

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE October 13, 2015

CONTACT: Akia Garnett  
agbrew@iedconline.org  
(202)545-7323

**Over 1,100 Economic Developers Convene in Alaska to Discuss  
National and International Priorities**  
*Host City benefits with an estimated \$2 million in economic gain.*

WASHINGTON, D.C. (OCT. 13, 2015) - The International Economic Development Council (IEDC) hosted its 2015 Annual Conference in Anchorage, Alaska this week. IEDC's Annual Conference is the world's largest gathering of economic developers; it affords participants the opportunity to hear from industry experts, as well as from other communities about industry best practices.

Held Oct. 4-7, more than 1,100 economic developers, industry experts, elected and appointed officials and special guests from around the U.S. and abroad, met to discuss dozens of topics that are critical to the current and future state of the global economy. The speaker list of elected officials included Governor Bill Walker, Anchorage Mayor Ethan Berkowitz, Former Mayor Rick Mystrom and Former Senator Mark Begich. Senator Lisa Murkowski, who was kept in Washington on Senate business, made a video appearance. Federal economic officials who spoke included National Development Council Washington Office Director Jane Campbell, Economic Development Administration Assistant Secretary for Economic Development, Jay Williams, and Former Under Secretary for Economic Affairs at the U.S. Department of Commerce, Mark Doms.

Topics covered included workforce development, partnering with educational institutions, economic opportunity and resilience, using data to gain new projects, economic development ethics, use of new technology, opportunities for arts and cultural centers, regulatory and zoning changes, attracting jobs from abroad, public-private partnerships, economic development marketing, the ArcGIS platform, communicating the value of economic development organizations, Department of Defense resources for shrinking military spending, changes to the EDA application process, affordable housing, Pacific Rim trade, attracting talent, industrial site readiness, energy, economic development innovation, becoming an Accredited Economic Development Organization, crowdfunding, and showcasing your region at foreign direct investment events.

IEDC's Annual Conference is hosted by a different city each year. "The financial impact our Annual Conference has on host cities is quite substantial," IEDC President and CEO, Jeffrey Finkle said.

In an article written in Alaska Dispatch News, by Anchorage Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) President and CEO Bill Popp, 2015 Annual Conference is estimated to have brought in \$2 million in economic gain to Anchorage. Popp noted that approximately 100 site selectors came to Anchorage for the conference. He added that several site selectors - who advise companies on business location selections for a variety of purposes - took a tour of Anchorage with AEDC. According

to Popp, this allows officials to demonstrate the city's worth as a consideration for future business endeavors.

Popp also noted that the 2015 Annual Conference came at just the right time. As Anchorage's economy is experiencing uncertainty due to fluctuating oil prices and cuts in federal spending, the learning experience, influx in revenue, as well as the jobs created in preparation were welcome now more than ever.

Finkle wrote in a Convention Nation blog post that Anchorage set itself apart from other prospects because of both its beautiful outdoor scenery and its dynamic economic development story.

"When choosing a host city for our conferences, we don't just look for a big city name. We also consider its economic development story," Finkle said. "Anchorage's abundant economic development case studies, as well as its thriving freight, fishing, petroleum and tourism industries made it an excellent learning lab for IEDC members."

IEDC Conferences are more than just professional gatherings, they also have several recreational and cultural opportunities. Participants and their guests were offered opportunities to see Alaska via a trip on the Alaska Railroad from Anchorage to Seward, or on a discounted Salmonberry or K2 Aviation "flightseeing" tour. Alaska Native Heritage Center performers gave participants a taste of their respective cultures in a traditional drumming ceremony as well.

IEDC's 2016 Annual Conference will be held in Cleveland, Ohio. from September 25-28. Event registration opens mid-2016 at [www.iedcONLINE.org](http://www.iedcONLINE.org).

#### **About the International Economic Development Council**

The International Economic Development Council (IEDC) is a non-profit membership organization serving economic developers. With more than 4,600 members, IEDC is the largest organization of its kind. Economic developers promote economic well-being and quality of life for their communities, by creating, retaining and expanding jobs that facilitate growth, enhance wealth and provide a stable tax base. From public to private, rural to urban, and local to international, IEDC's members are engaged in the full range of economic development experience. Given the breadth of economic development work, our members are employed in a wide variety of settings including local, state, provincial and federal governments, public private partnerships, chambers of commerce, universities and a variety of other institutions. When we succeed, our members create high-quality jobs, develop vibrant communities, and improve the quality of life in their regions. [www.iedcONLINE.org](http://www.iedcONLINE.org).

###