

**Pursuing A Vision of Excellence**  
**Exploring Innovation in Community Development Week Kickoff**  
**April 14, 2008**  
**The Old Rock House**  
**St. Louis, Mo.**

Remarks by  
Dave Sapenaro, First Vice President  
Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis

## **Welcome**

On behalf of the St. Louis Fed, I'm delighted to welcome you to the kickoff of our inaugural *Exploring Innovation in Community Development Week*. As the title of this event—"Pursuing a Vision of Excellence"—suggests, we want to celebrate innovative approaches that support successful community development and to encourage future projects.

By "innovative," we mean activities that add value by applying a new idea or method to something already established.

By "community development" we are primarily concerned with revitalization and stabilization of neighborhoods. But it also means combining public, private and nonprofit activities to increase the economic well-being of residents of those neighborhoods.

Today, bankers, investors, policymakers and participants from academia, community organizations, foundations, government and private corporations are joining us for this celebration. Why? Because it takes all of you to accomplish community development. You have all played a role in the accomplishments we are celebrating. And we thank you for your participation.

## **Federal Reserve Bank's Role**

For those of you not familiar with the Federal Reserve, our sponsorship of this may seem puzzling. Some of you may be wondering why this topic is of interest to us.

I know that you all have heard a lot in the news lately about the Fed's role in monetary policy, which affects the nation's credit conditions and interest rates, but our goal of fostering economic growth includes every part of the American economy.

Low- and moderate-income communities are important to that economic growth. For these communities, credit availability, affordable housing development, job creation and

economic development are challenging. Learning how to solve such problems may open the door for additional community development. This is why the Federal Reserve wants to bring these ideas to the forefront.

### **What's innovation got to do specifically with community development?**

A culture of innovation in a community provides the foundation that enables organizations to function at a high level by addressing complex issues with breakthrough ideas. This means taking action and delivering results at a local level, where the rubber meets the road.

Innovation influences how community developers view their work, organize people, use information, use technology, communicate and build value. It also helps community development organizations to attract capital, credit and investments.

### **Conclusion**

We recognize that comprehensive approaches to community development require significant time and resources. There are no easy answers, but that's why we are continuing to explore innovation.

Building on the success of our first *Exploring Innovation in Community Development* conference last year, we are planning for a follow-up conference in the spring of 2009. The Federal Reserve gathers people together to make new connections and build networks to solve tough economic issues. We hope you make some of those connections during this event and plan to join us for the conference next spring.