It Takes a State
21st National EPSCoR Conference

Mary L. Good, Dean, Donaghey College of Engineering and Information Technology, UALR

October 19, 2009
JW Marriott Hotel, Washington, DC
Problems at National Level

- Federal government strategies for national economic development are fragmented, and resources are distributed to several federal departments.

- No system in place to create coordinated, government-supported research activity focused on economic development and competitiveness.
States’ Reaction to Federal Issues

- States have filled void by creating state R&D priorities and linking them to economic development policies and activities.
- Reinforces the importance of state-supported universities in these state R&D and economic development initiatives.
Examples from the State of Arkansas

- State-initiated environments for growth of knowledge-based jobs and technology industry
  - Arkansas Science and Technology Authority founded in 1980 to oversee first EPSCoR proposal
  - 33.3% tax credit for investing in technology start-ups
  - Program to help with SBIR grants
  - Technical training for workforce development at two-year institutions
Examples from the State of Arkansas

- Number of state-funded activities to aid technology innovation and business incubation
  - Accelerate Arkansas
  - Arkansas Research Alliance
  - Innovate Arkansas
  - Connect Arkansas broadband initiative
  - Funding for Centers (nanotechnology, high-performance computing, etc.)
  - Research matching fund
Examples from the State of Arkansas

- New approach to economic development from Arkansas Economic Development Commission
  - Move from number of jobs to payroll/wealth creation

- Private-sector developments
  - Angel investor groups
  - “Fund for Arkansas” LLC
  - Spinoffs from Alltel (acquired by Verizon) and Acxiom
  - Research Park developments
Examples from the State of Arkansas

- University contributions
  - Incubators – business start-ups
    - University of Arkansas at Fayetteville
    - University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
    - University of Arkansas at Little Rock
    - Arkansas State University in Jonesboro

- Direct support to AEDC

- Increased emphasis on technical/professional workforce
Corporate Growth and Recruitment

- Strong corporate presence for small, poor state
  - Recruited: Welspun Pipes (first plant outside India), LM Glasfiber, Nordex, Polymarin, SAIC, food processing companies, including Nestle and Lever Brothers
Corporate Growth and Recruitment

- Major potential remains for innovation at state level coordinated with federal programs
  - “Green” technologies
  - Health care
  - Tech transfer

- Major needs include very early stage funding for technology transition to commercialization, support for graduate programs and students
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