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As far as I'm concerned, they are absolutely the best lead generation firm in the business for economic development organizations. Call them now. They can help you create real prospects.

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**Chad Chancellor:** Welcome to this week's episode of the Next Move Group We Are Jobs podcast. This is Chad Chancellor, co-founder of Next Move Group. Today, we've got Jeff Finkle with us. Jeff is the president and CEO of IEDC. So, obviously, nearly everybody in the profession knows you, Jeff, so I really appreciate it and I'm honored you would come on our show.

**Jeff Finkle:** Well, thank you for having me. It's certainly an interesting time that we're in and I appreciate being invited.

**Chad Chancellor:** First, I want to complement IEDC. So, we're a member and we get the newsletters and all that you're doing and you all are really pushing out great information to economic developers. I think you're doing it the right amount of times. Some newsletter lists I'm on I'm getting too much information, but I think you've got the right cadence and pace down and you had some webinars and I've been told by a lot of people who watch them were very, very helpful. So, why don't we start with you talking about all the things that IEDC is doing right now to try to get information out to the economic development professionals?

**Jeff Finkle:** Well, I'm going to take you on a quick history lesson first if that's okay. IEDC started working in the area of economic recovery after a disaster when Katrina hit New Orleans in the gulf south Mississippi and we didn't do a lot before then.

Now, that's kind of a secondary important issue for IEDC. We get some money from the federal government and we support communities with technical assistance after disasters. So, when this COVID-19 or coronavirus, whatever you want to refer to it as hit, we know many of the steps that communities need to think about.

So, we did two things immediately. The first thing is we took an existing website that we've been maintaining post-Katrina called [restoreyoureconomy.org](http://restoreyoureconomy.org). We packed it with information on how communities are responding to the coronavirus or COVID-19. We then started rolling out a series of webinars.

These webinars I've never seen the number of people that have participated. Before a month ago, the most we've ever had in a webinar was 400. Our first one had almost 1400 people. The second one had almost 800 people. The third one had almost 1400 people again and they are going to continue.

This coming Monday, we're having one on tech tools that you might need to use immediately. A week from Monday, we're going to have a webinar on how to use the CDBG both for economic development purposes, but also for rebuilding your local community. The week after that, we're going to have a webinar on what are some our international partners doing? Two or three people from Canada, somebody from Mexico, hopefully, somebody from Europe who will be talking about what are they doing in their communities?

The week after that, for our public-private partnerships and our chambers of commerce, it's going to be how do you stop the bleeding if some of your private sector funders, your public sector funders are thinking about pulling out? What do you do at this particular point in time?

So, on top of that, we've had a webinar on what was in the CARES Act and we will have another webinar not in the Monday series, but also free on what do you have to do as a community before you can go racing reopening your town? We can't just all race back to work as if nothing happened. We'll just get everybody sick again. We'll overcrowd our hospitals. There needs to be some clear thought process by communities, out states, our federal government on how we can successfully reopen our economy. That's what we've got coming up.

**Chad Chancellor:** And for IEDC members, if they can't watch one, can they log into their normal account on IEDC online and watch a recorded version of it or you have to watch it live?

**Jeff Finkle:** No, you do not have to watch it live. Since these are all free, we're giving them free to everybody. It's not members only. You just go to [restoreyoureconomy.org](http://restoreyoureconomy.org) and they are all being cataloged there. We're doing this not just for members. This is a national crisis and there are people that we would acknowledge that are not members. We wish they were. Our members are certainly helping to pay for this series because there are staff that are working on it, but we think it's so important that everybody needs to share in the knowledge.

**Chad Chancellor:** Well, as you know I'm based in New Orleans and I remember what you all did for the whole gulf south after Katrina. As a matter of fact, we're doing an executive search right now in Louisiana and we had a gentleman apply from California and my first question was why would you want to move to Louisiana? And he said I actually spent time down there through the IEDC program where economic developers came in and would help communities try to come up with new plans and strategies. I believe it was through IEDC.

**Jeff Finkle:** That sounds right.

**Chad Chancellor:** He had spent time in Louisiana and fell in love with it and he wanted to come back. So, just literally this week, I was talking to somebody who remembered it through those times. So, I appreciate what you all did back then and what you're doing now.

