



Web Tools to Put You on the Map

A Smart Mix of Maps & Stats Draws Prospects Online

The competition for business prospects keeps getting fiercer. A wise economic developer knows he needs to make it as easy as possible for site selectors and others to find the information they need about the region, the community — and even a particular building or parcel. And the most efficient way to do that is online.

Of course, it's most important to get your basic facts online: tax incentives, permitting processes and, by far the most important, demographics. But more elaborate technologies, specifically geographic information system (GIS) programs that can provide large amounts of information on the land parcel of one's choosing, may be a good investment for an umbrella organization or other regionally focused EDO with sufficient resources. For smaller entities, linking with a regional group or perhaps a utility may be the best option. However one gains access to them, certain technologies may give your organization an edge — in the very least, they can convey the impression of a staff that's well-organized and responsive to client needs.

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Basic Do's & Don'ts for ED Web Sites

There are certain features any respectable economic development Web site should have, no matter how big or small an area it represents. They don't have to be high-tech, either. In fact, some are pure common sense.

- **A phone number and mailing address.** Anatalio Ubalde of GIS Planning notes that he sees this critical information omitted all too often. "This shows that people are missing the point of what their Web site is supposed to be doing for them, which is to facilitate economic investment in their community and offer a reason for a prospect or visitor to contact them," he said. "Not having a phone number listed is counterproductive." Julie Denise, project manager for business development with Carter & Burgess in Fort Worth, echoes this, noting that she doesn't like clicking a "contact us" link and having an e-mail window open. She prefers to phone.

Mark James of ED Solutions Inc. adds that your phone number and address should be somewhere on every page of your site. No, that's not overkill. Research indicates that many people nowadays actually use the Internet as a phone directory. If you want prospects to call, go out of your way to make it easy.

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So what's available, and would it help you?

Options for attraction

Anatalio Ubalde, principal of GIS Planning Inc. in San Francisco, explains that there are three primary options for listing a community's available sites and buildings online. One is a relatively simple listing of properties on a Web page. The main advantage of this is that it only costs whatever the Web designer charges for creating the page.

The second option is a searchable database that allows a site selector to look for a property that meets specific needs. This of course will be more expensive than a simple Web page, ranging from a few hundred dollars to several thousand, according to Ubalde. The information, however, is still fairly simple and, in Ubalde's view, insufficient because property alone doesn't differentiate a community or region from the competition.

A number of companies compete to provide national databases of real estate, although these typically are oriented toward real estate brokers and are in business simply to sell properties, not to create high-wage jobs, improve the downtown or any of the other goals a local EDO would have. These databases also may well be showcasing sites from competing communities along with the properties your organization wants to lease or sell. Says Ubalde, "Adding a link from your economic development agency's Web site to these national real estate sites can be like adding a link to your competition."

Besides, just listing a bunch of properties does little to differentiate a community. "Almost every city, county and EDC has available properties and buildings to promote," Ubalde says. Besides, he adds, property availability rarely is the driver behind a site decision.

What does matter are factors such as physical infrastructure, workforce quality, market characteristics and local amenities. Which is why Ubalde advocates (and creates) searchable property databases integrated with other site selection analysis tools — in other words, Web-based geographic information systems (GIS). This third option answers three main questions for the site selector:

- Does the community have property available for this business?
- What are the market characteristics of the location? In other words, what kind of workforce is available there, and is there a market demand for the business' goods or services?
- Which nearby businesses will create synergy or competition?

This kind of software allows the user to map the exact locations of companies in a particular industry, so the user can see what kinds of industry clustering are happening in the area. "A person could look at a spreadsheet until they are blurry-eyed and never be able to see this level of spatial analysis without GIS," Ubalde comments.

Dennis Donovan, senior managing director of the Wadley Donovan Group, a Grubb & Ellis consulting company, indicates he is a fan of GIS capabilities, although he adds that he doesn't see them used much by EDOs. "I think it would be an advantage," he says. He and his colleagues use geophysical maps from sources such as the U.S. Geological Survey, the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) Co. and certain utility companies. Donovan acknowledges that small organizations may not be able to afford GIS technology themselves. However, he recommends at least having a still photograph and aerial shot of any sites being showcased, and recommends banding together in regional partner-

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ships or with other, larger entities to get one's community properly displayed and analyzed.

Sioux City & Honolulu

The cities of Honolulu and Sioux City, Iowa, both have instituted GIS technologies on their Web sites and sound pleased with the results.

