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From the Desk of the CEO

Dear CALED Members,



We're just past the halfway mark and 2025 continues to be fast paced and full of surprises. From significant CEQA exemptions and reforms, twists and turns at the federal level impacting economic development (and more), and Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District firsts, the changes in the environment continue to show why it's important to have dedicated economic developers on local government, regional, and state teams, as well as knowledgeable consultants to help.

For us, it was great to see so many of you at our 2025 Annual Conference in May. Thank you to our chair Jennifer McLain Hiramoto and the City of Ontario for being awesome hosts. If there is anything that stood out to me at the conference, it's just how much turnover we are seeing in economic development. While it's great to see familiar faces, it's also incredibly encouraging to see the new economic developers continuing the profession. As many of the attendees noted, the conference was exciting and folks left energized and wanting more.

This is also reflected in our trainings. As we see the demand for training increase, CALED added a second Keys to Successful Economic Development Course (Intro to Economic Development), and both offerings are close to selling out. Our Advanced Institute for Economic Development sold out quickly. CALED and our California Academy for Economic Development are committed to continuing to identify training and support areas for our members and will adjust future programming as needed.

Sometimes, the best way we can support our members is helping them set a foundation with leadership on economic development. CALED Board Member Stephen Baiter and I were fortunate to recently have the opportunity to join Gloria Ortega, Kyle Weddington, & Carmela Campbell (the economic development team), City leadership, the Mayor and Council with the City of Union City to talk about advancing economic development in the City.

As many of you know, local governments are the closest unit of government serving California residents and work hard to track economic development trends and model practices. The City held this critical conversation about how to support already existing businesses, retain/create jobs, attract new opportunities, and increase city revenues to provide Union City residents the quality of life they desire, allow local entrepreneurs to fulfill their goals of a growing and thriving business, and help residents find employment in positions that allow them to support themselves and their families.

It was an excellent working session, and we are grateful to the City for allowing us to share our perspective on the value of economic development, the need to be strategic, and a framework to view the rest of their strategic planning process through. If we can support you in this way, please reach out to anyone on the CALED team for more information.

With that, we hope 2025 continues to bring us all only good surprises and opportunities!

Sincerely,

