



# Thinking Regionally: Strategies to Build Resilient Regions and Communities

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**One of the victims of a region-wide natural disaster is often regionalism itself**

**- Doug Elliott, Executive Director, East Central Iowa Council of Governments**

# Presentation Agenda



- Introduction
- Setting the Frame for Resilience
- The Regional Role
- Regional Resilience Strategies / Case Studies
- Additional Resources

# NADO's mission:

To strengthen local governments, communities, and economies through the regional strategies, partnerships, and solutions of the nation's regional development organizations

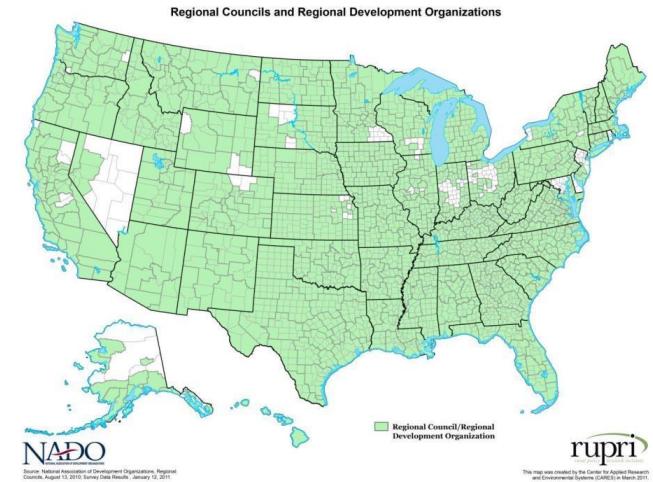


# NADO represents the national network of regional development organizations (RDOs)

National membership organization for the network of over 520 **regional development organizations (RDOs)** throughout the U.S.

RDOs are also known as “Councils of Governments,” “Regional Planning Commissions,” “Economic Development Districts,” and other local names

Promote efforts that **strengthen local governments, communities, and economies** through regional strategies focusing on economic development, infrastructure, housing, transportation, regional planning, disaster resilience, and other areas

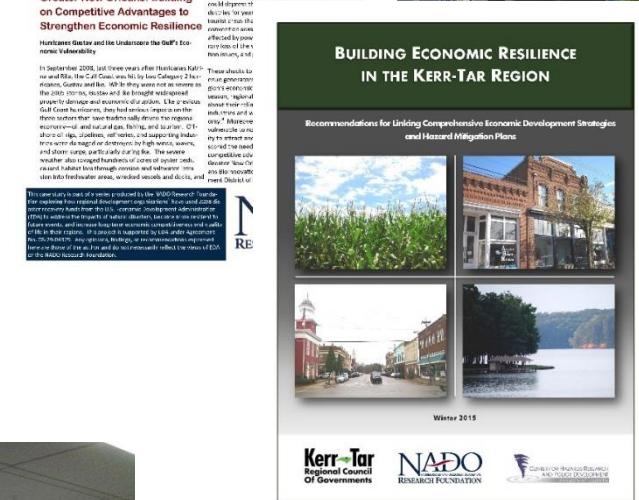
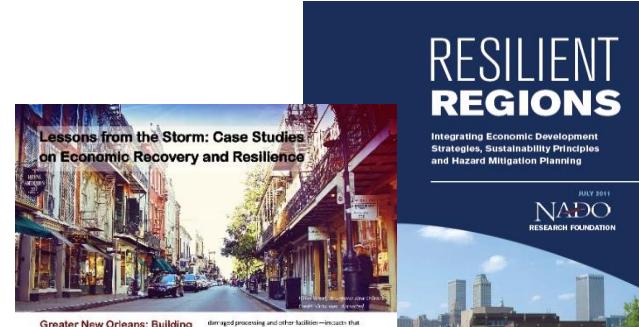


# The NADO Research Foundation

Founded in 1988, the NADO Research Foundation is the non-profit research affiliate of NADO

Shares **best practices** in latest developments and trends in small metropolitan areas and rural America through training, peer exchanges, publications, and other resources

**Focus Areas:**  
Rural Transportation  
Regional Resilience  
Sustainable Communities  
Capacity Building  
Organizational Support



# The Roots of “Resilience”

## From the Oxford English Dictionary:

- “Elasticity; the power of resuming an original shape or position after compression, bending, etc.”
- “The action or an act of rebounding or springing back; rebound, recoil.”



