

College of Business

Economic Breakfast Series Focuses on Infrastructure

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The second Arkansas Economic Issues Breakfast Series videoconference, coordinated by the Institute for Economic Advancement (IEA) in UALR's College of Business, will focus on Arkansas' infrastructure March 17.

With about 150 people attending the videoconference from the host location at the Acxiom headquarters in Little Rock, a panel of speakers will begin at 7 a.m. addressing some infrastructure issues, followed by local discussion sessions to conclude by 9:15 a.m. Topics will include:

- What are the goals and priorities for maintaining and building highways and bridges in Arkansas? How do we pay for it?
- What is the status of federal stimulus spending (ARRA) on Arkansas infrastructure projects?
- How can we improve high-tech infrastructure around the state? What are our options for improving high-speed internet connectivity?

Panel participants include Jim McKenzie, executive director of Metroplan and a member of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Highway Finance (chair, New Revenue Subcommittee); Michelle Stockman, director of the Broadband Entrepreneurship Program at Arkansas Capital and vice president of Connect Arkansas; and Keesa Smith, representing the Gov. Beebe's Office of Recovery.

The program will also include a brief economic update report by Michael Pakko, state economic forecaster at IEA, and Kathy Deck with the Center for Business and Economic Research at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville.

An important aspect of the event is public participation, according to IEA Director Jim Youngquist. After the panel discussion, individual events at universities around the state will include time for attendees to participate in conversations about unique local and regional aspects of the issues. Feedback from participants at these local discussions will be summarized on the Arkansas Economic Issues Breakfast [website](#).

The Arkansas Economic Issues Breakfast Series held once in the fall and spring is designed to encourage economic development in the state through the dissemination of high quality information and analysis to business, community, and government leaders. The event links people across Arkansas via videoconferencing technology and provides an interactive setting for learning about the latest economic trends that affect businesses in Arkansas. This opportunity is the result of collaboration among higher education institutions in Arkansas and an understanding that Arkansas citizens must leverage their resources to compete successfully in the global economy.

The series coordinated by UALR's IEA is in cooperation with the Center for Business and Economic Research at the University of Arkansas, the Delta Center for Economic Development at Arkansas State University, the Economic Research and Development Center at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, the College of Business at the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith, the University of Arkansas at Monticello, and Southern Arkansas University. The series is sponsored by Arkansas Business.

[Register online](#) for any of the breakfast series locations held at the host site in Little Rock and participating campuses. For more information, contact Neva Wayman at IEA at or nfwayman@ualr.edu

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