

Mr. Jim Devine CEcD, FM, HLM

IEDC Interview Conducted with Nancy Moorman

Can you give an overview of how you've seen the economic development profession evolve over the years?

I've been involved since 1972. I've seen the profession evolve from [employing mostly] political appointees (especially in EDA) to [being composed of] serious people wanting to make a serious difference in their communities. It turned into a profession because of the efforts of AIDC in those days. I was fortunate to have known a couple of the founding fathers of AIDC: Dick Preston and Ad Schmidt.

While economic development may have started in chambers of commerce, I have seen EDCs separate from chambers of commerce over the years. Maybe people who were employed by chambers of commerce, or cities, [had] different perspectives [on economic development].

There are really three areas of economic development: rural, suburban, and urban.

I pioneered and introduced the concept of retail economic development in the 1990s. I was a guest editor of an issue of the Economic Development Review devoted solely to retail economic development. Retail was never considered economic development until people realized it was a game of "follow the money." [Many] political jurisdictions in urban areas [rely on] sales tax dollars [from retail]. But, the incorporation of retail economic development into [the broader] economic development [field] was really quite heretical in the 1970s and 1980s. Today, it has more of a value proposition to cities where retail sales tax drives everything.

Community development [has become] part of economic development. [This is] evidenced [by] the transition [from] the CID designation to [the] CEcD designation.

[There has been an] increase of better educated and [more] experienced professionals entering the profession. [Also, there has been an] increase of women practitioners [entering into] economic development and association leadership. [There are] better and more technical continuing educational programs for practitioners. [There has been a] change from [a] few [basic] performance metrics to [much more] sophisticated performance metrics. [There has been a] change in use of sales skills from data to tailor made information substantiated by easy information from the web.

Early on, there was a bias against having consultants in the organizational leadership. Some perceived their involvement as self-serving and [a way] to develop customers. That went away in the late-1980s, as consultants were understood [to be] the practitioner's best friend. [They taught] skills [that were] not necessarily needed or practiced in [the practitioner's] community.

[There was an] evolution [in] association management from volunteers to professional association managers. As the organization management was more professionalized, the tension between the hands-on economic developers as volunteer leaders and the paid professional

directors provided some tensions early on. Was the organization volunteer led or professional manager led?

Can you describe your own career path and how it evolved as the economic development profession evolved?

I went to Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Public Administration, trained to be a city manager, and graduated in 1971. My first job was as Director of Personnel for the City of Syracuse, New York. I didn't like the city management politics, so I found my first job in economic development as the Assistant Director of the EDA-funded New Hampshire-Vermont Development Council. Basically, our job was to figure out ways to win EDA grant—and other federal grants—for infrastructure development (like water [and] sewer) in industrial parks. That was basic economic development.

Bi-state politics between the New Hampshire and Vermont contingents [of] the Board of Directors led to [the] creation [of] two economic development districts: one in New Hampshire and the other in Vermont. So much for not liking the political nature of the business. This was trial by fire. Many of my colleagues experienced [this] in those days. The average job tenure was about three or four years! The staff resigned.

I became the Assistant Director of the Sierra Economic Development District for the four counties in the Lake Tahoe area of California. Again, it was pretty much grant-driven through EDA. But, we were very successful at getting grants because we played the politics. I think that's a piece of the business that the younger people don't fully appreciate: the relationship between economic development and federal delegations. Those have to be nurtured a lot. Yes, they are political, but they're also necessary. Politics ensued when the board was overtaken by one county trying to direct all the staff resources to "pet projects." The staff resigned.

Then, I moved to Rhode Island and worked with Jim Roberson who was just named the Director of Economic Development for the state. I was hired [through] a BRAC grant to help attract investment to the closed navy bases in the state by setting up industrial parks for industry and staging offices for offshore oil drilling at the George's Banks. I managed a state-owned industrial park near the University of Rhode Island and helped set up another near Newport.

