



NEWSLETTER

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ASSOCIATION for UNIVERSITY BUSINESS and ECONOMIC RESEARCH

The AUBER Newsletter is a quarterly publication of the Association for University Business and Economic Research.

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AUBER Conferences in 2006

Spring Conference

NABE/AUBER Washington Economic Policy Conference

The NABE/AUBER 21st annual policy conference will be held March 12–14, 2006, at the Crystal City Marriott at Reagan National Airport in Arlington, Virginia. As always, speakers will include high-ranking

government officials and other experts on selected economic policy issues. Additional information about the conference is available at www.nabe.com or 202-463-6223.

Fall Conference

Walking in Memphis

The University of Arkansas and The University of Memphis are proud to be the hosts of AUBER's 60th annual fall conference. Memphis, Tennessee, will be home to this conference October 14 through October 17 in 2006. With a theme of "Barbecue, Business, Blues, and You," the conference looks to be one that combines the proper mixes of topics, food, music, and entertainment. With its central location in the nation, the ease of arrivals and departures through the Memphis International Airport, and the smell of barbecue and the sound of the blues filling the air, Memphis is an ideal spot. Directors John Gnuschke and Jeff Collins promise an informative and exciting event.

The host organizations, the Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) and the Sparks Bureau of Business and Economic Research (SBBER), and the program planners, Paul Polzin and Pia Montoya, have already

begun incorporating ideas and events into next year's conference. Over the next 12 months, you will see announcements, reminders, and invitations for the 2006 fall conference. In addition, the hosts will be sending out "Memphis Facts" and "Southern Tips" so you will feel at home in the River City.

Although the organizers hope this conference will be a fun one, they emphasize that the focus is on current economic topics, administrative advice, the latest software, proven research methods, and creative design tips. One of the current economic hot topics is real estate research. Both CBBER and SBBER have real estate research centers and are eager to share their experience and suggestions for conducting such research. In other words, there is something for every AUBER member (as well as any AUBER-wannabe member).

Start making your plans now to attend next October! Y'all come!

Outgoing AUBER President Janet Speyrer's Address

Hurricanes, Research, and AUBER

By special request, the following remarks were made by Cindy DiPersio (AUBER Secretary/Treasurer's Office) on behalf of outgoing AUBER president Janet Speyrer at the fall conference in Missoula. As many of you are aware, Janet relocated to Houston and was unable to attend the conference.

What do Katrina, Rita, and Janet have in common? Hurricanes don't come to Missoula, Montana. Because of the hurricane target on my back, health concerns, and the fact that all state travel funds have been frozen, I am unable to be here. I cannot tell you how sad I am to miss the conference; I miss each

and every one of you. I know how hard Jerry, Stephen, and their committee worked to make this one of the best programs ever. And Paul: Aren't you happy we didn't hold the meeting in New Orleans this year?! I know you did a fabulous job with everything. I hope you found a

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News from the President



Jerry Conover
2005–2006
AUBER President

Congratulations to the 2005 AUBER Award Winners!

Economic Outlooks

Center for Business and Economic Research
The University of Alabama

Magazines and Journals

Bureau of Business and Economic Research
The University of Montana

Newsletters, Brochures, and Other Promotional Materials

Economic and Business Research Center
The University of Arizona

Special Studies, Technical or Contract Reports

Center for Business and Economic Research
University of Arkansas

Web Site

Bureau of Business and Economic Research
The University of Montana

Fall is at its peak on this beautiful afternoon as I write, very reminiscent of the days we enjoyed a short while ago at the AUBER fall conference in Missoula. A quick glance on our web site at the photos and other chronicles of that conference brings to mind the near-record turnout for an excellent, multifaceted program, great opportunities for networking and renewing friendships, and the beautiful country we enjoyed throughout the conference and field trip. In case you weren't able to take in this conference first-hand, be sure to check out the conference coverage on AUBER's web site.

