

45 Years of Growth: The South Carolina Economic Developers Association

BY ALLISON K. CALDWELL



SOUTH CAROLINA ECONOMIC DEVELOPERS' ASSOCIATION

South Carolina's Voice for Economic Development

Since 1965, the South Carolina Economic Developers' Association (SCEDA) has existed to "enhance the professional development of its membership and to advocate economic development to benefit the citizens of South Carolina." As leaders and members alike celebrate 45 years of strategic impact and dedicated service, SCEDA is uniquely poised to help grow South Carolina's economy through tourism, trade, entrepreneurship and public policy initiatives. Current President Buddy Bateman, CED, SCCED—also director of Business Development for AT&T—shares insight on SCEDA's history as The Voice of Economic Development in South Carolina.

"SCEDA was organized on May 7, 1965, in what is now the Clarion Hotel on Gervais Street in Columbia," says Bateman. "The founders of the organization—originally known as the South Carolina Industrial Development Association—were President Thomas Ford of the Rock Hill Chamber and York County Development Board, vice president C.T. Kelly of Georgetown County Development Board, and secretary/treasurer Lee McClure of Kahn Southern. They all agreed that we needed a medium through which we could gain knowledge, exchange information, promote professional skills and increase the effectiveness of individuals involved in the practice of economic development. The name was officially changed in 1985, and today we have three primary objectives of education, networking and advocacy to accomplish the mission and goals [set by those founders]."

Those goals include actively influencing critical economic development policy with the desired goal of developing sustainable statewide prosperity; building the reputation and credibility of SCEDA and positioning the organization as the economic development

authority in South Carolina through effective communications; and providing ongoing educational opportunities to enhance the professional and personal development of SCEDA members. With more than 650 members statewide, SCEDA provides and encourages cooperation, exchange of information and the promotion and development of professional skills.

SCEDA is led by an extremely involved, hard-working volunteer Board of Directors. Officers and board members serve as committee chairs for the association's 10 committees—ranging from Legislative and Local Developers to Media Relations and Sponsorship—that work to implement its programs and activities. Bateman says the board contracts with Capitol Consultants to provide association management services, with MG&C Consulting (McAngus, Goudelock and Courie) for advocacy and lobbying services, and with the Clare Morris Association for public relations and media services.

"Our professional trade association has representation from all 46 counties," says Bateman. "SCEDA members include local and regional economic developers as well as officials from municipal, county and state government agencies, construction and engineering firms, utility companies, attorneys, consultants, financial institutions and higher education."

Benefits of membership include an annual membership directory, networking events, grassroots and public policy advocacy, scholarships and awards, resources through SCEDA's Web site and e-newsletter (SCEDA Voice), and professional development education through the South Carolina Economic Development Institute and the Advanced Economic Developers' Symposium.

Bill Smith, CEO of Red Rock Developments—an office, industrial and retail development firm with offices in Columbia and Charlotte—has been a member for more than 20 years.

“SCEDA provides a forum for people involved in both the public and private sector to share ideas, spearhead incentives and legislative issues, and create jobs to make South Carolina a better place for all of us,” says Smith. “Nobody is a member just to get business, but the more we come together and look at ways to attract more companies and viable ventures to the state, the more we all benefit. Staff and board members may volunteer in those positions, but these folks are very dedicated, and what they do for us takes an awful lot of time. It’s a great organization doing important work, and I’m proud to be a part of it.”

Education, Networking and Advocacy

Bateman says that SCEDA’s contributions to increased economic development lie in the fulfillment of three key objectives: education, networking and advocacy.



Buddy Bateman,
President of the SCEDA

“SCEDA is very proud of the educational accomplishments we have made over the years,” says Bateman. SCEDA partners with the College of Charleston’s Tate Center for Economic Development and the South Carolina Department of Commerce to host the South Carolina Economic Development Institute. Now in its 20th year, the Institute serves to educate those who support and participate in economic development activities in their communities, including elected officials. Since its inception, the Institute has graduated more than 755 participants representing a wide variety of organizations including city and county councils, county

economic development boards, school boards, utility companies, local and state government, banks and others.

“In addition to the education that we provide for members throughout the year, we also offer an advanced level course for economic developers called the Advanced Symposium,” says Bateman. “This is an intense, week-long education course which provides graduates with the South Carolina Certified Economic Developer (SCCED) designation. SCCED’s must re-certify every three years by providing proof of continuing education, and we are proud to announce that there are currently 59 SCCED members of the organization.”

Networking is encouraged through multiple venues for discussions and interactions, including annual and mid-year meetings and other events throughout the year. Mark Simmons served as president of SCEDA in 1994, and is the executive vice president of Central SC Alliance, a 501(c)(3) public/private partnership which engages in the recruitment of capital investment and job creation in the Central region of South Carolina.