Jim became the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Economic Development and invited me to take one of several positions. He was the first professional economic developer in the state. I choose the Director of Public Affairs [position] over the Business Retention position. I knew BRE pretty well, so I stretched [my limits]. I had no idea what [the] Public Affairs[position] was. But I had twenty-five people working for me in various divisions: the Maryland Film Commission, Advertising and Promotion, the *Maryland Magazine*, Business Directories, and the Public Information Office. [This] was [an] in-house public information and advertising counsel to all fifteen agencies within the department. Here, I learned the value of target marketing, advertising, and establishing strategic marketing plans for various departments' agencies while ensuring that the overall message of the department was unified. Jim resigned and moved to Kentucky, I moved to Colorado Springs in 1979 [to become] the President of the Colorado Springs Economic Development Council. There, economic development [was] bared raw.

Colorado Springs was a very rapidly growing residential area, but people weren't buying the houses because there were no jobs. In those days, people followed the jobs. It's the reverse of that now. More and more people these days think of living where they want and then finding a job there. That's been a huge shift in the last twenty years or so.

Since the early 1980s, developers were using savings and loan money to build residences. That went bust because there was a recession and jobs evaporated. The economy nosedived, and Colorado Springs was left with lot of mountains and few jobs. Target marketing and cluster development were in the forefront in those days. Operating cost and conditions statements were the norm for industry recruitment. We focused on attracting nonprofit associations who frequently had major corporate CEO's on their boards. By having board meetings in Colorado Springs, we thought [that this] personal experience would be attractive to shipping [and] high tech industries.

We attracted a lot of national associations. Junior Achievement, Focus on the Family, and [many other] religious organizations [moved to Colorado Springs]. The presence of these national religious organizations, along with that of the military, turned Colorado Springs into a far-right [community]. Colorado Springs is like "ground zero" for religious organizations. Our strategy worked, but the consequences were unforeseen.

In 1989, I became a consultant with Coopers & Lybrand in Scottsdale, AZ. I worked for three years doing site selection for their in-house clients. I [also] prepared strategic economic development plans for communities in Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, California, and Nevada. From an economic development point of view, this was the best job that I ever had, because I got to sit on the other side of the table. I was on the side of the client looking for locations. I learned a lot about how CEOs function from their side of the table. Every economic developer probably ought to work in the private sector for a couple of years [in order] to understand how they think.

As a marketing ploy to generate face-time with potential EDO clients, I developed and merchandised something called "The Dark Side of Economic Development." I was personally unsatisfied with the politicization and the three- to four-year tenure of economic developers around the country. I did a regular survey in the late-1980s and throughout the 1990s called "The Dark Side of Economic Development." I put together a presentation that I gave to state associations and to economic developers around the country from time to time. It was about the personal aspects of economic development that nobody talked about. [This included] marriage problems, alcohol abuse, and the inability to create net worth. People really enjoyed hearing about these issues. In fact, I presented the results of this study while [I was in] Minneapolis for AEDC's annual conference. I got the Vice President from the Hazelton Foundation (the nation's premier drug and alcohol rehabilitation clinic) to co-present the findings of The Dark Side of Economic Development. Using the test results, she said, "You guys are as stressed as ministers and dentists, [and they] are the highest stressed occupations in the nation." In the late-1990s I did the "Spousal Side of Economic Development." The results showed that the spouses wanted more security. Their children's continuing education was important to them. I could see people walking into the presentation holding hands. It was really interesting to see how supportive the families were despite the fact that the business is pretty intense and political.