- The term emerged from the scientific community, particularly physics and mathematics
- First used in the 1970s to describe ecological systems' responses to change
- 400 percent citation increase in the social sciences between 1997 and 2007
- 20+ definitions of community resilience to disasters

# A Broad Definition of Resilience

**The ability of a region or community to anticipate, withstand, and bounce back from shocks and disruptions, including:**

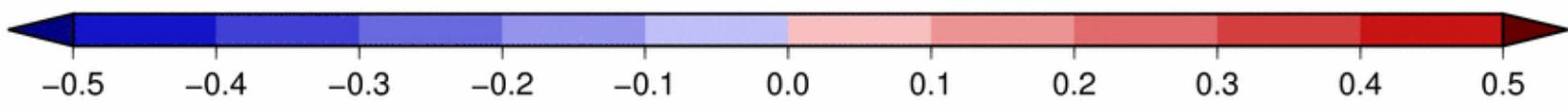
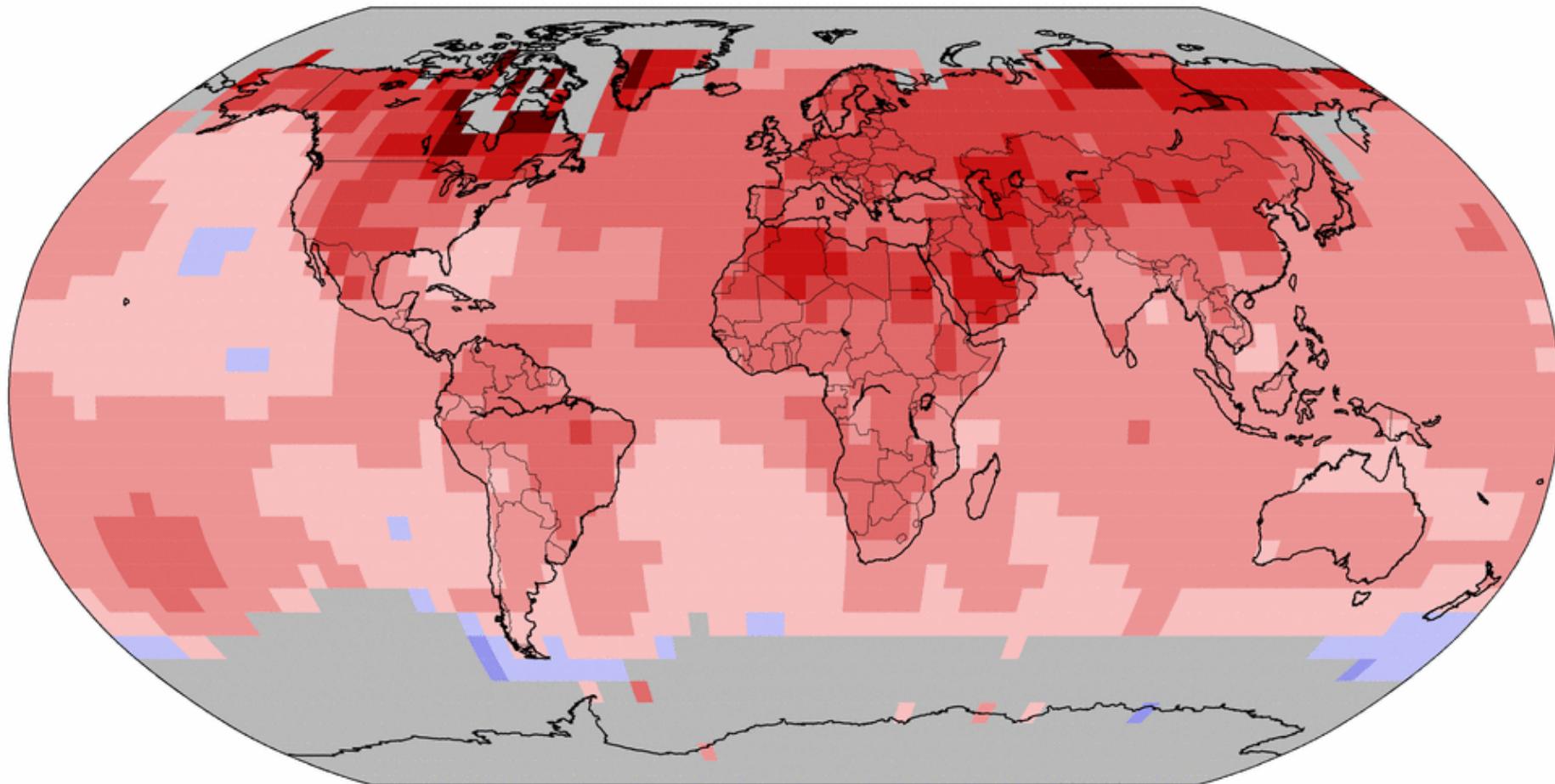


