



# SEDC News

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**Winter  
2008**

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## **2008 Summer Seminar**

### **July 9-11, 2008**

**Orlando/Kissimmee,  
Florida**

**This two day seminar** will be held at the Gaylord Palms Resort and Convention Center. Plan to attend this mid-year meeting and hear the latest trends and tips for improving your personal, organizational and community performance. And, a separate one-day track will be offered providing attendees a better understanding of economic development finance issues delivered by the Council of Development Finance Agencies. More details will be sent soon.

## **2008 Annual Conference**

**The Homestead  
Resort**

### **October 4-7, 2008**

**Hot Springs, Virginia**

**The conference** will be centered around the theme of "Energy Driven Economic Development." Join us at this historic resort to learn more about how the issue of energy is affecting our profession and what trends are expected for the future.

## **Technology** continues to elevate us to a '**paperless**' level

How are you receiving your news and staying current on what's happening in the world? Are you receiving multiple email newsletters, blogging communications, or just visiting favorite websites? Are you ready to be instantly updated on the news that's important to you and receive only the stories you want? Then an RSS Feed might be the answer for you.

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As Chandler Cornett shared with us in a recent issue of Friday@SEDC, "RSS stands for Really Simple Syndication. RSS feeds allow for the user to acquire up-to-date information in a condensed manner, avoiding the hassle of constantly refreshing a web page for new information." RSS is, simply put, a format for distributing and gathering content from sources across the Web, including newspapers, magazines, and blogs. Web publishers use RSS to easily create and distribute news feeds that include link, headlines, and summaries.

With an RSS Reader on your computer you can customize the information you want to receive. Imagine logging onto your computer and instantly receiving only the news stories that you want to read! RSS feeds are continuously updated as the websites are updated so there is no need to refresh or update on your own. Once set up with an RSS Reader, your computer can retrieve and compile only the information that you are interested in. Most websites allow you to subscribe to RSS feeds.

## How can you use RSS?

According to Yahoo.com, typical applications for consuming or using RSS include:

- Using a program known as a News Aggregator to collect, update and display RSS feeds
- Incorporating RSS feeds into weblogs

News Aggregators (also called news readers) will download and display RSS feeds for you. A number of free and commercial News Aggregators are available for download. Popular news readers include AmphetaDesk, NetNewsWire, and Radio Userland. Many aggregators are separate, "stand-alone" programs such as those listed above; other services will let you add RSS feeds to a Web page. Yahoo! lets you add RSS feeds to your My Yahoo! Page.

Another way many people use RSS feeds is by incorporating content into weblogs, or "blogs". Blogs are web pages where entries are commonly displayed in reverse chronological order. Many blogs provide commentary or news on a particular subject; others function as more personal online diaries. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, web pages, and other media related to its topic. The ability for readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part of many blogs.

For more information on RSS Feeds check out these websites:

**CNN Money:** <http://money.cnn.com/services/rss/>

**Reuters:** <http://www.reuters.com/tools/rss>

**Freakonomics Blog:** <http://feeds.feedburner.com/freakonomicsblog>

**EDPro Weblog:** <http://edpro.blogspot.com/> \*must have premium service for RSS

**Wall Street Journal:** [http://online.wsj.com/public/page/O\\_0813.html?mod=hpp\\_us\\_podcasts](http://online.wsj.com/public/page/O_0813.html?mod=hpp_us_podcasts)

**Yahoo!.com:** <http://news.yahoo.com/rss>

**Washington Post:** <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/rss/index.html#what>

If you're interested in reading more on the subject check out **O'Reilly's** PDF, What are Syndication Feeds., This report provides everything you need to know about what elements make up a feed, the different formats, and the tools you need to manage incoming and outgoing feeds. To buy this PDF go to <http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/syndicationfeeds/?CMP=ILCKC2876097557&ATT=http://www.xml.com/pub/a/2002/12/18/dive-into-xml.html%20>

# Lack of Affordable Housing Near Jobs: A Problem for Employers and Employees — New Survey Looks at Impact of Commuting

Concern is apparent within the business community—particularly among larger employers—about the lack of affordable housing for employees, with companies reporting the shortage as being problematic in hiring and retaining entry- and mid-level workers, according to a new survey released by the Urban Land Institute (ULI). The same survey showed interest by moderate-income workers in moving closer to work if affordable housing were available.

The survey, conducted between April 26, 2007 and May 1, 2007 by Harris Interactive®, was taken to gauge perceptions by employers and commuters regarding the impact of long distances between housing and jobs on business operations and workers' quality of life. The employer portion polled employers from three groups—those with less than 50 employees; those with 50 to 100 employees; and those with more than 100. More than 300 companies from across the United States responded. The largest companies consistently reported the greatest awareness of problems resulting from long commutes and an inadequate supply of affordable housing—ranging from high employee stress to high employee turnover.

