

COEDD: AN OPINION STUDY OF AN
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
DISTRICT

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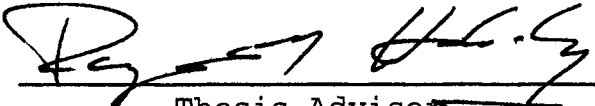
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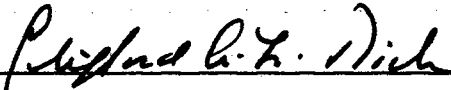
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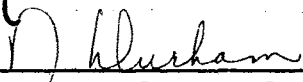
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The United States economy has grown and prospered to a high degree during the past thirty years, but not all of the country has shared in this economic growth. Rural areas have consistently lagged behind the country as a whole, with much higher unemployment rates, lower family incomes, inadequate governmental services, and fewer educational facilities. In a large number of rural counties throughout the nation, unemployment figures are twice that of the national average. Recognizing the nature of the situation the President of the United States, early in 1961, requested that a special committee be formed from within the United States House of Representatives to examine the causes of economic deterioration in rural and other areas of the country. The results of this committee's examination led to the passage by Congress of four major items of legislation between 1961 and 1965, the last of which was the Public Works and Econom-

ic Development Act of 1965,¹ to be referred to from now on as the Act.

The Act established a program designed to reverse some of the causes of unemployment and low family incomes in the economically depressed areas of the country. "The Public Works and Economic Development Act" was designed to enable socially and economically depressed areas of the country to help themselves establish a stable and diversified economy through the creation of long-term employment opportunities for the unemployed in the area. A stabilized and diversified economy would hopefully reverse the social and economic deterioration in each of these depressed areas. The long-term employment concept, according to the Act, was to be accomplished by encouraging private businessmen to establish or to expand existing businesses in these socially and economically deteriorating areas of the nation. The Act offered "a comprehensive program of federal grants and loans for public works and development facilities that would make the community attractive to businesses looking for a new building site."²

¹U.S. Department of Commerce, Annual Report of the Economic Development Administration, for the Fiscal Year ended June 30, 1971, (Washington, 1971), p. 5.

²The Public Works and Economic Development Act, Statutes at Large, LXXVII, Sec. 101-5, 201-2, and 301, (1965).

Congress, recognizing the need for a coordinating device at the local level for federal grant-in-aid programs for the socially and economically depressed areas of the country, called for a multi-county agency system designed to fill the void of governmental and civic leadership and of professional expertise at the local governmental level. Title IV of the Act authorized those multi-county economic development districts to act as the agency for the planning and the coordination necessary for social and economic development in these distressed areas.³ Since 1967 the economic development districts have rapidly grown in number with approximately 108 now in operation and others in the process of being organized.⁴ A map on the following page shows the economic development districts which had been established by mid-1971.

Oklahoma has had its share of this growth. From 1967 to June 1971, eleven districts were created with a total membership of approximately 426, and forty-nine per cent of this growth took place between 1970 and 1972.⁵

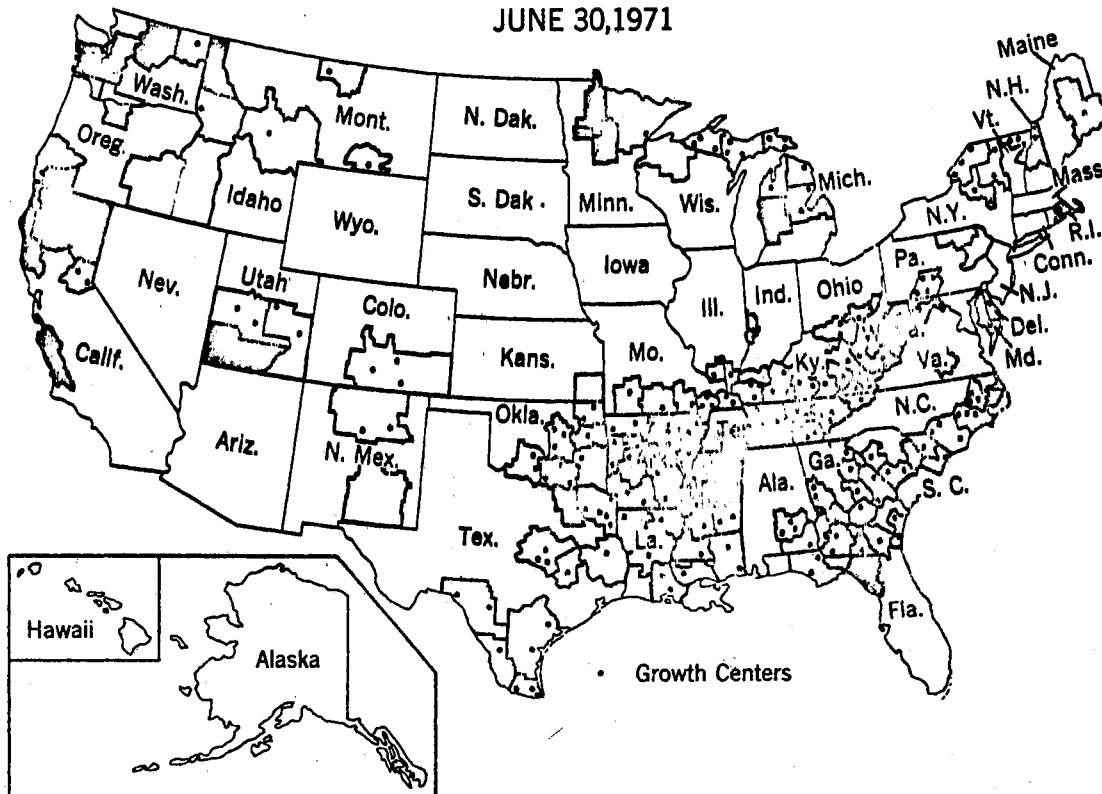
³U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration Handbook (Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968), p. 1.

⁴Annual Report of the Economic Development Administration, p. 5.

⁵Substate Planning Districts in Oklahoma (Oklahoma City, 1972), pp. 1-6.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS

JUNE 30, 1971



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Annual Report of the Economic Development Administration for the Fiscal Year ended June 30, 1971.

The economic development districts in Oklahoma drew their powers, functions and precedent from six federal and state acts. These acts are as follows: (1) the U.S. Area Redevelopment Act of 1961, a four year program to help rid conditions of unemployment in various economically distressed areas of the United States;⁶ (2) the U.S. Public Works Acceleration Act of 1962, a two year program to supplement the public works component of the Area Redevelopment Act activities by providing immediate temporary employment in eligible areas, and by improving community facilities in order to encourage industrial development;⁷ (3) the U.S. Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965, a six year program to assist that region in meeting its problems and to establish the criteria for joint federal and state efforts toward providing the basic facilities essential to the district and its problems;⁸ and (4) the U.S. Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 which, while incorporating the elements of the three earlier acts mentioned above, is designed to enable depressed areas to help themselves by curtailing the downward trend of the economy and hopefully to reverse

⁶ Interview with Earl Price, Executive Director of COEDD, November 5, 1971.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

this trend by establishing long-term employment opportunities. As discussed earlier in this chapter, Title IV, Section 403 of this Act authorized the Secretary of Commerce to designate, with the concurrence of the states, multi-county economic development districts.⁹ The State of Oklahoma Acts are as follows: (1) the Interlocal Cooperation Act of 1965, which is designed to permit local governmental organizations to make the most efficient use of their powers by enabling them to cooperate with other localities on a basis of mutual advantage, and which provides for cooperative rendering of services by municipalities, counties and other public agencies through interlocal agreements;¹⁰ and (2) the Oklahoma Resources Development Act of 1965, which created the Industrial Development and Park Commission. Article 74, Section 1108 says, "the commission is responsible for the establishment of boundaries for development districts throughout Oklahoma."¹¹ In 1967, the Industrial Development and Park Commission established the boundaries for the Central Oklahoma Economic Development District (COEDD).

⁹ Public Works and Economic Development Act, Statutes at Large, Vol LXXVIII, Sec. 403, (1965).

¹⁰ Oklahoma. Oklahoma Interlocal Cooperation Act, Statutes Supplement, Vol. XII, Secs. 1001-1008, (1970).

¹¹ Oklahoma. Oklahoma Resources Development Act, Statutes Supplement, (1970), XII, pp. 1638-40.

COEDD was organized, within the authorized boundaries set by the Industrial Development and Park Commission, mainly through the efforts of a small group of district leaders from the city of Shawnee, Oklahoma, and the surrounding area. This group was able to develop interest within the area through various discussions and conferences with city and county officials; and business, agriculture, health, and minority leaders to try to stop and hopefully reverse the economic trends in this seven county district with its twenty-five cities, and six Soil and Water Conservation Districts in central Oklahoma.¹²

COEDD, as designated in late 1967, is organized into three major functional groups. First is a thirty-five man Board of Directors, which is selected from the members within the seven county district and twenty-five cities and six Soil and Water Conservation Districts and is the governing body of COEDD. Second are three commissions dealing with the areas of health, criminal justice, and narcotics and drug abuse. The commissions consist of 146 experts from within

¹²Interview with W. B. Moran, Chairman and President of the Board of Directors of COEDD, February 4, 1972. The COEDD counties consist of: Hughes, Lincoln, Okfuskee, Payne, Pawnee, Pottawatomie and Seminole. The cities of COEDD consist of: Holdenville, Wetumka, Calvin, Stuart, Chandler, Prague, Stroud, Meeker, Okemah, Weleetka, Boley, Paden, Pawnee, Cleveland, Ralston, Stillwater, Cushing, Yale, Shawnee, Tecumseh, Asher, Maud, Wewoka, Seminole, and Konawa.

the district in each appropriate field, who formulate improvement programs for the district. Third is the administrative staff of COEDD, which consists of an executive director, a professional staff, clerical help and consultants as needed. The executive director supervises the staff and reports to the Board of Directors.¹³

COEDD has been in existence for about five years and has handled a number of projects. This is a new organization designed to handle new functions and organize and coordinate a district of semi-independent governmental units and produce cooperation of local, state and federal agencies. The success or failure of these organizations both in Oklahoma and in other parts of the United States will, no doubt, influence future local, state and federal cooperation and influence the content of future federal and state legislation dealing with similar projects and projects generally designed for the economic and social development of the depressed areas in the United States.