Autumn finds many of us involved in planning to share our insights with our constituents in the form of annual economic outlook events. There was plenty of discussion in Missoula about members' forecasting activities and creative approaches to prognostication, a good example of the kinds of insights we can share through our association.

A new AUBER initiative along these lines was conceived at the fall conference, the planning for which is now under way by a group convened by the Marketing and Communications Committee. This initiative will periodically gather AUBER members' views on the economic outlook in their areas and other, topical economic issues, then make members' insights conveniently available to the media and other interested audiences. Such a move should help highlight the strength of our organization and its

members in regional and applied economics and business research. Stay tuned for details of this initiative and other innovative AUBER activities.

Before memories of the fall conference disappear like autumn leaves, please give some thought to taking part in next fall's conference in Memphis, October 14–17, cohosted by the Universities of Memphis and Arkansas. Paul Polzin, Pia Montoya, and their colleagues on the program committee would love to hear your ideas for presentations or sessions at the conference, and session chairs are always needed as well. Drop them a line with your program ideas (paul.polzin@business.umd.edu; pmontoya@eller.arizona.edu).

And don't overlook the annual spring policy conference in Washington, D.C., March 12–14, cosponsored by NABE. This is always a fine opportunity to glean the latest happenings from policy-makers and federal agencies, and to exchange ideas with not only our academic colleagues but also business economists from across the nation.

I'm enthusiastic about what AUBER can do to enhance the professional and collegial lives of all our members, and I look forward to a fine year ahead working with you to make it the most rewarding of all our professional affiliations. Thanks for your help! ▲

Jerry Conover
Indiana University

Alphabet Soup:

AUBER, COPAFS, and the FCSM

In the world of AUBER, acronyms are a way of life. COPAFS and the FCSM are two organizations that you have likely seen abbreviated somewhere, but may not be totally familiar with. The following paragraphs attempt to delineate the organizations behind the acronyms.

COPAFS stands for the Council of Professional Association on Federal Statistics. It has a membership base of more than 60 organizations, including professional associations, businesses, and research institutes. COPAFS advocates for the development and dissemination of high-quality federal statistics, providing an important link between federal statistical agencies and end-users of this data. The organization holds quarterly meetings in Washington, D.C.

The FCSM (Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology) is a government organization that works closely with COPAFS. The committee is housed in the Office of Statistical Policy in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Its goal is to improve the quality of federal statistics. It recommends standards for statistical methodology, investigates data quality problems, and makes suggestions for improving statistic quality. The agency has more than 20 members appointed by the OMB. The FCSM collaborates with COPAFS to host a biennial research conference in Virginia and biennial statistical policy seminars in Maryland.

For more information on COPAFS, visit www.copafs.org. For more information about FCSM, visit www.fcsm.gov. ▲

News from COPAFS

The agenda for the September 16 meeting was altered just prior to the meeting to accommodate special reporting by the Census Bureau regarding anticipated impacts of Hurricane Katrina on federal statistical programs.

Ed Spar provided continuing budgetary intrigue in his executive director's report. While the House had voted full funding for the American Community Survey (ACS) at the time of the COPAFS September meeting, the Senate markup once again implied a major cut. Consistent with last year's position, the Census Bureau says it will suspend or significantly scale back the ACS, the Current Population Survey (CPS), the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), County Business Patterns, and other statistical programs if final funding is not near the House budgetary figure. (Subsequent to the COPAFS meeting, the ACS received full funding for FY2006.) The Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) is the only statistical agency budget that had passed by mid-September, and its numbers are down. Ed commented that this will present programmatic challenges for BTS, where the director is no longer a presidential appointee, and the entire agency faces an uncertain future. Ed also touched on the controversy at the Bureau of Justice Statistics in which the director was

forced out in a dispute over the content of a press release describing a report on police stops and the incidence of racial profiling. AUBER members with a stake in federal statistics are encouraged to "educate" their legislators on the importance of the ACS and other statistical programs to economic development and other issues of local importance.