Sioux City Economic Development Director Patty Heagel notes that prior to instituting GIS, getting site information to potential clients was "quite a bit of handwork." Her department had access to tax assessor files that already

were GIS-based, but the staff could only pull up information on a specific parcel, not perform criteria-based searches. Ubalde's company helped develop the site, at a cost of less than \$17,000, and maintains it for \$10,000 a year.

Currently, some eight real estate agents and other entities post a total of 97 properties on the site. The listings are free, but those who post them are responsible for updating the information. Heagel says the city sends the companies quarterly reminders about those updates.

Lisa Gibson, chief operating officer of Enterprise Honolulu, notes that the city and county of Honolulu paid for development of the GIS site, but her organization, a privately funded nonprofit EDO, solicits the property listings. Jane Yamashiro, director of special projects with the organization, says it cost roughly \$30,000 to develop the site, with additional costs for maintenance. As in Sioux City, those submitting property information keep them updated. There currently are 345 listings.

Gibson and Heagel both said the technology was extremely helpful. Heagel reports that the GIS site has received some 21,800 hits since it was launched in September 2002. A lot of them have been local hits, possibly established companies contemplating a move or expansion. Heagel says that she's working to add more links to the site, particularly from other business and economic development entities in the region, which stretches into Nebraska and North Dakota. The Hono-



www.siuox-city.org/ED/index.htm

Excerpt from a map created at Sioux City, Iowa's real estate database. The numbers along the roads indicate traffic counts. Users can search for buildings or sites to fit specified parameters, and obtain detailed information on a property and its surrounding area.

lulu site has been drawing approximately 300,000 visits per month, according to Gibson, and it has been credited with drawing the attention of Federal Express, which used the GIS site to find an appropriate location in the area.

Partnering with others

For communities too small or low-budget to afford such technologies, partnering with a regional group or a utility company may be an option. Cinergy Corp., which serves Indiana and the Cincinnati area, uses GIS

to provide details on properties throughout those two regions, using separate Web sites for Indiana and Greater Cincinnati. There is no charge to the EDOs or communities whose properties appear. After all, a company that locates on one of those sites becomes a new customer for Cinergy.

Visitors can find site and building information, as well as some 115 "community resumes" posted there. Mike Heaton, Cinergy's economic development marketing manager, says current site statistics aren't available, but recalls that about a year ago, the number of hits totaled "way over 50,000 per month," with about 4,000 actual user sessions. The numbers were rising at the time.

Heaton sees Cinergy's site as being especially useful for smaller communities that businesses might not think to check out. "What we hear is that the site selectors are looking at more regional organizations," Heaton says, and a utility can serve as a portal for regional information. However, the utility also offers advice and financial assistance to local EDOs as well, to help individual community development efforts.

One can turn to a number of different organizations for property information in Pennsylvania, from the state's "Team Pennsylvania" site down to some municipal Web sites. For the greater Scranton area, one can find information on specific parcels and buildings via the Greater

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Scranton Chamber of Commerce Web site; Penn's Northeast, which markets the nine-county region in which Scranton is located; Pennsylvania Power and Light (PPL); and the state's Team Pennsylvania site. Not all properties will be found at each site. Some of their Web sites, including the state site and the one for Penn's Northeast, are still in relatively early stages of development.

Penn's Northeast President Jim Cummings notes that the economic development groups whose properties are to be listed through his organization's Web site contribute money to a common fund, but it's minimal: "Did they pay for this? Yes, but it was nickels and dimes." Likewise, Penn's Northeast pays a modest amount to the state to utilize the Team Pennsylvania site. Probably the most comprehensive site listing service for the area is found via PPL, which serves 34 counties and says on its site that it currently has more than 1,000 properties inventoried. One can access the PPL site via the Greater Scranton Chamber site and search for locations in Lackawana County, obtaining maps, photos or pictures, building floor plans, and details about the workforce, major employers, educational institutions and other mat-

ters, using an application that GIS Planning developed.

PPL Economic Development Director Sharon Ward notes that the utility has purchased data from the state and other sources, and bases its collection on the IEDC data standards. Included are statistics for areas up to 30 miles outside the state and service area borders. Those who want to submit a property for inclusion in the database are given two-page checklists to complete. Ward says site selectors and real estate agents use it, typically for companies employing perhaps 75 to 100 workers.

