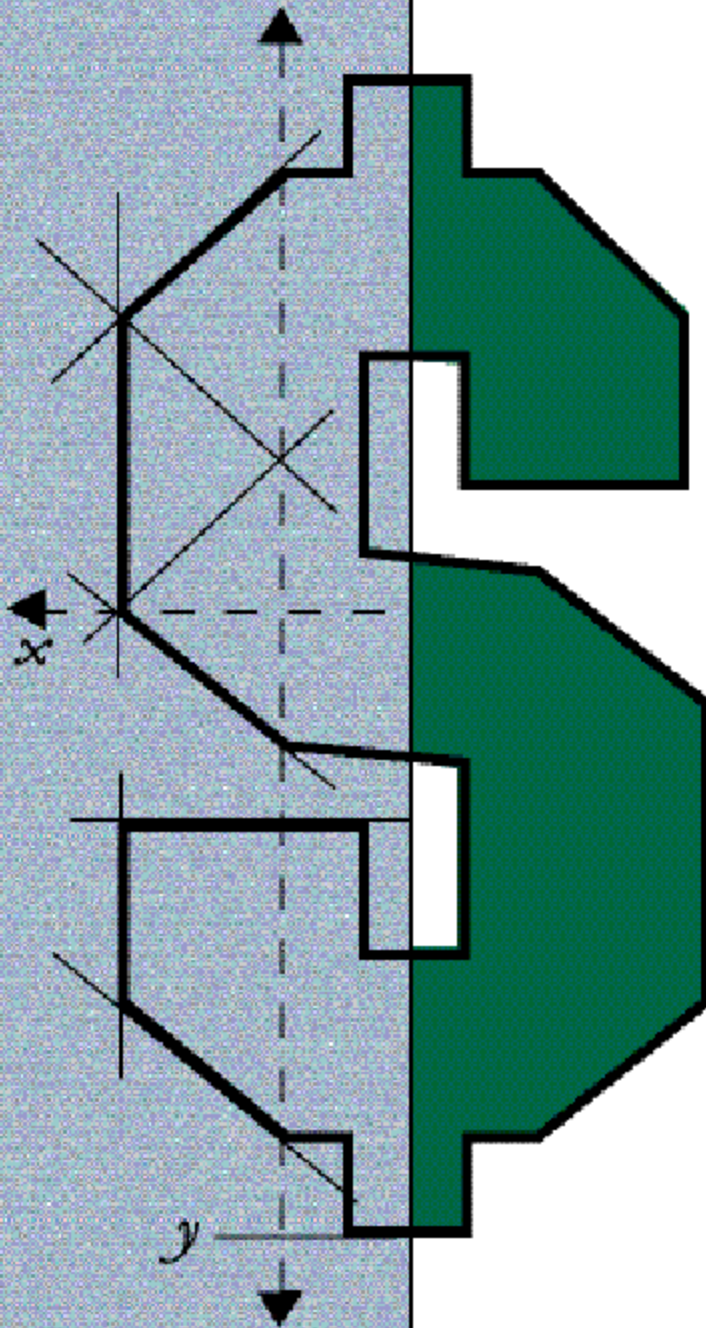


ARKANSAS FUNDAMENTALS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION RESULTS

Participant Feedback of
Inaugural Program



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Participant Feedback of Inaugural Program

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Publication 03-12
May 2003

Amy Shivers, Graphic Artist/Desktop Publisher provided assistance with the design and layout of this report.

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this summary report is to provide feedback from program participants on the inaugural Arkansas Fundamentals of Economic Development program that was held April 13-18, 2003 in the Donald W. Reynolds Center for Business & Economic Development on the UALR campus. The Arkansas Partnership and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock's Institute for Economic Advancement (IEA) developed the 40-hour basic economic development course to bring economic development training to Arkansas developers. During the program session a total of 40 attendees participated.

Data Collection Methodology

Data was collected from program participants using an overall program evaluation form and individual session forms for each session the participant attended. All evaluation forms were anonymous to facilitate honest responses. Evaluation forms utilized open-ended questions, forced choice questions, and rating scales to gain insights into participant perceptions of the program.