During the last several years some members of COEDD have been critical of the Board of Directors and the administrative staff. One of the criticisms has been that both the structure of COEDD and the decision-making process do

¹³ Interview with Earl Price, November 5, 1971.

not function fully in that they do not serve the members' needs and desires. The author of this paper has, therefore, decided to find out how the COEDD has been functioning as a multi-county economic development district, how the influential leaders of this organization view the functions, powers and accomplishments of the organization, and what suggestions they have for improvements.

I decided to personally interview the said leaders and try to answer the above questions and in particular provide answers or insights as to possible institutional arrangements which might evolve from our search for solutions to state economic problems.

The primary investigative tool relied upon to answer the above questions is an experience survey. The respondents were a selected sample of people working in the desired area and have a large amount of practical experience with the subject matter and can communicate good ideas of their own.¹⁴ By using this method, the paper will reflect a wide representation of different types of experience and points of view. To obtain a good representative sample, respondents from the COEDD groups who could provide insights into those relationships were selected for inclusion in the survey.

¹⁴Claire Selltitz, et al. Research Methods in Social Relations (New York, 1966), pp. 55-59.

In selecting the members from within the COEDD Board of Directors to be interviewed, several criteria were used. An attempt was made to include members who were active in the formation of the COEDD and who are presently active in the organization. As a result of analyzing articles of the COEDD files, which describe the establishment of the COEDD, by reviewing the attendance records of the COEDD Board of Directors meetings from January, 1970 to December, 1971, and by questioning several informants for the names of individuals who meet these criteria ten men were chosen to be interviewed.

Since not all of the twenty-five members of the COEDD have representatives on the Board of Directors, I first selected those cities with representatives on the board and then proceeded to examine the records of the influential persons from those cities to be interviewed in the survey. On the basis of this I selected eleven persons for interviewing. In addition, following the same system of analysis seven individuals were selected from the County Commissioners and three from the district Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

Finally selection was made from the three commissions of the COEDD. Six were selected from the Health Commission, five from the Criminal Justice Commission and nine from the Narcotics and Drug Abuse Commission. The criterion used in

selecting these individuals was their position and activities within the different commissions, the activity being determined by examining the minutes of the meetings from January, 1970 to December, 1971. This gave me a total of fifty-one respondents for interviewing. It should be pointed out that many of the people chosen for the survey were businessmen, mayors, city councilmen, city managers, chamber of commerce managers, and experts in their fields of authority. Nevertheless occupation was not the criterion for selection, but rather the experience factor along with the degree of their involvement with the COEDD.¹⁵

The respondents chosen from the Board of Directors, the three commissions, and the COEDD member units were individually interviewed. The interviews followed a structured pattern, i.e., a questionnaire, although the interviews did maintain a considerable degree of flexibility. Thus, while all the people interviewed responded to certain questions, the survey did allow the respondents to raise issues at will.

This chapter has discussed the purpose of this study and the methodology to be used. The remaining chapters will concentrate on the following subjects: Chapter II will identify and describe the legal organizational structure of the

¹⁵For full details of the criteria for selection see Chapter III.

COEDD; a brief discussion of the general characteristics of COEDD finances and selected project case studies will also be included. Examining the organizational structure and the finances of COEDD will help create a better understanding of the opinions expressed by the members of COEDD being interviewed. Chapter III analyzes the interviews with the purpose of evaluating the present role of the COEDD and estimating what future role it will play within the central Oklahoma district, and draw conclusions from these findings and assess the suitability of COEDD as an apparatus to deal with the social and economic problems of central Oklahoma.

CHAPTER II

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, FINANCES AND SELECTED CASE STUDIES OF COEDD

This chapter will examine the COEDD organizational structure and finances and study specific COEDD projects as an example of the COEDD's action within the local units of government. The purpose of the examination is to understand what COEDD is and how it functions in central Oklahoma.

Multi-county coordinating agencies are intended to provide a general approach to social and economic problems in contrast to a unit approach. Important to this approach is a strategy based upon determining the priorities within the district and the availability of resources to satisfy these district needs. The multi-county coordinating agency also provides an adequate source of badly needed technical assistance for local planning and the initiation of federal grant-in-aid programs. Another function of the multi-county coordinating agency is to provide a single and reliable channel of communications between federal grant program agencies and the local units of government. Promoting social and economic programs and insuring the best use of state and federal resource

possibilities are also a part of the coordinating functions of the multi-county coordinating agency.¹

In November, 1969, Oklahoma Governor Dewey F. Bartlett, pursuant to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-95, designated the multi-county agencies as the local grant review bodies for the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) project notification and the review process for federal grant-in-aid programs.² Under this the COEDD was designated the multi-county coordinating agency for central Oklahoma and the review body for local applications for federal grant programs. The fact that local government requests for federal grants became dependent upon the COEDD action has directly involved the multi-county agency in local policy decisions and made the decision-making process of the COEDD increasingly important to local government units. The organizational structure of COEDD and the manner of representation of local units of government within the structure become matters of increasing interest to all.

¹James L. Sundquist and David W. Davis, Making Federalism Work (Washington, 1969), pp. 175-198.

²Letter from the Office of the Governor of Oklahoma to the COEDD, November 17, 1969.

The COEDD Organizational Structure

The COEDD organizational structure is divided into three parts; the Board of Directors, three functional commissions, and an administrative staff.³ Each part is dependent upon the others for its own operation. The Board of Directors must rely upon information given by the COEDD administrative staff in order to review or act on administrative matters. The three functional commissions, consisting of health, criminal justice, and narcotics and drug abuse provide feedback information from the district to the administrative staff and finally to the Board of Directors. The commissions rely upon the administrative staff for state or federal information necessary for their activities, and also must wait for the various proposals to be approved by the Board of Directors before they can act upon a program.

COEDD Board of Directors

The Board of Directors consists of thirty-five members representing the seven counties, twenty-five cities, and six Soil and Water Conservation Districts within COEDD. The authorized limit of thirty-five board members was establish-

³Article V, VII, Bylaws, COEDD.

ed by the COEDD Organizing Committee.⁴ Representation on the board gives the cities more weight than the counties, since the cities actually choose fifteen of the thirty-five directors, the counties choose fourteen directors, two from each county, and the Soil and Water Conservation Districts choose six directors, one from each district.

The distribution of board members per city is based upon population. After the cities have been allocated directors on the board, the mayors of each of the cities select their directors to represent them on the COEDD Board of Directors.

Each director serves a three year term, and the terms are staggered so that one-third are selected each year.⁵ The Board of Directors meets once each month in the COEDD offices in Shawnee. Throughout a four year period, the Board of Directors has managed to maintain a high percentage of attendance at the meetings. This level of attendance has been attributed to interest in COEDD activities and the potential it has for helping the district socially and economically.⁶ (Table I on the following page is an attendance chart.)

⁴Interview with W. B. Moran, February 4, 1972.

⁵Article V, Bylaws, COEDD.

⁶Interview with W. B. Moran, February 4, 1972.

TABLE I

PERCENTAGE OF ANNUAL ATTENDANCE AT COEDD BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MEETINGS FROM JANUARY, 1968 TO DECEMBER, 1971

Year*	Directors from County Commissions	Directors from COEDD Cities	Directors from Soil and Water Conservation Districts
1968	98%	94%	97%
1969	97%	96%	98%
1970	99%	95%	98%
1971	99%	97%	99%

*Figures for 1967 are not available.

Source: Minutes of COEDD Board of Director's meetings from January, 1968 to December, 1971.

All of the Board meetings are open to the members of COEDD and the public. Members in attendance are given the opportunity to express their views before the Board. Since COEDD is a voluntary organization, the Board feels that members should be encouraged to attend and participate in Board meetings.⁷

The COEDD Board of Directors also has an Executive Committee, composed of a president, first and second vice-president and a secretary-treasurer, which holds a weekly

⁷ Ibid.

meeting. The Executive Committee's primary function, according to the bylaws, is to bring issues before the board members for discussion, approval, and/or review.⁸ In addition, the committee gives the board an organizational structure to provide the functional purpose and direction of the organization. The Executive Committee also oversees, on behalf of the board, the general administrative operations of the COEDD organization.⁹

The officers of the COEDD Board of Directors, namely the president, first vice-president, second vice-president, and the secretary-treasurer are elected by majority vote of the members of the Board of Directors. Each officer is elected for a one year term and can serve succeeding terms if elected by the majority of the members.

