

NOTES: Session II: Option B, Thursday, May 15, 2003

Regional Partnerships with the Federal Government

Panelists:

David Warm, Executive Director, Mid-America Regional Council (Moderator)

Ruben Barrales, Director, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, White House

Richard Doege, Fellow, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Institute for the Regional Community

Michelle Lennihan, Regional Innovations Initiative, Council on Competitiveness

David Warm

What is the relationship between regional organizations and federal government?

It is like the movie "My Big Fat Greek Wedding" which is a love story but in also a story about extended family. No one deals with just one federal government agency. Some are more helpful than others but we depend upon them.

Cross cutting regional partnerships can pull out regional initiatives that are often hidden. There are lots of contradictions too.

Finally there is always someone else in the room, usually many people involved and not just you and federal government. Often states play a role. Federal regional relationship is three-part with the state often.

We have three people here to frame some of the challenges for informing effective partnerships.

Michelle Lennihan

The way the council defines innovation is not just new things, but improvements too.

The link between innovation [see slide]

Innovation drives competitiveness and prosperity. The cluster of innovations and projects, how clusters play a key role.

What the federal government can do to enable companies to compete in federal markets. Particularly in small business the federal government has helped where 99 percent of our business are small and they have 2/3 of the jobs. The private sector drives the process.

The council created several things but I just want to talk about Breakthrough Discovery today.

The federal government is a key driver to research. The federal government could step up on research facilities as they are getting old and need replacing and states are paying the burden.

In the area of workforce – The federal government provides information on the percent of job openings the DOL is expecting, the levels of skill increases demanded, the demographics of the workforce are changing too so the skills mismatch is a concern.

Slide about skill needs and slide about percent not completing high school.

Assistant Secretary DeRocco is creating a demand driven workforce. Employment, Education, and Economic development are the three Es.

A place where federal government played a role is they can identify and work with your more at risk populations.

Mitigation a goal of ATP they let industry set priorities selecting based on...[see slide] they are peer reviewed. They have strict cost sharing rules and different ways of sharing joint funding. ATP totaled more than 40%... been successful by relaxing boundaries, sharing knowledge, and access to information technology.

Other key programs all targeted to small business.

Dr. David Sampson of the EDA put in a lot of infrastructure in to try to transform EDA to enhance.. [see slide]

The council is currently working with EDA also to create a private sector process.

They (EDA) don't call it grant guidelines they call it investment guidelines and here are some of the questions. What's the probability for success? Does it create an environment for more jobs? What is the return on investment?

PFI is embedded in NSF [see slide]

Looking for longer commitment and we have to include academic organizations and encourage the inclusion of local government.

See slides she continues on through slide 24.

Ruben Barrales

I am from the federal government and here to help. There are some regional entrepreneurs within the government.

Homeland security looks at the kinds of things we are focused on with multi-billion dollar investment. That is a lot of money for homeland security and it is a lot of opportunity too.

The money goes to cities, counties, and states. The money will flow to the state that has approved regional plan but every state is to have plan built from the ground up. The money then flows, after the state has approved regional plan, 5 to 6 days after the state receives the money 80% is money going to the locals. It really is built on a regional approach.

Regions have the necessary equipment, training, and agreements to respond to terrorist activities. Although it likely much of this will be use for natural disasters more often than terrorist attacks.

Regional plans help to maximize efficiencies, prevent on site failure, build in redundancy, and facilitate mutual aid.

Homeland security is a wonderful opportunity to collaborate and promote regionalism. The best advice is to get to know your homeland security advisor. Invite that person out to meet members of community. Homeland security is a vehicle to promote regionalism.

One model is in the Washington D.C., Maryland, Virginia area they are working together and we think it is working out quite well. There are discussions for a regional director, and if that happens it will be a direct regional link to the federal government in Homeland Security.

There is a strong appreciation of the 10th amendment and states rights. Homeland Security is funneled through the states.

On Monday we are bringing together regional appointees. We are going to be talking about more ways to do things. If you are interested in giving me your ideas to direct toward them I would be happy to do it. Even if not today, but after you get back, because we will be having discussion in the future too.

The Pacific Region 9 is a model I am interested in extending. Secretary Minnett (sp?) has describes "Safe T". It is a new authorization concerned with safety and provides more flexibility with dollars for things such as regional cooperation. So I think there will be more opportunities to practice regionalism.

Participant Comment

The upside/downside of greater flexibility is the chance for regionalism, but it sets up a dynamic for individual competitiveness.

Ruben Barrales

I think we are consistent. It depends. In Homeland Security there are monies that should be part of the state pan and money spent on things in the plans.

Participant Comment

Maryland and Virginia took it as within regions and within the state, they never thought of across state lines. So one comment is they see it as state regional effort.

There are traditional silos between business, community-based organizations and the public sector. Yet, all the money flows through the public sector. The money is going to the public sector and non-profit when there are disasters as they are providers of services but there is no opportunity to cross sectors.

Ruben Barrales

In terms of non-profit organizations responding, you raise a good point.

Participant Comment

We are not seeing the money jump to hospitals, for example.

Michelle Lennihan

In the 9/11 attack, 90 percent of the structures were owned by business. Governor Rich and Chuck McQueen (?) are looking at the way business can increase security as well help economic development. It is another way money can jump out into other sectors.

David Warm

This is a critical structural point. Why it works better in transportation is because we are working at regional level and the scale that makes sense. Think about the design that states will partner with locals.

You mentioned federal regional councils—that is not a traditional model. Federal regional councils can act to solve problems, but typically they don't look at resources. It is not a mode of operation that we are used to—can we focus on communities within the region?

Ruben Barrales

In homeland security we will fund innovations. In the 1970s federal regional council did play this type of integrated role. Region 9, San Francisco has done this. In region 9 we have experiments in interdisciplinary ways. It is a challenge.

Michelle Lennihan

On our web site we have clusters of innovations there are 10 fundamental things to achieve it and you may have to tinker with it to make it work in your area.

Ruben Barrales

Housing issues at HUD are very siloed. From my perspective affordable housing is much more of a regional issue.

David Warm

Take housing, the money goes in our area and goes to dozens of agencies with dozens of plans. Although it goes to HUD it goes to so many agencies that it doesn't foster regionalism.

Richard Doege

Our topic is the impact of federal policy on regionalism. We will see that the impact for federal policy on regions is very profound and happening right now—more profound than you think. My objective is that you appreciate the federal policy impact on stewardship.

It is not a secret that the federal government relies on volunteers. NGOs and volunteers are part of our tradition.

Article 5 of Magna Carta is a charter of stewardship.

For 800 years we have had the Magna Carta, for two years we have had the Alliance, and since 1969 with NEPA we have had a charter for regional stewardship.

Richard experienced technical difficulties and was unable to give the rest of his presentation.