In 1991, I went to the city of Glendale, Arizona as Director of Economic Development. In addition to business attraction and retention, redevelopment was a major program function. It was there that I “broke the mold” by suggesting and proving that retail sales tax attraction was economic development. I was the guest co-editor of the Economic Development Journal devoted entirely to the subject of retail sales tax economic development. Today, many communities see retail sales tax attraction as economic development, but it was heretical thirty years ago! We helped to attract the football team, the Arizona Cardinals, and also the soccer team, the Coyotes. The major economic issues there were basically how to deal with annexation and the fast-growing communities for whom incentives were [vital]. It was there, in 1994, that I received the Arthur D. Little Award for Excellence in Economic Development for the pre-approved speculative building concept. [It brought] product to market faster than competing communities. Along with the City Manager of Goodyear, Arizona, I created an award-winning, multi-jurisdictional 5000-square-mile enterprise zone to attract business. To this day, this availability of buildings allows for the attraction and retention of business. Enterprise zones survive as well, as government incentives are needed to level the socio-economic playing field.

I went to Lee’s Summit, Missouri in 1999. I’ve been here since then. This is where my wife grew up. Here, I’ve been focusing on downtown redevelopment. [I have] institutionalized “Show Me Angels” as a local venture capital LLC for high-net-worth individuals interested in jumpstarting local companies. [I’ve worked in] community development and industry attraction and retention. [I’ve] helped the city understand the fiscal impacts of balancing commercial and residential tax bases. Finally, identifying, nurturing, and promoting emerging local [citizens] into leadership positions has been gratifying. I think the most lasting legacy of EDO leaders is the leadership they leave behind and the jobs they helped attract and retain.

Gray hair helps with elected officials. While technical skills are important, I think they need to be complimented by leadership skills. [Leaders must be able to deal] with the political aspects of the community and [different] boards of directors. This is learned [through] experience, failure and hopefully some trusted mentors in the community. Long ago, I learned that an economic developer needs to confide in two or three of the community’s top people. The community and I have benefitted greatly from working this strategy.

Can you go into more detail about the early political relationship with the federal government? Did this [relationship] present extra challenges? If so, how did you handle them?

I know that CUED focused on HUD [because of] its largesse. Rural economic developers relied on EDA and the Department of Agriculture. The federal government, EDA in particular, was reasonably political in those days. Every congressman had opportunities to put some “pork” into their communities once it qualified for an Overall Economic Development Plan. A lot of people, in the rural areas especially, were funded by EDA [and] put together an OEDP. That plan [included] demographic analysis and strategies on how to attract new industry. This plan was the gatekeeper to qualifying for EDA grants and loans. Typically, water and sewer grants [were used] to help tourism or grow small- and medium-sized industrial parks in rural areas. Those funds were highly sought nationwide, and the best EDCs were the ones who had a congressman sitting on either the Appropriations Committee or on the Commerce Committee. In my case, we

were the only economic development district in New Hampshire and Vermont, and they had some long-term senators and congressmen there. [The] same thing [was true] in the Sierra Economic Development District...this was the four counties surrounding Lake Tahoe. Under Reagan, we were the only Economic Development Administration grantee in the whole state. Getting the money was easy. I felt sorry for the people who had to compete for it on a less-than-political basis.

Why did you say it was harder to work in cities? Was there a private vs. public divide?

Typically, the urban areas are more complex politically and financially. Elected officials are driven by elections. Economic development is not well understood except [as a] mantra. "Economic development" is an empty phrase if there is no understanding of the interrelated issues [that allow] a community to prosper. Economic developers are particularly challenged, unless they create and enjoy a close working relationship with the mayor or city manager. Economic developers that are buried in bureaucracy are less effective. In these times, the private sector is an essential partner. They have money, discipline, and [are willing to take] risks. Redevelopment is where the action is. The problems are due to [redevelopment's] complexity.

Were you involved in any of these urban developments firsthand?