The duties of each of the officers are as follows: the president is the principal executive officer of the COEDD and presides over the Board. He is the principal representative of the COEDD organization, signing all official documents, acting as the primary spokesman for the Board, and on behalf of the Board, as a whole, creating interest in the COEDD through frequent liaison with state and district officials. The first vice-president acts as president of the

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

Board in the absence of the president. The second vice-president acts as president of the Board in the absence of the president and the first vice-president, respectively.¹⁰ The secretary-treasurer of the board keeps the minutes of all board meetings and prepares the agendas for the meetings as secretary; and, as the treasurer, he has the primary responsibility of maintaining the accountability of all COEDD funds, of which financial records must be kept, and, as part of his duties, he reports to the board members each month on the income and expenses of the COEDD.¹¹ The duties of each of the officers are subject to change by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

Functional Commissions

In 1968 the COEDD Board of Directors established three functional commissions of health, criminal justice, and narcotics and drug abuse. The decision was based upon comprehensive studies made by the COEDD professional staff in regard to identifying the most urgent problems of the district.¹²

¹⁰The purpose of having a first and second vice-president is to establish a strong chain of responsibility within the organization.

¹¹Article VI, Bylaws, COEDD.

¹²COEDD Board of Directors Commission Organization Directive, July 15, 1968. (In files of the COEDD.)

The primary functions of the commissions are, under the direction of the Board of Directors, to conduct surveys in conjunction with the public and private sectors of the district in their respective fields in order to expose district problems. Upon completion of the surveys, the commissions analyze the results of their findings, documented recommendations are formulated, and then given to the COEDD professional staff for further analysis before being forwarded to the Board of Directors for review and/or approval.¹³ The commissions meet at least once each month, based upon an agenda prepared by the chairman of each commission. Members of the COEDD professional staff regularly attend the meetings to help the commission members with technical matters.

Commission members are chosen by the executive director of COEDD and must be approved by their respective local governments and by a majority vote of the Board of Directors. The selection of the members is based upon their occupational experience, reputation in their particular field, and past general activities within the district. Each of the members serves an indefinite term.

A commission chairman is selected from among the members of the commission by the COEDD executive director and must be approved by the Board of Directors. The chairman is

¹³ Interview with W. B. Moran, February 4, 1972.

charged with the responsibility of defining the objectives of the commission and establishing committees, if appropriate, based upon the defined objectives. He also assigns members to committees based upon their professional background and civic interests and selects the committee chairman.¹⁴

The committee chairman is responsible to the commission chairman for establishing the goals of his committee, based upon the commission goals as a guideline, and supervising the actual activities of the members. Each committee chairman reports to the commission chairman, who reports, in turn, to the COEDD executive director.

The Health and the Narcotics and Drug Abuse Commissions are organized into various committees, whose type and number are determined by the chairman of each commission. This is commonly based on the purpose and needs of the commission concerned. The Health Commission chairman has divided the commission into three committees concerned with the areas of health facilities, manpower procurement, and health services.

The Health Facilities Committee is primarily concerned with the number of health facility services provided in the district, such as hospitals, health service centers, and rest homes and how adequate they are. The committee surveys

¹⁴ Ibid.

the health facilities of the district, analyzing the results and submitting documented recommendations to the commission chairman.¹⁵

The Manpower Procurement Committee of the Health Commission is primarily concerned with the task of developing ways to encourage more medical personnel to move into the district. Manpower needs are examined and analyzed by the committee and recommendations are formulated. The recommendations are documented and forwarded to the Health Commission chairman.¹⁶

The Health Services Committee has the function of insuring for the district adequate linen services to hospitals and health service centers, adequate ambulance services, and supervising health nurses in the school systems, and all other health services. The committee surveys the district, analyzes the survey, and makes documented recommendations to the commission chairman on methods to resolve existing health service problems.¹⁷

¹⁵ Interview with Gary Henderson, Health Facilities Committee chairman, February 9, 1972.

¹⁶ Interview with Jerry Hulin, Manpower Committee chairman, February 5, 1972.

¹⁷ Interview with Shirley Brooks, Health Services Committee chairman, February 21, 1972.

The Narcotics and Drug Abuse Commission consists of eighty-three members, and is divided into four committees concerned with community involvement, programs and services, surveys, and drug education. Approximately fifty percent of the members of these committees are experienced in the fields of narcotics and drug abuse, and the other fifty percent are individuals who have an interest in the drug problem within the district.¹⁸

The Community Involvement Committee is concerned with contacting civic leaders within the district in order to stimulate community action against the drug problem. The committee members work in pairs to contact civic leaders in the district and are assigned a certain number of contacts each month to stimulate involvement with the problem. At the monthly meetings, members must give a report on the progress made and make recommendations to the committee chairman.¹⁹

The Programs and Services Committee has responsibility for coordinating work in establishing drug service centers at which drug users can seek help. Several of these centers have already been established in the district. The committee

¹⁸Interview with Mona Sellers, Narcotics and Drug Abuse Committee chairman, February 5, 1972.

¹⁹Ibid.

reports every week to the commission chairman on the progress of the drug services within the district.²⁰

The Surveys Committee's task is to prepare initial surveys for the rest of the committees and provide them with data on problems or possible problems concerning drugs. The committee conducts its work by questions or questionnaires submitted to city leaders throughout the district. School officials, police officers, and narcotics agents are the individuals most frequently contacted. During the monthly commission meetings, the committee submits its documented report to the chairman of the commission, and the meeting is also used to distribute the survey data to other committees.²¹

The Drug Education Committee, as the title indicates, is concerned with coordinating drug education programs with schools, churches, and various youth groups within the district. This committee not only provides drug education materials, but also gives instruction on the harmful effects of drugs. The committee reports monthly to the chairman of the commission on the progress being made with the education program.²²

²⁰ Interview with Pat Carver, Programs and Services Committee chairman, February 4, 1972.

²¹ Interview with Mona Sellers, February 5, 1972.

²² Ibid.

The last commission to be discussed is the Criminal Justice Commission, which consists of thirty-five members from within the district, primarily city police officers, county law officials, district attorneys, and district leaders interested in law enforcement.²³ The number of members from each county is based upon the total population of the county,²⁴ Payne County and Hughes County, which have the largest populations, have more representation on the commission at this time.

Since the commission is not divided into committees, but is divided by counties, the chairman of the commission assigns duties to the members by county, rather than by committee, as was the case in the two commissions previously discussed. The members from these counties nominate one member to act as the leader of the group, and the group leader reports directly to the commission chairman. The primary function of the commission is to provide district education for crime prevention, which is taught in the schools by the members upon request, to conduct surveys to find the extent, type and degree of crime within the district, and to submit documented recommendations through the commission chairman

²³ Interview with Earl Price, December 20, 1971.

²⁴ Ibid.

to the executive director. This is the type of work which is done spontaneously upon the request of the executive director.²⁵

Administrative Staff

The third organizational segment of the COEDD is the administrative staff. The administrative staff consists of an executive director and a professional staff of eight,²⁶ who have duties given to them by the COEDD Board of Directors;²⁷ in conjunction with the local units of government, they are responsible for conducting comprehensive planning studies in the district.

The U. S. Economic Development Administration requires that all economic development districts have an approved area-wide comprehensive economic development plan before a district is eligible for a federal grant-in-aid. The plan must include the district development goals, specific projects and a schedule for carrying out the district pro-

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ The professional staff consists of a social and environmental coordinator, director of health planning, director of economics and finance, director of manpower training, systems analyst, director of shared health facilities, program analyst, and manpower coordinator.

²⁷ Interview with Earl Price, November 5, 1971.

jects;²⁸ the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) review for federal funds is based upon comprehensive planning within the state. Since COEDD has responsibility for an area-wide comprehensive economic development plan, it is, therefore, necessary for COEDD to act as a review agency for all grant-in-aid applications within the district, as was discussed earlier in this chapter.

The COEDD formulates the comprehensive plans within the district in coordination with the local governments. Due to the fact that these local governments are represented on the Board of Directors, which makes the final approval for the district, they have a strong voice in finalizing the comprehensive plan which they have coordinated with the COEDD administrative staff.²⁹

The COEDD comprehensive plans include technical assistance to the local units of government in the form of advice and aid in obtaining federal grants-in-aid. The COEDD as such provides the expertise and help in expediting grant applications, and provides a channel of communication between the COEDD administrative staff, the federal agencies, and

²⁸ U.S. Department of Commerce, Regional Economic Development in the United States (Washington, 1967), pp. VI-43.

²⁹ Interview with Earl Price, November 5, 1971.

the local units of government. It is especially important that the channel of communication between the COEDD and the local district units of government remain open, for coordination and mutual cooperation to result in effective planning within the district, and so the local officials can provide feedback to the COEDD administrative staff, which is valuable for COEDD intergovernmental relations, not forgetting that the local officials work with the COEDD administrative staff in planning such local governmental projects as industrial and educational development.³⁰

COEDD Finances

The three primary sources of COEDD financial aid consist of member assessments, state grants, and federal grants-in-aid (see Table II). These financial resources will now be examined to determine to what degree the COEDD has been able to rely on each source.

Member Assessments

The COEDD member assessments are apportioned on the basis of population, with the latest U.S. census determining the total population of the district and each county. According to Earl Price, "County assessment is determined by

³⁰ Ibid.

TABLE II
 FUNDS HANDLED BY COEDD FOR THE FISCAL YEARS
 1967-68 THROUGH 1970-71

Fiscal Year	County Assessments	State Grants	Federal Grants	Total
1967-68*				
1969-70	\$ 31,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 5,192,000	\$ 5,232,000
1970-71	31,000	522,000	2,098,000	2,651,000
1971-72	31,000	101,000	1,080,000	1,212,000

* Figures are not available

Source: COEDD Statement of Income and Expense, Oklahoma, 1971.

dividing the county population by the COEDD total budget figure for the fiscal year. The county assessment is then reached by multiplying the resulting figure by the current county population."³¹

The public officials of each county determine the most equitable method of paying the county assessment. The county commissioners can pay the total assessment for the county or it can be divided among the County Commissions, the Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and the cities.³² Present-

³¹ Interview with Earl Price, May 5, 1972.