Report Notes

For ease of reading, the results are presented in either a tabular or chart format with accompanying narratives. Due to computerized rounding it is possible that not all tables will equal 100 percent. A notation of NA in the tables signifies that respondents gave either an answer of Does Not Apply or did not answer a particular question. Results are given in percentages, means/averages, or frequencies with the number of participants responding to a specific question noted either at the bottom of the table or in parenthesis to the side of the response category.

Overall Program Evaluation Findings

The overall performance evaluation form was administered to program participants at the conclusion of the week long program. Ratings represented in [Table 1](#) are based on a five-point Likert rating scale with 1 defined as Poor and 5 defined as Excellent. Participants consistently rated the listed items in the upper tier of the rating scale.

Table 1

Accommodations - Holiday Inn Select		Average Rating
Comfort		4.27 (11)
Convenience		4.09 (11)
Room Rate		3.73 (11)
Service		4.09 (11)
Classrooms and facilities		Average Rating
Convenient Location		4.95 (37)
Parking		4.43 (37)
Seating		4.97 (37)
Temperature		3.78 (37)
Audio/Visual Eq.		5.00 (37)
Hearing the Instructor		4.73 (37)
Case Study Attributes		Average Rating
Content		4.24 (34)
Team Involvement		4.24 (34)
Presentation		4.26 (34)
Value		4.38 (34)
Activities		Average Rating
Sunday Reception		4.30 (30)
Box Lunch		3.91 (35)
Hospitality Suite		3.79 (23)
Banquet		4.97 (32)

Note: The average ratings are based on the total number of respondents indicating a rating value between 1 and 5. Varying numbers of responses were reported (as indicated in parentheses) for each program rating category.

[Chart 1](#) reveals that a plurality of respondents is satisfied with the current program organization.

[Table 2](#) provides information on participant perceptions regarding the time allocated to individual sessions and whether sessions should be offered as an elective or dropped altogether. Results that are noteworthy include the perception by the majority of respondents (67.6%) that the Incentives session (currently allocated 30 minutes) needs more time allocated. Additionally, the allocation for Organization Structure (currently allocated 90 minutes) was perceived by twenty-four percent (24.3%) of participants to need a time reduction.

[Table 3](#) illustrates how participants regard the status of elective offerings. It was interesting to note that the majority of respondents (54.1%) indicated that Arkansas Incentives should be moved to the main classroom. It is also worth noting that approximately forty-one percent (40.5%) of the respondents indicated that GIS should be moved to the main classroom. The only elective offering garnering substantial negative (should be eliminated) was Rural Tourism capturing approximately eleven percent (10.8%) of the respondent pool.

