



# EDA

Volume 2; Issue 2

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Each quarter, *EDA America*, an eight-page print publication, is delivered to thousands of economic development practitioners across the United States. The publication focuses on highlighting best practices, case studies and research on various topics related to economic development, workforce development, planning, partnerships and much more.

The theme for the spring 2009 issue will be Green Workforce Development. The publication will feature a column on partnerships, rural strategies, urban renewal and other timely topics.

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## Federal Funding Opportunity Now Available for EDA's University Center Economic Development Program

EDA is pleased to announce the solicitation of applications for the FY 2009 University Center Economic Development Program competition, to take place in EDA's Atlanta and Seattle regional offices. A notice was published today in the *Federal Register* (74 FR 7856). EDA is soliciting applications from accredited institutions of higher education and from consortia of accredited institutions of higher education in the geographic areas served by its Atlanta and Seattle regional offices. The deadline for receipt of applications is April 21, 2009 at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time for EDA's Atlanta regional office and 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time for EDA's Seattle regional office. All other information and requirements for the FY 2009 University Center Economic Development Program competition may be found in the February 20, 2009 Federal Register notice (74 FR 7856) and the companion federal funding opportunity announcement on EDA's website at [www.eda.gov/InvestmentsGrants/FFON.xml](http://www.eda.gov/InvestmentsGrants/FFON.xml).

## It's Academic: The Rewards of Higher Education in Economic Development

Colleges and universities have long served as incubators for science, technology and business innovation. But in times of economic challenge, higher education institutions often serve as drivers of community development. The partnership between the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) and the cities of Urbana and Champaign has resulted in significant economic benefits and serves as a model for how university representatives and economic development practitioners can work together.

In the late 1990s, the city of Champaign started making significant investments in Campustown, a neighborhood adjacent to the university. These investments focused on infrastructure enhancements (related to flooding issues) and improving the streetscape, an effort which was partially funded by UIUC. This initial \$8 million investment has spurred private sector investment, resulting in more retail, restaurants, apartments and a new grocery store. Additionally, Campustown has become a more pedestrian-oriented and urban environment, providing a preferred

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### WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Do you have a story idea, case study or topic that you would like to see covered in this newsletter? Do you want to comment on something you read here? [Email us](#) and your comment or idea could be featured in the next EDA Update!

### APA's Economic Development Toolbox Part One: *Potential Economic Development Strategies*

Development practitioners, along with local and regional governments, have a variety of options to employ when considering their community's best economic strategies. In APA's Toolbox, ([website](#)) stakeholders can learn of different strategies – from business retention and attraction to workforce training – that may be right for their region and industries.

### EDA Excellence in Economic Development Awards 2009 – Entries now being accepted!

The competition for the EDA Excellence in Economic Development Awards 2009 is now open.

The awards recognize innovative economic development projects or strategies across the United States. The awards are designed to showcase best practices and highlight outstanding results.

EDA is accepting entries through **April 16, 2009**.

To review and download the Awards 2009 entry brochure, visit: [www.eda.gov](http://www.eda.gov).

location to both national chains and local start-ups, with easy access to the approximately 25,000 students that live within five blocks.

Campustown isn't the only place in Champaign that is experiencing revitalization. Downtown, while not immediately adjacent to the UIUC but still close to campus and Campustown, is also experiencing redevelopment. In fact, according to city planners, approximately \$3.5 million in tax increment financing funds have been invested in downtown since 1994 – and that has yielded a return on investment of \$35 million. Students also seem to be spending more time – and more money – downtown, which has increased revenue from sales tax.

The revitalization has benefited from the collaborative approach between the University, city officials, local business and property owners, as well as students. Representatives from each of these entities sit on the University District Advisory Board, which oversees the implementation of the University District Action Plan. This plan leverages key community leaders to address vital community development issues ranging from land use and urban design to safety, transportation, parking, infrastructure and aesthetics.

The university has also been an important partner to the city of Urbana, just east of Champaign. A public-private partnership between Urbana, UIUC and a private developer has led to the development of Gregory Place West and Gregory Place East. These two mixed-use developments have added to the vibrancy of the east part of campus, and helped to replace some of the residential and commercial uses lost over time. The Krannert Center District, which is a new business group, is also working to help develop a neighborhood of arts, entertainment and dining to encourage more students and residents to spend time on the east side of campus.