³² Ibid.

ly, each of the seven district counties divide among themselves the county assessments, with the County Commissions, the Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and the cities sharing in paying the county assessment. For the past three years, COEDD has collected approximately \$31,000 in assessments, which helps pay the operating expenses of the COEDD administrative offices located in Shawnee, Oklahoma.³³

State Grants

The Oklahoma legislature appropriated \$531,000 in state funds for the district for the period of this study from January 1968-September 1971, to meet the established federal grant-in-aid matching requirements in the areas of crime prevention, health facilities, drug control, organizational expenses, and for planning activities within the district.³⁴

In the current 1971-72 COEDD budget, state funds amount to five percent of the total budget or \$395,161.³⁵ Most of these funds are to be used in conjunction with federal grants-in-aid to meet matching requirements for district pro-

³³Ibid.

³⁴Financial Status Report of COEDD, September 31, 1971.

³⁵Substate Planning Districts in Oklahoma (Oklahoma City, January, 1972), p. 5-4.

jects. The remaining funds are to be used for planning activities within the district.

State grants have so far enabled the district units of government to meet many of the matching requirements of the federal agencies according to the executive director of the COEDD. The COEDD administrative staff, however, is constantly working with the state to provide more funds to the district than in the past. As district programs designed to stimulate economic development increase, demands for local government services will also increase. The COEDD administrative staff has therefore been working with state officials to help ease the burden, by granting larger amounts of state matching funds in order to receive larger federal grants-in-aid.³⁶

Federal Grants-In-Aid

The third source from which the COEDD obtains financial operating resources is the federal grants-in-aid program. As a result of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 and the Oklahoma Interlocal Cooperative Act of 1965, the COEDD acts as a coordinating agency for federal grants and loans to the local governmental units in the district. These grants and loans are used for such areas as public works,

³⁶Interview with Earl Price, May 5, 1972.

development facilities, and industrial and commercial loans³⁷ Table III, appearing on the next page, outlines the major federal grants-in-aid received in the three fiscal years, 1968-69, 1969-70 and 1970-71.

Many of the important activities of the COEDD are initiated on the basis of available grants from federal agencies. In order to fully understand this statement, it is necessary to examine briefly the federal grants-in-aid applications as processed by the COEDD. The examination will involve two processed and approved grant applications in the areas of criminal justice and manpower development. In January, 1970, the COEDD Criminal Justice Commission made a comprehensive district survey to determine the causes for the increase in the crime rate in the district during the past five years. The report based on this comprehensive survey claimed that the crime rate had increased in the district by forty-five percent and gave the lack of sufficient law enforcement officers as the reason.³⁸

The COEDD executive director, along the the professional staff, formulated a documented application for a federal grant of \$150,000 from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, a division of the Department of Justice, to be

³⁷ Project Status Report of COEDD, July 1, 1971.

³⁸ Interview with Earl Price, December 20, 1971.

TABLE III

FEDERAL FUNDS HANDLED BY COEDD FOR MAJOR PROJECTS
FOR THE FISCAL YEARS 1968-69 THROUGH 1970-71*

Funding Agency and Type of Grant	Action by COEDD (spending for district planning activities or pass-through)	Total
Six Economic Development Administration projects	Pass-through	\$ 3,029,000
Five Economic Development Administrative projects	Spending for district planning activities	400,000
Two HEW projects	Pass-through	2,500,000
Two HEW projects	Spending for district planning activities	80,000
Nine Law Enforcement Assistance Administration projects	Pass-through	472,000
One Department of Labor Public Service Careers Program project	Pass-through	120,000

* Figures not available for 1967.

Source: Project Status Reports of the COEDD, July 1, 1971.

spent on a program of crime prevention. Approximately three months later the COEDD was informed by the Department of Justice that the grant application was not approved. The latter noted the availability of grants to research the nature and the extent of crime and the effect of drugs on the crime

rate, indicating that such research should precede the formulation of a crime prevention program. Based upon this information, the executive director and the COEDD professional staff, along with representatives from the Criminal Justice Commission formulated a \$325,500 plan to research the nature and extent of crime and the effect of drugs on the crime rate in the seven county district.³⁹

This is one example of a program in the district that failed because a grant application for federal aid was not approved and resulted in an alternate plan being developed by the COEDD.

The second example of an application for federal funds is in the area of manpower development. In March, 1970 the executive director of the COEDD was notified by the Department of Labor that funds were available to establish the Public Service Careers (PSC) program which is associated with the Manpower Development Commission. The program would provide public training jobs for handicapped and unemployed individuals in the district. The federal government was to match \$120,000 by the COEDD to be divided among the seven counties, based upon population.⁴⁰

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

The COEDD executive director and the professional staff, with the approval of the Board of Directors, formulated an application for a grant in the amount of \$120,000 and the application was forwarded to the Department of Labor. In June 1970 the grant was approved for \$120,000 to initiate the Public Service Careers program, to cover a nineteen month period, ending January 31, 1971.⁴¹

This example illustrates how the COEDD executive director and the professional staff, because of the inadequacy of state placed resources, had no other choice for developing a Public Service Careers program except a program based upon available federal funds.

The COEDD acts as a dual agency; first, as a spending agency for district planning activities, and second, as an expediting and coordinating agency with a pass-through function regarding federal financial aid. As a pass-through agency, the COEDD assists local units of government in obtaining federal grants, which are paid directly to the program administrators. The pass-through function of the COEDD also expedites the grant-in-aid applications for the district members. All federal grant applications within the district must be reviewed by the COEDD administrative staff and the Board of Directors before being forwarded to the appropriate

⁴¹Ibid.

federal agency.⁴²

Selected Project Case Studies

The project cases to be studied include the Gordon Cooper Vocational School Project, the Health Center Project, and the Sapulpa Industrial Area Project.

The Gordon Cooper Vocational School Project

In 1968, the Gordon Cooper Vocational School Project in Shawnee was one of the major district projects. The city of Shawnee, according to the city manager, lacked a staff knowledgeable in formulating federal grant-in-aid applications. The city commission requested that the COEDD make a study of the Shawnee area and prepare and document a federal grant application for \$2,000,000 to build a vocational school. The grant application was formulated by the COEDD staff and forwarded to the Board of Directors for approval. Upon approval, the application was forwarded to the Economic Development Administration in Washington in 1969. The Economic Development Administration approved the grant application for \$2,000,000 for the Gordon Cooper Vocational School. The school, operated by the city of Shawnee, was completed in 1969 and approximately 250 students had been trained by

⁴²Ibid.

by July, 1970.⁴³

The Gordon Cooper Vocational School Project exemplifies the cooperation that exists between the COEDD administrative staff and the local units of government in the district, and how the COEDD staff studies the project and prepares forms required by the federal grant-in-aid applications, thus expediting the application process. In so doing, the COEDD helps the local units of government receive federal grants-in-aid for needed projects.

In 1970 another federal grant application was formulated by the COEDD staff at the request of the city officials of Shawnee. The application requested the amount of \$164,000 for water and sewage work to connect the Gordon Cooper Vocational School and a nearby industrial plant to the Shawnee water and sewer system. Previously, the school had been obtaining its water from a well and using a septic tank for sewage, but the city officials of Shawnee expressed concern that these systems would soon become overloaded, and that for the industrial area to be more attractive to new business, a water and sewer system was required. The application was approved and upon the completion of the project, a clothing manufacturing business moved into the industrial area, creat-

⁴³Interview with W. D. Frueh, city manager of Shawnee, Oklahoma, February 4, 1972

ing 350 new jobs in Shawnee.⁴⁴

Health Center Project

In 1968 a Health Center Project was researched and an application processed by the COEDD professional staff for the city officials of Shawnee. The Shawnee city commission had determined that there was an urgent need for a more adequate hospital to serve Shawnee and the surrounding area. The city manager of Shawnee was directed by the city commission to contact the COEDD for help in processing the application and in locating federal aid to build a hospital. The COEDD professional staff analyzed the Shawnee area and found that a need for a hospital existed and that this need was compatible with the COEDD comprehensive plan for the district.

The COEDD professional staff contacted the officials of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) for advice on the project, but discovered that funds for a hospital were not available; only for a multi-city health center.⁴⁵ After a series of meetings between the county commissioners and city officials of Shawnee, Tecumseh, and Seminole, plans

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵A health center is limited to out-patient care in which physical examinations, minor treatment, inoculations and health certificates are offered.

were formulated, based upon a recommendation from the COEDD Health Commission, for a multi-city health center. The city officials of the three cities and the county commissioners requested that the COEDD staff complete and forward a federal grant application through the Board of Directors of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The application requested that \$2,500,000 be appropriated for the health center. The grant application was approved in 1971.⁴⁶

Sapulpa Industrial Area Project

The Sapulpa Industrial Area Project was initiated in 1969. The Sapulpa city officials contacted the executive director of the COEDD and requested help in developing and submitting a federal grant application for expansion of the existing industrial facilities. The executive director accepted the request, based on the approval of the Board of Directors in a regular monthly meeting, because the grant request was in accordance with the district comprehensive plans for industrial development.⁴⁷

The COEDD professional staff helped the officials of

⁴⁶ Interview with W. D. Frueh, February 4, 1972.

