



Editor's Introduction

Thomas A. Garrett

The Center for Regional Economics—8th District (CRE8) at the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis sponsored the fourth annual meeting of the Business and Economics Research Group (BERG). This year's meeting was part of the eighth annual Missouri Economics Conference held in Columbia, Missouri, in March 2008 and sponsored by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis and the Department of Economics at the University of Missouri—Columbia.¹

This issue of *Regional Economic Development* contains four research papers by St. Louis Fed economists, several of which were presented at the recent BERG meeting. Dan Black, Natalia Kolesnikova, and Lowell Taylor present empirical

and theoretical evidence that labor supply decisions are not just a function of wages—as often assumed in empirical and theoretical models of labor supply—but also are dependent on the prices of other goods. Kristie Engemann, Rubén Hernández-Murillo, and Michael Owyang compare the predictive power of various forecasting models of employment that use different levels of data aggregation. Michael Pakko explores the economic impact of a smoking ban in Columbia, Missouri, using a time series of sales tax data for eating and drinking establishments. Finally, Christopher Wheeler examines whether urban sprawl resulted in rising income segregation in 359 U.S. metropolitan areas over a 20-year period.

¹ The agenda for the eighth annual Missouri Economics Conference, which includes sessions sponsored by BERG, can be found at http://research.stlouisfed.org/conferences/moconf/8th_annual_agenda.pdf.

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