

American Economic Development Council Milestones — 1960 to 2000

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THIS ARTICLE IS AN ATTEMPT TO CHRONICLE SOME OF THE MAJOR ACTIVITIES, PROGRAMS, AND EVENTS THAT HAVE DEFINED THE AEDC SINCE 1960. THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE, THE CERTIFIED ECONOMIC DEVELOPER PROGRAM, AND THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REVIEW ARE AMONG THE LIST OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

PREFACE

This article is not a comprehensive history of the American Economic Development Council from 1960 to 2000. A comprehensive history would include extensive details about the organization, its activities, its leadership and members. Because of missing or destroyed records, incomplete institutional history, and a tight deadline, this article is an attempt to chronicle some of the major activities, programs and events that have defined the Council since 1960. We are indebted to the past presidents and chairs who replied to our request for highlights of their year as the chief elected officer. While this is as complete as we could make it, we recognize there are omissions. For these, we apologize.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

The history of AEDC (AIDC) during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s is closely connected with that of the Economic Development Institute (EDI). EDI, originally IDI, began in 1962 at the same time that the Continuing Education Center at the University of Oklahoma was constructed. UO, IDI, and AIDC shared a common heritage in the sense that their programs were important innovations and their delivery involved one other. Each needed the others in order to evolve to the advanced stages that they achieved by the decade of the 1990s.

Credit must be given to the Southern Industrial Development Council (now SEDC) for recognizing the need to develop an institute for professional industrial (economic) developers. A committee of five SIDC leaders — led by Robert Cassell, who was on the staff of Georgia Tech — was "site searching" and went to Norman, Oklahoma during the time when the UO Center was under construction. The Committee was welcomed by Dr. Thurman White, Director of Continuing Education. He was enthused about the con-

cepts the committee had in mind, and he agreed to advance sufficient financial support for the Institute to get underway. This became one of the initial adult education programs to be offered at the Center.

After three years as the professional organization sponsor, SIDC recognized the need to develop IDI as a national program, and therefore brought AIDC into the role of professional organization sponsor in 1965. SIDC (SEDC) has continued to support the Institute in many ways.

The Industrial Development Institute began in 1962 with a group of 25 Year I students. Conceived as a three year program, the first class did not graduate until 1964. Ensuing years reflected continued growth in the size of the program and in improvements in the curriculum.

By the 1970s and 1980s, the classes had grown so large that Years I and II were divided into two sections. In 1985, the Institute was expanded to a second site, located at Cleveland State University. After two years it was moved to Indianapolis, using the facilities of Indiana University-Purdue University.

More recently, a third site has been added at San Diego. Consistency of program content and operation has been maintained with The University of Oklahoma, AEDC, the Curriculum Committee, and faculty functioning in the same capacity at all three sites.

Changes in the program during these years included adding a Thesis requirement, adding electives, and offering Advanced Symposia. The symposia were developed under the direction of Robert Cassell and Robert Koepke. A recent innovation has been to tie the Advanced Symposia to the Year III curriculum, further strengthening the EDI curriculum.

CERTIFIED ECONOMIC DEVELOPER

Other important innovations from AEDC were initiated in the 1960s and 1970s. Highly significant was the establishment of a certification program in 1971, a major step in "professionalizing" economic development. For the first time, outstanding economic developers had a means of recognizing proficiency and success in the field. The first Certified Industrial Developer (CID) exam was administered in May of 1971 at Denver, Colorado. Fifty-eight members were certified. Now called Certified Economic Developer, over 1,000 men and women have earned the designation.

THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COURSES

The first AEDC-accredited Basic Industrial Development Course (BIDC) was held at Texas A&M University in 1967, and it was quickly followed by courses at Georgia Tech, the University of Arizona, and the University of Illinois. Later these courses were renamed Basic Economic Development Courses, and more recently Economic Development Courses (EDCs). As the number of Basics grew, the need for consistency became apparent, and in 1974 criteria for accreditation by AEDC were established. Originally they were designed to provide broad introductory (i.e., basic) training in economic development, primarily for new, entry-level practitioners. More recently, the EDCs have appealed to a much broader audience, including community leaders, elected officials, planners, and various other "stakeholders" in the economic development process. Currently, 19 courses are offered throughout the year at locations scattered around the United States.