⁴⁷ Interview with Dale Block, member of the COEDD Board of Directors, representing Sapulpa, Oklahoma, February 5, 1972.

Sapulpa formulate and submit the plans to the COEDD Board of Directors for approval. The application for \$719,000 was approved by the Board and forwarded to the Economic Development Administration. The grant was approved in 1969 in this amount for expanding the existing industrial facilities of Sapulpa.⁴⁸

Chapter II has discussed the COEDD organizational structure, finances, and selected projects as case studies. The chapter explained that due to federal requirements, one of the basic functions of the COEDD is to formulate an area-wide comprehensive economic development district plan. The COEDD has also been designed by the state as a district review agency for all federal grant-in-aid applications. This data provides background for Chapter III, in which the district leaders express their opinions concerning the COEDD.

⁴⁸Ibid.

CHAPTER III

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, AND THE FUTURE OF COEDD

Respondents from the COEDD Board of Directors, the three functional commissions, the district cities, the counties, and the Soil and Water Conservation Districts were selected to answer questions concerning the present and future roles of the COEDD.¹ Each of the respondents was asked to answer a composite of three major questions: (1) what do you perceive the role of the COEDD to be now;² (2) what do you perceive the role of the COEDD to be in the future;³ and (3) what form will the apparatus for solving district problems assume in the future.⁴ The answers of the Board members will be presented first, followed by those of the representatives of the three functional commissions, then the opinions of respondents from the district cities, counties, and Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

¹The manner of selection is explained on page 42.

²Responses to questionnaire questions 6, 7, 8, 9, and 12.

³Responses to questionnaire question 14.

⁴Responses to questionnaire question 15.

The Board of Directors

The ten respondents from the Board of Directors were selected on the basis of their individual activity on the board and their experience within the COEDD. The activity of a board member was presumed to be measured by his actual participation in the meetings and special projects of the board. The source of information for the determination of activity for members of the board was the minutes of the board for the two year period, January, 1970 to December, 1971. The minutes were analyzed for the number of times the member had contributed information during the meetings or had been involved in major COEDD projects. The writer arbitrarily decided that a four year membership on the board would adequately satisfy the experience requirement. The regular term of the members is three years. Four years as a board member indicates the respondents have all served at least two terms and presumably would be knowledgeable about the operations of the organization. Ten of the current board members were found to have served at least four years as board members, and had participated substantially in the board activities. Four of the respondents are businessmen, three are farmers, and three are city officials within the district.

The respondents discussed the role of the COEDD in terms

of the strengths or weaknesses of the organization in performing its functions, as they individually perceived them to be. The board members generally pointed to four types of strengths which they perceived as aiding the organization in the performance of its functions. A majority of the board members found two present weaknesses in the COEDD organization, which they felt limited the possibilities of accomplishment. (See Table IV on next page.)

COEDD Strengths

The majority of the ten respondents suggested that the first COEDD strength enabling the organization to serve the district is that the COEDD is in a position to assist in obtaining federal grants-in-aid to improve district social and economic conditions. Most of the directors interviewed stated that many member cities in the district have qualified for federal aid only as a result of the assistance given by the COEDD in providing expertise and in expediting the grant applications. The COEDD gives district cities technical planning advice regarding their proposed projects to meet federal grant requirements. COEDD assistance in preparing federal grant applications is necessary for many district cities because they lack the qualified staff necessary to do it themselves. The chairman of the COEDD Board of Directors suggested that the expertise and aid in expedit-

TABLE IV

HOW THE TEN COEDD BOARD MEMBERS INTERVIEWED PERCEIVE
COEDD STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

COEDD Strengths	Number Perceiving As A Strength	COEDD Weaknesses	Number Perceiving As A Weakness
COEDD is in a position to assist in obtaining federal grants-in-aid to improve district social and economic conditions.	9	COEDD professional staff has a tendency to assume each board member is as knowledgeable in the technical aspects of social and economic development as they are.	9
COEDD offers the opportunity for the directors, from the seven counties, to meet together at the monthly board meetings to discuss district problems.	10	COEDD is too dependent upon federal aid.	9
COEDD has good intergovernmental coordination with federal agencies providing grants.	9		
COEDD acts as a multi-county planning and coordinating agency.	10		

Source: Personal interviews with selected representatives from the COEDD Board of Directors.

ing federal grant applications that COEDD gives the district is one basic motivation factor for the organization of the COEDD.

As viewed by the majority of directors interviewed, the

second strength the COEDD offers to serve the district is the opportunity for the directors from the seven counties within the district to meet together at the monthly board meetings and discuss and air views on district problems. Most of the directors stated that the COEDD Board of Directors acts as an educational organization as well as a governing body of the COEDD. They pointed out that as some directors have more district experience and have served longer on the Board of Directors than others, they are able to share information with a less experienced member who could then use it in his city or county.

A third strength which enables the COEDD to serve the district, according to the majority of the directors interviewed, is the good intergovernmental coordination existing between the COEDD and federal agencies providing federal grants-in-aid. Some of the federal agencies which the COEDD has approached for financial assistance are The Department of Commerce, The Department of Health, Education and Welfare, The Department of Labor, and The Justice Department. One respondent stated that "due to the cordial relationship existing between COEDD and the federal agencies, there have been instances when COEDD has been able to expedite the approval of district projects which otherwise might not have been approved."

Due to the designation of the COEDD as a multi-county

coordinating agency, all district grant applications can be processed only through the COEDD administrative staff. This COEDD monopoly streamlines its intergovernmental relationships with the federal agencies and expedites its work, thus making it advantageous for district units of government to be a COEDD member.

The fourth major strength of the COEDD is its function as a multi-county planning and coordination agency working in developing comprehensive plans within the district. The comprehensive planning required by the Economic Development Administration and other federal agencies, according to the majority of the directors interviewed, allows for an open channel of communication between the district and the federal agencies providing the grant. This channel of open communications allows constant intergovernmental coordination and interaction between the COEDD and the federal agencies, on federal grant requirements, grant applications, and agency approved grant projects for the district.

COEDD Weaknesses

Whenever there are generalists and specialists working together in the same organization, a conflict tends to develop between the two groups. The majority of the directors suggested that this conflict has developed, to a limited degree, within the COEDD. The COEDD professional staff has

a tendency to assume that each board member is as knowledgeable in the technical aspects of social and economic development as they are. The most common example cited by the directors is that whenever an urgent situation arises, the members of the professional staff talk too fast and use terminology unfamiliar to the majority of the directors. Most of the directors mentioned that this is an inherent weakness that usually exists in any organization having experts and laymen. A possible solution, suggested by one of the directors interviewed, would be to: "have only public officials of local units of government on the Board of Directors and eliminate the businessmen and the farmers from the board." Most of the respondents suggested that there is no reason why local government leaders should not be familiar with the terminology concerning economic development and the procedures used by the COEDD staff in solving district social and economic problems.

The second weakness mentioned by the majority of the directors was that the COEDD is too dependent upon federal financial aid. This could possibly hinder the COEDD in serving the district should the federal grants-in-aid be terminated. Most of the directors suggested that if this happens the COEDD would possibly become ineffective as a multi-county coordinating agency.

The majority of the COEDD operating funds have been from the federal agencies. From the period of January, 1968 to December, 1971 federal agencies have contributed \$1,521,730. In this same time period, the state of Oklahoma contributed \$61,160 and local assessments have amounted to approximately \$93,000. The COEDD annual operating budget has averaged approximately \$350,000.⁵ If federal aid for the operation of the multi-county coordinating agencies is terminated, the COEDD would have to rely solely upon state aid and member assessments. There is a possibility, according to the directors, that state aid and member assessments would be inadequate for the COEDD to remain as an effective organization within the district.

The ten directors interviewed, although listing two COEDD weaknesses, were optimistic about the future role of the COEDD. Each of the directors viewed the multi-county coordinating agency concept as the only way for improving the social and economic condition of the district. Most of the directors stated that many of the local governmental units within the district have progressed both socially and economically as a result of the COEDD expertise and the handling of federal grant-in-aid applications. They believe that based on the past performance of the COEDD, it is con-

⁵Interview with W. B. Moran, February 4, 1972.

ceivable that the role of the COEDD will expand as a multi-county coordinating agency.

Each of the directors maintained that the COEDD is a suitable apparatus for solving district problems in the future. The directors suggested that the COEDD professional staff has helped, socially and/or economically, most of the district units of government either directly or indirectly, and see no reason why the COEDD would not continue to help them in the future. The majority of the respondents added that even if the economic development concept was to change in the future, there would have to be an organizational structure similar to the COEDD in order to solve the social and economic problems of the district.

The small cities, according to the majority of the respondents, cannot progress socially or economically alone. Most of them lacked a sufficient staff to formulate and expedite an application for federal grants-in-aid. The directors were of the opinion that the COEDD has become an important organization giving those cities the expertise, knowledge and the necessary guidance to solve their needs. Most of the directors expressed the view that the COEDD will continue to increase its assistance to the small cities by providing expertise and helping to expedite their federal grant applications.

The Three Functional COEDD Commissions

A second distinctive group of district leaders selected for interviewing come from the three functional commissions. A total of twenty representatives were chosen from the three commissions; six from the Health Commission, nine from the Narcotics and Drug Abuse Commission, and five from the Criminal Justice Commission.