The consumer portion, covering more than 1,200 commuters nationwide, included those with commutes of less than 30 minutes, 30 to 60 minutes, 60 to 90 minutes and more than 90 minutes. On the whole, the survey found that the majority of employees will tolerate living farther away from work if housing is more affordable; but there were noticeable differences in opinion when measured by commute time, income and age. Those with the longest commutes were the most willing to change jobs for a shorter commute, and the most apt to move closer to their jobs if more affordable housing options were available. Those with incomes of less than \$50,000—widely considered the “mainstream” workforce—were significantly more likely to move closer to work if affordable housing were available than those with higher incomes. When measured by age, those aged 18-34 were the most likely to uproot and change jobs, likely reflecting fewer family obligations and fewer ties to their existing neighborhoods.

Survey responses indicate that larger employers understand the reality of moderately priced housing being scattered far from employment centers. And, while many consumers continue to equate success with being able to afford a larger home in outlying areas, he said the responses from moderate-income and younger workers show they are starting to “feel the pinch” of money and time spent commuting.

## **Some highlights from the employer survey:**

- Fifty-five percent of larger companies (those with 100-plus employees) reported a lack of affordable housing near their location.
- Sixty-seven percent of the larger companies that acknowledged a lack of affordable housing believe that it is having a negative impact on retaining qualified entry-level and mid-level employees.
- Fifty-eight percent of the larger companies that acknowledged a lack of affordable housing reported having lost employees at least in part to long commute times.
- Sixty-nine percent of the larger companies believe a long commute increases employee stress; 63 percent believe it triggers negative emotion among employees; 48 percent said it causes more absenteeism; and 46 percent said it contributes to employee turnover/attrition.
- Thirty-six percent of the larger companies believe it is important to be actively involved in providing employee access to affordable housing.
- Awareness among larger companies regarding corporate and government housing programs remains relatively low (25 percent were aware of corporate programs and 34 percent were aware of government programs); but 42 percent of larger companies said they would participate in a government program.

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- Forty-five percent of the larger companies offer flextime to reduce commuting time; 21 percent offer telecommuting.

### **Some highlights from the consumer survey:**

- Sixty-seven percent of those with annual household incomes of less than \$50,000 would be at least somewhat likely to move closer to work if more affordable housing were available.
- Sixty-four percent of those earning less than \$50,000 would be at least somewhat likely to make a lateral employment move in exchange for a shorter commute; compared to 60 percent earning more than \$50,000.
- Seventy-six percent of those aged 18-34 would be at least somewhat likely to make a lateral employment move in exchange for a shorter commute; and 76 percent in that age group would be at least somewhat likely to move closer to work if affordable housing were available.
- Fifty-seven percent of all commuters surveyed said they would be at least somewhat likely to move closer to work if affordable housing were available.
- Eighty-five percent of respondents who commute more than 90 minutes daily said they would be at least somewhat likely to make a lateral job switch to cut their commute in half.
- Forty-seven percent who work in suburbs prefer to live closer to work even though it may mean higher housing prices and less disposable income; while 53 percent of suburban workers prefer to live in an area with affordable housing opportunities and more disposable income, even if it means living further away from work and having a longer commute.

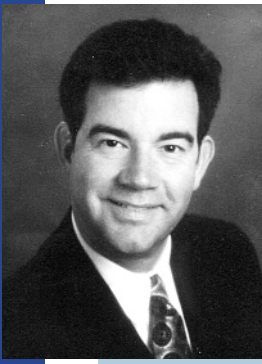
One notable finding in the consumer survey suggests a lingering gap between perception and reality. Of all consumer respondents, 42 percent said they would prefer to live closer to work to shorten their commutes, even if it meant higher housing prices. Fifty-eight percent said they would prefer to live in an area with more affordable housing, even if it meant a longer commute. It is likely that many consumers who don't perceive living closer to work as desirable are not factoring in transportation costs as a rising expense, and are not aware that desirable housing close to jobs is even an option. The reality is that moderate-income housing can be developed near employment centers in a way that provides a high quality of life, offering proximity to both amenities and work.

To help raise awareness of the need for more housing affordable to moderate-income workers, ULI has established the ULI Terwilliger Center for Workforce Housing. The ULI Terwilliger Center is based in Washington, D.C., and focuses on three specific markets – Atlanta, Washington, D.C., and Southeast Florida. Its staff members will work with housing-related organizations and various public- and private-sector representatives in several urban areas to create models of mixed-income workforce housing design, development and financing that can be applied to other cities. In each, the center will develop a plan to increase the production of mixed-income housing over a specified time period; to expand available project financing where necessary; and to support developers in completing projects. The goal is to produce at least 3,500 units of new workforce housing in the three markets within five years.