“Over the years, SCEDA has grown into a sizeable organization devoted not only to furthering professional development, but providing opportunities for members to share what’s been useful with each other,” says Simmons. “Our membership now includes those in the legal profession, contractors—all parts of the economic development team. Bringing those people together to hear and understand their needs creates an avenue not only for economic development and networking, but leadership development as well.”

In terms of advocacy, SCEDA provides members the opportunity to help create legislation that will help bring more jobs to South Carolina, specifically this year with their involvement in drafting the Economic Development Competitiveness Act of 2010. SCEDA Vice President April Allen, SCCED, was appointed by South Carolina House Speaker Bobby Harrell to serve as part of an economic development group designed to improve the state’s economic climate and suggest legislative solutions to the General Assembly.

“The bill passed the House earlier this year, then passed out of Senate Finance sub-committee on April 12. [As of this writing,] the full Senate Finance committee took up the bill on April 13,” says Allen, senior director of Business Development at O’Neal Inc.—a full-scale, full-service project delivery firm with offices in Greenville, Atlanta and Raleigh. “As of now, the biggest difference between the House and Senate versions is that the House version included a 10-year phase out of corporate income tax that would have begun in 2013,” says Allen.



April Allen,
Vice President of the SCEDA

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- Bill Smith

The bill itself represents several months of work, with almost 50 professionals interviewed by members of the group appointed by Speaker Harrell. Allen and current SCEDA Board Member George Wolfe of Nelson Mullins serve as co-chairs, and other members include Burnie Maybank of Nexsen Pruet (also a past board member of SCEDA); Otis Rawl of the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce and Lewis Gossett of the South Carolina Manufacturers Association.

"The objective was to make us more competitive with as little fiscal impact to the state budget as possible," says Allen. "In the end, we decided that the best way to approach the task was to create more flexibility in existing laws, so that a local community could use the flexibility in the new tools to recruit and retain the companies that were best for their communities. For example, the bill includes a modification that could be used to recruit a smaller company with high wages that has a small capital investment, but could also be used to help retain an existing company that was undergoing a corporate consolidation. The bill includes changes that target the recruitment of renewable energy component manufacturers. The companies that make turbines, pistons, gear box, wind mill blades and other parts make large investments and are high wage payers."

"SCEDA is doing what economic developers know how to do best—working as a team," says Allen. "Along with the SC Chamber and the SC Manufacturers Alliance, we work daily to make sure that the members of the Senate understand the importance of this very large bill and each suggested change. We have been meeting with members and staff as well as testifying at hearings."

SCEDA is also a sponsor of the annual Southern Legislative Conference, which marks its 64th year in 2010. In 2009, SCEDA developed an Economic Development Blueprint—a high level guide for the next administration. Over the past few months, board members have been meeting individually with gubernatorial candidates to talk about the Blueprint and the important role that a governor plays in economic development.

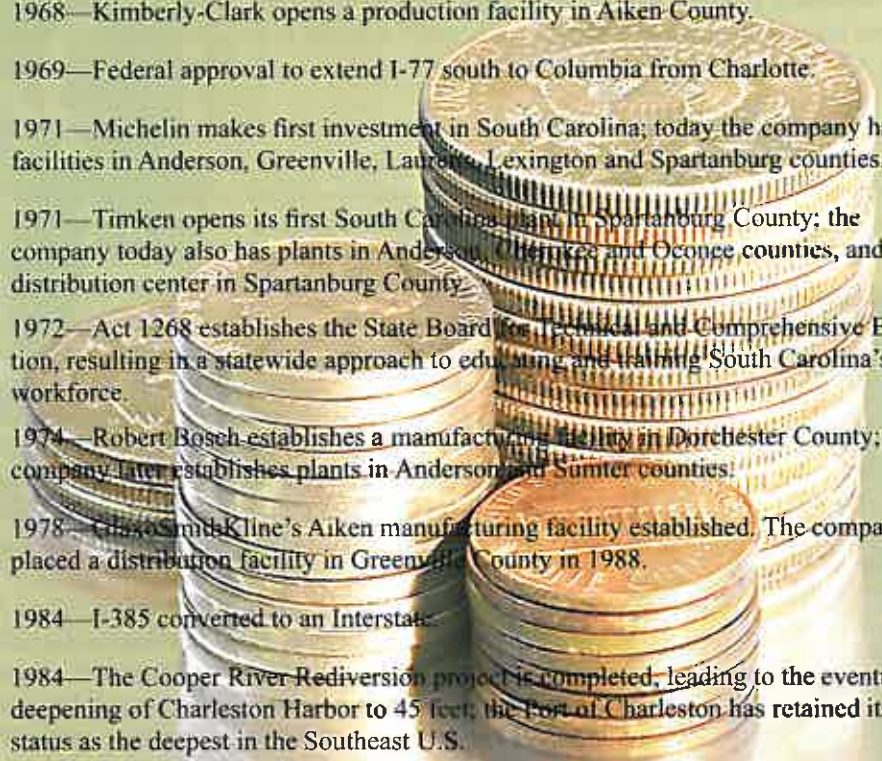
Bateman says the organization has remained stable through the current economic changes and is always strategizing on ways to ensure the future health and success of South Carolina's economy.