The representatives of the functional commissions were chosen with reference to their individual experience and involvement in district activities. Experience was determined by the number of years the individual has spent in the district pursuing his particular interest related to the specific commission. The activity of the commission members was determined on the basis of participation in commission meetings and special projects. The source of information for the determination of activity in the several commissions was the commission meeting agendas and activity reports from January, 1970 to December, 1971. The writer arbitrarily assumed that a three year membership on the commission adequately satisfies the experience requirement, as within this time period, the commission member would have become oriented and experienced in his duties. Six of the current commission members from the Health Commission, nine from the Narcotics and Drug Abuse Commission, and five from the Criminal Justice

Commission were found to have served at least three years as a commission member and to have participated substantially in ten commission meetings and special projects.

The six persons chosen from the Health Commission were three hospital administrators and three medical doctors. The three hospital administrators had twenty-one, eighteen, and sixteen years of health experience respectively. Each of these hospital administrators had been involved in at least ten commission meetings and special projects.

The three medical doctors had twenty-four, twenty-two, and twenty-one years of medical experience respectively. Each of the doctors had been involved in at least ten or more commission meetings and special health projects. Each of these respondents had been involved with the COEDD since its inception in 1967.

The nine members chosen from the Narcotics and Drug Abuse Commission were four city police chiefs, one county sheriff, two narcotics agents from the Oklahoma Narcotics Agency, and two laymen leaders who are members of the commission. The four city police chiefs had twenty-three, twenty-one, nineteen, and eighteen years of experience respectively involving narcotics and drugs and had been involved in at least ten or more commission meetings and special projects. The one county sheriff had twenty-years experience in dealing with narcotics and drugs and had been in-

volved in ten or more commission meetings and special projects. The two narcotics agents from the state narcotics agency had twenty-three and nineteen years of narcotics and drug experience respectively. Each of the agents had participated substantially in ten or more commission meetings and various special commission projects.

The Narcotics and Drug Abuse Commission consists of eighty-three members from many diverse areas throughout the district. Included within the commission are laymen who are members of the Community Involvement, Program Services, Survey, or Education committees. These individuals are not experts in the field of narcotics and drugs, but do provide valuable feedback concerning the district narcotics and drug problems. These members also create interest and support for the commission activities within the district. The writer chose two laymen to be interviewed because it is important, regarding this discussion, to include as many diverse opinions of the COEDD as possible in order to obtain a more accurate picture of how the commission members perceive the present and future role of the COEDD. The two lay members were chosen based upon ten or more years active involvement in district improvement activities and participation in ten or more commission meetings and special projects. The two lay members had respectively fifteen and fourteen years involvement in district improvement activities. Six of the

nine respondents from the Narcotics and Drug Abuse Commission had been COEDD participants since its inception in 1967.

The five representatives from the Criminal Justice Commission consisted of two city police chiefs, one county sheriff, and two district attorneys. The two city police chiefs had twenty-two and nineteen years respectively, of experience in the field of crime prevention, and both are involved in at least ten or more Criminal Justice Commission meetings and special projects. The county sheriff selected as a respondent had twenty-one years experience in the criminal justice field and had been involved in at least ten or more commission meetings and special projects. The two district attorneys had respectively fourteen and twelve years experience in the field of criminal justice, and had been involved in at least ten or more commission meetings and special projects. Each of these five representatives are former COEDD directors.

COEDD Strengths

Respondents from the COEDD Health Commission listed three strengths which enable the district to better perform its functions. (See Table V on the next page.) The first strength listed is that COEDD and the commission, by providing an inter-district approach have succeeded in making steady progress in upgrading the health conditions within

TABLE V

HOW THE TWENTY REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE COEDD HEALTH,
CRIMINAL JUSTICE, AND NARCOTICS AND DRUG ABUSE
COMMISSIONS INTERVIEWED PERCEIVE COEDD
STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

COEDD Strengths	Number Perceiving As A Strength	COEDD Weaknesses	Number Perceiving As A Weakness
The health, criminal justice, and narcotics and drug abuse coordination in the district can only be effectively studied and handled by an intergovernmental agency. A proof of this is the fact that COEDD, in conjunction with the commissions is making steady progress in this area.	19	The power of the Board of Directors at times rejects commission recommendations.	5
COEDD acts as a coordinating agency. COEDD has been successful in handling the social and economic development of the district.	20	Lack of communication: Citizens within the COEDD district are not familiar with the organization.	18
On the district level program the COEDD functional commissions provide an opportunity for district leaders to be actively engaged in improving their communities.	18	Committees of some of the commissions need to be more functional.	6
COEDD Board of Directors and the administrative staff have, by their expertise and coordination, been beneficial within the district in obtaining federal aid.	20	The problem of federal agencies that have grants pushed COEDD into certain projects in the district.	7

Source: Personal interviews with selected representatives from the COEDD three functional commissions.

the district. The respondents noted that the commission has worked closely with the COEDD professional staff to locate major health service inadequacies. After these service inadequacies have been discovered, various possible solutions are analyzed.

The health center facility which services the cities of Shawnee, Tecumseh, and Seminole was frequently given by the respondents as an example of how the COEDD Health Commission identified a local health need and then worked with the COEDD professional staff to provide the service. The health center facility project, which is discussed in detail in Chapter II, was, according to most of the respondents, the direct result of action by the COEDD Health Commission which analyzed the adequacy of the health facilities in the Shawnee area. The COEDD Health Commission decided that the Shawnee area, including Tecumseh and Seminole, needed another hospital. The matter was discussed at a meeting held in the city of Shawnee between the COEDD professional staff, representatives from the Health Commission, and officials of Shawnee, and plans were finalized.

The Shawnee city officials became interested in the possibility of building a new hospital facility to service Shawnee and the surrounding area, but when federal aid was denied, the COEDD professional staff secured federal grants for a health service center. The professional staff of the

COEDD helped the city officials of Shawnee formulate the grant application and expedite approval of it. Each of the respondents cited this example as the type of work the Health Commission does to help locate health service inadequacies and bring them to the attention of the professional staff in order to solve these problems.

A second COEDD strength, mentioned by five of the respondents, is that the COEDD acts as a coordinating unit for social and economic development. The respondents stated that the COEDD facilitates cooperative planning among the officials of the local units of government in the district and provides the expertise necessary to upgrade the social and economic standards of the local units of government.

A third COEDD strength is that the COEDD functional commissions provide an opportunity for district leaders to be involved actively in improving their communities. The leaders donate their time and effort to the COEDD commissions to help improve the district socially and economically, according to the respondents. A majority of the respondents mentioned this strength in terms of motivating district leaders to improve the district.

The respondents from the Criminal Justice and the Narcotics and Drug Abuse Commissions mentioned two strengths of the COEDD. First, the majority of respondents interviewed suggested, as did the representatives from the Health Com-

mission, that the primary COEDD strength lies in the way the COEDD administrative staff formulates comprehensive planning and provides coordination to help solve the depressed social and economic conditions in the district and handle the social and economic problems. Each of the Criminal Justice Commission respondents mentioned that due to the comprehensive planning and coordination, the district crime rate has gradually been decreasing.

The second strength of the COEDD, viewed by the majority of respondents, was that the COEDD Board of Directors and administrative staff have helped the district progress both socially and economically. The example cited most often by the respondents was the role COEDD plays in helping obtain federal funds from the Department of Justice for city police radios, riot equipment, and law enforcement officer training. According to the respondents, due to the financial aid the COEDD administrative staff has helped obtain, police-community relations have improved, the overall district crime rate has decreased and the drug problem within the district is less of a problem.

An example cited by the respondents is that the COEDD, cooperating with the Narcotics and Drug Abuse Commission has started a district-wide education program in the schools concerning the danger of drugs. The education program has been funded by the Economic Development Administration for \$50,000.

The grant application was formulated by the COEDD staff and forwarded to the administration for approval. Some Narcotic and Drug Abuse Commission members and the local units of government, working with the COEDD professional staff have surveyed specific areas to determine the degree of drug usage and to see if an actual drug problem existed.

COEDD Weaknesses

The COEDD commission respondents mentioned some weaknesses and were unanimous in supporting the idea that attention needs to be directed to these faults. The COEDD Board of Directors at times has rejected recommendations for district improvements without any apparent reason for rejection. An example mentioned by the Health Commission respondents was the problem of whether there was need for new hospital facilities in Shawnee and Payne counties or the remodeling of existing ones was all that was needed. According to the respondents, as a result of a district survey by the COEDD professional staff, it was found that inadequate health services existed and that they were especially inadequate in Shawnee and Payne counties. The respondents said that the COEDD Board of Directors had vetoed the commission recommendation that the district's top health services priorities be located in Shawnee and Payne counties. They expressed

the opinion that the Health Commission survey was biased in that it was influenced by persons unaware of actual needs.

The COEDD Board of Directors gave top priority instead to the improvement of health facilities in Seminole and Okfuskee counties. These two counties were the second choice of the Health Commission. The respondents accused members of the COEDD Board of Directors of selecting priorities based upon the personal opinions and influence of some of the board members. Three of the respondents from the Health Commission felt that some of their efforts are wasted, yet none of the respondents denied that the COEDD has aided in improving the health conditions of the district.

The respondents of the Health Commission observed that the majority of the citizens within the district are not aware of the COEDD and that most individuals remain unaware of the COEDD's existence unless they have had actual contact with the organization. This information was based on a survey conducted by the commission to gather individual health data.

Respondents from the Criminal Justice Commission, as a whole, felt some of the committees within the commission need to be more functional. This commission consists of five committees, and each has to rely upon the others for its data in order to complete its work load. The respondents also mentioned that at times a committee causes a hardship for

other committees by not relaying information within a stated period of time. This is a serious organizational problem. What is more, some of the committees have become nearly non-existent, due to a lack of instructions or an indication of priority situations from the COEDD. Some respondents even expressed the opinion that their committee job is a waste of time because of disfunctional committees.