PUBLICATIONS

Information-dissemination activities characterize AEDC's history. Newsletters, white papers, and other publications were produced during the entire post-World War II period. Importantly, the *AIDC Journal*, edited by Dr. Howard Roepke of the University of Illinois, began publication in 1966, and in the 1980s, AEDC significantly increased its information-dissemination function. This emphasis

was attributable to at least three developments. First, the information age was dawning, and economic developers, who always have been information brokers, learned they needed more information to remain competitive. Second, the Economic Development Institute, the Basic Economic Development Courses, and other vehicles were producing thesis and instructional materials that were worthy of broader dissemination. Third, the value of providing professional material in published form was proven by the pioneering success of the *AIDC Journal*.

Two major contributions mark the increased emphasis begun in the 1980s. AEDC's highly acclaimed *Economic Development Review* began publication in 1983, and *Economic Development Today: A Report to the Profession* was published in 1984. The EDR was edited by Dr. Howard Roepke from its inception until his untimely death (at EDI) in 1985. In the inaugural issue, Roepke stated:

The motive behind the publication is the belief of the Board of Directors and many members of the American Economic Development Council (AEDC) that a professional organization has an obligation to advance, as well as to practice, that profession. AEDC has been justifiably proud of its educational programs, and this publication is viewed as an integral part of those

programs. The purpose of the Review is to advance the theory and practice of economic development and to foster understanding among practitioners, applied researchers, teachers, and students of the field.
(p. 6)

After Dr. Roepke's death, Dr. Robert Koepke, one of Roepke's protégé's, assumed editorship of the *Review*. Koepke had contributed regular "Research Notes" to the *AIDC Journal*, and served on the Editorial Board under Roepke's editorship. Though the transition was abrupt and difficult, Koepke took the *Review* from the solid launching pad and lift-off that Roepke established to a highly successful orbit. He served sacrificially as editor from 1985 to 1997, during which time he established the *Review* as the single most successful service that AEDC provides (according to member surveys).

Mr. Mark Waterhouse became *Review* editor for a brief period following Koepke's tenure, and J. Christopher Svare followed him. In 1999 the current three person Editorial Team assumed editorship duties. The Team consists of Dr. Mark Miller (Team Leader) and Dr. Ron Swager, both of the University of Southern Mississippi, and Dr. Rhonda Phillips of the University of Florida.

Economic Development Today was the result of efforts by the Committee on Emerging Opportunities, which was appointed in

1983 to develop a strategic plan for the economic development profession. The Committee was charged with:

...setting forth major environmental trends and conditions that are pertinent to the field of economic development and identifying the practical implications for the field of economic development and for development professionals in both the for-profit and the public sectors.

The Committee also was charged with making recommendations for strategic directions for the organization. With Dr. David Sweet as Chair, the final report, *Economic Development Today: A Report to the Profession*, was published in 1984. Because of its forward thinking, it proved to be an important guide for both the profession and the organization for several years. Its value was so great that a successor was commissioned in 1992. *Economic Development Tomorrow, A Report from The Profession*, was published in 1993. It was edited by Dr. Ron Swager, and drew input from economic development professionals throughout the United States and Canada. It became one of AEDC's most popular publications, and remains in demand today. *ED Tomorrow* was succeeded by *Economic Development in the New Millenium*, published in 1999.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, AEDC published numerous materials designed to educate and

inform the membership. Its monthly newsletter has become a valuable vehicle for updating members in current activities. Now titled *Inside E.D.*, its publication as a joint venture from AEDC and *Expansion Management Magazine* began in 1998. The result of all these efforts by AEDC is a growing base of literature that contributes significantly to the overall body of knowledge of the field.