Yes, I ran redevelopment in Lee's Summit and in Glendale. I am acting as the sparkplug with the city manager [and trying] to start a redevelopment department. In Glendale, we were doing a lot of downtown redevelopment and retail redevelopment because sales tax was the lifeblood of the tax base in many of the communities in Phoenix Valley. Downtown redevelopment there was all about façade improvements, street-scalping, landscaping, and painting things to make them look better. We [provided] grants and loans to smaller businesses in downtown areas to [help them] survive. [We helped in the] redevelopment of shopping centers through the diversion of net new sales tax dollars to on-site and off-site infrastructure. Getting economic development defined as a public purpose [allowed us to] use public funds for on-site costs. [It] was a breakthrough and allowed for incredible retail sales tax opportunities...especially [for] car dealers. Who would have thought that car dealer attraction and retention was considered economic development? After all, we were slicing up the trade area to attract dollars, not jobs. Lee's Summit's redevelopment is downtown-oriented and will evolve into commercial strip centers. It is attracting tourism into our community by recycling older buildings into offices and residential space.

Can you go into more detail about The Dark Side of Economic Development you were talking about? What is this three-to-four year tenure that you mention?

Just like city managers, at least in the past, economic developers were fired or hired away. This was partly because the profession didn't know how to strategically plan as a group. They did not understand the concept of metrics around which the Board coalesced, and [they] did not have the executive presence (or local power broker) to go toe-to-toe with the Board and the politicians. We are, as a profession, subject to Board whims and Board focus. And there are as many whims as there are focuses in this business. So the Dark Side was all about feeling OK that you can't keep a job forever. [It was about] feeling OK that it's not your fault you got fired because of a

change [in] administration. It could be a change of direction because you got a new Board President who was a jerk. A lot of dysfunctional dynamics can happen for control reasons. Someone once said many years ago, maybe it was Mark Waterhouse: “Economic development is everybody’s business, and everybody knows what economic development is. [This is] not true, but everyone thinks [it is].” So when the hired gun thinks they know better than you, that is when the tension begins. Our EDC-types in the past, starting out young like I did, didn’t know how to manage that particular process well. [They didn’t know] how to create mutually shared expectation or mutually shared metrics.

I noticed in Mark’s [interview], and Russ Boyle mentioned it somewhere too, that the consultants really helped the profession in two ways. First, [they] took the heat for the staff in terms of strategic planning. Second, because economic development was so much on-the-job-training, there was little time to be strategic. In those days it was two- or three-person shops...end of story. Larger regional organizations were able to staff [better] and be more strategic. But the smaller organizations, which are two or three total people, had problems [with] continuity and strategic planning. [They have problems] helping the board drill into those things. So Dark Side is all about making it known that we are expendable, that stress comes with the jobs, that family life is compromised, and that net worth is elusive. By knowing these things we can plan to avoid these speed bumps.

Also, [it’s about] bringing it to people’s attention. When I was in leadership in AEDC, somewhere along the line, we had a financial planner come for the economic development summit in Florida. That room was packed because people’s net worth was less than \$50,000 in those days. [In the] late 1980s and early 1990s, most of the people I polled didn’t have anything to speak of. [This is] partly because every time you move you have to (theoretically) buy a house. You have to buy shades and drapes. By my wife’s calculation, it takes three to four years to break even after a move. We’ve moved enough, so I think she’s got a good number. The good news is that I moved up, not out, so...

Do you think that this Dark Side of Economic Development is still relevant today, or has it changed?

That’s a good question. The older I get, the more stable I feel. My suspicion is that it would still attract an audience if we redid it. I believe it would be especially popular among the middle-manager types...[those] who don’t really know why they are there, what faces them if they stay in the profession...[but they] aspire to leadership positions in nonprofit [organizations]. I used to dress up as Darth Vader and give the seminar. I think the Dark Side of Economic Development is always there. It’s the elephant in the room that’s always there, but we don’t want to talk about it. I think that’s why the leadership conferences and the annual summits are important, because peers get together and just commiserate about their problems and realize they’re not the only ones.