"I think site selectors have been cut back. They have to be more efficient," Ward said. Sites like PPL's save time for them, and for the EDO with properties to push. Dan Walsh, administrator for the Scranton Plan, the industrial marketing arm of the Greater Scranton Chamber, agrees, saying the PPL site has been a valuable marketing tool for his organization. The chamber links not just to the PPL site, but to the state and regional partner sites as well, while still providing community profiles and maps at its own address. "In economic development, the two major things are your people and your land," Walsh says.

Does Your Web Site Have the Right Bot Bait?

You can pack all kinds of terrific information on your Web site and have it come to naught if you don't make sure people can find the site in the first place.

First, be sure to put your site address on every item you give out, be they brochures, notepads, postcards, coffee mugs or tee-shirts. After all, the Internet is fast becoming the first link a business or site selection consultant uses when mulling potential locations; the wise economic developer always is looking for ways to drive people to his organization's Web site.

But as Mark J. James, principal of ED Solutions Inc. of Columbus, Ohio, points out, you need to make it easy for the search engines, particularly the five biggest — Google, Yahoo, Alta Vista, MSN and AOL — to find you. For some, such as Yahoo, that will mean paying for the listing, of course, but it's a wise investment. Expect to spend about \$550 a year to do this.

But more importantly, you've got to make sure the search "bots" that go prowling for Web sites will latch on to your site. And according to James, lately there have been changes in what those little bots are looking for. The meta tags, special codes embedded in Web site copy to get a search engine's attention, aren't the ticket any-

more. What matters, James says, is relevance, which bots judge by matching key words and phrases in the text on your site to those a searcher has just typed in.

What would those key words be? Try to think like a site selector or other outside visitor looking for information. According to James, that means first and foremost telling folks where you are. "Remember, all economic development searches are done by geography," he says. Also think about the kinds of information they'll be expecting to find — workforce statistics, available sites, etc. Picture someone typing, say, "Briggs County workforce" into a search bar. Be sure your site has those words on the home page and elsewhere in the site so the bots can find them and pull them up quickly should your community get "Googled."

Links are important, too, on your Web site and elsewhere. Put together a good set of links to other sites — for chambers of commerce, government agencies, state, regional and national economic development organizations, business associations and any other entities with which your organization might have shared interests. More important still, contact those organizations and make sure they include links to your site on *their* sites.



Focus on

EDUCATING FUTURE ENTREPRENEURS

Erik Pages Talks Entrepreneurship Training, Culture

Recent economic changes should prompt economic developers to put emphasis on promoting entrepreneurship in their communities, according to Erik Pages, president and founder of EntreWorks Consulting.

Entrepreneurship accounts for one-third of the difference in the nation's economic growth rate. At any one time, 9 percent of Americans are trying to start a business, said Pages, who spoke earlier this month during the Economic Development Administration Annual Conference in Washington. Currently states invest only 1 percent of their economic development dollars in encouraging entrepreneurial activities, he estimated.

The key to encouraging the formation of companies in your community is cultivating an entrepreneurial ecosystem — a business culture that embraces startups, networks of entrepreneurs and a set of service providers catering to fledgling firms. To create that ecosystem, a community needs to increase its supply of entrepre-

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Engineering Entrepreneurship In North Central Louisiana

Louisiana Tech Teaches Tekkies about Business

The main goal behind Louisiana Tech University's Center for Entrepreneurship and Information Technology (CEnIT) is to teach beginning engineers and scientists about marketplace realities. The new program, however, aims to do more than that, helping commercialize faculty and student inventions and assisting the state's efforts to attract advanced technology companies to north central Louisiana.

CEnIT was established in 2001 as part of a state initiative to create an information technology (IT) cluster. The idea was to leverage the strengths of the university, which is based in a rural area with few high-tech companies aside from CenturyTel, considered one of the nation's top telecommunications firms.

"To really have an impact on economic development in north central Louisiana, we needed to stimulate entrepreneurial activities — tied to our mission and strengths," said CEnIT Director Leslie Guice.

Officials hoped CEnIT would draw IT companies to the region surrounding Ruston, La., by growing entrepreneurial activities and supporting existing advanced technology firms, said Guice. Four other research universities in the state also received funding under the IT initiative.