AIDC MILESTONES

1962 Office moves from Newark, Delaware to Boston.

First class of the three-year Industrial Development Institute (IDI) was held at the University of Oklahoma. James Latta was the first Dean and M.L. "Mike" Powers was the Course Director. Of the first class, 19 graduated in 1964. The initiative for IDI began with the Southern Industrial Development Council's program of exploring training courses for economic development practitioners.

Fellow Member designation instituted to recognize individuals who have attained unusual stature in the field as long as they maintain membership in the Council.

- 1966** First issue of the *AIDC Journal* published. Dr. Howard G. Roepke was appointed editor in 1967.
- Council membership exceeds 1,000 for first time.
- 1967** The first accredited Basic Industrial Development Course was held at Texas A&M. The Dean was Thomas W. Finney and the Course Director was James R. Bradley.
- 1968** First of three accredited Basic Industrial Development Courses for American Indians was held at Arizona State University.
- The Industrial Development Practitioner: Profile and Study*, a survey of activities and salaries for 512 practitioners, was released.
- 1969** AIDC Educational Foundation chartered as an IRS Code 501(c)(3) to further educational activities in the field of industrial development.
- The Sections Program started to involve members in the specific areas according to employment.
- 1971** AIDC establishes a certification program to be awarded to individuals who demonstrate knowledge and proficiency in the field and successfully pass a comprehensive examination. First Certified Industrial Developer exam held in May at the annual conference in Denver, Colorado. Of the 66 members who sat for the examination, 58 were certified.
- 1973** Headquarters office moves from Boston to Kansas City.
- 1974** Criteria for accrediting Basic Industrial Development Courses established.
- League of Economic Development Organizations (LEDO) formed by 16 development organizations to discuss issues, programs, and policies impacting economic development.
- 1975** The monthly *Legislative Affairs Report* edited by John C. Kavanaugh was instituted.
- 1978** Membership exceeds 1,000.
- 1980** The executive committee sitting as the by-laws committee, determined that the 1954 edition of the council's bylaws needed a complete revision. Instead of submitting a totally new by-law proposal to the membership for ratification, the decision was made to submit 117 changes or additions to the 1954 edition. Major provisions were the name change from American Industrial Development Council to American Economic Development Council, the change of the top elected officer from president to chair, and the addition of regional vice chairs. All major changes passed at the general meeting of the membership in Atlanta. The only proposal that failed was an expansion of the duties of the executive director (president).
- 1981** Offices moved from Kansas City to Chicago (Schiller Park, IL).
- Board suspends publication of *AIDC Journal*.
- 1983** *The Economic Development Review* edited by Howard Roepke was inaugurated.
- The Committee on Emerging Opportunities was appointed to develop a strategic plan for the economic development. The result of the committee's efforts was the report, *Economic Development Today: A Report to the Profession*, which, along with subsequent committee initiatives, guided the development of AEDC programs.
- 1985** *Emerging Issues* report published.

1986 The Richard Preston Award established to recognize individuals who have made exemplary contributions to the educational aspects of economic development.

1990 The American Chamber of Commerce Researchers Association (ACCRA) becomes affiliated with AEDC.

James M. Buss of North Dakota State University becomes first student member.

Membership exceeds 2,000 for the first time.

The State/Legislative Awards program is established.

The "Outstanding New Developer" award is established to recognize outstanding new practitioners.

1992 First annual CED Summit is held.

1996 AEDC's Accredited Economic Development Organization (AEDO) review program is initiated to measure economic development organizations against profession standards.

Strategy 2005, a comprehensive strategic planning is undertaken.

1998 *Inside E.D.* becomes the official newsletter of AEDC.

Economic Development Review goes on the World Wide Web (www.aedc.org).

AEDC sponsors the first transatlantic economic development conference in Frankfurt am Main, Germany.

1999 Policy Governance Model is adopted for governance of AEDC, but also can be used in economic development organizations and communities.

2000 June 4-6, Annual Conference commemorating 75 years of AEDC history is held in Dallas, Texas.

BIOGRAPHIES

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