- To find your representative go to: <http://www.house.gov/writerep/>
- To find your senators go to: http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm

Alan Tupek reported that the September and October CPS data collection will require major adjustments because Census representatives cannot get into many of the impacted areas, and the USPS is still not delivering mail to all areas. He stated that Census is contacting about 250 evacuees to be surveyed about their movements and relocation, and that the ACS question pertaining to "residence a year ago" will provide timely information as well. The October ACS questionnaires are being mailed with a letter instructing respondents to be sure to include information on evacuees who may be living in their household.

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Obituary

Edwin D. Goldfield, a leader in the world of federal statistics, and a long-time member of COPAFS, passed away on September 27, 2005. Born in New York City in 1918, Ed received an M.A. in statistics from Columbia University and did graduate work at American University. He began his 35-year career at the U.S. Census Bureau in 1940. Ed was a program coordinator for the 1950 Decennial Census and later chief of the Statistical Reports Division, assistant director of the Bureau, and chief of the International Statistics Program Center. He also served as staff director of the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Census and Statistics, was a consultant to the Social Science Research Council and the Mutual Security Agency, and a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of the International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences.

Upon retiring from the Census Bureau in 1975, Ed joined the staff of the Committee on National Statistics (CNSTAT). In 1978 he became the committee's director, a position he held until retirement in 1987.

Ed was a past president and lifetime member of the Washington Statistical Society, and a fellow and lifetime member of the American Statistical Association.

A memorial service is scheduled for Wednesday, November 30, 2005, from 3:30–4:30. It will take place in the Members' Room at The National Academies Main Building (2100 C St. NW) in Washington D.C. For more information, please contact Agnes Gaskin (agaskin@nas.edu, 202-334-2240). ▲

BEA Releases GSP Industry Estimates

On October 26, 2005, the Bureau of Economic Analysis released prototype accelerated estimates of real- and current-dollar total GSP (revised) and GSP for NAICS-based industry groups for 2004. This was the first release of GSP by industry estimates 10 months after the reference year, speeding up the release by 8 months from previous release schedules. For more information, go to <http://www.bea.gov/bea/regional/gsp.htm>.

COPAFS

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Tom Mesenbourg addressed hurricane impacts on the Census Bureau's economic programs. Trade and construction statistics will be most affected. Due to disruption of the significant volume of activity through the Port of New Orleans, the Census Bureau is considering the release of special data to reflect the trade flow impact on Gulf region ports. There are several challenges regarding construction statistics. The new Survey of Construction sample does not include New Orleans, the survey does not cover demolition/cleanup activity or capture federally owned manufactured homes, and the survey itself is not designed to provide data for local areas. Additionally, in emergency situations like this, local officials tend to loosen the permitting process, making administrative records a less reliable source of construction activity. The bottom line is that construction programs will have to do a number of things differently if they want to capture post-hurricane activity.

Christa Jones discussed some of the longer term statistical concerns engendered by the hurricanes and their aftermath. Modifying existing statistical programs to capture reconstruction and evacuee movements is likely, as is greater and more innovative use of various administrative records to measure evacuee activity. A formal, two-year longitudinal survey of the evacuee population has been suggested. Jones cautioned that none of these possibilities has progressed to the formal proposal stage. Deputy Director Hermann Habermann was among the attendees, and he added that the topic of additional data collection is delicate politically and challenging fiscally.

Jay Waite warned that it will probably take a year for the USPS to correct its Delivery Sequence File (used as the basis for the Census Master Address File [MAF]) in response to the hurricane dislocations. As a result, the ACS will have to use the MAF as is, with extremely high nonresponse rates expected for Gulf localities. Because no one knows how many units in New Orleans will be demolished, the process of MAF updating will take place most slowly there, with unknown ramifications on data quality for months or even years to come. He also explained that it will take some time to track evacuees who were initially relocated to Red Cross, FEMA, and "irregular" group quarters, such as the Houston Astrodome, and then dispersed without systematic tracking. Waite concluded his comments with a reference to the difficulty the hurricanes are posing for the collection of five-year ACS data. Pre-hurricane population estimate weights are acknowledged to be

of decreasing value, but whether to report unweighted ACS or go with some other weighting option is as much a matter of funding as a statistical issue.