The Narcotics and Drug Abuse Commission respondents stated that there is too much pressure upon the COEDD from various federal agencies that have program grants and want them used for certain projects in the district. This pressure, according to the respondents, comes usually in the form of an agency contacting the COEDD staff and wanting them to institute a new program within the district as soon as possible. A recent example of this, according to the representatives interviewed, was when the chairman of the commission was contacted by the executive director of COEDD and asked to analyze the various causes of drug abuse within the district. The commission had finished analyzing the reasons for drug usage in the district approximately six months previously and a repetition of this procedure seemed unnecessary, but funds were available from the Department of Justice for this project, and the Department had urged to institute such a project as soon as possible.

On the whole, each of the three commissions suggested

that the weaknesses of the COEDD could be corrected with time, and that presently these faults did not appreciably hinder the operation or progress of the COEDD in developing the district.

Future Role of COEDD

Each of the twenty respondents from the three COEDD functional commissions were of the opinion that the COEDD would continue to act as a multi-county coordinating agency. The major functions would be to formulate comprehensive planning and coordination within the district to improve the social and economic conditions. Most of the respondents saw a possible increase in future COEDD functions, in which additional counties would eventually become members of the COEDD. This, however, would require action from the state government.

Specifically, the COEDD Health Commission respondents foresaw a steady growth in the district health program. A majority of the respondents cited one example of this. The Health Commission, in conjunction with the COEDD professional staff, is presently formulating plans for a multi-county hospital linen service, in which participating hospitals in the district can benefit from reduced rates and faster service. The proposed program is planned to start with hospitals in Shawnee, Tecumseh, and Seminole counties and, if successful,

will expand into the other counties within the district.

All of the respondents from each of the three COEDD commissions suggested that the COEDD, with its comprehensive planning capability, is the most suitable organization for improving the social and economic conditions of the district in the future. A majority of the respondents stated that the COEDD has proven itself to be a suitable organization in district comprehensive planning. The COEDD was also mentioned as a suitable organization to coordinate economic development within the district. All of the respondents suggested that the COEDD had "justified itself" and, therefore, no other type of organization was necessary to perform the comprehensive planning and coordination functions.

Many of the respondents also mentioned that the COEDD would expand in the future. It was viewed by many of the respondents that district coordination and planning is what is needed in the future to solve social and economic problems on a comprehensive scale.

The Cities, Counties, and Soil and Water

Conservation Districts

A third major group of district leaders from which respondents were chosen was the local government officials. A total of twenty-five persons were selected from this general group of district leaders. Eleven were selected from offi-

cials of the twenty-five member cities, seven county commissioners were selected, and three officials of Soil and Water Conservation Districts were selected for interviewing.

In a manner similar to that used for the other two groups of respondents, criteria of experience and individual involvement in district activities were established for the government officials. The writer arbitrarily chose three years of service as an adequate measure of experience. For purposes of the study, only those public officials with at least three years experience with the COEDD were chosen for the survey. Individual involvement was presumed to be measured by participation in at least ten COEDD projects. The source of information as to the participation of the public officials was the administrative staff of the COEDD and various other district informants. Due to a lack of records, the entire period of existence of the COEDD was used as the measurement of individual activity in the district.

The eleven persons chosen from the COEDD member cities were four city managers, three mayors, two city councilmen, one city chamber of commerce manager, and one businessman. The four city managers had twenty-four, twenty-two, twenty, and nineteen years respectively of city management experience, and each had been involved in ten or more COEDD projects. Each of the city managers was a former member of the COEDD Board of Directors. The three city mayors had twenty,

eighteen, and seventeen years, respectively, of experience working as city officials in varying capacities. Each of the mayors had been substantially involved in ten or more COEDD projects for his community. Two of the three mayors had served as members of the COEDD Board of Directors. The two city councilmen had twenty-two, and nineteen years respectively, experience in local government and had been involved in ten or more COEDD projects involving their communities. Both city councilmen were former members of the COEDD Board of Directors. The chamber of commerce manager had thirty-one years experience in this capacity, and had been involved in ten or more COEDD projects for his community. This person was also a past director on the COEDD Board of Directors. The businessman chosen had been familiar with the COEDD since its inception in 1967. He had been involved in ten or more COEDD projects for his community and was a former COEDD director. This respondent was active in local civic activities, and was highly regarded within his community. Eight of the eleven COEDD respondents had been associated with the COEDD since its inception.

The seven respondents chosen from the county commissions within the district consisted of four farmers and three businessmen. The four farmers had been involved in county activities for ten, eight, seven and six years respectively. Each had also been involved in ten or more COEDD projects and

two of the farmers had previously been on the Board of Directors. The three businessmen selected from the County Commissions had fifteen, twelve, and ten years respectively of experience in county activities. Each of the businessmen had been substantially involved in the COEDD projects and two of them had been directors of the COEDD. All seven of the respondents had been associated with the COEDD since its inception.

The respondents chosen from the Soil and Water Conservation Districts were three farmers. They had twenty-five, twenty-three, and twenty years of experience respectively. The representatives had been involved in at least ten or more COEDD projects and each of them had been a COEDD director. The three respondents had been associated with the COEDD since its inception in 1967.

COEDD Strengths

The respondents listed above pointed as the major strength of the COEDD its ability to view district problems as a unit, provide coordination, provide expertise when needed, and act on behalf of all members with the federal agencies. This enabled the COEDD to provide essential services to the district. The respondents listed some of the accomplishments of the COEDD. (See Table VI on the next page for details.) First, the COEDD has helped to bring new industry into the district by obtaining financial aid and expediting

TABLE VI

HOW THE TWENTY-FIVE REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE COEDD MEMBER
AND NON-MEMBER CITIES, COUNTY COMMISSIONS, AND
THE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
PERCEIVE COEDD STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

COEDD Strengths	Number Perceiving As A Strength	COEDD Weaknesses	Number Perceiving As A Weakness
COEDD has helped bring new industry into the district.	21	Influential persons on the COEDD Board of Directors causing some conflict among the members.	6
COEDD district representatives can meet and discuss their problems and coordinate programs.	21	Size and number of grants are based upon population size.	8
COEDD administrative staff expedites federal grant applications.	20	General public is not well informed about the COEDD.	16
COEDD is a comprehensive economic development planning agency.	21		

Source: Personal interviews with selected representatives from the COEDD member cities, non-member cities, County Commissions, and Soil and Water Conservation Districts within the COEDD district.

federal grants to build new industrial areas. The respondents stated that the COEDD has also helped in creating new jobs for the unemployed, due to assistance given to new industries within central Oklahoma. Some examples of the

COEDD activities mentioned by the respondents were the industrial areas located in Stillwater, Holdenville, Boley, and Sapulpa, which have created additional jobs in these communities. It was mentioned that the dollar value of these three projects totals approximately \$1,295,000 in federal aid, providing approximately three thousand new jobs within the district.

A second strength mentioned frequently by the city representatives was that the COEDD provided them the opportunity, through board and commission meetings, to meet together for the purpose of discussing their problems and coordinating common programs. The COEDD has been especially helpful to the smaller communities, which often lack the financial resources or the necessary expertise to improve their communities. The majority of the respondents stated that the COEDD has provided valuable education to the local units of government in economic and social development.

The third COEDD strength suggested was that the COEDD administrative staff expedites federal grant applications, thus minimizing the possibility of a delay. The COEDD administrative staff, and specifically the professional staff, helps members by meeting the various requirements for each federal grant application. The staff has the expertise necessary to gather the required information and to organize the information to conform to federal requirements.

Fourth, the COEDD, as viewed by the city respondents, has the ability to provide comprehensive economic development planning within the district. Due to this planning, the social and economic trends throughout the district have been improved. A majority of the respondents cited examples of improvements in industrial development, educational development, health facilities, crime prevention, and control of narcotics and drug use.

A majority of the seven respondents from the COEDD County Commissions felt that the COEDD had the same strengths listed by the respondents from the cities. The COEDD strengths mentioned were, first, the COEDD administrative staff expedites federal applications, making it possible for district projects to be initiated at a faster pace. Second, the COEDD is seen by the respondents as a comprehensive economic development planning agency. Due to the action taken on the basis of the planning efforts of the COEDD, the district is progressing socially and economically, according to most of the respondents. Third, the COEDD provides the medium for representatives from the County Commissions to come together and discuss common problems and solutions.

The respondents from the County Commission were especially enthusiastic about the entire COEDD concept of district planning, and saw this as a social and economic boost to the communities. Each of the commission representatives stated

that his individual county had benefitted significantly by participating in the COEDD. The majority of the County Commission respondents suggested that the COEDD was fulfilling its primary role of cultivating the social and economic development of the seven county district. Some of the examples cited were such projects as the \$2,000,000 Gordon Cooper Vocational School in Shawnee; the \$2,500,000 health center project in Shawnee, which services the Shawnee, Tecumseh, and Seminole area; the planning of programs to deal with the health and crime problems; and the various industrial projects which the COEDD has aided in securing financial aid.

The respondents from the Soil and Water Conservation District mentioned one primary strength of the COEDD that has been noted by the previous respondents but is significant of mention again. The primary strength of the COEDD is its function as a comprehensive planning agency. All of the respondents stated that the COEDD professional staff has helped the Soil and Water Conservation Districts obtain federal grants for irrigation and environmental protection projects in order to improve the productivity of the farming and grazing lands within the district.

