

**Capital Area Council of Governments
Capital Area Economic Development District (CAEDD)**

Summary of Minutes

**CAPCOG Boardroom
6800 Burleson Road
Building 310, Suite 165
Austin, TX**

February 16, 2007 – 12:00 PM

Board Members Present:

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| James Bertram | City of Lockhart |
| Eric Carlson | City of Elgin |
| Bill Hamilton | Bill Hamilton Associates |
| Ron Kessler | Ron Kessler Group |
| Jennifer Kim | City of Austin |
| Sam Martin | Hill Country EDC |
| Mary Martinez | Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce |
| Maurice Pitts | Lee County |
| Rosa Rios Valdez | Business & Community Lenders of Texas |
| James Satterwhite | Rural Capital Area WDB |
| Jeff Webb | Greater Austin-San Antonio Corridor Council |

Guests Present:

Sally Campbell, Envision Central Texas
Joe Ramos, Alamo Area Council of Governments
Ernest Gerlach, University of Texas at San Antonio

Guest Speaker:

Randall Kempner, Council on Competitiveness

Staff Present:

Betty Voights
Sean Moran
Brian Kelsey
David Partlow

I. Welcome and Introduction

Kelsey welcomed all and invited everyone to introduce themselves.

II. Board Membership Changes

Kelsey announced the resignation of Shirley Knox, executive director of *WorkSource*, from the board. Greg Marshall has also left the board because of his resignation from the Capital City African-American Chamber of Commerce. Sally Campbell, executive director of Envision Central Texas, will join the board pending ratification by the CAPCOG Executive Committee. Voights invited board members to submit names of other people who may be interested in serving to staff.

III. Proposal: Austin Regional Competitiveness Initiative

Voights and Kelsey presented the Austin Regional Competitiveness Initiative for the board's consideration. The presentation explained the necessity of tracking the Austin region's performance against other U.S. regions and covered several examples of data that could be evaluated, including income, educational attainment, and wages. Voights and Kelsey emphasized that past success does not guarantee future performance, and that elected officials and other stakeholders need to be aware of areas where the regional economy may be falling behind other U.S. regions.

Board members offered feedback and brainstormed potential next steps. The following comments were offered:

- Data should be evaluated according to the CAEDD's ten-county area and not just limited to the five-county Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).
- Project should begin with a vision statement and followed by a prioritized list of objectives that the CAEDD can realistically achieve.
- Business feedback on regional conditions should be incorporated as much as possible. Employee retention and traffic are key concerns.
- Political boundaries are largely meaningless when it comes to economic development. Companies look at regions, not individual cities and counties. Project should consider several regions, such as MSA, ten-county, and the Austin-San Antonio corridor.
- Many small towns and rural communities do not have the resources to engage in cutting-edge economic development practices. Goals for the project should reflect the diverse needs and resources available to practitioners in the region.

Staff will create a draft project timeline and action plan and submit to board members via email for review and feedback.

IV. Guest Speaker

Randall Kempner, Vice President, Regional Innovation Council on Competitiveness (www.compete.org)

Kempner provided an overview of the Council on Competitiveness and described several recent projects. The Council is working with the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration on the Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) initiative. Kempner highlighted the WIRED work going on in Northeast Pennsylvania region, which is billing itself as “Wall Street West”. Kempner explained that successful regions will have the necessary infrastructure in place to deal with the inevitable changes in economic conditions and industries.

Kempner emphasized three key findings from the Council’s regional experiences:

1. Economic and workforce development are inextricably linked and should be addressed at the regional level.
2. The right unit of measurement is the region. Economic development does not align neatly with political boundaries.
3. The proper focus is on innovation. It is not what you do; it is how you do it.

Board members discussed the proposed Austin Regional Competitiveness Initiative in light of Kempner’s comments. The following comments were offered:

- Political boundaries may have lost a lot of meaning in terms of economic development, but that is difficult for locally elected officials to explain to their constituents. It will take leadership over time to change perceptions.
- Buy-in from the business community is essential for the regional model of economic development. Private sector leadership can have a strong impact on community perceptions and elected official support.
- Land use policies, infrastructure planning, and economic development must move together. Financing commuter rail, for example, will require significant economic development in areas that have not seen enough of it.

Discussion concluded with suggestions for next steps. One member proposed that the CAEDD consider updating the region’s five-year plan, the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), to reflect a new focus on regional competitiveness. Another board member summarized the needed next steps as “mission, message, measurement, mapping, and movement.”

V. Conclusion

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:00 p.m.