Chart 1

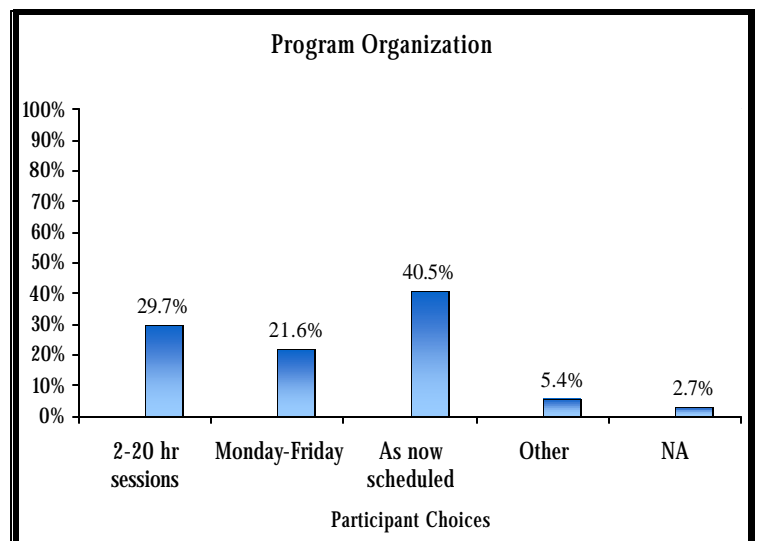


Table 2

Major Blocks of Instruction	Appropriate Time	More Time	Less Time	Offer as an Elective	Drop	N/A
Orientation (30 minutes)	89.2%	2.7%	2.7%	-	-	5.4%
Regional Economy & Performance Measurement (50 minutes)	75.7%	2.7%	10.8%	2.7%	-	8.1%
Overview of Economic Development (70 minutes)	81.1%	8.1%	8.1%	-	-	2.7%
Community Development (75 minutes)	73.0%	10.8%	13.5%	-	-	2.7%
Research (90 minutes)	67.6%	21.6%	8.1%	-	-	2.7%
Strategic Planning (90 minutes)	62.2%	29.7%	5.4%	-	-	2.7%
Site Selection (90 Minutes)	64.9%	21.6%	10.8%	-	-	2.7%
Organization Structure (90 minutes)	67.6%	5.4%	24.3%	-	-	2.7%
Incentives (30 minutes)	27.0%	67.6%	-	2.7%	-	2.7%
Proposals (90 minutes)	67.6%	18.9%	8.1%	2.7%	-	2.7%
Buildings and Sites (90 minutes)	62.2%	10.8%	13.5%	2.7%	-	10.8%
Marketing (90 minutes)	67.6%	21.6%	5.4%	-	-	5.4%
Workforce Development (90 minutes)	67.6%	8.1%	16.2%	-	-	8.1%
Finance (90 minutes)	64.9%	21.6%	8.1%	-	-	5.4%
Program Support (90 minutes)	70.3%	8.1%	10.8%	2.7%	2.7%	5.4%
Business Retention and Expansion (90 minutes)	64.9%	27.0%	2.7%	-	-	5.4%

n=37

Chart 2 reveals that April was the most noted (29.7%) month for attending the Arkansas Fundamentals of Economic Development program. The Other category included multiple month choices by participants.

Table 3

Program Electives	*Elective	Eliminate	Main Class	N/A
Geographic Information Services	51.4%	2.7%	40.5%	5.4%
Arkansas Incentives	40.5%	5.4%	54.1%	-
International Trade	81.1%	-	13.5%	5.4%
Developing Small Business	78.4%	-	13.5%	8.1%
Developing International Parks	62.2%	-	32.4%	5.4%
Rural Tourism	83.8%	10.8%	2.7%	2.7%
Main Street Programs	83.8%	5.4%	2.7%	8.1%

n=37

*Represents the percentage of respondents indicating course should continue as an elective offering.

A question was posed to program participants regarding the price for the course. An overwhelming number of respondents (94.6%) indicated that the price for the course seems reasonable.

Participants were asked to comment on how the notebooks that were handed out worked and how they could be improved. The following are representative comments.

"Notebooks will be a great tool when we get back to our jobs."

"Fine. Each instructor needs to provide handouts - might

help us to have blank note sheets in each day's section - keeps from having to switch to different notepad if no handouts given."

"Have presentations PowerPoint for all. That really worked for me."

Additionally program participants were given the opportunity to comment on the case studies presented. Below are comments that indicate the most common themes that emerged from the respondents.

"Content could possibly be strengthened."

"Not enough case study information and team direction. Groups were too large."