The science of business

The center is a collaboration of Louisiana Tech's College of Engineering and Science — where Guice serves as the dean — and the College of Administration of Business — where CEnIT's associate director is associate dean. Students cannot major in entrepreneurship at CEnIT. Instead, the center offers programs meant to give engineers better insight into the business world and help students pursuing a master's in business administration (MBA) improve their understanding of technology.



Photo courtesy of CEnIT

CEnIT students examine possible uses for augmented virtual reality.

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“The real key is the interdisciplinary nature of this,” Guice said. The business college recently added a minor in entrepreneurship and now is considering revamping its MBA curriculum to add an entrepreneurial focus, he added.

In a typical CEnIT project, MBA students collaborate with doctoral students to develop a business plan for a new product. The center’s class in innovative product design, for example, challenges students to design a product to meet a specific need and takes them through all the phases necessary to bring a product to market — understanding the problem from the customers’ viewpoint, creating a prototype, conducting market research and developing a business plan.

A recent assignment, Guice said, required students to create a product to help people with blindness. One team built a walking cane that vibrates when a built-in infrared sensor detects low-hanging obstacles. Although the class has ended, the students still are exploring whether the cane could be sold commercially.

This summer, students in one of the courses will be required to design an add-on device for the Segway, the personal transportation device introduced by inventor Dean Kamen in 2001.

“We’re trying to create a culture where these students really understand that they can create their own business opportunities,” Guice said.

Another CEnIT class covers the basics of starting a business for engineers and scientists — planning, marketing, finance and accounting. “Some of the things engineers and students typically don’t get exposed to,” he noted.

The center’s 3,000-square-foot Innovation Lab provides a facility for students from different disciplines to work together to create rough prototypes. A new 30,000-square-foot lab is planned to allow faculty and students to collaborate on class work, research projects and outreach activities.

Results already showing

Less than two years since it was established, CEnIT already is producing dividends, Guice said. Louisiana Tech had more invention reports and patent applications filed in the first five months of 2003 than it had in all of 2002, which had been the university’s best year to date. “We’re seeing a lot of activity,” he commented.

An invention report is filed when a university researcher notifies the school’s tech transfer office of a new discovery. This triggers an assessment of the potential to

secure a patent and commercial licensing opportunities.

A recent graduate started his own technology-based company, and others with the center are working on plans to launch other companies. “I think if we look back a year from now, several new businesses will have cropped up,” Guice said.

The center’s commercialization efforts are geared toward student-generated research projects as well as those led by faculty and funded through government grants. CEnIT works closely with the university’s technology transfer office, but has been developing its own capacity to promote tech transfer.

“This CEnIT funding [from the state] has really helped accelerate that,” Guice said.

Research at CEnIT is focused in two fields — advanced computing and sensing; and networking, simulation, modeling and design. The first area deals with next generation systems for processing, computing, storing and sensing information. The school’s work in this area is tied to Louisiana Tech’s Institute for Micromanufacturing, which specializes in nanotechnology and microelectromechanical systems (MEMS).

“We’re using CEnIT to pull some of the business opportunities out of that research,” Guice said.

The other field targets the use of computer modeling tools in materials science, biology, networking and decision support. To shorten the time to bring a new technology to market, industry is placing an increased emphasis on complex systems and the interdisciplinary teams of scientists necessary to establish the relationships between hardware, software and simulation algorithms.

A node in the network

CEnIT received \$1.9 million from the state in 2001 and \$2.4 million last year. Much of the funds were spent on high-end computers and network access, while some were used to hire new faculty in IT. Officials expect the center to receive about \$2 million a year from the state for the foreseeable future.

“We’re using this as a catalyst,” Guice noted.

“Louisiana: Vision 2020,” the state’s master plan for economic development, has helped the state align its economic development efforts with its higher education system for the first time, he said. The university stays in close contact with Louisiana Economic Development, the state EDO, frequently hosting prospective companies the agency is wooing.

But, Guice concedes, the university cannot meet all



of the state's economic development needs: "We realize we're a node in the network."

The key to success for any university research center devoted to entrepreneurship, he said, is the degree to which the school, industry and local or state government work together. The best way to help such a venture take off may differ from community to community, however, Guice added.

Questions? Leslie Guice, CEnIT, 318/257-4647, <http://cenit.latech.edu>; information on Louisiana: Vision 2020 is available at www.lded.state.la.us/.

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neers, link them in networks and reward entrepreneurial behavior, he said.

One way to do this, according to Pages, is through entrepreneurial training in public schools, community colleges and universities. "I think the ideal target age to hit people is high school age. That's when they're both capable of acting on the knowledge and perhaps more interested in it," Pages said.

