

Economic Development Commissioner Speaks About Connecticut's Challenges



The Department of Public Policy kicked off the Spring 2008 semester with a visit from Joan McDonald, Commissioner of Connecticut's Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). Commissioner McDonald shared her strategic plan for the future of Connecticut's economy.

DECD's role is to develop and implement strategies that attract and retain businesses, and revitalize the neighborhoods of Connecticut. DECD supports economic development through development financing, development services, infrastructure development, and efforts to reduce urban sprawl.

One of Commissioner McDonald's main priorities is encouraging the clean up and development of brownfields. Brownfield development encourages high density land use patterns that can help to reduce urban sprawl and expand housing and employment opportunities in Connecticut's older, more distressed neighborhoods. DECD hopes to encourage for developers to purchase and build on brownfield sites by investing money to decontaminate these sites,

Commissioner McDonald is also concerned about losing young Connecticut residents to other states. She feels that providing the right type of job opportunities and low cost housing options are keys in addressing this problem.

In addition, DECD recognizes the importance of transit-oriented development to make public transit a more consistent and reliable option for those citizens for whom transportation to work is their main obstacle in obtaining employment. McDonald's vision includes a public intra-city transportation system that might include the implementation of a commuter rail from New Haven to Hartford.