

**Southeast Regional Directors Institute
Council of Peers
Annual Meeting
April 27, 2025
Atlantic Beach, Florida**

Council Members Present

Chris Rietow, Florida
Robert Hiett, North Carolina
Sara Smith, South Carolina
Randy Imler, President, South Carolina
Mark Farley, Tennessee
Rick Yakubic, Tennessee
Martha Shickle, Virginia
Joanna Shake, Kentucky
John Byers, At-Large, Mississippi
Beth Payne, Florida
Michelle Jordan, Alabama
Dwayne Pratt, Arkansas
David Richardson, North Carolina
Jennifer Codo-Salisbury, Florida (Zoom)

Jim Livingston, Georgia
Sasha Grist, Vice President, Arkansas
Anthony Starr, North Carolina
Eric Sexton, Treasurer, Kentucky
Ashley Garris, At-Large, Arkansas
Melinda Goode, Tennessee
Kevin Byrd, Virginia
Ron Mitchum, South Carolina
Danna Stansbury, At-Large, North Carolina
Lori Sokol, Alabama
Lisa Sandt, Alabama
Rodney Larsen, Arkansas
Michelle Allen, Kentucky (Zoom)

Others Present

Melissa Kraemer Badtke, Associate, Wisconsin
Amy Chitwood, SERDI Fiscal Agent
Jim Youngquist, SERDI Lead Staff
Vicki Glass, SERDI Logistics Coordinator
Joe McKinney, Executive Director, National Association of Development Organizations
Chris McKinney, Executive Director, Southeast Crescent Regional Commission

**I. Welcome and Introduction of Council of Peers
Guests**

Randy Imler, President Members and

SERDI Council of Peers President Randy Imler called the 2025 SERDI Council of Peers Annual Meeting to order and welcomed all present. He had each person present provide their name and affiliation.

II. Consideration of Minutes of the Fall Planning Meeting of the Council of Peers, October 22, 2024, New Orleans, Louisiana **Sasha Grist, Vice President**

SERDI Council of Peers Vice President Sasha Grist called the Council's attention to the Minutes of the Fall Planning Meeting of the Council in their packets. Anthony Starr, North Carolina, noted that he was present in the New Orleans meeting, but his name does not appear in the Minutes. Vice President Grist noted the omission for correction. There being no other corrections, a motion was made by Martha Shickle, Virginia, and seconded by Rodney Larsen, Arkansas to accept the minutes with the one correction of adding Anthony Starr, North Carolina as present. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Appointment of Ashley Garris as a Council of Peers At-Large Member **Randy Imler, President**

President Imler announced that per the SERDI Bylaws that the Association of Arkansas Development Organizations had submitted the nomination of Ashley Garris, Deputy Director, Western Arkansas Planning Development District, to fill the vacant At-Large seat on the SERDI Council of Peers. President Imler stated that nomination complied with the Bylaws and asked for unanimous consent that Ashley be placed in the At-Large position. Unanimous consent followed.

IV. SERDI Financial Report **Eric Sexton, Treasurer**

SERDI Treasurer Eric Sexton presented the SERDI Financial Report. As of March 31st, SERDI's financial status was in good shape. There is \$198,074 on hand. Motion was made by Anthony Starr, North Carolina and seconded by Melinda Goode, Tennessee to accept the report. Motion carried unanimously.

V. SERDI Membership Report **Sasha Grist, Vice President**

Vice President Grist presented the 2025 Membership Report. SERDI has 90 members for 2025. There are 86 members out of 136 regional councils which equates to 63% membership for this year. There are 4 associate members from Wisconsin, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. South Carolina and Arkansas are 100% membership states. The 10 members in Virginia represent the largest number of Commonwealth members since SERDI started collecting dues. No motion or vote was needed for the report.

VI. Update Regarding Logistics Consultant Services **Eric Sexton, Treasurer**

Treasurer Sexton noted that Vicki Glass was retiring at the end of her contract to serve as the SERDI Logistics Consultant Services staff that she had held since 2010. Her contract will end December 31st. Knowing this Amy Chitwood of the Catawba COG in Rock Hill, South Carolina has been working with Vicki for a smooth transition beginning January 1, 2026. Eric noted that Vicki would be recognized at the dinner on Monday night for her service and support of SERDI for 15 years. No motion or vote was needed for the report.

**VII. 2025-2026 SERDI Training and Development
Conference Updates****Randy Imler, President**

President Imler called upon Martha Shickle, Virginia, to recap the 2nd Leadership Development Training held in Greenville, South Carolina in February of 2025. Martha relayed to the Council that just like the 1st Leadership Development Training, there were over 100 participants representing over 50 councils in the region. Deputy Directors, Department Heads, and projected rising leaders participated in the 2 ½ day event. The training is an example of SERDI offering training and outreach for non-executive directors throughout the SERDI footprint.

President Imler led the discussion regarding the next Fly-in Training Topic that is scheduled to take place February 18-20, 2026, in Greenville at the Westin Poinsett. The question initially was whether there should be a 2nd SERDI Financial Training.

In the discussion, other possible topics include AI, Growing Programs, Relationship Building, and Crisis Management. The group concluded that all of those topics were very important and should be held as another separate training or should be topics for the next Annual Professional Development Conference. It was the consensus that the training in Greenville February 18-20, 2026, should be the 2nd SERDI Financial Training. David Richardson, North Carolina agreed to Chair the 2nd SERDI Financial Training Planning Committee. Other volunteers to serve on the committee include Martha Shickle, Virginia, Rick Yakubic, Tennessee, and Lori Sokol, Alabama.