Post-high school training is valuable, too, he added. "I really believe community colleges are the one major untapped area. They're in the right place, hitting the right populations."

Pages firmly believes that entrepreneurial skills can be taught: "It may sound hokey, but it's about empowering people to follow their dreams."

To help build entrepreneurial networks, communities need to encourage "soft, cultural" factors through training and mentoring. They also should reward entrepreneurial behavior, an approach that can be as simple as establishing an awards programs to honor people who have successfully established businesses. Communities also can recognize entrepreneurs by offering them opportunities to serve as civic leaders.

The steps required to build an entrepreneurial ecosystem are very different from traditional economic development activities, Pages said. They don't rely on big projects, but rather are low-cost, but long-term, investments.

Of course, traditional economic development activities such as business attraction and retention still matter. "You've got to do it all," Pages said.

Questions? Erik Pages, EntreWorks Consulting, 703/237-2506, www.entreworks.net.

Helping Teens Think Like Business Owners

Can you teach kids — even those from low-income families — to be entrepreneurs? Absolutely, according to a New York-based nonprofit which offers 11- to 18-year-olds the basics in dreaming up an enterprise and thinking like a business owner.

The goal of the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) is not specifically to encourage youngsters to start new ventures, but to mix business education with life skills training, said Leonora Snyder, director of in-school programs for NFTE's San Francisco office.

"We're helping students to become empowered through writing a business plan," Snyder said.

The organization — it's a foundation in name only — designs curricula that emphasize hands-on, interactive learning and provides training to teachers and youth workers. Through its six regional offices, NFTE offers its programs through schools and community groups such as the YMCA and the Boys and Girls Clubs, helping it reach low-income, at-risk populations.

The organization started in 1987 as a dropout prevention and academic performance improvement program, and "focused on engaging students who weren't otherwise engaged," Snyder said. NFTE has evolved, though, into a comprehensive course in writing a business plan. Now its programs in entrepreneurial literacy reach 17,000 kids a year.

NFTE offers a variety of curricula covering supply and demand, return on investment, competitive analysis, market research, ethics and taxes. Its primary course, "How to Start and Operate a Small Business," takes from 40 to 180 hours and is intended for high school students. It can be taught as a stand-alone course or it can be integrated into existing math, social studies or economics classes. The course's 512-page text and 342-page teacher resource guide won the Association of Educational Publishers' 2002 Golden Lamp award for, as one judge put it, making a complex subject "entirely do-able."

"What it exposes them to is the idea of ownership," Snyder said.

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A shorter program is available for middle schools and after-school programs. "A lot of stuff involves running around the classroom, moving beyond traditional education and having a hands-on experience," she added.

NFTE also has a curriculum for young adults as well as an online course in creating a business plan.

Deciding they can

The organization has conducted several research studies in conjunction with Brandeis University to gauge the impact of its programs. One survey found that the percentage of students who believed they could start a small business rose from 20 percent before starting the program to 59 percent afterward. Another survey showed that NFTE increases the number of young people who have run a business by 63 youth per 100 enrolled.

Many of the program's alumni launch ventures, some through businesses located at their schools. Several of the schools hosting NFTE even have started mini-malls filled with student businesses.

The organization continues to support its students after they complete its programs. Through its network of national and local alumni groups, it offers workshops and, for alumni with active businesses, an advanced seminar. NFTE also holds a national awards competition to recognize its young entrepreneurs. Winners receive \$1,000 venture grants.

But helping its students start a business is not the program's only objective. One benefit of NFTE's approach is the improved sense of self-confidence students gain.

"A key piece is creating a positive identity," she said. For example, Snyder explained, many of the kids say, "I'm an entrepreneur. That's who I am."

NFTE also offers participants a different way to think about their future careers.

"We're not saying go get a job; we're saying think about how you [would] do a job as an entrepreneur," she said. For schools that offer their own career programs such as internships or job shadowing, NFTE presents an alternative approach to navigating the workplace.

"If they work at McDonald's," Snyder said, "they

don't feel disconnected if they have thought about what it means to own a McDonald's."

An ongoing study led by a professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education is evaluating NFTE's impact on students' academic performance and personal development.

