

Day Five | December 8, 2022 | Düsseldorf



Düsseldorf and Region Nine, Sharing Ideas on Economic Development

The delegation headed back to Düsseldorf to meet with the Office of Economic Development (OED). Theresa Winkels, Director of the OED, and Stefan Wenzel, Head of the Department of Municipal Climate Management, spoke on how the city is moving away from coal and changing to new energy sources to help solve the climate crisis. Energy concerns have increased importance due to the war in Ukraine.

Jamie McCormick, Legislative Associate for the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) spoke about what regional development organizations (RDO) do for their communities. From grant programs, working on diversity and inclusion, connecting stakeholders, and everything in between, McCormick explained how RDOs play a pivotal role in their regions prosperity.

McCormick also noted how NADO is looking to expand into the west coast. In what she called the "west coast tour," NADO is working to increase membership not only in the west, but also in the mid-west states not currently served by an RDO.

Next, RNDC Research Associate Aaron Pacheco spoke on labor force concerns and how the most critical sector of our economy, the workers, are the ones that are often left behind. This includes immigrant and undocumented workers that supply the labor, but do not share in the "harvest."

Pacheco also discussed the precariousness of automation and technology replacing a traditional workforce. Moving to automation has a higher cost and risk factor. It is also much less adaptable. Automated processes can do the one task they are programmed for and would either need to be replaced or reprogrammed to perform additional tasks. Automating the workforce could also put strain on the economy as the working-class would not have income to spend.





EUREF: Large Scale Change to Benefit Business and the Environment

Jörg Philippi-Gerle welcomed Region Nine to the office of EUREF. EUREF is working on building one of the largest office buildings in Düsseldorf that will be completely free from gas, oil, or coal power.

The new EUREF Campus-Düsseldorf will be 860,000 square feet and house approximately 100 businesses and serve as a laboratory of sorts for other large-scale, carbon-neutral office complexes. The location for the building was carefully chosen with a train station, bike highway, and the Düsseldorf Airport all within walking distance.

This will be the second EUREF Campus. The Berlin Campus has been running since 2009 and houses 150 enterprises and 5000 employees.



Lunch with Tina Völker: How NRW is Working Towards a Carbon Neutral Future

Tina Völker, Ministry for Economic Affairs, Innovation, Digitalization and Energy NRW, hosted the delegation for a lunch in Düsseldorf. Völker shared what North Rhine-Westphalia is doing to reach their goal of being carbon neutral by 2045.

Düsseldorf still has a long road ahead of them, and Völker laid out ways they will work towards their goal. This includes increasing funding for clean energy, and climate-smart initiatives for both industry and residents. They also want to improve communications and collaborations with other ministries. By sharing metrics and best practices, the hope is that all the regions in Germany can move forward together.