- Natural disasters or hazards
- Climate change impacts
- The closure of a large employer
- The decline of an important industry
- Changes in the workforce

# Land & Ocean Temperature Trends Jan–Dec 2012

## 1970–2012

Data Source: GHCN–M version 3.2.0 & ERSST version 3b



NOAA's National Climatic Data Center

Please Note: Gray areas represent missing data  
Map Projection: Robinson







Thank you  
for years  
of dedicated service!





Jack Corn / Rural Archive

# Not Just Bouncing Back...

## *Bouncing Back Better*

**“Another way of looking at resilience is the ability not only to bounce back but also to “bounce forward” - to recover and at the same time to enhance the capacities of the community or organization to better withstand future stresses.”**

- Urban Land Institute, *After Sandy*



# Why *Regional* Resilience?

- Nearby communities often share similar risks/hazards
- Disaster impacts cross jurisdictional boundaries
- Communities are interdependent
  - Vulnerabilities in one community could impact another.
  - Mitigation investments in one community could impact another (positively or negatively).
- Economies are regional in nature
- Communities can accomplish more when they work together

# COG Roles in Promoting Regional Resilience

- **Regional planning and analysis**
  - Hazard mitigation planning
  - Vulnerability assessments
  - Economic development/resilience
  - GIS mapping
- **Building/enhancing local capacity**
  - Technical assistance
  - Grant writing
  - Revolving loan funds
  - Sharing staff
- **Coordinating federal, state, and local government partners**
  - Allocate funding (i.e. recovery)
  - Connect local governments with assistance opportunities
  - Translate national and local priorities
- **Convening stakeholders in a neutral forum**
- **Contributing regional, long-term perspectives**



Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester COG

# Regional Resilience Strategies



# Understand the Regional Landscape

- What is the history of regional cooperation in your region?
- What formal or informal structures are in place?
  - Regional organizations/committees
  - Plans
  - MOUs
- Who has relationships with key stakeholders?

# Look at Resilience Holistically

- Natural disasters/hazards
- Climate change impacts
- Economic threats
- Social equity issues
- Opportunities as well as threats

# Gather Region-Specific Information

- Data on risks and impacts
- Survey existing information and fill gaps
- Qualitative information can be helpful, too

# Start a Regional Conversation

- Workshops, peer exchanges, facilitated discussions, working groups
- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy planning process
- Strengthen social capital and relationship-building
- Look to external partners for convening assistance

# Think Outside the Box About Partnerships

- What non-traditional partners have a stake in resilience?
- Don't forget about economic development
- Cross the rural-urban divide
- Keep asking: Who needs to be at the planning table?