"We are focusing on ways to keep our events affordable for members and guests to attend, and also adding more value to our events, such as the direct sales training available at our annual conference," says Bateman. "In June, our incoming board will undertake a strategic planning session which will help set our goals and objectives for the next three years and formulate efforts to help ensure growth and sustainability."

45 Years of Economic Development History: A Timeline

Here's a glimpse back at some state economic development milestones that happened during SCEDA's first 45 years. Read more about SCEDA initiatives at www.sceda.org

- 1966—The first containership calls on the Port of Charleston. This is the beginning of a shift toward shipping containers as the major mode of international trade.
- 1968—General Electric opens a turbine facility in Greenville County. Company also has an MRI manufacturing facility in Florence County.
- 1968—Kimberly-Clark opens a production facility in Aiken County.
- 1969—Federal approval to extend I-77 south to Columbia from Charlotte.
- 1971—Michelin makes first investment in South Carolina; today the company has facilities in Anderson, Greenville, Laurens, Lexington and Spartanburg counties.
- 1971—Timken opens its first South Carolina plant in Spartanburg County; the company today also has plants in Anderson, Cherokee and Oconee counties, and a distribution center in Spartanburg County.
- 1972—Act 1268 establishes the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education, resulting in a statewide approach to educating and training South Carolina's workforce.
- 1974—Robert Bosch establishes a manufacturing facility in Dorchester County; the company later establishes plants in Anderson and Sumter counties.
- 1978—Eli Lilly's Aiken manufacturing facility established. The company placed a distribution facility in Greenville County in 1988.
- 1984—I-385 converted to an Interstate.
- 1984—The Cooper River Rediversion project is completed, leading to the eventual deepening of Charleston Harbor to 45 feet; the Port of Charleston has retained its status as the deepest in the Southeast U.S.
- 1984—South Carolina's Smiling Faces, Beautiful Places campaign is launched.
- 1987—FILOT incentive is passed into law in South Carolina.
- 1988—North American manufacturing headquarters of Fuji Photo Film announced in Greenwood County.
- 1991—Wal-Mart announces plans for a distribution facility in Laurens County.
- 1991—Hoffmann-La Roche announces plans for an R&D and pilot manufacturing facility in Florence County.
- 1992—BMW breaks ground on its first manufacturing facility outside Germany in Spartanburg County.
- 1993—S.C. Development Board becomes the S.C. Department of Commerce.
- 1995—Enterprise Zone legislation passed into law.
- 1995—Nucor Steel locates a recycling plant in Berkeley County.
- 1996—UPS opens its Southeast air hub at the Columbia Metropolitan Airport in Lexington County.
- 1996—The South Carolina National Heritage Corridor was established by the U.S. Congress as one of a select number of National Heritage Areas—regions in which en-



Timeline, Cont.

tire communities live and work and where residents, businesses and local governments have come together to conserve special landscapes and their own heritage.

1997—Honda announces plans for an ATV manufacturing facility in Florence County.

1997—Bridgestone-Firestone announces Aiken County as location for its new tire manufacturing plant.

2000—Haier opens a manufacturing facility in Kershaw County. It is the first foreign direct investment by a Chinese company in the United States. In 2004, Haier built a warehouse and distribution facility in Lee County.

2001—Harbor Freight Tools establishes a distribution center in Dillon County.

2002—The CoEE Program was created by the South Carolina Legislature and is funded through South Carolina Education Lottery proceeds. The legislation authorizes the state's three public research institutions, Medical University of South Carolina, Clemson University and the University of South Carolina, to use state funds to create Centers of Economic Excellence in research areas that will advance South Carolina's economy.

2004—Alenia Aeronautica of Italy and Vought Aircraft Industries announce a joint venture to build components for Boeing's new 787 Dreamliner in North Charleston. Boeing later purchases both facilities.

2004—Savannah River given National Lab status -- one of only twelve in US.

2005—Arthur Ravenel Bridge opens. Along with the shipping channel's deep water, the new bridge's vertical clearance of 186 feet means no height restriction for vessels transiting underneath the bridge calling the Port of Charleston.

2005—The Port of Charleston's Union Pier Terminal handles its 1-millionth BMW.

2007—Google announces plans to build a data center in Berkeley County.

2008—Monster breaks ground on customer service facility in Florence County.

2009—Boeing announces that it will establish a 787 assembly site at its North Charleston facility.

2009—First Hydrogen Highway opens with refueling stations in the Southeast.

2009—readySC trains its 250,000th South Carolinian.

2010—I-520 Palmetto Parkway opens in January.

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