

Economic and Natural Disaster Resilience in the INCOG Economic Development District Region

The INCOG-Economic Development District region is no stranger to economic and weather-related shocks. Given the location of the state, geographically, and the cyclical industrial drivers of revenue and job creation (energy, aerospace, and agriculture), the region can experience a shock in any given year. The “steady-state” initiatives in resiliency provided in the goals and strategies section of the CEDS address the needs of the critical physical and economic assets that contribute to the regions long-term stability. However, the unique partnership amongst various economic development organizations, private industry, and local governments in the INCOG-EDD is what directly contributes to the region’s ability to withstand shocks, recover quickly or avoid the shocks altogether.

The INCOG-EDD region has a robust and very well-established information network that is composed of various regional stakeholders, such as INCOG, the Tulsa Regional Chamber and local chambers of commerce, local, state and federal governmental entities, economic development organizations, and public/private utility companies. These stakeholders interact regularly through their participation in countless regional intergovernmental programs and public private partnerships and INCOG’s various programs. As the communities within the INCOG Region become more connected, the ability for one community to quickly recover from an external shock is critically important to its neighbors. Because the regional information network is composed of various public and private entities, the capability exists for anyone to rapidly contact key local, regional, state, and federal officials to communicate governmental and business sector needs and coordinate impact assessment efforts.

The INCOG Region is likely to see more natural disasters than economic shocks. With respect to natural disaster preparedness, recovery, and resiliency; local governments work together through such entities as the Tulsa Area Emergency Management Agency, and other local emergency management organizations. Local governments in the area have individually and collectively taken efforts to prepare for and respond to disasters in numerous ways. Assets have been hardened, equipment is shared, training and exercises are conducted. INCOG also has assisted numerous local governments with Hazard Mitigation Planning, securing and administering grant funding for storm sirens, backup generators at critical public facilities including water and wastewater treatment plants, public safety equipment, interoperable communications and critical facility asset mapping.

Chambers of commerce and economic development organizations encourage businesses to adopt best practices in:

- Disaster preparation
- Business continuity planning
- Establishing critical emergency contact information
- Preparing media messages and communication channels
- Providing resources for business recovery
- Communication and outreach
- Providing resources for businesses to locate short and long-term financing post disaster

ADDENDUM TO THE INCOG-EDD CEDS 2018-2022

Despite every effort to help local businesses and communities recover as quickly as possible from a natural disaster, the uncertainty of employment and housing can weigh heavily on affected families. Understanding the workforce characteristics of communities within the Region can assist with temporary employment in other communities during the recovery. Therefore, regional efforts should continue to identify workforce clusters and improve transportation corridors that connect the workforce in one community to a business or industry in another.

The CEDS advances a broad range of strategies to grow and expand the regional economy which will result in a more diverse economic base less susceptible to economic dislocation and disruption. The CEDS also advances strategies to enhance the region's transportation infrastructure to meet the demands of a globally connected modern economy. The transportation networks in the region are critically important for regional resiliency as they contribute to the region's ability to withstand and recover from shocks. As mentioned in Goal 5 of the CEDS, regional transportation assets include US Interstates and highways, Class I and short line railroad network, an international airport, and the inland waterway port. The CEDS encourages the development of regional public and private partnerships to help expand transportation facility infrastructure and improve modal connectivity amongst these assets to foster regional economic growth and resiliency.

As mentioned earlier, it is the unique partnership amongst various economic development organizations, private industry, and local governments in the region that directly contributes to the region's ability to recover quickly from shocks, withstand shocks, or avoid the shocks altogether. The Tulsa region has experienced throughout its history a myriad of natural disasters and boom and bust economic cycles. Response, recovery and resilience is a part of the Tulsa spirit. The local citizenry, government and business place a lot of faith in regional resiliency and response to help expedite the recovery after natural disasters or economic disruption. The region will pursue all possible avenues to secure funding resources that may be made available to implement long-term economic recovery strategies in response to natural or man-made disasters or economic disruptions.