



Member Spotlight

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The Blue Springs Economic Development Corporation (BSEDC) is a non profit organization in Blue Springs, Missouri, that was founded in 2006 and opened for business on January 1, 2007. Under the direction of Sher Lopez, Investor and Business Relations Manager, BREP, the first Business Retention Program was launched in Blue Springs.

Through the "Grow Blue Springs" business visitation program in 2009 – 2010, the following were completed: 46 Synchronist visits, 91 business assists, 8 forums, 1 corridor study and 1 workforce development survey. Beginning in 2006 through June 2010, \$65,000 has been awarded through state and federal grants for business retention activities.

While we had plenty of success in our organization, we could have not done it without our regional partnership with the Eastern Jackson County Development Alliance. This partnership, built over the last 3 years, has picked up enough momentum through regional opportunities and partnering that the alliance is currently undergoing a branding/marketing exercise as well as developing a strategic work plan to accelerate our regional exposure. The most beneficial tool to-date from this partnership has been our OneConnect program.

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Joint Conference 2010

Building the Future: Strategies for Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction

by Melinda Cox

The Crescent City will host the 2010 Annual Joint Conference for BREI and SEDC on August 14-17. Business Retention Expansion International and the Southern Economic Development Council will bring economic developers from all parts of the world to New Orleans, LA, to collaborate on

maintaining and galvanizing our most vital assets – our local existing business partners. Conference headquarters will be the Sheraton Hotel New Orleans located at 500 Canal Street near the French Quarter.

Building the Future: Strategies for Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction will serve as our mantra as we assess and reflect on the recent economic hardships to prepare for an economic recovery in our communities worldwide.

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Joint Conference 2010

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This platform provides a dialogue for two major professional organizations to meet, work in partnership and plan for the future. Conference dignitaries such as Louisiana Secretary of Economic Development Stephen Moret, New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu, Tulane University's Dr. Peter Ricchiuti and Southern Growth's Executive Director Ted Abernathy will address the conference theme blended with our current realities. Program highlights will feature workshops on public-private partnerships, advantages of tax benefits, going green, best practice case studies, and accessing capital and site location trends. This conference also provides the individual BRE professional an opportunity to recharge from the dynamics of the conference content and the spirit of the people of Louisiana.

The conference will also showcase other benefits to our membership such as networking opportunities with SEDC members from across the southern U.S. Be aware that certification and recertification opportunities beyond the conference schedule will be available. In addition, make plans now to be part of the Silent Auction to raise scholarship monies and celebrate our success at the reception following the event. Don't miss the Awards Breakfast on Monday morning when we recognize our economic developers and their communities who "set the bar" for innovation.

Evenings in the "Big Easy" are relaxed, welcoming and immersed in history and the intertwining cultures as the city's official nickname suggests. Conferees will have access to a wide array of activities such as the eclectic culture of the Arts District and Jackson Square, the historic architecture of the French Quarter, the cities of the dead, the mystique of voodoo, the extraordinary food from fine dining at 5-Star restaurants to shrimp po-boys or blackened red fish – especially the Cajun cuisine with its Creole heritage, a Katrina Devastation Tour, "Dirty Linen" night on Royal Street on August 14, NOMA's *Fabergé Eggs*, Louis Armstrong-style jazz in Preservation Hall and the original French Market coffee stand - Café Du Monde, just to name a few. Each of the above experiences is a lesson in how a community comes back to thrive after devastation as our conferees will discover *en masse* during dinner at Tipitina's in the French Quarter on Monday night.

The [registration](#) deadline for the conference is August 6, 2010 and the reservation deadline for the [hotel](#) conference rate of \$106.00 per night is July 11, 2010. A spouse/guest program is also available. Make sure that "Nawlins" is part of your August calendar for professional development, tourism at its best, culinary delights from morning to night and the opportunity to meet new global colleagues and share best practices. Join us on August 14 in New Orleans, Louisiana, to observe first hand how to make your community a phoenix project and don't forget your umbrella for the afternoon rain showers!

Members Helping Members

After a one month break, Members Helping Members is back. The questions for June are:

1. Looking for Best Practices on Winning New Rural Development – programs, people, new ideas
2. Ideas on identifying, recruiting and motivating volunteers
3. Ideas and tips on getting buy-in from business and government and individuals on BR&E programs
4. Samples of community profiles
5. Cluster start up information
6. Survey software – what are you using, does it work, is it easily modified/adaptable to program changes

Please share your information with members. Send it to [Connie](#).

