



Member Spotlight

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by **Craig Linhoss**

Gerry Delany lives and works as a free-lance consultant in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal, on the eastern coast of South Africa. Through BREI’s international outreach and training, Gerry has been influenced by its knowledge and is establishing an existing industry program that is expanding across his country.



Gerry Delany

“It was Hank Cothran, a (BREI member and trainer) who helped open the door to the possibility that BREI might recognize a South African BR&E course”, says Gerry. “He gave Claire Patterson (Gerry’s teammate in existing industry work) and me a lot of encouragement to develop our own.”

Gerry also cites that he and Claire received support from the German development agency GTZ to write a manual incorporating South African experience in existing industry.

BREI did not start the BR&E movement in South Africa, but it may have assisted with its expansion through Hank Cothran. Through his role as Extension Specialist with the University of Florida, the university funded Hank to travel to South Africa on three occasions. He observed the South African version of the BREI Certification course and taught a survey design and analysis course in Durban.

continues page 6

Professional Development - Webinar

Economic Gardening
Monday, March 22, 2010
1:00 p.m. (CT)

Economic Gardening is an entrepreneurial approach to economic development and a viable sales growth strategy. Invest in your career and community’s success.

Chris Gibbons is co-inventor (along with the city manager of Littleton, CO, Jim Woods) and face of “Economic Gardening.”

What you will learn:

- Strategies, techniques and tips
- Core elements of an Economic Gardening strategy
- North American and global trends in Economic Gardening
- What’s working
- What’s not working
- Launching an Economic Gardening Program

Register online at brei@brei.org

In this issue:	Volume 10, No. 1 March 2010	
Member Spotlight	1, 3	Member Helping Members 2
Professional Development - Webinar	1	Joint Conference 2010 2
BREI Member Survey	2	Upcoming 2010 Webinars 4
Free - Social Networking	2	BREI Upcoming Classes 4

BREI Member Survey

BREI is striving to provide more resources, opportunities and programs for our members. To help BREI understand your needs as a BRE professional, please take a few minutes to fill out the [member survey](#).

Members Helping Members

BREI is pleased to announce a new resource program for members. March 16 will mark the rollout of 'Members Helping Members'. Through this program, information and help will be provided to members from members. Additionally, a resource depository will be developed and available to members.

Once or twice a month, an E-Mail will be sent to members asking for help on a maximum of five topics/questions. The topics will be open for your response for 10 days. Everyone responding will receive a copy of all the replies.

To submit a question or questions, please either send an E-Mail to Connie at brei@brei.org or use the link on the BREI homepage, www.brei.org.

Free - Social Networking

by Lisa Ponce

Now that we have your attention, here is how you can take advantage of information and advice from your peers that could help your community and businesses. Best of all, it won't cut into your budget!

How do you get access to all this free information? It's simple, join Business Retention Expansion International (BREI) on LinkedIn. If you already have an account, just search in "Groups" for BREI. If you do not have an account its simple, just sign up at www.linkedin.com.

Can you believe that we have been on LinkedIn for over a year? LinkedIn was set up January 2009 led by the efforts of Ernest Strickland, BREI board member. Since that time 120 people have joined to discuss a wide range of creative and essential topics to our communities and businesses. That is a great number! We want to encourage all our members to join, which will allow us to expand our resources with a wealth of information, both nationally and internationally.

So what are other advantages of joining BREI on LinkedIn?

- It gives you insight on what your colleagues are doing to make their BRE programs successful.
- You are able to network with new colleagues.
- It is an active account that allows you to stay current with existing challenges in the industry.
- You have access to a wealth of knowledge from esteemed peers with a plethora of experiences.

We look forward to seeing you on LinkedIn!!!

Joint Conference 2010

Business Retention & Expansion International (BREI) and the Southern Economic Development Council (SEDC) are joining forces this summer for a joint conference in New Orleans, Louisiana. The conference, August 14-17, will be at the Sheraton New Orleans, just steps away from the French Quarter. The theme of this year's event *Building the Future: Strategies for Business Retention, Expansion, and Attraction*, will bring together economic development professionals from around the world.

Highlights of the conference include a pre-conference golf tournament and optional Sunday educational sessions on topics such as labor law, workplace sexual harassment and BRE Throughout the World. We are excited to welcome economist, Dr. Peter Ricchiuti of Tulane University. Other topics to include "Going Green - How to Take Advantage of Available Tax Benefits" presented by Jim Edmonson, President, Edmonson Associates, and "Diversity in America - How It Will Impact Future Growth" presented by Kelly McDonald, McDonald Marketing. Other program topics will include presentations on creative marketing techniques to position your community for new jobs and investment and a panel of leading site location consultants regarding trends and projections for new business locations. More information on the agenda and registration will be available shortly on the SEDC Web site at www.sedc.org.