Chart 2

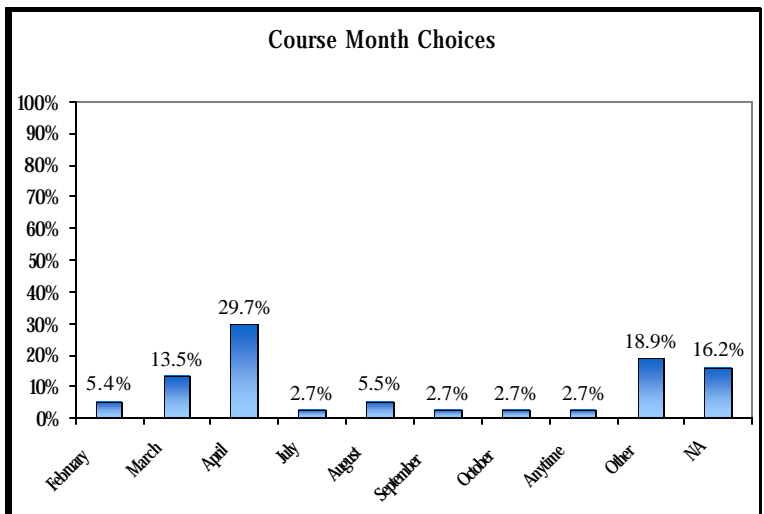


Table 4

Information provided in session	Helpful in work	Not helpful in work	Not Valuable to me	Other	
				Other	NA
Overview of Economic Development (36)	94.4%	2.8%	-	-	2.8%
Regional Economy & Performance (37)	75.7%	18.9%	-	2.7%	2.7%
Community Development (37)	91.9%	2.7%	2.7%	2.7%	-
Workforce Development (35)	85.7%	11.4%	-	-	2.9%
Finance (34)	79.4%	14.7%	2.9%	-	2.9%
Organizational Structure (31)	67.7%	29.0%	-	-	3.2%
Site Selection (38)	94.7%	5.3%	-	-	-
Strategic Planning (40)	100.0%	-	-	-	-
Research (37)	86.5%	8.1%	2.7%	-	2.7%
Building & Sites (34)	44.1%	47.1%	2.9%	2.9%	2.9%
Proposals (38)	92.1%	7.9%	-	-	-
Marketing (36)	88.9%	8.3%	2.8%	-	-
Main Street Programs (12)	50.0%	33.3%	8.3%	-	8.3%
Developing Small Businesses (23)	87.0%	8.7%	4.3%	-	-
Developing Industrial Parks (14)	85.7%	14.3%	-	-	-
Arkansas Incentives (2)	50.0%	50.0%	-	-	-
Geographical Information Systems (23)	91.3%	8.7%	-	-	-
Rural Tourism (19)	63.2%	31.6%	-	5.3%	-
Incentives (34)	94.1%	5.9%	-	-	-
Business Retention/Expansion (35)	85.7%	11.4%	-	-	2.9%
Program Support (30)	100.0%	-	-	-	-

participants rated Program Support (100%), Strategic Planning (100%), and Site Selection (94.7%) as the top three courses for providing information that they would find Helpful in my work. The lowest perceived course was Building & Sites garnering forty-seven percent (47.1%) of the participants indicating Not especially helpful in my work.

Table 5 reveals that most individual sessions fared well in the rating scale (where 0 was defined as Poor and 3 was defined as Excellent) with the exception of Finance, Building & Sites, and Organizational Structure. It is important to note that these sessions only scored poorly when participants were asked to rate Outline and Visuals.

"Maybe receiving more real life case studies and walking through their history would be more helpful."

All participants were given the opportunity to make comments throughout the overall evaluation form. The following are representative of comments received.

"I was impressed! Thank you for being excellent hosts/hostesses!"

"The facilities are awesome."

"Need information in advance what is to be covered so that we may select in advance."