**Jeff Finkle:** Once we get kind of resettled back in our offices, we're still working on the hurricanes that hit Puerto Rico and Florida and the Virgin Islands and North Carolina, the tsunami that hit the Northern Mariana Islands, the volcano that hit Hawaii, and the hurricane that hit Texas and we're working on all of those places still and sending volunteers out. We haven't figured out a way to do it virtually yet, but we're not sending anybody to those places today. As the world starts to get sane again, if that's a fair thing to say, we will be sending volunteers out in those places.

**Chad Chancellor:** What is your advice to economic developers in the short term? So, right now, if you had to give some tips, some advice, some counsel, what do you think economic developers should be doing?

**Jeff Finkle:** So, the first thing I would say is there is a lot of information on this website [restoreyoureconomy.org](http://restoreyoureconomy.org). If I forget a step or two, they just need to go to that website and it will lay out almost in a systematic way how to go about thinking about rebuilding your economy. Let me go through some things that I think people ought to be thinking about now.

The first one is taking care of yourself and your staff. Is everybody safe? Are people in a position that they can return to work at some point? Do you need to be helping them thinking about safe housing, about where they are locating? Is anybody sick and what do you need to do about supporting your staff?

Second, you need to think about how do you support your local businesses. In one of our webinars, we had somebody say one of my small businesses cannot seem to get a bank to take them on under this payroll protection program, the PPP and I said well, you're the economic developer. I wasn't trying to be crass, but you're the economic developer. Obviously, you have a banking relationship, maybe many banking relationships that you can talk to a banker and get them to help push their application through. So, getting the word out on what tools are out there is very important at this particular point in time.

Third, and maybe first and maybe last and maybe in every position is communicate, communicate, communicate. People need to know where they turn for resources. They need to know that you're still there to help. You may be there virtually and not able to walk into their office or they may not be able to walk into your office.

Then the next step is going to be plan for the future. Frankly, our communities will reopen at some point, but we're going to be reopening differently. A number of our retailers will be badly hurt. A number of our restaurateurs will be badly hurt. Some of them-- our downtowns will maybe not have had many customers for 20, 30, 40, 50 days. You're not going to be able to just turn it on immediately. As you and I were talking a minute ago, we need to be able to-- when we do reopen, we need to be reopening safely because the last thing we need is for us to encourage people to come downtown, encourage people to go to the shopping mall and then all of a sudden have a new outbreak of coronavirus fill our hospitals again and all of us having to stay home again.

So, we need to make sure that we have the ability to do lots of testing, figure out who had the virus before. They should be able to hopefully be able to go near darn anywhere, figure out who hasn't had it and how you protect them over the long haul because whatever vaccine is coming it's a ways off. So, we're still going to have to be terribly careful.

**Chad Chancellor:** Do you think economic developers ought to get involved in any lobbying of legislation with CARE? There's already talk of another CARES Act, putting more money in and maybe that the 510(c) (6)s should be included. So, do you think there's any role in that regard that economic developers?

**Jeff Finkle:** Absolutely. We put out actually a list last night. I don't know if you saw it as a member of things that we were recommending economic developers do right now. For people that are not members, if they go to one of my LinkedIn postings, I posted that this morning so that the whole world can see what we're recommending.

So, a number of the things that we recommended are one, for the public-private partnerships and the chambers of commerce who are 501(c)(6)s, they were excluded from using the payroll protection program, the PPP that has been set up for SBA. I'm not sure that was terribly fair. I think I understand why they did it. They didn't want a bunch of lobbying organizations using that money to lobby against members of Congress. I'm also not sure they thought it terribly through when they decided who could and who could not put their hands on the PPP.

Second, many economic development organizations particularly the ones with private sector funding, but even some of the public sector funded because of the lack of tax revenue coming in some places, we need to get economic development organizations back up and running fairly

quickly. Another billion dollars to the economic development administration distributed to non-traditional grantees, public-private partnerships, public agencies where they would otherwise have to lay off people. We need those economic development organizations at real strength right now and getting them some EDA funding could be real helpful right now.

Some other things that we said in kind of our proposal where we asked economic developers to weigh in, I guess I'm somewhat of a nationalist and believe that we should try to reshore certain types of businesses and the businesses that we obviously need reshored for the future is all of these medical device manufacturers, these protective companies that are making masks and stuff.

It makes no sense that we have to send jet planes to China to bring back equipment and protective gear for our healthcare workers. We need to bring those types of businesses back. If we have to pay a little bit more for a mask in the future, who cares? We should have enough ability to produce that stuff here. What if China had a greater level of health concern? They would have kept it all for themselves and not given it to us.