A flurry of unanswered questions followed the presentations, dramatizing both the seriousness and uncertainty of a post-hurricane challenge to our statistical system.

Ray Mataloni (BEA) briefed attendees on the subject of "offshoring" (i.e., the decision of domestic producers to cease producing a good or service in the United States, and substituting this production under a formal contract to a foreign source). While popular sentiment suggests that offshoring kills U.S. jobs, a growing body of research seems to indicate that U.S. multinationals that expand offshore and hire non-American workers are primarily serving local markets. These expanding multinationals are pursuing new local consumers as much as they are chasing low wage labor. Foreign operations are growing faster than domestic operations, and the host economies are growing more rapidly than the U.S. economy. Mataloni advised interested analysts and researchers to consult the several sources of data pertaining to offshoring maintained by the BEA and available through their web site.

Douglas Hilmer (Census) reviewed release rules for the detailed data tables of the ACS. The 500 tables are modeled on the STF3A/SF3 tables of previous censuses, and Hilmer noted that the preferred term for those data is "estimates," with confidence intervals and "low" and "high" estimates meant to replace single value, fixed point estimates. He reported that the five-year ACS data are meant to replace the census long form, so no population thresholds are to be applied. However, the one- and three-year ACS data do involve the use of population thresholds and thus take the form of statistical

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Special Thanks!

A big thank you to all those who helped put on a terrific fall conference in Missoula!

Local arrangements:

Julie Ehlers
Shannon Furniss
Paul Polzin
Deborah Simmons

Conference program committee:

Jerry Conover
Stephen Smith
Paul Polzin
Richard Wobbekind
Lorena Akioka
James Kurre
Pia Montoya
Eric Thompson

It was a great conference, and we truly appreciate your hard work! For a conference recap, presentations, and photos, visit the AUBER web site, www.auber.org and click on recap.

Thank you!

Many thanks to Past President Janet F. Speyrer and outgoing board members Andy Brod, Fred Carstensen, Jeff Collins, and Stephen Smith for all of their hard work on behalf of the association. We greatly appreciate their contributions!

estimates. Hilmer noted that it will take conscious effort on the part of the user community to successfully incorporate these estimates into their demographic models. Among the unresolved issues facing the Census Bureau are the inclusion of group quarters, several question changes due in 2008, and disclosure avoidance issues.

Robert Marske (Census) discussed improvements to the way data from the economic censuses will be disseminated. He began by contrasting demographic data collected from households from the economic data collected from businesses, and noted both the importance and challenges connected with industry classification (NAICS). Economic censuses are conducted every five years and provide detailed data for county and state levels, whereas the more familiar annual, quarterly, and monthly economic surveys conducted by the Census Bureau provide national level information. ▲

Paul Zelus
Idaho State University

Member News

AUBERite Elected to National CFA Institute's Board

AUBER member and past president Ashvin P. Vibhakar, director of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock's Institute for Economic Advancement, was elected in September to the Board of Governors of the CFA Institute, a global, nonprofit professional association. The organization administers the Chartered Financial Analyst curriculum and examination program worldwide.

Congratulations, Ashvin!

AUBER.org

Unable to attend the fall conference? A summary of the conference, along with photos, award winners, and more than 30 conference presentations are available online.