Partners in training

Outside of the classroom, NFTE stresses professional development for the teachers and youth workers who lead its programs. The organization has partnerships with nine universities to train teachers in business and entrepreneurship, including Columbia (University) Business School, which offers advanced training. NFTE can arrange to bring guest speakers to the classroom or to connect teachers to other resources.

Beyond public schools and community groups, NFTE partners with a number of universities, nonprofit organizations and state and local agencies to deliver its training. NFTE's partnership with the Florida Department of Education, for example, is bringing its entrepreneurial literacy programs to communities designated through the state's Front Porch Florida community revitalization initiative.

NFTE tries to select partners who can effectively implement its programs and reach its target population. Some of its other program partners include the Connecticut Departments of Economic Development and Education, Dallas Girls Inc., GEAR UP Kentucky, NAACP, U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Foundation and Youth Entrepreneurs of Kansas.

The organization has international partnerships as well, including ties with groups in Argentina, Belgium, El Salvador, India, South Africa, Tanzania and the United Kingdom.

For communities considering starting business programs in their public schools, Snyder stressed the importance of establishing clear objectives. A program with a well-thought-out vision is most likely to gain public support and survive over the long-term, she said.

Questions? Leonora Snyder, NFTE's San Francisco office, 415/644-0844, ext. 429, or Vivian Garcia-Tunon, NFTE's headquarters, 800/FOR-NFTE, ext. 314. Web site, www.nfte.com.



Picture courtesy of NFTE

A student sells comic books during an NFTE BizCamp held at Stanford University.



- **A good collection of statistics.** It's the most important thing you can offer. (See "Snaring Site Selectors in Your Web," *Economic Development Now*, Jan. 15, 2002, p. 1.) Business prospects want to know about the workforce, educational opportunities, leading employers, industry clusters and other details that, for an EDO on a budget, can be put into a PDF, Word file or HTML form on an easily found page of the site.

That's how Deb Courtney-Bertha, director of information services with the Greater Colorado Springs Economic Development Corp., posts her organization's statistics. Her organization in fact made a conscious decision to post groups of documents on a smaller number of pages within the Web site, and offer them in both PDF and Word formats. Previously, the data all had been coded in HTML and distributed over a larger number of pages, making it harder for visitors to find, according to Courtney-Bertha. She adds that the use of PDF and Word files allows site selectors and other users to copy and paste the information into their own documents offline for reports and presentations.

As for the type of statistics to provide, there are several options. Some communities opt to put together their own collections. Others use the national standards compiled by IEDC and Conway data. (See article, page 10.) Still others may opt for a proprietary program such as DataFast, a somewhat simpler application developed by Chabin Concepts of Chico, Calif., available on CD and in a Web-based version. Chabin President & CEO Audrey Taylor notes that the program is interactive and allows downloads in either PDF or Excel formats. (She adds that IEDC members get a 10 percent discount.)

- **Maps.** Dan Walsh of the Scranton Plan, the industrial marketing arm of the Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce, is a believer in these. "Don't assume people know where you are," he says. The chamber has five on its Web site: the greater Scranton area; the "Tri-State Region," which includes northeastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York; downtown Scranton; and the official downtown Scranton business district.

- **Links.** All good EDOs partner whenever they can. Link to every chamber, regional group, state entity, business organization and other logical partner you can find, and make sure they do the same for your site. (See "Does Your Web Site Have the Right Bot Bait?," page 4.)

And while we're at it, let's note some mistakes:

- **Designing a site that only accommodates one type of browser.** Even though you're not designing the site for the general public, you should make it accessible for all

the types of Web browsers the general public might use. (We here at the IEDC offices have encountered sites that didn't follow this rule, and they made us want to scream.)

- **Overuse of graphics and animation.** James cites studies that indicate a typical Web site visitor will wait an average of 22 seconds for something to download before moving on. However, some economic development Web sites he's seen take as much as 45 seconds to download because of all the graphics. "A lot of people who are searching economic development Web sites do it in their off-hours," he warns. And that means they may very well be using a dial-up modem, like the majority of at-home Web surfers. While he thinks Flash, for example, can be a useful tool, it and the other bells and whistles can definitely become a repellant rather than an attraction if not used judiciously.

- **Web tools that require special software in order to function.** Most Internet users don't want to be forced to download software just to see information on an economic development Web site that they will probably only use once. Just ask national site selection consultant Dennis Donovan: He says Adobe Reader is pretty much the only extra software he's been willing to add. Besides, many people worry that they may download a virus with that special software. And it simply sends the wrong message. "Forcing someone to download software to get information is like saying, 'I would be happy to help you, but only if you improve your shoddy computer to meet our standards,'" says Ubalde.

