

EXCELLENCE IN DEVELOPMENT FINANCE: TAX INCREMENT, ACCESS TO CAPITAL, TAX CREDITS

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The CDFA Excellence in Development Finance Awards recognize outstanding development finance programs, agencies, leaders, projects, and success stories. These awards, presented annually at the CDFA National Development Finance Summit, honor excellence in the use of financing tools for economic development, as well as the individuals who champion these efforts.

Nine awards were presented at the 2012 CDFA National Development Finance Summit (see the sidebar for the full list). Three of the award winners are described in detail below, and other winners will be featured in future issues of *Perspectives* and other CDFA venues.

CDFA Excellence in Tax Increment Finance Award



Anthony Griffin from Berwyn Development Corporation and Brian Pabst and Mayor Robert J. Llovero from the City of Berwyn.

The 2012 winners of the CDFA Excellence in Tax Increment Finance Award are Berwyn Development Corporation and the City of Berwyn for the Berwyn Gateway Plaza.

Berwyn Gateway Plaza, completed in 2011, was the result of a long-term vision for the City of Berwyn. The City targeted the block for redevelopment because the high-traffic intersection serves as a gateway into Berwyn, but was blighted and underutilized. The City used an existing tax increment financing (TIF) district to assemble and prepare the site for redevelopment, which was conducted through a partnership between the City and Berwyn Development Corporation.

The redevelopment process included a three-year land acquisition period and the construction of nearly 20,000 square feet of new commercial space in an urban infill environment. Several sources of capital and equity were used to fully finance the project, including developer and tenant equity and bank loans. The use of the existing TIF district was critical not only for the funding, but also for the successful execution of the lengthy assemblage process.

The development features an architectural monument identifying the City while providing a restaurant and retail park. The buildings and gateway share masonry and stone accents, a courtyard provides outdoor restaurant seating, and a 15-foot setback provides generous pedestrian space and visible interest. Ultimately, the Berwyn Gateway Plaza stands as a welcoming entrance to the city.

CDFA Excellence in Access to Capital Finance Award



Ben Avery and Ryan Whitehead from Wyoming Business Council.

The 2012 winner of the CDFA Excellence in Access to Capital Finance Award is the Wyoming Business Council.

The creation of the Wyoming Business Council in 1998 dramatically changed the state's approach to economic development. The Council employs a corporate structure and regional offices to drive programs and offer better service. The Wyoming Business Council focuses efforts to build a strong job creation base in manufacturing and technology while strengthening existing business and industry groups under alternative energy, agriculture, transportation, and logistics.

Within this mandate, the Council offers programs focused on enabling communities to develop and thrive, helping established businesses to improve, and improving residential and commercial energy efficiency. The divisions of the Council include Investment Ready Communities, State Energy Office, Wyoming Main Street, and Wyoming Rural Development Council.

Key to this award, the Wyoming Business Council provides innovative finance tools that help businesses both small and large to obtain capital to grow. These tools include a variety of revolving loan funds and other loan programs, industrial development bonds, and the Wyoming Small Business Investment Credit Program, as well as the Wyoming Partnership Challenge Loan Program. All of these programs help the

Council reach their end goal of economic development for Wyoming.

CDFA Excellence in Tax Credit Finance Award



Gregory Folta and Darrin Casper from Salt Lake County and Chuck Depew from National Development Council.

The winner of the 2012 CDFA Excellence in Tax Credit Finance Award is the National Development Council and Salt Lake County for the Salt Lake County Solar Facilities Project in Salt Lake County, Utah.

The Salt Lake County Solar Facilities Project placed one of the largest roof-top solar installations in the United States on the Salt Palace Convention Center in Salt Lake City. The project's financing sources included Qualified Energy Conservation Bonds (QECBs), New Markets Tax Credits (NMTCs) equity, and 1603 grant funds. Senior debt represents only 28% of the

project costs, and energy costs for the facility are set for a 20-year period.

A "green" mandate from the Salt Lake County Mayor and acute pollution problem drove the County to pursue this clean energy project, despite the availability of low-cost coal. This project began taking shape when Salt Lake County received two Department of Energy Grants in 2009 and successfully lobbied the state for third-party Power Purchase Agreement legislation in 2010. During this period, Salt Lake County also received an allocation of QECBs and gained experience by closing its first NMTC financing.

The Solar Facilities Project placed one of the largest roof-top solar installations in the U.S. on the Salt Palace Convention Center.

As the stars aligned, Salt Lake County, the National Development Council, Ballard Spahr, and Zion's Public Finance collaborated to close on a financial structure incorporating all of these elements to provide the most solar possible for the investment at current pricing.

2012 CDFA Excellence in Development Finance Award Winners

CDFA Lifetime Achievement Award: Gary Smith, Chester County Development Council

CDFA Federal Development Finance Leadership Award: Paul Webster, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

CDFA Distinguished Development Finance Agency Award (State Agency): Business Oregon

CDFA Distinguished Development Finance Agency Award (Local Agency): New York City Economic Development Corporation

CDFA Excellence in Bond Finance Award: MassDevelopment, Worcester Polytechnic Institute's Gateway Park

CDFA Excellence in Tax Increment Finance Award: Berwyn Development Corporation, Gateway Plaza

CDFA Excellence in Tax Credit Finance Award: National Development Council, Salt Lake County – Salt Palace Solar Facility

CDFA Excellence in Energy Finance Award: Greater Cincinnati Energy Alliance & Cincinnati Development Fund, Building Performance Program

CDFA Excellence in Access to Capital Finance Award: Wyoming Business Council, Wyoming Partnership Challenge Loan Program