AEDC and IEDC have served [as] a therapeutic venue, as well as professional development venue, I think. [This is] especially [true] afterhours. You get to know people who have the same problems you do. Lifelong friendships are made either because of Board work or conference attendance. I don’t know if you’re familiar with the concept of “Diasporas?” I was going to do a

paper for IEDC a long time ago, but I never did it. A Diaspora is [a group of] people who are of the same tribe but live all around the world [and are] disjointed. In many respects the economic development “tribe” is there, but they live in the Diaspora. [This] means they have no home and they’re always wandering around. Now that may be an older perspective in the business. You know, I had one job [for] nine years [and another] job [for] eleven years. But I still see it with people, especially on the coasts. I think the coasts, and maybe the South, are a little harder politically than the Midwest where I am now. That might be an interesting discussion to have some day: what are fast growing areas and highly competitive areas? How [is] the profession [being] either nurtured or beat up? A lot of people here have their job for ten or fifteen years. That didn’t happen in Arizona, Maryland, or any other place I’ve been. You can check that with other EDC guys. Maybe it’s because I’m ADHD and have to keep moving <laughs>.

**Why do you think the profession has grown so much? Is this through training efforts?
Greater awareness?**

My mother still thinks I’m a city manager and a planner <laughs>. I think the word “economic development” is still not well understood by most elected officials. People, at least when I was growing up, looked at it as grants...or as a political job. Today it is seen as getting jobs, not investment. By focusing on investment, one’s metrics are better than [they would be from focusing on] jobs. People [must] realize that economic development is bringing in revenue from jobs. The public sector spend[s] it through services...police, fire, roads, etc. I don’t think that some city managers [fully comprehend] economic development. That’s why public/private partnerships are useful. [They all you to] educate your elected officials into thinking like a business.

You’ve worked in a variety of different areas. What skills did you acquire over time, and did certain skills become more valuable as your career progressed?

Typing <laughs>. I never took [a] typing [class] in high school. [Also,] Excel spreadsheets, believe it or not, are my bread and butter. [You are in trouble] if you don’t know how to use Excel and PowerPoint.

Being strategic is essential. I tell my Board that I get paid to be paranoid. This is a skill set which makes one acutely aware of the environment and actions to survive and be a leader. I think the skill set I’ve acquired over the years is called “grey hair” <laughs>. [But I have developed] some “executive presence.” When you come into a meeting you [need to] have validity at the table. You [should] not [be perceived as] just a “hired gun.” One of the things that [we] used to lament about ten years ago, partly as a function of the public sector being involved more in economic development, is [the lack of] “good old’ boy” leadership. [We missed] the Jim Roberson’s and the Wayne Sterling’s. They were certain characters who had executive presence. We believed, as we were getting into leadership, that executive presence, or that toe-to-toe professional peer respect, was being diluted to some extent by the public sector and the associated politics. [It was also being] diluted partly by the aging of the group. Younger people were coming in, [but] they didn’t have the experience to get gray hair yet. Teaching people how to have executive presence was something that I was very aware of in my younger years. You can be as smart, but if you don’t have executive presence you’ll just [be] regarded as a staffer.

Throughout your career was there anyone who inspired you?

I call Jim Roberson my mentor. Rick Weddle, Jay Garner, Mark Waterhouse, Jim Griffin and Bob Ady were and are personally and professionally inspiring.

Can you discuss your role with AEDC in further detail? How did your involvement affect your own career?

Starting in 1974, I worked for Jim Roberson when he was involved with AEDC. In those days it was AIDC, but it then morphed into AEDC. Jim suggested I get with the AEDC educational programs. The rest is history.

In 1999-2001 I was AEDC's Chairman. Some of my AIDC/AEDC roles included [serving as the]: Bylaws Chairman, Educational Committee Chairman, Annual Conference Chairman, [and] the first Code of Ethics Chairman. I pushed [for] the creation of what is now the Leadership Summit, and of course, being the longest continually elected Board member in AEDC's history. [I also developed] AEDC's first logo in 1981. There is no doubt that my professional credentials were improved by my involvement and leadership in AEDC and IEDC.