# Make Resilience the New Normal

Look for ways of building resilience through your day-to-day decisions, programs, and investments in:

- Planning
- Zoning
- Policymaking
- Capital investment
- Lending
- Economic development
- Other routine services

# ECICOG Revolving Loan Fund (East Central Iowa Council of Governments)

- Following the 2008 floods, ECICOG established a **revolving loan fund** with the support of a \$1.5 million grant from EDA
- Loan decisions are made by an **RLF committee** comprised of representatives from local banks, a credit union, an entrepreneurial development center, and a small business development center
- Loans help **bridge financing gaps** and priority is given to projects that support **the regional economy and economic diversification**
- Loans can be used to purchase real estate and equipment and for working capital



# Comprehensive GIS Data in Disaster Recovery Project

## (Southwest Arkansas Planning and Development District)

- Following the 2008 hurricanes, SWAPDD leveraged funding from a **variety of sources** including EDA, the state of Arkansas, and the Delta Regional Authority to develop a **comprehensive GIS database for the region**
  - The database contains **locations** of employers, public water and wastewater utilities, and other critical infrastructure that can be compared to storm track data
  - The database can be used to quickly estimate a **storm's impact** on businesses, infrastructure, and individuals, to **pre-fill applications** for post-disaster funding and technical assistance, and to support with **hazard mitigation planning**



# Emergency Operations Center (Ark-Tex Council of Governments, AR-TX)

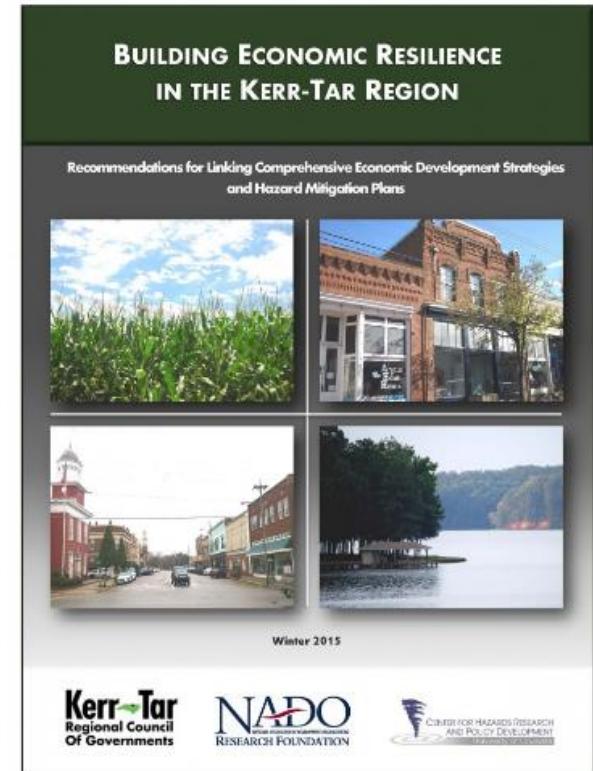
- Through funding from FEMA, ATCOG constructed a regional **emergency operations center** available for use by jurisdictions serviced in the ATCOG nine-county region during and after disasters
- **Building features** include sleeping quarters, showers, a full kitchen, bathrooms, an interview room for interaction with the media, a briefing room where the EOC commander can brief oncoming staff, and an operations room
- Facility also used for **training** purposes
- No other facility like this exists in the region and **no single jurisdiction** could have afforded to build it on their own



All images from ATCOG

# Linking the CEDS and Hazard Mitigation Planning (Kerr-Tar Regional Council of Governments, NC)

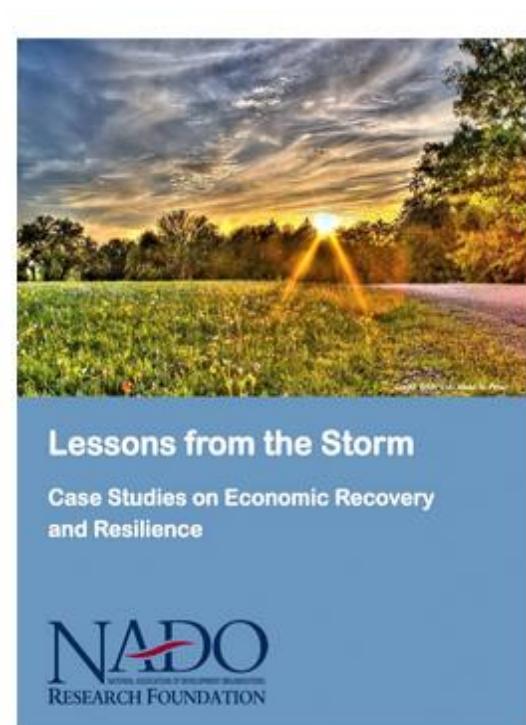
- Hazard mitigation and economic development activities—both critical to the long-term prosperity of regions and communities across the country—are often **conducted separately**
- A report and project conducted by the Kerr-Tar Regional Council of Governments identified and reviewed the parallels between CEDS and Hazard Mitigation Plans in an effort to **better align** the two planning processes