City planners from both Champaign and Urbana report that while they are not immune to the downturns in the economy, the presence of the university has helped create a local economy that is more resilient. Ongoing partnerships with the university have also helped create important economic development opportunities.

Learning from this example, policy leaders and economic practitioners should look to these enterprises when visioning and implementing their communities' short- and long-term development strategies. The higher education collaborative, like public-private partnerships, leverages multiple sources of investment and reinforces the commitment of a varied group of community stakeholders. The UIUC story teaches us the following important lessons:

- Municipalities, community development corporations, and the business community should not overlook engaging local universities in creating economic development plans;
- An advisory board that includes representatives from the university as well as other local stakeholders can be an effective way to engage stakeholders;
- Colleges and universities can be sources of funding as well as research and workforce training expertise;
- A commitment to place making and raising quality of life amenities creates an atmosphere for sustainable economic activity; and
- Private investment often follows the public investments in community improvements.

While not every region or community has a higher educational institution located nearby, the UIUC experience suggests that effective partnerships can often involve less traditional economic development partners. These partnerships ultimately help strengthen a community's resiliency in times of economic downturn and pay dividends in creating places of lasting value.

## Universities and Entrepreneurial Impact

When we think of the economic development role of universities, we often think of

If you have any questions, contact Barbara Earman in EDA's Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs Division at 202-482-4521 or at [awards@eda.doc.gov](mailto:awards@eda.doc.gov).

### Coming Soon!

#### March 7–9, 2009

NAWB's Forum 2009: Partners at Work Washington, DC [[Website](#)]

#### March 12, 2009

*NIST's* Technology Innovation Program and Manufacturing Extension Partnership San Francisco, CA [[Website](#)]

#### March 15–17, 2009

*IEDC's* Federal Economic Development Forum Alexandria, VA [[Website](#)]

#### March 25–27, 2009

Nado's Economic Development Finance Service Conference New Orleans, LA [[Website](#)]

#### April 14–15, 2009

Center for Automotive Research, Roads to Renewal Chicago, IL [[Website](#)]

#### April 19–22, 2009

NBIA's 23rd International Conference on Business Incubation Kansas City, MO [[Website](#)]

#### April 25–29, 2009

APA's 101st National Planning Conference Minneapolis, MN [[Website](#)]

technology transfer or the effects of local real estate development. A new study of the economic impact of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) details another important and often overlooked role for universities--as an incubator of innovation and entrepreneurship. The study reports on a survey of MIT alumni and their subsequent careers as entrepreneurs. The results are pretty astounding. At present, MIT alumni have founded 25,800 active companies that employ 3.3 million people and generate annual revenue of \$2 trillion. If organized as a single economy, this alumni group would represent the 17th largest economy in the world.

MIT has always spawned a lot of entrepreneurs, but, in recent years, alumni have been even more entrepreneurial—starting businesses at faster rates and at a younger age. This shift is partly the result of MIT's growing emphasis on entrepreneurship. In recent years, it has developed a number of programs, such as alumni mentoring network and a major student business plan competition. These efforts have helped build a stronger entrepreneurial ecosystem in Massachusetts and within the wider national and global MIT alumni network. The report concludes with a number of concrete suggestions on how other universities can also nurture a stronger, and more effective, regional entrepreneur support system.

The February 2009 Kauffman Foundation-sponsored report, *Entrepreneurial Impact: The Role of MIT*, by Edward B. Roberts and Charles Eesley, can be accessed at: [www.kauffman.org](http://www.kauffman.org).

### **Roads to Renewal: A Summit on the Changing Automotive Industry — How Communities Can Thrive**

This April, leaders from automotive communities will gather in Chicago for a first-of-its-kind event: a Summit on how communities can respond to the changing automotive environment. Everyone knows the challenges. What may not be as well known are the solutions: community empowerment, collaboration and planning.

On April 14-15, the Center for Automotive Research, the EDA and the University of Michigan will host this event that could change your community. You will hear from leaders who have turned their communities around, as well as from leading experts in economic development and the automotive industry. You'll learn how to position your community to prepare and partner to prosper, even in these unprecedented tough times in the automotive industry.

For more information, or to register for this important event, visit: <http://regionalsummit.cargroup.org/> or call 734-662-1287.

April 14-15, 2009  
Renaissance Chicago Hotel  
Chicago, Illinois



**American Planning Association**

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