Member Spotlight

continued from page 1

“We had been keen to work more closely with BREI for some time but it really wasn't practical for South Africans to travel to the US or Canada for all their BR&E training and development, then try and adapt what they had learned to our environment,” says Gerry.

BREI's influence was first introduced to South Africa in 1997 when Gerry's boss at the National Business Initiative (NBI), Henry Jeffreys, attended a BREI conference and training course in Albuquerque. Jeffrey's had been encouraged to attend BREI by Peter Kenyon, an Australian who is recognized around the world as a leading authority on Business, Town and Regional Development.

“In the next few years we worked quite hard to try and introduce the concept in South Africa, but with little success at first. Perhaps because there were so many other priorities for our new democracy”, says Gerry. “Things didn't really get going until 2003 when Trade & Investment KwaZulu-Natal commissioned me to run a pilot program in KwaZulu-Natal. By then I was working independently of NBI but still kept in touch with Peter Kenyon who generously shared his experience of BR&E in Australia.”

Due to the divided past from the apartheid in South Africa, that officially ended in 1994, there are still challenges to working with business. Gerry says the South African economy is dominated by large enterprises and, due to the struggle for democracy, the unions are more militant. Poor workforce skills and education, problems with infrastructure and services including roads, rail, electricity, and telecommunications continue to be a challenge. According to Gerry, crime and red tape is also a problem.

Gerry says, “Given the divided past, an important outcome of the BR&E program may be the opportunity it gives to different role players to work together. It can develop a platform for other development initiatives.”

The courses Gerry and Claire run are equivalent to the BREI basic course. They aim to give people the basic tools to run a local BR&E program on their own. He says they sometimes need additional support but it's not always cost effective to fly to other areas of the country to provide this.

“For this reason we are trying to develop a few other people strategically located in other centers of South Africa with the necessary combination of skills to do what we do,” he says. “We're not there yet.”

Until recently BR&E was essentially confined to KwaZulu-Natal on the east coast, but now he is seeing a lot more people from other provinces at training courses. Gerry and his team recently ran a course in Cape Town for people not just from other parts of South Africa, but also from Namibia and Botswana. He expects to see some action in at least two other provinces in the next couple of months.

In addition, the Industrial Development Corporation has set aside some money to promote and support BR&E in all nine provinces and have been given a particular mandate to assist businesses in distress as a result of the recession. The Industrial Development Corporation is a self-financing, national organization that was established to promote economic growth and industrial development in South Africa.

“To implement the BR&E visitation programs, we've opted for the "traditional" locally-driven approach and use local volunteers to conduct the survey,” says Gerry. “We rarely have the resources and expertise to employ skilled professionals to do this. But it is sometimes difficult to sell this in the face of our high rates of unemployment, and the widespread belief that South Africans no longer volunteer. Our experience is that, not only do they still volunteer, but they can be very generous about it. As a result we reap the benefits of local interest in survey findings and greater willingness to get involved in implementing action afterwards.”

Gerry says it is still a challenge to convince people of the value of BR&E. There is also the harsh reality that a great deal of existing business is still owned by people who had unfair advantages in the apartheid era. He says nonetheless, interest has definitely started to grow in the last year or two, and the recession may well have played a part in this result.

So, while many of the challenges faced by Gerry in South Africa are different from those of the BREI members from North America – at least one remains the same, “BR&E isn't as sexy as starting new enterprises or recruiting investment,” he says.

Maybe one thing that will change is that Gerry can attend a BREI Conference in North America and share his experiences and expertise in developing a BR&E program in a diverse environment.

Upcoming 2010 Webinars

April	The Role of Community Leaders in Economic Development
May	Social Media for the Economic Development Professional
June	Fresh New Views on Winning Rural Development
July	Business Intelligence for Economic Development
August	How Site Selectors <u>Really</u> Use the Internet
September	Existing Industry Strategies for the Real World
October	Attracting Work Rather than Companies
November	Social Media II- Deep Dive into Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube
December	Marketing Masters: Jerry Mallot

BREI Upcoming Classes

BRE Fundamentals

March 24-25	Norfolk, NE
June	Memphis, TN (tentative)
Fall	North Dakota (tentative)

Continuing Education Courses

May	Building Effective Teams Cape Girardeau, MO
May	Survey Design & Analysis Cape Girardeau, MO
August	Building Effective Teams New Orleans, LA
August	Survey Design & Analysis New Orleans, LA
September	Building Effective Teams Minden, NE

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