- **Requiring visitors to register.** "We just won't do it," says Donovan. "It's way too time-consuming." That's because there may be a lag between registration and actually obtaining access. What's more, some users may be involved in confidential searches.

True, an EDO may require registration in order to control the flow of information and generate leads for possible follow-up later. Denise says she understands this, but for her, it's not necessary: She usually uses the Web *after* contacting state and regional economic development officials; by the time she finds a community's Web page, she has probably short-listed the community — and contacted the local EDO — already. As for prospects who use the Web early in the process, Ubalde reports being told by many that they don't like being called when they're simply doing preliminary research. In any case, the consensus seems to be that registration is unnecessary at best, and off-putting for many users.

The Internet can be a powerful marketing and communication tool — if you use it wisely.



Advice & Caution for Video & Virtual Reality

Some sites go beyond maps and color photographs to offer video and/or virtual reality tools.

Anatalio Ubalde of GIS Planning Inc. says there are three primary ways to put moving pictures and video on a Web sites: Video files in formats such as MOVs, MPGs or AVIs; streaming video such as Real Player, Quicktime or Windows Media; and Flash technology, which is more like animation.

For all three types, the basic idea is to offer a more comprehensive view than one would get in a single photo.

There's another alternative as well: "virtual reality" technologies that allow a user to control an image by panning 360 degrees. Some may also allow the user to look up and down 360 degrees, as well as zoom in and out of an image.

The Internet isn't TV

Regarding video, Ubalde says that most video on the Internet is being used the same way video is used on television — for commercials: "Few people like watching commercials, and the video content is usually not deep enough to be useful in the site selection process unless it actually takes the viewer on a virtual tour of a property or community." Although economic developers may be comfortable with online video because it simulates TV, the Internet is a different medium and therefore provides different information communication opportunities.

However, Ubalde does think virtual reality tours could be useful, because they allow the user to select what he or she wants to see and obtain more information about a particular site. He also suggests that this technology will become more valuable for communities where tourism and promoting the area's quality of life are part of the economic development strategy.

Video and virtual reality tours are both more expensive than static pictures. Video costs include content and video development, technical editing and then transfer to an Internet file format, which can cost several thousand dollars. Virtual reality tours are more affordable than video; budgets range in size depending on the number of virtual images.

The National Data Standards

IEDC worked with top national site location professionals to create a comprehensive set of data guidelines, so communities could use them in assembling statistics for site selectors. In addition, IEDC and Conway Data created the Development Alliance, which operates a Web site where communities can post their data directly for businesses and consultants to view. More information and links to both of these can be found online at www.iedconline.org/hotlinks/site_selection.html.

For More Info, Contact:

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- **Deb Courtney-Bertha, Greater Colorado Springs Economic Development Corp.:** 719/475-6482; www.coloradosprings.org
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Job Mart

For information on Job Mart rates and packages, contact John Dolan, 202/942-9478, or e-mail jdolan@iedconline.org.

President, New Mexico Economic Development Corp.: Albuquerque, N.M. Summary of position: Establish the EDC as the economic development sales and marketing organization in the state of New Mexico, develop the protocol for managing leads, develop and implement an aggressive, proactive marketing and business development strategy. The preferred candidate is an economic development professional with outstanding marketing and selling skills. E-mail resumes to todd@joanjorgenson.com.

Executive Director: Storm Lake, Iowa. The Storm Lake Iowa Area Development Corp. and the Storm Lake Chamber of Commerce are seeking interested individuals to apply for the position of executive director. Ideal candidate will have several years of experience in efforts to attract new businesses and working with existing employers. Knowledge of legislative and governmental relations considered a plus. BA in related field expected. This position is 90 percent focused on economic and community development with 10 percent devoted to chamber policies and guidance. The individual selected will supervise three people, including the managing director for chamber activities. Emphasis of efforts and time will be devoted to community and economic development for a county of approximately 20,000 population in Northwest Iowa that is also home to Buena Vista University. Competitive salary and attractive benefits provided. Please provide a resume, three references and salary history by July 15 to donald.chaplain@uni.edu or mail to Don Chaplain, CCB Suite # 5, UNI, Cedar Falls, IA 50614-1020.