AUBER members, check out the Members Only section for the 2005 membership survey results and board meeting minutes. New resources, including an AUBER forum, are also in the works. While you are there, be sure to update your center's information. For usernames and/or passwords, e-mail AUBER's webmaster, Jennifer Whitfield (jwhitfield@uwf.edu). ▲

A U B E R C O N F E R E N C E S

SPRING 2006 CONFERENCE

March 12-14

**Crystal City Marriott
Arlington, Virginia**

FALL 2006 CONFERENCE

"Barbecue, Business, Blues, and You"

October 14-17

Memphis, Tennessee

Hurricanes, Research, and AUBER

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bison to name after me...you know, the one with the big mouth! And remember my platform: I promised hospitality suites; I hope you enjoyed them.

Can you believe that the program committee picked energy as the theme for the conference before gasoline topped \$3 per gallon and oil neared \$70 a barrel? Imagine natural gas prices this winter! I KNOW they could predict with absolute certainty the shutdown and destruction of rigs in the gulf, refineries along the coast, and accompanying infrastructure problems.

I have a few lessons to share with you. It's not about how to pack everything you think you need and gather your children from a 50-mile radius in one hour. It's not how to live in three changes of clothes for a month. It's not how to get your kids and a niece into school in a new place without birth certificates and immunization records. It's not how to say you are homeless and have your kids ask, "Is that true, Mom?"

Instead, this is a story about being a director of a business research unit in crisis and coming back fast and furious! I left with two studies to read the Friday before the evacuation order came: the New Orleans area forecast and the D-Day Museum visitor study. I had also just presented the visitor study for New Orleans for the first half of the year and recently completed the economic impact of Louisiana's many parks. We thought we would finish the rest on Monday, but Monday never came.

A different Monday came. At first I thought I had nothing. But after a few days I realized I am an AUBERite! I know how to use statistics like Wonder Woman! The information we had compiled could be used in many ways. It could help businesses to start to understand the impacts of these events and work for tomorrow. Each AUBER unit would do the same—take the information you have and use it to meet the needs and opportunities in your state and community.

I had just completed the baseline forecast of the New Orleans economy before the catastrophe. I had also put together a visitor profile of the D-Day Museum. (By the way, you'll be glad to know that many of the museum's artifacts survived.) The New Orleans visitor study showed us how many visitors we were losing each day and how much money they would have spent. From prior research, we knew how much the tax exemption offered by the state to refugees and evacuees was costing every day. We were also able to discuss the impact of having troops

and FEMA officials stay in state parks instead of tourists. Moreover, we knew the value of six months of cancelled conventions. So now we are the people with the expertise to do the population projections, the economic impact, the tourism estimates, and the small business impacts as the economy starts to recover!

A couple of interesting side notes. I had recently completed a study for the Murphy Oil Refinery—the one that Katrina twisted, which caused it to leak and leave much of the parish uninhabitable because of hazardous waste. I also had spoken to alumni of a historic catholic school in the 9th Ward area about future students. This school is located in the area that was flooded by the levee breaks in both Katrina and Rita. All of the data I have can be used by these businesses in settling the multitude of insurance and legal claims. They have the answers because of our work as an AUBER research unit.

With regards to AUBER, I cannot say enough about the value of the web site in contacting people after the storm. All of my contacts are in my unavailable (possibly soaked) address book in New Orleans. The web site made it possible to stay in touch as the Nominating Committee formed the slate of officers.

Speaking of the web site, have you noticed its new look? It now distinguishes between visitors and AUBERites as the site is entered. It is more user friendly and attractive for all. Many thanks to Maile Nadelhoffer and Jennifer Whitfield for their work on this project.

And thanks to our new Marketing and Communications Committee led by Lorena, we now have a new and extremely attractive AUBER brochure. This brochure has been distributed, along with a letter promoting AUBER's value, to all AACSB deans. Special thanks for this effort go to Jeff Collins and Sheryl Barger.

Congratulations to Jerry Conover, our new president, and thank you to all who serve as officers, on the board, and on committees.

Have a great conference! ▲

**Sincerely,
Janet**

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