



SRSA

Newsletter

Southern Regional Science Association

May 2003

Thunder Over Louisville!!!

The 42nd Annual Meeting of the SRSA ended with a bang- literally. An air show and fire works display on Saturday capped off the meetings. Thunder Over Louisville is the largest annual pyrotechnics display in North America. The Seelbach Hotel provided an historic venue for the meetings. The hotel, first opened in 1905, is a landmark to a 'golden era,' it is on the National Register of Historic Places, and has attracted many famous figures – from eight U.S. presidents to Al Capone to the SRSA! Many thanks to Bob Cox for a fine job handling the local arrangements. Steve Smith, the 2003 Program Chair, put together a firecracker of a program with 21 sessions. Several sessions were organized by Bob Cox, Brain Cushing, Samia Islam and Eric Scorsone. Attendance was down – probably due to a combination of budget cuts and SARS. See the letter from this year's president, Steve Smith.

The Graduate Paper Committee selected Up Lim, the University of Texas at Austin, as the winner of the 2003 Barry M. Moriarty Award. His paper, *Knowledge Spillovers, Agglomeration Economies, and the Geography of Innovative Activity: A Spatial Econometric Analysis*, was presented Friday afternoon in a session entitled Knowledge, Social Capital, and Location Choice. There were five entries in this year's competition. The committee noted that the quality of all of the entries this year was excellent. It's not too early to encourage your students to apply for next year's competition.

New Officers

At the business meeting on Saturday, the following officers were elected: President- elect and program chair for 2004, Mark Partridge, St. Cloud State; Councilors for 2003-2006, Nancy White, Bucknell University, and Douglas Woodward, University of South Carolina.

Ted Trott, after many years of service, stepped down as executive director/secretary. His guidance and service will be missed. Frank Hefner, College of Charleston, was selected as the new secretary. Any news items you wish to have included in the newsletter, please submit to Frank via e-mail, hefnerf@cofc.edu

Laissez les bons temps roulent:

New Orleans the 2004 Meeting Site. The SRSA meets March 11-13, 2004 at the LePavillon Hotel. Mark your calendars, and note the meeting is earlier than usual. Start preparing your papers now and thinking about organizing sessions. I am sure Mark Partridge will appreciate any sessions you put together.

Presidential Address.

Robert Gibbs presented his presidential address at the lunch on Saturday, April 12.

Reconsidering the Southern Black Belt

Abstract

The portion of the South known as the “Black Belt” lies at the heart of what was once the cotton-and-tobacco plantation region, and retains a large black population. Despite the Black Belt’s high poverty rates and relatively slow economic growth, its large net loss of blacks to urban areas over the course of the 20th century has effectively ended, and more are now returning. Rural southern blacks still face a low-wage economy, and their prospects are conditioned by a legacy of both southern agricultural paternalism and, due to interregional migration, inner-city decline. A number of writers have noted the importance of familial and community ties for returnees, and express cautious optimism about their abilities to further erode the region’s old social and economic barriers. More generally, anti-poverty strategies in the Black Belt, public and private, will be successful only insofar as they are sensitive to the social exclusion that continues to restrict the full participation of blacks in rural southern labor markets and civil society.

Look for the full copy in *The Review of Regional Studies*.

Consider submitting your papers to the editors, Ronald Moomaw and Dan Rickman of Oklahoma State University. To submit papers or find additional information about The Review, access their website at <http://economy.okstate.edu/rrs/>

The SRSA Newsletter is published three times each year in January, May, and September.

Material for inclusion in the Newsletter should be sent to:

Frank Hefner, editor

Department of Economics and Finance

College of Charleston

Charleston, S.C. 29424

or

e-mail hefnerf@cofc.edu

Greetings from the President Our Association needs help and commitment from its members. My concern stems from the low attendance at the April annual meeting in Louisville, what that did to the Association’s finances, and what we can anticipate for future meetings.

In a nutshell, attendance in Louisville was approximately half that of recent years. We did not meet our hotel guarantee, which resulted in our having to pay a “fee” of \$11,000, reducing our reserves to zero. Another direct, and embarrassing, result was our not being able to meet certain obligations in a timely fashion. A professional association cannot continue to operate in this manner. At a minimum, we will all indirectly have to pay the costs in the form of either increased annual dues or increased registration fees, or both.

Perhaps this was a one time aberration, for which there are likely several explanations. Clearly, tight university travel budgets is one reason, and this situation probably will continue for the foreseeable future. At the same time, many of the attendees were new to our meetings, including several graduate students. There seemed to be an absence of long time members. What does this portend for future attendance?

If we wish to continue to hold annual meetings in quality venues we will have to support them. We already have signed a contract for the New Orleans meetings in March, 2004. If we do not meet the guarantee, will not have the financial cushion to cover it. That would hinder, at best, our ability to hold future meetings, as our “credit rating” would be destroyed.

Some possible solutions to low attendance have been suggested. One is to explore merging with another regional association, or at least holding frequent joint meetings. Another is to hold meetings at selected well-known tourist destination sites, hoping that members will consider combining the meeting with a family vacation. Both of these have their downsides (losing our identity; members touring instead of attending sessions). What are your opinions and suggestions? The Council and I would like to hear what you think.

I hate to not have an upbeat message for my inaugural column, but I feel that this is an issue of enough importance to our future that all members need to be aware of it. So, send any thoughts you may have, and pay attention to the Call for Papers for the New Orleans meeting that will come out in early Fall. Remember, this will be an early call, as the meeting is a month earlier than usual.

Have a good summer.

Steve Smith

Steve Smith,
President

2003 SRSA Executive Council

President

Steve Smith
Penn State University

President-elect and Program Chair for 2004

Mark Partridge
Saint Cloud State University

Immediate Past President

Robert Gibbs
ERS, USDA

Co-executive Director/ Treasurer

Kevin McNamara
Purdue University

Co-executive Director/Secretary

Frank Hefner
College of Charleston

Nominations Chair 2003

Frank Hefner
College of Charleston

Honors Chair

John Rees
University of North Carolina- Greensboro

Co-editors, The Review of Regional Studies

Ronald Moomaw and Dan Rickman
Oklahoma State University

Graduate Student Papers for 2004 Meeting

John Rees
University of North Carolina- Greensboro

Elected Council Members

2003-2006

Nancy White
Bucknell University

Douglas Woodward
University of South Carolina

2002-2005

Jiemen Guo
BEA, USDOC

David McGranahan
ERS, USDA

2001-2004

Ed Feser
University of North Carolina

Scott Loveridge
Michigan State University

First Call for Papers

Southern Regional Science Association 43rd Annual Meeting

*March 11-13, 2004
Le Pavillon Hotel
New Orleans, Louisiana*

Potential Topic Areas Include:

*Regional Modeling
International Trade
Resource Utilization
Environment Quality
Transportation Systems
Tourism and Recreation
Economic Impact Analysis
Rural Economic Development
Regional Migration/Labor Markets
Regional Development Issues/Policy
Public Finance and Investment Analysis*

Submit Abstract of Paper to:

[e-mail preferred]

Mark Partridge, Program Chair for 2004

390 Stewart Hall

Department of Economics

720 4th Ave. South

St. Cloud State University

St. Cloud, MN 56301

O: 320-255-2072, F: 320-255-2228

Email: mpartridge@STCLOUDSTATE.EDU