As part of its overall program of work, the center will identify barriers to workforce housing production (such as inflexible zoning and building codes) and work to eliminate those barriers by raising awareness of the affordability gap and by advocating changes in public policy. To educate the public and help change public policy, the Center will partner with local, regional and national organizations, including chambers of commerce, employer organizations, home builder organizations and housing advocacy groups. The Center will publish best practices, organize conferences and provide competitions to recognize individuals and companies demonstrating excellence in the area of mixed-income housing production.

The workforce housing provided through the Center will be oriented toward people typically making between 60 percent and 120 percent of the median income for the targeted market, and it will be mixed with housing offered at market rates. Those income boundaries will be kept flexible, however, to reflect variations of salaries and housing costs in individual markets. An emphasis will be placed on designing and building housing in ways that encourage long-term affordability.

[See details of the survey here.](#)



# President's Message

by Gene A. Stinson, CEcD, CAE

## President

## What a Conference Registration Covers... and Doesn't

Many of you work for organizations that hold meetings and/or you are involved with organizations in a volunteer capacity that hold professional development events. For those of you in this situation you have an idea of the costs associated with "putting on" a conference/seminar. For those of you that haven't had this experience I'd like to share some information to give you an idea of the costs associated with hosting a SEDC event.

As a goal, SEDC strives to provide quality programming along with memorable entertainment and food/beverage experiences at an affordable price. In comparison to other professional associations in the economic development arena I know we deliver a product that is a great value. In fact when this question is asked in follow-up surveys on our meetings those responding consistently give us very high marks on the value of their experience (dollars spent for what they received).

Conference expenses for large gatherings at a major hotel are significant. Soft drinks and bottled water provided at breaks average \$4.50 each. Coffee can cost \$80 a gallon for a break! An average breakfast or lunch in a hotel frequently runs \$30-40.00+ per person after taxes and service charges are added (service charges in 2007 average 22% and sales taxes vary from 8 to near 10%). A reception and dinner with alcohol are the most expensive food and beverage functions and will easily run \$125 per person. Audio visual costs for a two day event can run \$6-8,000 depending on the number of meeting rooms used. Other major meeting costs include the related printed pieces both for pre-registration items and then onsite agendas, signage and banners. For our annual meeting this is a big cost of nearly \$20,000. Depending on the event's program, the related costs for speakers is also a major expense. Not even considering any speaker fees, the cost to pay lodging and related travel expenses for a single speaker will average over \$500.

After tabulating the major expenses detailed above, you can quickly see how expenses add up. With the scenario above and an attendance number of about 250 people, the cost just to cover expenses is \$325-\$350 per person. One of the best ways to keep registration costs low is to spread fixed costs such as speaker related expenses, signage, printing design and entertainment over a larger pool of registrants. A second way to offset the registration cost is to bring in additional revenue through conference sponsors and exhibitors. These methods require packaging services and exposure to bring value to the sponsor and exhibitor.

Hopefully, this information has provided you a better understanding of the expenses related to hosting an event by any organization. SEDC will continue to offer quality programs and provide a great value at a reasonable cost.

**Note:** I'd like to thank Donna Croom, a long time SEDC member and now Executive Director of the South Carolina Workers' Compensation Educational Association for the idea of this article by sharing a similar article she wrote for her association.



# Chairman's Message

by Robert Ingram

## Chairman

Serving as SEDC Chairman is an interesting, challenging, occasionally frustrating but always rewarding experience.

The challenge comes from trying to provide value-added benefits to over 900 members who have widely diverse job responsibilities and a broad spectrum of interests; who may represent a community of a few thousand people or one of a hundred thousand or who may work for an agency which has no community connection. SEDC members work and live across 17 states, have different levels of education and experience and different expectations and needs from their membership.

Some members want and appreciate frequent contact from SEDC. We have received dozens of 'thank-you' comments and rave reviews for the SEDC TIP OF THE DAY. We have also had members ask to opt out of this communication, obviously seeing no value. Some members are frequent users of ASK SEDC, some never use it and never contribute suggestions to those who do. Many members are excited about the March 11 Consultant's event in Atlanta, as evidenced by a huge registration and large sponsorships, but not every member benefits from such an event. Those involved in economic development finance, community development, organizational development or personal skills development will find our summer meeting in Orlando a great use of their time and professional development budget, while those not involved in these areas will most probably not participate.

SEDC is a dynamic, ever-changing, very diverse organization—just like our own communities. To be effective we have to offer a broad range of services and benefits. Sometimes your leadership, which you elect, does a great job in determining what you want and need. Sometimes we don't. Some programs will greatly benefit you. Some will not.