Individual Session Evaluation Findings

Referring to Table 4 the reader can easily determine that partici-

Table 5

Individual Session Evaluations - Average Ratings	Other					
	Outline	Visuals	Content	Presentation	Discussion	Other
Overview of Economic Development	2.53 (34)	2.87 (35)	2.88 (34)	2.85 (34)	2.64 (25)	3.00 (3)
Regional Economy & Performance	2.72 (36)	2.59 (34)	2.60 (35)	2.40 (35)	2.21 (28)	1.50 (2)
Community Development	2.65 (34)	2.78 (37)	2.73 (37)	2.84 (37)	2.38 (24)	2.40 (5)
Workforce Development	2.54 (28)	2.00 (12)	2.73 (33)	2.68 (34)	2.75 (32)	3.00 (1)
Finance	.43 (14)	.43 (14)	2.52 (33)	2.61 (33)	2.77 (31)	3.00 (2)
Organizational Structure	1.27 (11)	1.09 (11)	2.59 (27)	2.62 (29)	2.73 (26)	3.00 (1)
Site Selection	2.91 (35)	2.78 (36)	2.95 (38)	2.97 (38)	2.82 (34)	3.00 (2)
Strategic Planning	2.90 (39)	2.90 (40)	2.95 (39)	2.98 (40)	2.85 (33)	-
Research	2.09 (35)	2.36 (36)	2.57 (37)	2.47 (36)	2.39 (31)	3.00 (1)
Building & Sites	.85 (13)	.43 (14)	2.52 (29)	2.55 (31)	2.28 (25)	-
Proposals	2.97 (36)	2.94 (36)	3.00 (37)	2.97 (37)	2.91 (32)	3.00 (1)
Marketing	2.89 (35)	2.92 (36)	2.94 (36)	2.97 (36)	2.81 (31)	3.00 (2)
Main Street Programs	2.75 (12)	2.83 (12)	2.83 (12)	2.75 (12)	3.00 (11)	3.00 (1)
Developing Small Businesses	2.70 (20)	2.31 (13)	2.82 (22)	2.83 (23)	2.80 (20)	2.50 (2)
Developing Industrial Parks	2.86 (14)	3.00 (13)	3.00 (14)	3.00 (14)	2.58 (12)	3.00 (2)
Arkansas Incentives	3.00 (1)	3.00 (2)	3.00 (2)	3.00 (2)	3.00 (2)	-
Geographical Information Systems	2.76 (17)	2.91 (23)	2.87 (23)	2.78 (23)	2.70 (20)	3.00 (1)
Rural Tourism	2.53 (17)	2.69 (16)	2.72 (18)	2.72 (18)	2.35 (17)	-
Incentives	2.78 (23)	2.00 (31)	2.87 (33)	2.88 (33)	2.92 (26)	-
Business Retention/Expansion	2.68 (31)	2.68 (34)	2.79 (34)	2.60 (35)	2.76 (21)	3.00 (2)
Program Support	2.38 (13)	2.46 (13)	2.80 (25)	2.81 (27)	2.76 (25)	-

Note: The average ratings are based on the total number of respondents indicating a rating value between 0 and 3. Zero represents Poor and three represents Excellent.

Table 6 indicates that when sessions were viewed to need more time allocation, Workforce Development, Incentives, and Overview of Economic Development were viewed most frequently as needing additional time.

The following comments are representative of respondent remarks regarding session time allocation.

"Not enough time, we could have used the entire weekend on this subject [strategic planning], maybe make it into a special class."

"Would like more time on demographics."

"Hour and a half classes are too long."

"Some classes are too long, too late in the day."

"Need more time and more detail, especially for Target Industry Studies."

Table 6

Time allowed for subject	Too Much Time	Not Enough Time	About Right	NA
Overview of Economic Development (36)	-	27.8%	72.2%	-
Regional Economy & Performance (37)	5.4%	13.5%	78.4%	2.7%
Community Development (37)	2.7%	2.7%	94.6%	-
Workforce Development (35)	2.9%	31.4%	65.7%	-
Finance (34)	5.9%	14.7%	76.5%	2.9%
Organizational Structure (31)	3.2%	3.2%	93.5%	-
Site Selection (38)	2.6%	10.5%	86.8%	-
Strategic Planning (40)	-	20.0%	80.0%	-
Research (37)	5.4%	21.6%	73.0%	-
Building & Sites (34)	17.6%	-	79.4%	2.9%
Proposals (38)	5.3%	7.9%	86.8%	-
Marketing (36)	5.6%	13.9%	75.0%	5.6%
Main Street Programs (12)	8.3%	25.0%	66.7%	-
Developing Small Businesses (23)	8.7%	8.7%	78.3%	4.3%
Developing Industrial Parks (14)	-	7.1%	92.9%	-
Arkansas Incentives (2)	-	-	100.0%	-
Geographical Information Systems (23)	8.7%	13.0%	73.9%	4.3%
Rural Tourism (19)	10.5%	5.3%	84.2%	-
Incentives (34)	-	29.4%	70.6%	-
Business Retention/Expansion (35)	5.7%	17.1%	77.1%	-
Program Support (30)	-	13.3%	86.7%	-

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