



Home: [Nation Cities Weekly: Article Items: NCW52608](#): CEDspring08.aspx

In this Section

► [Join NLC](#)

Growing Local Economies Key Topic at CED Meeting

by James Brooks

The ongoing negotiations in Congress, and between Congress and the White House, over housing stimulus legislation was a leading topic at the spring meeting of the Community and Economic Development (CED) Steering Committee in Overland Park, Kan., May 15-17.

Under the chairmanship of Joe Davis, alderman, Milwaukee, Wis., the committee also discussed broad strategies designed to grow local economies. This included presentations focusing on global competitiveness, the untapped potential of small- and medium-sized enterprises, the increasing need for highly skilled workers and the complexity of rehabilitating or reusing aging commercial centers and their supporting infrastructure.

"What we are seeing is that growing local economies requires municipal leaders to stand at the intersection of the global and the local," said Davis. "Economic prosperity is achieved in livable communities with state-of-the-art infrastructure, international trade and investment, entrepreneurship and a foundational education system that stresses life-long learning."

Two committee members, Laura McConwell, mayor, Mission, Kan., and Lana Wolff, councilmember, Arlington, Texas, presented case studies from their respective communities as a means of launching a more comprehensive discussion.

McConwell outlined her city's major redevelopment effort. Wolff described Arlington's Technology Incubator. Both programs proved successful because of the economic benefits that would accrue as a result of the initiatives, but also because they represented a shared community vision to meet immediate and long-term needs.

Guest speaker Jo Anna Edgerton, director, International Affairs and Trade Office, Kansas City, Mo., focused her remarks on how cities position their economic assets to compete globally.

Scott Anglemeyer, executive director, Workforce Partnership Kansas, emphasized some system-wide reforms to improve the capacity of workers. He also offered advice to the committee members about how communities might work more effectively with local Workforce Boards.

As a result of the presentations and the discussions, several recommendations were sent back to NLC about educational programs or publications that would be useful to municipal elected officials. For example, it was suggested that NLC organize a workshop or seminar on how local governments can help small business compete in the global economy.

On the related topic of international trade agreements, committee members wanted to know about the success of U.S. government efforts to halt foreign "dumping" (selling goods at prices below the cost of production toward the goal of disrupting competition and increasing market share) in the U.S. market.

The committee was hosted by Overland Park Councilmember Donna Owens. The city has a number of examples of creative economic development initiatives including a profitable hotel and convention center complex, a new redevelopment vision for its central transportation artery (Metcalfe Avenue) and partnerships with top-flight community colleges to meet future workforce needs.

The committee meets again on September 25-27 in Fort Smith, Ark., at which time the members will decide upon amendments to National Municipal Policy.

National League of Cities

1301 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Suite 550 · Washington, DC 20004

Phone: (202) 626-3000 · Fax: (202) 626-3043

info@nlc.org · www.nlc.org

[Privacy Policy](#)