Senior Vice President: Albuquerque, N.M. Albuquerque Economic Development, Inc. (AED) is a 43-year-old nonprofit membership organization that has as its principal mission the recruitment of new business and industry to the Albuquerque metropolitan area. Its Web site is www.abq.org. For five consecutive years, Albuquerque has ranked among the top cities for new and expanding business, according to 75 leading site selection consultants surveyed by Expansion Management magazine. Site Selection magazine named AED

as one the nation's top 10 economic development groups for 2000. The senior vice president is responsible for the recruitment of new business and industry to the Albuquerque metropolitan area. He or she will oversee the organization's marketing efforts and will serve as the primary contact for representatives of prospective business and industry. The senior vice president will report to the president and supervise the vice president of business development and the research manager. The successful candidate will have a solid record of business recruitment, excellent marketing and communication skills, staff management experience, a commitment to customer service and a reputation of integrity. A competitive package is available and commensurate with professional economic development experience. Please send your cover letter and resume via e-mail to Gary Tonjes at gtonjes@abq.org.

Economic Development Manager: Moreno Valley, CA - \$5,588 - \$7,146/month DOQ & an excellent benefits program including a cafeteria plan of \$7,930/yr. This key division manager position will report to the community & economic development director and will manage the city's economic development projects and program activities; assist in developing and implementing financing, marketing, public relations, business recruitment and retention programs; provide technical support to City Council, city manager and CEDD director; and make presentations to city boards, committees, City Council, and the public. Qualifications include a bachelor's degree in public administration, business administration, marketing, economics, social sciences or a related field. A master's degree in a related field is desirable. Five years related work experience within a municipal economic development/community development department, redevelopment agency and/or economic development corporation, and should include professional experience in economic, community development, development finance, marketing research, business outreach, real estate development and public relations. Four years of supervisory experience is also required. APPLY IMMEDIATELY: This position is open until filled and may close at any time without notice. To apply, submit a completed City of Moreno Valley application to: Human Resources Department, 14177 Frederick Street, P.O. Box 88005, Moreno Valley, CA 92552-0805. Applications and more information can also be found on our Web site at: www.moreno-valley.ca.us or call 909/413-3045. E O E



Member Update

Charles L. Smith, formerly the economic development director of **Development Corp. of Belton, Texas**, has been named the new executive director for **Mount Pleasant Industrial Foundation** in Mount Pleasant, Texas. Replacing him in Belton is **John Bennett**, formerly the economic development director for the city of Corsicana, Texas.

Tammy Brownlow, the former director of Sedelia/Pettis County Development Corp., Sedelia, Mo., has joined the economic development team of the **city of Sacramento, Calif.**, as an economic development specialist.

Wayne L. Sterling, CEcD, formerly the CEO of the Henry County Office of Commerce in Collinsville, Va., has been named the new president and CEO for **Greater Paducah Economic Development Council, Paducah, Ky.**

Jim Ferguson has been named the new president/CEO for the **Greater Yuma Economic Development Corp. in Yuma, Ariz.**

Tedra Cheatham, CEcD, has been named the new director of economic development for the **Greater North Fulton Chamber of Commerce, Roswell, Ga.**

City of Bakersfield Economic & Community Development has moved. Their new location is 900 Truxtun Ave., 2nd Floor, Bakersfield, CA 93301.

Preston Gibson, formerly planning and engineering manager of Jefferson County, Colo., has been named president and CEO of the **Jefferson Economic Council** in Golden, Colo.

Get Ready for Cincinnati

In tough economic times like these, it's more important than ever to meet with colleagues and compare notes on how to help our communities grow. And you won't have a better opportunity this year than at the IEDC 2003 Annual Conference, Sept. 14-17 in Cincinnati.

Arrive early so you can attend one of our in-depth pre-conference seminars. One, presented in conjunction with the National Association of Workforce Boards, will focus on workforce development. Another, which will deal with historic districts and historic preservation and restoration, will feature the Cincinnati Netherlands Hotel, the conference headquarters.

Special focus sessions during the conference will examine retail as a catalyst for economic development, and winning sports and entertainment strategies. You'll also have a chance to hear about the political implications of the 2004 elections for economic development. And the other state-of-the-art sessions will be organized around five tracks: Economic Development Finance; Trends in Development; Organization Development; International Economic Development; and Personal and Professional Economic Development.

Best of all, you'll be able to network and share knowledge with peers from around the world. Register online today at www.iedconline.org.

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