How did AEDC evolve through the years? Did you see a change in priorities from the early years until the merger?

Well, AEDC was AIDC first. It started in the 1950s or 1960s with Bob Cassell, Ad Schmit, Dick Preston and others whom I cannot remember. AIDC was a volunteer-driven industrial development trade association whose leadership became more sophisticated over the years. Educational courses and networking prevailed. Utilities and railroads were primary supporters of the organization and its member EDO's. AIDC needs to be considered in relation to SIDC...which still exists today. Others need to comment on this, as the organization's leadership has been intermingled over the years as well as mergers were discussed off and on.

AIDC changed its name to AEDC [with] the realization that economic development was more than "industrial development." Loosely stated, we needed community economic development to exist before industrial development could be attracted...hence the change in name and the [change in] disciplines [that were] taught. There were more diverse needs. This was reflected in the name change from CID to CED. I was never involved with the Certification Board Politics, but there was a lot of debate on the name and professional designation change. The same dialogue happened with the change from CED to CEcD.

Merger discussions began with declining privately funded EDO's budgets, declining course revenues, and an expanding definition of economic development and the educational needs associated with that. **Here is where CUED adapted to the trends while AEDC may have not been so nimble.** I think the differences of how the two competing organizations were run were important leading up to the merger. AEDC was run by volunteers and executive directors with little economic development experience. CUED [was run] by a strong CEO whose effectiveness

was bolstered by budget stability. [This was] helped by members whose budgets came from the public sector. This is my opinion.

Did being involved with AEDC affect your own career development in any way?

That's a good question. I still don't know what I want to do when I grow up <laughs>. I didn't get married until I was forty, so economic development was great for me. I could go wherever I wanted. Fortunately, it was always up. I don't have any regrets. I know that people hiring me were impressed with my involvement and leadership. I really never had to look hard for a job as I was on the list of recruiters by virtue of my AEDC leadership roles.

Would I do it over again? That's a question I always asked in Dark Side. More than half of the people said, "No, I wouldn't do economic development again." But knowing what I know now, I would do it again. But that's a sixty-five-year-old talking, not a twenty-five-year-old. Joan Jorgensen always got it right. She would say, "Economic development is the most on-the-job-training job there is. Every day is different." I talked to Joan about some of these things. I noticed her name wasn't on [your list], but you might want to talk to Jeff about [interviewing] a couple [of] executive recruiters like Joan. [She's] been around this profession a long time. She probably would have some really good insights about it. She would be really good.

Were you involved with the merger at all?

Just peripherally as Past Chairman. Jim Griffin grabbed it and ran with it. It needed to be done for financial reasons, but Jim grabbed it and ran with it. It had to be done. Jim did a good job of marshaling it through.

Do you know the reasons for the merger?

A lot [of it was] financial for AEDC's bottom line. Also, I think the AEDC volunteer leadership model was broken partly because of two poor hires at the Executive Director level over previous years. Conversely, CUED had a strong and seasoned leader in Jeff. Also, it was just the right thing to do. Everybody had [limited] budgets. They asked themselves whether to join either CUED or AEDC. Finally, I think CUED's educational programs and publications were better. Yes, AEDC had better networking opportunities and a rich personal history of peer relationships. Not everyone could join both organizations.

Many of us saw CUED as [being oriented towards the] public sector, while AEDC was more private sector dominated. Therein laid the cultural concerns for the merger. I think it's survived fairly well. Jeff's done a good job managing rural, suburban, and urban expectations.

Did you see any positives or negatives come out of the merger into IEDC?

I'm sure there are a few negatives, [but] I have no idea what they are. Jeff's executive skills were very [good]. [Some questioned whether] he was the right guy [to lead] the merged organization. Some people wanted to have a whole new person brought in who was a professional association manager. And most of the people in the know said, "No, Jeff's done a good job. Let's give him

some time to help merge these two cultures.” The question in those days was whether Jeff was the right guy to merge the two organizations. The answer is “yes,” especially in retrospect. That was an issue that was hashed through pretty quickly, but nevertheless [it was] on the table.