Scholarship \$\$

During the 2008 and 2009 Conferences, BREI held a Dollar Auction. The monies raised help fund scholarships to the next conference. This year, BREI and SEDC will have a joint Silent Auction. The auction is on Sunday evening, August 15, in conjunction with a reception. ***Watch for more details coming soon!***

Member Spotlight

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This program is a one-stop shop for the region in finding business resources available to local companies (www.oneconnectejc.com). Under this umbrella we maximize training sessions, educational sessions, realtors roundtables, business outreach, workforce outreach and networking opportunities for the 9 communities in the region. By maximizing our resources, we can ensure the region grows and ultimately benefits each individual community.

The Business Retention Council has also played a key part in the success of Blue Springs and the Eastern Jackson County Region. The council is comprised of communities that received the grant awards from 2006-2010 that come together to share best practices, host speaking/education opportunities from surrounding resources, begin dialogue with the educational entities, and focus on workforce issues and opportunities. The council also provides a platform to track regional movement and report back to the state and federal government regarding what we know and what we see as issues and opportunities for our part of the state. As the 2010 grant comes to a close, we feel very strongly that this group will continue to meet monthly and make recommendations for our region of the state.

What does the future hold for Blue Springs? As in many businesses and companies, the future holds many challenges for our organization. With a 3 person staff, we are always looking to work smarter and be more efficient. Recognizing that our organization is a public/private partnership, I will begin to work hand-in-hand with our investors to ensure everything we have learned from our business retention activities will be translated to investor retention. Our theory behind the same individual retaining investors and businesses is that the process seems to be seamless. Already recognized in the community as an advocate for businesses, we can translate those tools and mentalities to build our relationship with our investor base and bring our value add to their needs back to the forefront. Recognizing the need to communicate, educate and assist our rapidly growing investor base, will help us proceed with our largest attraction/retention/development strategies in our business plan (246% increase in investors from 2006-2010).

In the retention area, we will continue our outreach to the local business community but refine our visits and focus on our revisits and major employees. Under the Eastern Jackson County Development Alliance banner we will maximize our workforce, education, training and networking opportunities for our community. We will begin working with our Chamber of Commerce as they begin to ramp up their business presence as well by introducing them to Synchronist CRTS and our site and building locator tool, Location One, for commercial and retail inventory. As we work to help our community partners become stronger, Blue Springs as a whole becomes a stronger, more business-attractive environment.

In the redevelopment strategy for Blue Springs, a task force has been formed to strategically look at areas of the community that could be redeveloped for light to medium industrial parks. The task force is in the early stages of identifying those opportunities and corridors into and out of the city that could be done in phases.

For attraction involvement, Blue Springs is focused on the Animal Health Corridor, working to close the well known area to the east of that designated corridor! The announcement of the Missouri Innovation Park (www.MissouriInnovationPark.com) and the potential jobs it would bring to our community has excited the entire community. The Missouri Innovation Park will be anchored by a long-term collaboration with the University of Missouri (MU), as its anchor research tenant. MU will establish a Mizzou Innovation Center at the Missouri Innovation Park to consolidate MU's various activities in the region. The park offers a business and research park within a planned park environment, featuring walking and biking trails incorporated into the existing golf course and pedestrian friendly environment.

In closing, I look forward to the changing business dynamic in our community and what the next 12 – 18 months will bring as it makes me stronger in my economic development specialty and pushes my skills to their limits!

Election Reminder

Have you voted for the new Board Members for 2010-2011?

This year, in keeping with sustainability, the BREI elections are being done electronically. If you have misplaced the link, please contact [Connie](#) and she will resend it to you.

BREI Training

What: **BRE Fundamentals**
 Where: Doubletree Hotel Downtown Memphis
 185 Union Avenue
 Memphis, Tennessee 38103
 Contact: [Kate Pera](#) for reservations
 When: July 13-14, 2010
 Instructors: Kathleen Tweeten & Alan Barefield
 Registration: [Now Open](#)

BRE Fundamentals provides attendees the tools necessary to implement a BRE program and improve the economic state of their community.

