

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
 - Homegrown: Wal-Mart, Alltel (now Verizon Wireless), Acxiom, Arkansas Systems, Systematics, Riceland Foods, Stephens Group
 - 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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