It was announced that the 2026 SERDI Professional Development Conference will be held April 26-29, 2026, at the Hyatt Sweetgrass Inn at Wild Dunes, Isle of Palms, South Carolina. The agenda will be developed for the conference at the SERDI Council of Peers Fall Planning Meeting in October.

VIII. SERDI Assessment Update**Jim Youngquist, SERDI Staff**

Jim Youngquist, Lead SERDI Staff, provided the Council of Peers with a brief overview of assessment activities during FY 2025 thus far. The Strategic Assessment was recently completed for the FIVCO Area Development District in northeastern Kentucky. They have a new executive director there (Lance Hanshaw) and the Board and local governments in the region have rededicated themselves to their ADD. We have a pending request from Mount Rogers PDC in Virginia. After the Council meeting, we received a request from Central Shenandoah PDC, also in Virginia.

Jim also noted that two non-associate member regional planning commissions in Wisconsin and inquired about the assessment after Associate Member from Wisconsin Melissa Kraemer Badtke shared with them how much the SERDI Assessment benefitted her East Central Wisconsin RPC. Hopefully they will become members and have us

conduct the assessment. Additionally, Melissa on behalf of the Wisconsin RPC Association has inquired about SERDI conducting a state association assessment.

Jim provided them with an overview and outline of a similar assessment conducted for the Florida RPC Association a number of years ago.

IX. EDA/NADO Meeting for Atlanta Federal Region

Randy Imler, President

President Imler noted that NADO and EDA were going to begin doing meetings in each Federal Region. They had been doing such a meeting in a couple of regions but had decided there will now be such a meeting in each region, including the Atlanta region. SERDI members in Arkansas already participate in such a meeting for the Southwest Federal Region. There is not currently such a meeting in the Philadelphia region for the SERDI states of Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia. President Imler noted that no tentative date had been set for the Atlanta meeting but that he had provided to NADO with dates of SERDI events so that such a meeting would not conflict.

X. NADO Federal Update

**Joe McKinney, Executive
Director, NADO**

NADO Executive Director Joe McKinney provided an overview of the happenings in Washington, DC and the Federal level. Joe noted that the transition going on with the Trump Administration was non-traditional and that agency appointments in a lot of cases were being mid-administrative levels before the top administrative positions. He said that his advice and advice he is receiving from agencies and members of Congress are to let things play out. While there are fears of cuts, elimination, and freezes, that is not the case across the board and that the SERDI members should be monitoring the agency resource pages for updates.

**XI. Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC)
Update**

**Chris McKinney, Executive
Director, SCRC**

SCRC Executive Director Chris McKinney visited at the Council meeting and then separately with the SERDI members who are in the SCRC footprint regarding the funding providing to the local development districts, indirect costs, funding requirements, etc. There was a very detailed and pointed conversation between Executive Director McKinney and the SERDI members over concerns of indirect rates, and the amount of fundings being provided in proportion to the work detail being requested. Executive Director McKinney thanked the participants for the candid conversation and said that he would deliver the comments back to the Federal Co-Chair and staff for further discussion and that he would respond.

**XII. SERDI Nominating Committee Report
and Recommendations****Anthony Starr, Chair
SERDI Nominating Committee**

The SERDI Nominating Committee, appointed by President Imler, met to put forth a slate of officers for 2025-2027 at the Council of Peers at their annual meeting. Members of Committee were Mark Farley, Tennessee; Chris Rietow, Florida; Joanna Shake, Kentucky; and, Anthony Starr, North Carolina.

The Nominating Committee submits for consideration by the Council of Peers the following slate of officers as set forth in Article VIII of the Bylaws: President: Sasha Grist, Western Arkansas Planning & Development District. Vice President: Eric Sexton, Barren River Area Development District. Treasurer: Heather Feldman, Georgia Mountains Regional Commission.

There were no other nominations from the floor. A motion was made by Ron Mitchum, South Carolina and seconded by John Byers, Mississippi to unanimously adopted and approved the recommendations of the Nominating Committee to appoint Sasha Grist, President, Eric Sexton, Vice President, and Heather Feldman, Treasurer. Motion was unanimously adopted and approved.

**XIII. Fall Planning Meeting of the SERDI Council
of Peers Site...in Footprint or NADO ATC,
Salt Lake City****Randy Imler, President**

President Imler told the Council that they needed to settle on a date for the Fall Planning Meeting of the Council of Peers. President Imler stated that in recent years that the Fall Planning Meeting had been held in conjunction with the annual NADO training conference but unless there a majority going to NADO the meeting would need to be held somewhere in the SERDI region. By a show a hand, it appeared that the vast majority present plan on attending NADO.

With that action taken, the SERDI Fall Planning Meeting will be held Wednesday October 15th from Noon to 1:30 PM at the Little America Hotel, Salt Lake City, Utah.

XIV. Other Business**Randy Imler, President**

None

XV. Adjournment

**Jim Youngquist
Lead SERDI Staff
May 5, 2025**

Southeast Regional Directors Institute

A professional development association for regional council executive directors and where appropriate, their councils and state associations in the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia & Associate Members from across the United States

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