In terms of the culture of the two organizations, I know [from] talking to some of my friends in the business [that] they saw an urban leaning on the coursework when the merger happened. [There was definitely an urban leaning in some of the topics [dealing] with grants, legislation, and public sector functions. The urban point of view is not interested in what’s called “traditional” economic development. I’ve looked at several conference brochures in the last few years that, in my opinion, show [the] urban bias still predominates. There may be a reason for that. First, that [may be] what the organization knows best, and it [may have] already had a lot of contracts with federal agencies. Second, rural and suburban coursework typically has a much more limited audience and budget. [Some people still wonder if their interests are being represented]. Maybe that’s changed. I haven’t been around the organization for eight years, so I don’t know. I’m confident that it’s successful, but I think there’s still some mumbling out there. But there will always been mumbling <laughs>.

Where do you see IEDC going into the future?

[I see IEDC] continuing to professionalize the [field] and put it on an equal [standing] as [that of] a planner or city manager. In my time in the business, city planners thought they were economic developers. We made a strong run at making the community planners understand what economic development really is. I’m talking about the planning and zoning types. They had no clue. I think the business has not really dealt with that issue yet. How do we better educate city staff, city managers, and city planners on what the purpose of economic development is? It [has been] difficult in the cities I’ve worked in. City managers and planning directors didn’t get it. If they did, they had their own reasons to fight it. That may have changed, but I think that’s a challenge that always has to happen. We should always aim to educate politicians, city managers, and planning directors about why we do what we do.

Where do you see the ED profession going into the future?

I guess it should be more global. I’m not sure if we can pull that off to be honest with you. [It would be difficult to have] a profession that’s understood globally. I know there are many more organizations out there than us. So globalization is one [issue].

Workforce development is another huge issue. There are huge dollars in workforce development. But the culture of workforce development organizations is far different than the culture of economic development organizations. Yet they’re the ones that get the money, and they’re the ones who are theoretically training people for jobs. And I don’t think we’ve done a good job as a profession. Again, I haven’t been around it enough in the last five or six years to know if we’re crossing those bridges or not. But my suspicion is that the culture of the workforce people versus the culture of the economic developers is like oil and water. They just don’t [speak] each other’s language very much. For the profession to be more successful it has to dig deeper into the workforce development finances, as well as staffing, to see how we can better cooperate with them.

Do you have any other stories or anecdotes you'd like to share?

None that I can print <laughs>.

Is there anything else you'd like to say?

One thing that maybe wasn't explored too well in what you've written is the role of the regional organizations: MAEDC, CALED, SIDC. [These groups] competed for the attention and leadership of economic developers. I think this may have gone away over the years, but you might want to ask someone in the current leadership. I know SIDC at one time talked about merging with AEDC. That did not happen for a bunch of reasons. But, I think that would help round out a discussion about the competitive weakness of the regional organizations. I worked in California. Not many people had, so I got to know CALED really well. [I worked with] Wayne Schell, whom I've known forever.

Involving CALED in AEDC and then IEDC was a huge membership/professional challenge for AEDC/IEDC. To Wayne's credit, he ran California. He was the "Jeff Finkle of California." Having our organizations benefit from cross-fertilization with CALED was really important for many years. My job as board member was to get Wayne really involved. [We were able to do so] partly because of my long term relationship with him. But that was a huge jump for CALED and AEDC, to start building bridges. I think this was a bridge which CUED built years before AEDC began to reach out.

Is there anything else you'd like to say about those regional organizations?

No, I don't think so. But if you want to drill into that, Mike Olivier or maybe Jay Garner would be the two to talk about how SIDC/AEDC/IEDC all got together or not.

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