Richardson, Superior California Economic Development

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## **AFFILIATE CHAPTER**

Kevin Adam, Rural Transportation Advisory Council (AZ)  
Brett Doney, Great Falls Development Authority, Inc. (MT)

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## **PAST PRESIDENTS**

Kevin Byrd, New River Valley Regional Commission (VA)  
Chris Brown, Ark-Tex Council of Governments (TX)  
Chris Fetzer, Northern Arizona Council of Governments  
Lynne Keller Forbes, Southeastern Council of Governments (SD)  
Peter Gregory, Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission (VT)  
Vernon (Randy) Kelley, Three Rivers Planning Development District (MS)  
Jeff Kiely, Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments  
Scott Koons, North Central Florida Regional Planning Council

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