



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Community Economic Development Symposium Excels in 2nd Year

*ARC President, Doug Hooker provides speech on the Rebounding of Atlanta Region*

**Atlanta, GA** - The finest of Atlanta's business and community leaders, elected officials, and industry professionals involved in community redevelopment and economic development assembled at the Georgia Tech Hotel and Conference Center on October 7th for the annual Atlanta Regional Community & Economic Development (CED) Symposium. The one-day event stressed the best practices of locales that have returned to prosperity after the economic downturn. The 2014 theme was *"On the Rebound: Making Progress, Scoring Economically"* and presented over 40 speakers who are leading the region's growth. The event was hosted by APDS Solutions (APDS), a national community and economic development firm based in Atlanta who chose to continue the symposium after a successful seminal event in 2013.

The visionary behind the event is 20 year housing, financial literacy, real estate and economic development veteran Vaughn D. Irons, who is Chief Executive Officer of APDS. "We are proud to present this year's conference which provides our network an opportunity to stay up-to-date on the most relevant issues and topics in redevelopment and economic prosperity in our region," said Irons, "We hope our attendees were challenged and reinvigorated by the subject matter and returned to their places of business ready to take action."



Vaughn D. Irons introducing Luncheon Speaker Doug Hooker to the Audience of over 130 attendees

Event attendance doubled year-over-year with 130 participants who came to hear from over 40 speakers. The swell of walk-up registrations required event organizers to add additional seating in order to accommodate the full attendance. CED event sponsors also grew exponentially, with the event garnering support from 16 prominent organizations such as Fifth-Third Bank, Georgia Power, Bellwether Enterprise, US Dept. of HUD, Fulton County Development Authority, Country Financial, the DeKalb Chamber, and Smith, Gambrell & Russell.

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Doug Hooker Providing the Luncheon Address

Two of the highlights of this year's event included a Luncheon Keynote from Doug Hooker, Executive Director of the Atlanta Regional Commission and a closing address by former Washington, DC Mayor Marion Barry. Hooker reminded the attendees that although the region has one of the youngest populations we will more than double the percentage of seniors over the next twenty years. "While there are other large metropolitan cities that are similar to Atlanta, we are unique because of the scale that we have to deal with these issues" said Mr. Hooker in regards to the unique and evolving challenges facing Atlanta.



The excitement continued to build leading up to the Keynote address, closing reception and book signing of "*Mayor for Life: The Incredible Story of Marion Barry, Jr.*" sponsored by Leadership DeKalb and the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce. The audience sat engaged as the Keynote speaker, the Honorable Marion Barry shared at length about his experiences acting as a catalyst in community development during the Civil Rights movement, and the challenges cities continue to face. Speaking highly of the efforts of APD Solutions C.E.O., Vaughn Irons, Mr. Barry simply expressed "You are a leader... and I admire you".

The CED Symposium not only provided a networking opportunity for attendees, there were also a diverse array educational sessions on topics ranging from Aging in Place to Capital Markets as well as an update on Federal development programs from US Department of Housing and Urban Development. Sessions were filled to capacity throughout the day as attendees flowed between concurrent sessions: Studies and Market Assessments session sponsored by Dye & Snyder, the Entertainment Districts session Sponsored by Fulton County Development Authority, a TOD, CID, TAD session sponsored by Bellwether Enterprises, a Water, Education, and Transportation session sponsored by Georgia Power. APD Solutions staff was inspired to build these sessions through the observed and experienced planning, management and development needs of their national network clients throughout the year.

The Atlanta Regional CED Symposium will continue in October 2015. For more information about APD Solutions, LLC or the CED Symposium please visit [www.APDSolutions.com](http://www.APDSolutions.com)

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**APD Solutions, LLC is a national community and economic development firm specializing in Advisory, Program Management and Development Services. We assist our public and private sector clients with best practices and innovative strategies grounded in market-based reality and not untested theory. Our goal is to Restore creditability in the development industry, Rebuild challenged communities and Renew the lives of impacted families.**

*"On the Rebound: Making Progress, Scoring Economically" Event Coverage*





(L to R) Richard Oden, Chairman for Rockdale County; Vaughn Irons, APD Solutions CEO; Tiffany Holland-Wright, Vice President, Community and Economic Development Manager for Fifth-Third Bank; Doug Hooker, Atlanta Regional Commission President; Carl McCluster, Executive Director, F.R.E.E.D.O.M., Inc. standing together during the networking portion of the CED Symposium.



The main conference room was filled to capacity as the swell of walk-up registrations required event organizers to add additional seating in order to accommodate the full attendance.