



## Editor's Introduction

Thomas A. Garrett

This issue of *Regional Economic Development* contains six selected papers from two conferences sponsored or co-sponsored by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis during 2006. The Transportation and Economic Development (TED) conference was held in Little Rock, Arkansas, in March. The TED conference was sponsored by numerous groups, including the Institute for Economic Advancement at the University of Arkansas in Little Rock, the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, and the Transportation Research Board. TED conference participants addressed regional and national transportation issues as they relate to economic development, such as NAFTA, border trade, and transportation logistics.<sup>1</sup>

The Center for Regional Economics—8th District (CRE8) at the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis sponsored the second annual conference of the Business and Economics Research Group (BERG) in St. Louis in June. Researchers from university based centers for business and economic research located within the Eighth Federal Reserve District presented a wide variety of papers on economic issues relevant to District states.<sup>2</sup>

The first three papers in this issue were presented at the TED conference. Richard Beilock of the University Florida, Robert Dolyniuk of the Manitoba Trucking Association, and Barry Prentice

of the Transportation Institute of the University of Manitoba explore the potential economic gains had by freer motor carrier transportation between the United States and Canada. Mark Funk, Erick Elder, Vincent Yao, and Ashvin Vibhakar at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock look at the different effects of NAFTA across industries in five southern states. Michael Hicks of the Air Force Institute of Technology and Marshall University examines the role of public infrastructure and local government fiscal policies on local agglomeration in the retail sector of Indiana counties.

Three papers from the second annual BERG conference focus on economic issues in Eighth District states. Mike Pakko of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis discusses the potential economic effects of smoking bans and offers an empirical evaluation of the revenue effects on bars and restaurants resulting from a recent smoking ban in one Missouri town. David Penn of Middle Tennessee State University examines how economic output of states located in the Eighth Federal Reserve District is affected by changing oil prices. Finally, David Rapach and Jack Strauss of Saint Louis University look at the long-run relationship between consumption and housing wealth for Eighth District states.

I would like to acknowledge the help of the authors, referees, and conference participants who contributed to this conference volume.

---

<sup>1</sup> Information on TED can be found at [www.ted2006-littlerock.org](http://www.ted2006-littlerock.org).

<sup>2</sup> The second annual BERG conference agenda, along with BERG members and past events, can be found at <http://research.stlouisfed.org/berg/>.

---

Thomas A. Garrett is a research officer at the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.

Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis *Regional Economic Development*, 2006, 2(2), p. 77.

© 2006, The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. Articles may be reprinted, reproduced, published, distributed, displayed, and transmitted in their entirety if copyright notice, author name(s), and full citation are included. Abstracts, synopses, and other derivative works may be made only with prior written permission of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.