After the course, you will know:

- If your community is ready to implement a BRE program
- What approach best suits your community
- Evaluation techniques
- The next step

What: **Building Effective Teams**
 Where: Sheraton New Orleans Hotel
 500 Canal Street
 New Orleans, LA 70130
 When: August 17-18, 2010
 Instructor: Kathleen Tweeten
 Registration: [Now Open](#)

Develop an understanding of the elements that encompass a successful BRE program including groups, individuals and organizations. The potential and limitations of each provide insight for establishing and sustaining a strong BRE program.

In this course you will learn:

- Recruitment
- Orientation
- To Make Meetings Effective and Efficient
- Strategic Relationship Building, Partnerships, Coalitions and Collaborations.

Business Roundtable Luncheons

by Melissa Dickens

In October 2009, the City of Williamsburg, Virginia, held its first Business Roundtable luncheon. This new initiative, which is part of a larger program aimed at assisting the City's existing businesses, strives to improve direct communications between business owners and the City. Michele DeWitt, Director of Economic Development for the City, facilitates the program along with Monty Mason, the City's Economic Development Authority's Chairman. According to Michele, the monthly meetings have been

What: **Survey Design & Analysis**
 Where: Sheraton New Orleans Hotel
 500 Canal Street
 New Orleans, LA 70130
 When: August 18-19, 2010
 Instructor: Alan Barefield
 Registration: [Now Open](#)

Acquire a working knowledge of the survey process including what data needs to be collected and how to obtain it.

In this course you will learn:

- Articulating the Need for Surveys
- Types of Surveys and their Applications
- Obtaining Outcome Information
- Survey Method Selection
- Sample Design and Size
- Question Development
- Implementation Tactics
- Collection and Storage of Data
- Analysis Techniques
- Reporting

Business Roundtable Luncheons - *continued*

a huge success, each attracting over 40 local business owners and senior managers. The meetings are held monthly at various restaurants throughout the City.

The meeting agenda typically includes 15 minutes for networking and ordering food, a brief talk or presentation by a City representative, then ample time for Questions & Answers and discussion of business issues pertinent to that day's topic and presenter. Topics have included everything from employment concerns and resources, to transportation plans, to the City's budget outlook for the upcoming year, to the local and national economy and their effects on the City's future. Following each meeting, a summary of the discussion is posted on the City's Economic Development website, which allows those who were unable to attend to still follow the progress of the group.

Due to the overwhelming interest in the program, City officials have decided to continue hosting the gathering indefinitely. The program has already proven beneficial to both City staff and businesses, as a great deal of information has been gained that will help staff retain and grow existing businesses in the area and improve the business environment for all.

For details on Williamsburg's Business Roundtable luncheons visit www.yeswilliamsburg.com.

Resource Update

Connie's Comments

Survey Results

Check out the recent additions to the resource section in the Members Only area of the BREI website. Many new items have been added recently. This section continues to expand so check regularly for updates! Do you have a resource that you would like to share or see? Please send your items and/or requests to [Connie](#).

New items:

- ◆ Small Business Resources
- ◆ National and Professional Development Associations
- ◆ US Government Resources
- ◆ US Regional & State Economic Development Associations
- ◆ Businesses
- ◆ Environment and Historic Preservations
- ◆ Finance
- ◆ Infrastructure
- ◆ Public Administrations
- ◆ Real Estate and Property Development
- ◆ Retail

First, I would like to thank all of you for participating in the recent BREI survey. The information helps BREI to meet the needs of its members in the future.

While reading through the surveys, I have a few notes that I would like to share with you.

- **Webinars** – The webinars that BREI is able to offer to members at a discount are made available through Professional Learning Laboratory. They have provided us with a tentative schedule for 2010 that is subject to change. The actual descriptions are normally made available to us the month of the actual webinar.
- **Certification & Education** - BREI has been and will continue to work on certification and education opportunities. The BRE Fundamentals course is available in July in Memphis, TN. We are looking at another course in September or October. Building Effective Teams and Survey Design & Analysis are available after the BREI/SEDC 2010 Conference. Building Effective Teams is also scheduled for September in Nebraska.
- **Training Schedule** - BRE Fundamentals and continuing education courses are currently being scheduled for 2011. Additionally, webinar format is being reviewed. If you are interested in hosting or attending, please contact [me](#).
- **Resources** - Recent additions to the Resource Section of the BREI website are now available.

July Webinar

The scheduled July webinar is ***Business Intelligence for Economic Development***. Watch for more details coming soon!

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