



SEDR 2025

December 11-13, 2025

The Pearl, Rosemary Beach, Fla.

We moved the winter edition of the Southern Economic Development Roundtable from January to December after two straight years of winter weather affecting the gathering of some of the finest minds in economic development in the South.

If fact, in January of 2025, only about half of the attendees planning to attend were able to make it, not because of snow in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi and Tennessee like in 2024, but because of 6 inches of snow actually on-site on Highway 30A, midway between Destin and Panama City, Fla.

Yes, in January of 2025, there was 6 inches of snow on the beach at Rosemary. Last year, many could make it to the Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport in Panama City, but could not make the 30-minute drive from Panama City to Rosemary as Interstate 10 and other roads were closed. It was a mess.

When I asked, every member of SEDR December 2025 raised their hand in agreement preferring to keep the meeting in early December for 2026 as opposed to January.

We have already set the SEDR Winter meeting for December 10-12, 2026, so you can reserve your spot in what is almost always a sold out event.

There were so many highlights among the presentations and discussions that all cannot be referenced here. Then again, this SEDR was dedicated to the great Neal Wade and his career. He had a wonderful Q&A where the attendees asked him a question and each question had a 10-minute response and discussion before he fielded the next one. It was memorable.

Make plans today to make the December dates for 2026. Simply email me and I will reserve you a seat.

And thanks to all of the sponsors who are listed here. We cannot put together this incredible event without your support.

As one attendee describes the meeting, "There is nothing like SEDR."

"The Southern Economic Development Roundtable is where capital meets conviction. It's one of the few rooms where you can trace the South's next decade of growth directly to the people structuring the deals."

- Mark Vitner, Chief Economist, Piedmont Crescent Capital, Charlotte, N.C.



1. "Dubble Bubble" gum was passed out to all members as Michael Randle explained the EV and the battery industry is in a bubble. Then he asked, "Is A.I. a bubble?" If so, we are in a world of hurt. 2. Randle during his "A little bit of everything" presentation. 3. David Hooks, Executive of the Etowah Count Industrial Development Authority (Gadsden, Ala.); Jim Byard, CEO, Byard and Associates (Prattville, Ala.); David Rumbarger, CEO of the Community Development Foundation (Tupelo, Miss.). All three were Executive Directors of the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs over the last 35 years and were together at SEDR. 4. Raul Peralta, Senior VP, ECS Southeast 5. Mark Williams, Founder, CEO of Strategic Development Group (Greenville, S.C.). 6. (l-r) James McClain, CEO, Southwestern Virginia Gas Company; Stacy Randle, Southern Business & Development; Mark Heath, CEO, Martinsville, Va. EDC; David Stone, CEO, Solid Stone Fabrics, Martinsville, Va. 7. Ed Castile, Director, Alabama Industrial Development Training (AIDT), Deputy Secretary, Alabama Department Commerce. 8. Neal Wade, Founding & Managing Partner, Advanced Economic Development Leadership; Former CEO, Economic Development Partnership of Alabama; Former Director, Alabama Development Office. 9. Neal Wade and Ed Castile. 10. Keith Phillips, Executive Director of the Alabama Technology Network (ATN) and Vice Chancellor of Workforce and Economic Development. 11. Mark Vitner, Former Senior Economist, Wells Fargo; Founder, CEO and Chief Economist, Piedmont Crescent Capital of Charlotte and Raleigh, N.C. 12. Randle with Mallory Darby, VP, Mississippi County, Ark. Economic Development. 13. Randle and Vitner. 14. Ryan Combs, Executive Director, Research Triangle Regional Partnership

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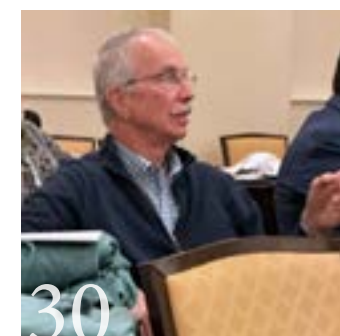
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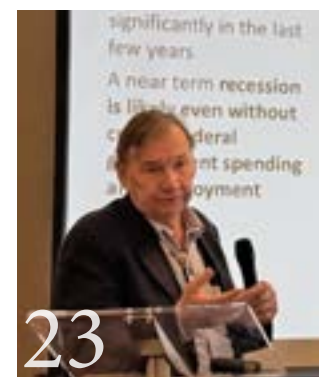


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15. (l-r) Mark Vitner; Mandi Mitchell, CEO, Lafayette, La. Economic Development Authority; Raul Peralta: Mallory Darby; Chuck Whipple, Director of Business Development, ECS Southeast. **16.** Jay Schwedler, CEO, Sumter, S.C. Economic Development; Keith Bowers, Director, Office of Economic Vitality for the Tallahassee/Leon County; Chuck Whipple. **17.** James McClain; David Stone, Martinsville, Va. **18.** Tray Hairston, Attorney, Butler Snow (Jackson, Miss.) **19.** Keith Phillips; Keith Bowers. **20.** David Rumbarger. **21.** Randle with a chart that shows the top industries with most big wins in calendar year 2025. After averaging 1.8 deals annually, the South captured nearly 80 data centers last year. Data centers/A.I. have topped the SB&D 100 for the first time in 33 years, while Southern stalwarts like automotive and financial services were off their deal counts by as much as 65 percent. **22.** Rick Walker, Founder, CEO, Georgia Automotive Manufacturers Association; Mallory Darby and Mandi Mitchell. **23.** Dr. Walter Kemmsies, CEO, Chief Economist, The Kemmsies Group, Savannah, Ga. **24.** James McClain and Walter Kemmsies. **25.** Cliff Brumfield, CEO, Lincoln, N.C. Economic Development Association. **26.** Mandi Mitchell, CEO, Lafayette, La. EDA.



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27. Jay Schwedler; Scott McClain, Principal and Managing Broker of Coldwell Banker Commercial McLain Real Estate, Huntsville, Ala. **28.** Mark Williams; Chuck Whipple; Jay Schwedler; Robert Long, Director of Chester County, S.C. Economic Development. **29.** Connie Bainbridge, Manager, Central Alabama Electric Cooperative, Prattville, Ala. **30.** Mark Heath. **31.** Mark Williams and the SEDR group. **32.** George Kosinski, Executive Director, Clarendon County, S.C. Development Board; Robert Long **33.** Aerospace panel with Jody Bryson, CEO, SC Technology and Aviation Center, Greenville, S.C., moderating a panel with (l-r), John Blair, Director, National Business Investment at Fairfax County, VA. Economic Development Authority; Nathan Sparks, Executive Director, One Okaloosa County, Fla. EDA; Jack Ellenberg, Managing Director with Maxis Advisors, Columbia, S.C. **34.** Christmas time at The Pearl, and no snow! Scott McClain; Keith Phillips; Jim and Beverly Byard; Tucson Roberts; Connie Bainbridge; Ed Castile; Ketrenia and David Hooks. 🎅