Weaknesses of COEDD

The majority of the eleven respondents from the cities listed three COEDD weaknesses which impeded its role of im-

proving the social and economic conditions of the district. First, that some strong, influential persons on the Board of Directors of the COEDD were responsible for dissension among the members of the board, and that this conflict had resulted in delaying some grant applications, which must have the approval of the Board of Directors prior to being sent to the appropriate federal agency.⁶ According to two city managers, the conflict within the Board of Directors, regarding the application delays was the result of inefficiency by the COEDD professional staff and not conflict within the COEDD's Board of Directors. These city managers stated that the professional staff was unprepared to process federal grant applications. Each of these city managers cited examples to substantiate his claim. One manager told of a request for a sewer and water line project in which the COEDD staff took so long to process the application that the city finally used its limited staff to formulate the plan and complete the application. Since the COEDD's Board of Directors must approve all COEDD activities, it is not clear whether this delay was a deliberate move on the part of the board, or a problem of staff inefficiency.

The second example mentioned was a request to the COEDD

⁶These allegations were not substantiated by specific examples during the interview.

for help in obtaining funds for new city police equipment. The city manager who was interviewed stated that after six month's delay the application was submitted by the COEDD only to be returned by the Economic Development Administration because of errors in the application. Approximately fifty percent of the city respondents were of the opinion that certain influential members of the Board of Directors had helped some cities to obtain financial aid faster or receive more funds than other cities without political influences on the board.

The second weakness mentioned by a majority of the respondents from the cities was that the amount of the grants is based not on need but on city population, so the bigger cities obtain bigger grants and the smaller cities must settle for smaller grants. Earl Price, the executive director of the COEDD, and W. B. Moran, chairman of the COEDD Board of Directors, both stated that this weakness, if it is in fact a weakness, is inherent in the nature of grant programs and the present system seems the only equitable means of improving the social and economic conditions of the central Oklahoma district.

Respondents from the smaller cities were upset about the fact that they had a low priority with the COEDD when it came to the size of grants. They understood that this is justifiable in many cases because of the number of people involved who would benefit from the funds. All of the respondents,

however, agreed that the COEDD had helped them with their social and economic problems and that a COEDD membership is worthwhile.

The third COEDD weakness, as seen by the cities, is that the general public is not well informed about the COEDD and its accomplishments within the district. All of the respondents proposed that the executive director of the COEDD institute and lead a promotional campaign designed to inform the people of the district. The respondents felt it beneficial to create interest within the district, because this would tend to involve more people in the existing problems and motivate them to do something to improve the situation. This in turn would help the COEDD reach its goal more effectively with less effort and time.

I interviewed a number of city officials in four cities not belonging to the COEDD who, from their limited view of the organization, expressed concern that an organization such as the COEDD might take the planning function out of the hands of city leaders. They suggested that the result might be a possible loss of initiative by city officials in the planning process. It was evident that these respondents lacked knowledge about the COEDD and its relationship with the cities regarding district planning.

The respondents from the seven County Commissions and the three Soil and Water Conservation District represent-

atives could not list any COEDD weaknesses which they felt were significant. Most of them noted that in any organization conflicts arise from time to time, but as long as these disagreements do not hinder the forward progress of the organization, there will be no resulting loss.

Future Role of COEDD

The individual respondents were also asked about what they perceived to be the role of the COEDD in the future. A majority of the respondents from the twenty-five cities within the COEDD stated that if federal funds are not terminated, the COEDD would continue to grow in membership and encompass a larger area of responsibility. Each felt that the COEDD idea is the idea of the future and is the only logical tool for solving district problems.

The respondents from the seven district County Commissions and the three from the Soil and Water Conservation Districts agreed with the other previous respondents that the COEDD would gradually expand in size and responsibility. The COEDD was generally regarded as the organization to save the farmer from financial loss in the future.

The respondents were also asked what they perceived as the apparatus for solving district problems in the future. The majority of the twenty-five cities, seven County Commissions and the three Soil and Water Conservation District rep-

representatives were of the opinion that the COEDD or an organization similar to the COEDD is the most logical organization to continue to improve the social and economic conditions of the district in the future. Most of the respondents stated that they were adequately represented in the COEDD and could not foresee any reasons for change.

The representatives from the four non-member cities interviewed lacked sufficient knowledge of the COEDD to perceive its future role. However, statements were made to the effect that they saw no real future in an organization that was created for multi-city or multi-county planning.

Conclusions

This chapter has examined the opinions of selected respondents within the COEDD concerning the present role of the COEDD, the future role of the COEDD, and the appropriate apparatus for solving district problems now and in the future. Respondents from the COEDD Board of Directors, the three functional commissions, and those representing the cities, the County Commissions, and the Soil and Water Conservation Districts generally listed three major strengths of the COEDD. First, the COEDD is a guiding body which provides comprehensive planning to improve social and economic conditions in the district. Second, the COEDD provides the means by which the members can work together for mutual cooperation and sharing

of their resources. This was emphasized by respondents from the smaller cities which lack the funds or other means to make substantial social and economic improvements on their own and must rely upon cooperation with other cities in order to obtain grants and assistance from the COEDD. Third, the district has benefitted extensively by the COEDD in securing funds from federal and state sources to attract new industry and to create new jobs for the unemployed within the district.

There were, however, some weaknesses listed by the respondents which merit consideration. First, it was mentioned that, due to political influences on the Board of Directors, conflict surfaces from time to time to obstruct or delay the functioning of the organization. Second, conflict between generalists and specialists seems to exist. Third, the general public was considered to be unaware of the COEDD and its activities and, as such, had failed to provide the smaller cities with adequate public support. Fourth, the leaders of the smaller cities were of the opinion that the size of grants has been based upon the population of a particular city, not upon its needs. Fifth, some committees seemed to be dysfunctional.

It was generally found that the future role of the COEDD will continue to be that of comprehensive planning to solve district social and economic problems in the future. If

not the COEDD, an organization similar to it should be developed with a comprehensive planning capability to adequately help solve future problems. The only change for the future mentioned by a small majority of the respondents was that the COEDD Board of Directors should be enlarged to be more representative of the whole district and that the COEDD committees within each commission should be reorganized to become more functional.

There was agreement that the COEDD is trying to improve the social and economic conditions within the central Oklahoma area. The weaknesses mentioned apparently have not hindered the operation of the COEDD to any significant degree. On the whole, the respondents expressed the view that although the COEDD has some weaknesses, they have not adversely affected the efficiency of its operations.

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APPENDIX A

COEDD-EXPERIENCE QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

COEDD QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME: _____

BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

1. What is your association with the COEDD?

2. Were you initially involved with the foundation of COEDD? If so, in what capacity?

3. How long has your city or conservation district been a member of COEDD?

4. What was the reason for your city or conservation district joining COEDD?

5. In what manner are you being assessed for membership in COEDD?

QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE PRESENT ROLE OF COEDD

6. What do you see as COEDD's present objectives?

7. Do you feel that COEDD is accomplishing these objectives? If so, how?
8. What do you see as the major strengths of COEDD?
9. What do you see as the major weaknesses of COEDD?
10. What are the general impressions of COEDD from the other members of the Board, Conservation District or functional commission with whom you work?
11. Does the surrounding community support the activities of COEDD?
12. Have you had any projects that were or are now being handled by COEDD? If so, what was or is the nature of the project and what are your impressions?
13. Do you feel that by being a member of COEDD that your community has benefited? If so, in what ways?

QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE FUTURE ROLE OF COEDD

14. What do you see as the future role of COEDD?

15. What apparatus for solving district problems, do you feel, is the most logical for the future?

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

APPENDIX B

PERSONS INTERVIEWED IN THIS OPINION STUDY

COEDD LEADERS INTERVIEWED

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

W. B. Moran
 Dale Block
 Mel Sires
 L. G. Ashley
 J. Ward McCague
 Everett Kistler
 Louis Warden
 Bob Jones
 Ed Turk
 Orion Wilbanks

CITY OFFICIALS

Larry Gish
 Wm R. Wright
 Pierre Taron
 Earl Walker
 Jerry Rempe
 John Moeller
 William D. Frueh
 Clifford Lison
 Gene Corbell
 L. D. Wornom
 Jim Williams

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

George Maynard
 Neal Clark
 Gene C. Hill
 John Williams
 Zollie Edgin
 Max Dye
 John Harman

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Fred Meyerdirk
 Don Quart
 George Sprayberry

HEALTH COMMISSION

Shirley Brooks
 Gary Henderson
 Dr. Jerry Sullivan
 Dr. Loyd Williams
 Paul Henderson
 Jerry Hulin

NARCOTICS AND DRUG ABUSE
COMMISSION

Mona Sellers
 Pat Carver
 David Lawrence
 Wesley W. Beck
 Don Greer
 Glenn H. Case
 Merle Clift
 Carl Sellers
 Frank Wunder

CRIMINAL JUSTICE
COMMISSION

Cecil O. Erwin
 John L. Clifton
 O. K. Smith
 W. H. Fox
 Ernest Mauldin

VITA

Richard Gene Miller

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Thesis: COEDD: AN OPINION STUDY OF AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
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Major Field: Political Science

Biographical:

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Education: Attended grade school in Boise, Idaho; grad-
uated from Nampa Idaho High School in 1957; receiv-
ed the Bachelor of Arts degree of Idaho State Uni-
versity, with a major in Pre-Law, in August, 1962;
completed requirements for the Master of Arts de-
gree in Political Science at Oklahoma State Uni-
versity in July, 1972.

Professional Experience: U. S. Army from 1962 to pres-
ent.

Membership in Professional Organizations: Pi Sigma
Alpha.