# Resilience Resources Available from NADO

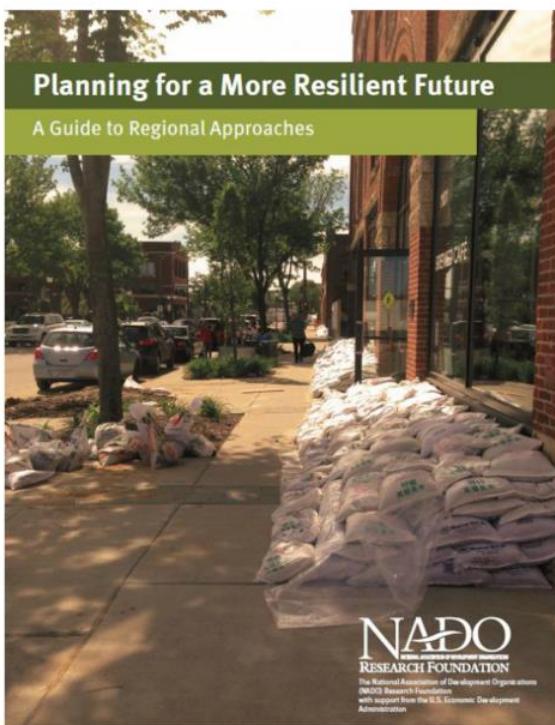
## at [www.nado.org](http://www.nado.org)

- [Lessons from the Storm: Case Studies on Economic Resilience and Recovery](#)
- [Resilient Regions: Integrating Economic Development Strategies, Sustainability Principles, and Hazard Mitigation Planning](#)
- [Regional Resilience: Research and Policy Brief](#)
- [Building Economic Resilience in the Kerr Tar Region: Recommendations for Linking Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies and Hazard Mitigation Plans](#)
- [Lessons Learned from Irene: Vermont RPCs Address Transportation System Recovery](#)
- [\[Webinar\]: Innovation and Opportunity: A Closer Look at the New CEDS Content Guidelines](#)
- [\[Webinar\]: Building Economic Resilience in Your Community: Linking Economic Development and Hazard Mitigation Planning](#)
- [\[Webinar\]: The Regional Development Organization's Role in Disaster Recovery](#)



# *Planning for a More Resilient Future: A Guide to Regional Approaches*

- *Planning for a More Resilient Future: A Guide to Regional Approaches*, is a report and website that summarizes the rapidly-growing body of research on resilience, describing the main ideas that are driving policy and practice across the country and examining current thinking on regional and economic resilience
- Available at: [www.planningforresilience.com](http://www.planningforresilience.com) and [www.NADO.org](http://www.NADO.org)



## The Report



Every year, people and communities across the United States experience disasters and major disruptions. These can be the result of damaging weather events, such as hurricanes, tornadoes, or floods, or of the decline of a significant industry or closure of a major employer. They can also be caused by the outbreak of infectious diseases, acts of terrorism, technological mishaps, or financial meltdowns. The financial, social, and environmental costs of these disasters continue to rise, and represent substantial drains on governments, businesses, and communities, and on the nation as a whole.

The NADO Research Foundation has released *Planning for a More Resilient Future: A Guide to Regional Approaches*, a report that summarizes the rapidly-growing body of research on resilience, describing the main ideas that are driving policy and practice across the country and examining current thinking on regional and economic resilience. It is intended for regional development organizations (RDOs) as well as local

Are you thinking and acting like  
a region?

What's been working?  
What hasn't?

A good half of the art of living  
is resilience

- Alain de Botton



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

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