If you want SEDC to be of more value to you, tell us how. We conduct annual surveys asking members to rate programs and suggest new ones. We conduct annual surveys asking about future meeting venues. We have numerous committees which give every member the opportunity for input. SEDC leaders utilize all of this input to try and develop programs which are "most desired" by members. The program of work is tweaked every year, based upon the input received.

**Value Added** is our slogan for 2008. It is one I and your officers take seriously. We are smart enough to know that everything the organization does will not benefit or please each one of you—that's just life. But we do care. We do want SEDC to be the best organization of its type in the world, to offer you benefits which exceed their cost, to offer you opportunities to grow professionally and personally, and to help you make your community and/or organization be the best that it can be.

I welcome your suggestions to how we can do a better job.

*Robert Ingram*

2008 SEDC Chairman



# JOB Posting

[www.sedc.org](http://www.sedc.org)

## Jobs Winter 2008

The following current job Posting were available at press time. Please go to [www.sedc.org](http://www.sedc.org) and click on **Career Center** to view the details of the most recent Posting.

We receive new Posting often so check back soon!

### **Executive Director**

- The Logan Economic Alliance for Development (LEAD), Russellville, Kentucky

### **Economic Development Director**

- Duplin County Economic Development Commission, Kenansville, North Carolina

### **Economic Development Planner**

- City of Cocoa, Florida

### **Executive Director**

- Graves County Alliance, Inc., Mayfield, Kentucky

### **Economic Development Director**

- Granville Economic Development Commission, Oxford, North Carolina

### **Economic Development and Community Relations Director**

- City of Covington, Kentucky

### **Director of Business Development**

- Greenwood Partnership Alliance, Greenwood, South Carolina

### **President**

- Nacogdoches Economic Development Corporation, Nacogdoches, Texas

### **President & Chief Executive Officer**

- Tifton-Tift Chamber of Commerce, Tifton, Georgia

### **Retail Development Specialist**

- ElectriCities, Raleigh, North Carolina

### **President**

- Polk County Chamber of Commerce & Development Authority, Polk, Georgia

### **Program Director**

- Georgia Department of Economic Development, Atlanta, Georgia

### **Program Coordinator**

- Georgia Department of Economic Development, Atlanta, Georgia

### **Economic Development Specialist**

- Southwest Community Development Authority, Covington, Tennessee

## Connect Winter 2008

**David G. Byerly** is the President/CEO for the Greater Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Mr. Byerly was the former President for the Garland County Economic Development Corporation in Virginia.

**Rose Mary Jackson** is the Director of Community Relations for Arkansas State University-Beebe in Beebe, Arkansas. Ms. Jackson was formerly the Project Manager with Arkansas Economic Development Commission.

**William (Bill) Martin, CECD** is the CEO for Harlingen Economic Development Corporation in Harlingen, Texas. Mr. Martin was the former President for the Cumberland County Business Council in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

**Jim Bradshaw** is the Executive Director for the Brunswick County Economic Development in Bolivia, North Carolina. Mr. Bradshaw was the former Business Development/Economic Development for Woolpert Inc. in Portsmouth, Virginia.

**Stephen Surles** is the Executive Director for Union County Development Association in New Albany, Mississippi. Mr. Surles was the former President/CEO for the Monroe County Chamber of Commerce in Amory, Mississippi.

**Warren D. Harris** is the Director for the Virginia Beach Economic Development in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Mr. Harris was the former Director for the Economic Development Department, City of Chesapeake in Chesapeake, Virginia.

**Jody A. Lassiter** is the President/CEO for Danville/Boyle County Economic Development Partnership in Danville, Kentucky. Mr. Lassiter was the former Executive Director for the Logan Economic Alliance for Development in Russellville, Kentucky.

**Chad Chancellor** is the Executive Director for the Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee. Mr. Chancellor was the former Project Manager for the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce in Mobile, Alabama.

**Woody Brinson**, formerly the Executive Director for the Duplin County Economic Development Commission in North Carolina. Mr. Brinson has retired and resides in Kenansville, North Carolina.

**Robert M. Van Geons**, CECD is the Executive Director for the Salisbury-Rowan Economic Development Commission in Salisbury, North Carolina. Mr. Van Geons was the former Executive Director for the Stanly County Economic Development in Albemarle, North Carolina.

**Michael J. Olivier, CED, FM, HLM** is the President for Future Pipe Industries in Gulfport, Mississippi. Mr. Olivier was the former Secretary for Louisiana Economic Development in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

**Linda D. Moore** is the Vice President for the Barrow County Economic Development Council in Winder, Georgia. Ms. Moore was the former Vice President for Albany-Dougherty Economic Development Commission in Albany, Georgia.