In addition, Puerto Rico used to be the home of the pharmaceutical industry. There was a special provision in the tax code. Many if not most of the pills that were consumed in North America were made in Puerto Rico. Let's bring those back, too. We don't need to send planes to other Asian countries because we don't have any pills being made here. Trust me; there are still some pharmaceuticals made in North America, but let's make sure key pharmaceuticals or most of the pharmaceuticals and their key ingredients are also made here.

And then the last thing we said is we need our members lobbying Congress to make sure that we have good testing capabilities in all the states, in all the communities so that when we do go back to work, we can figure out where the hotspots are, quarantine people, and get back to a good public health system that protects us.

**Chad Chancellor:** Thank you, Jeff. We're going to take a quick break for a message for our listeners and we'll be right back with a lot more with Jeff Finkle after this.

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**Chad Chancellor:** I want to thank LocationOne-- some folks know it as LOIS-- for sponsoring today's podcast. LocationOne has, in my opinion, the best buildings and sites database in the

economic development industry. Now, that coronavirus is here and everything has been disrupted, I've been thinking a lot about it. If I were an economic developer still, what would I do during this time and I know without question I would transition to LOIS and get my buildings and sites as updated as I possibly could so that when we come out of this economic downturn, we're ready to go.

Let me tell you why I like LOIS. It is the most responsive mobile friendly buildings and sites database I have found. It's easy to use. It's just as easy to use on an iPad or iPhone as it is a computer. I was browsing around last week on a state economic development building and site database and the thing it just wouldn't work. It wouldn't work properly. You had to be an engineer to figure it out. It was too much. It had this circle you could draw to look at buildings. The circle wouldn't work when I backed out if I got what square footage I was looking for.

None of that happens with LOIS. This is the best buildings and sites database I have found. I've looked far and wide. It is the most easy to use from a site selection standpoint on any platform. I'm told it's just as easy to use for economic developers. It really walks you through inserting your information and putting it in so the prospects can use it. So, I really encourage you take a look at [locationone.com](http://locationone.com). Use this time while we're down to update your buildings and sites. Transition them to LocationOne. You'll be really happy you did.

[Music]

**Chad Chancellor:** Well, Jeff, I couldn't agree with you more in the reshoring of the basic goods and pharmaceuticals and our listeners I know I had a rant on a show about a week ago. I grew up in a small southern Mississippi rural town, as rural as you can get; no interstate, nothing and when I grew up, we had two plants. We had a blanket factory and a glove factory. That's what they were called. Everybody called them the blanket factory and the glove factory. My grandmother worked at the glove factory. My father worked at the blanket factory.

Both of those closed in the '90s and all the jobs left and I was watching Governor Cuomo the other day. I was raised rural and now I live in downtown New Orleans. So, I love urban America and I love big cities, but I was raised rural. So, there's no divide in me. I get both sides of it. I was watching Governor Cuomo basically plead for New York to get these gowns and all. It just hit me. I said my goodness, that's what we used to make in rural America.

In this situation, if those plants were still open, rural America could be providing the supplies to urban America. It just hit me. I didn't need a scientist to tell it to me because my little town had two garment plants and a lot of little towns did and most of them went overseas. So, I'm really proud to hear that you think we need to reshore some of them. Most people seem to feel that way; that we need do reshore some of that stuff.

**Jeff Finkle:** The Department of Defense finds itself in a position that they have to argue for things to be manufactured here in the United States. They don't want to go into a war. We don't need that in healthcare crisis like this either. I'm hoping that many members of Congress come back with that opinion because the win/win here is let's get ourselves some more manufacturing jobs and let's protect ourselves for the future.

**Chad Chancellor:** Absolutely. Well, have you all thought about how IEDC is going to handle the certification programs? I know in the past you had to sit for your final exams. Have you all brainstormed how you're going to handle that?

**Jeff Finkle:** So far, we've only had to cancel one test and that test is at the conference that we were going to have in Calgary, Alberta in late June. The next test after that is supposed to be in Dallas in October and we may not be completely or 100% back to normal by October, but I hope we're in a lot better shape than we are today. We may have to have the test takers six feet apart, but other than that, I'm hoping that we will have a test in Dallas in October.

Can we go to an online test in the future and can we do oral interviews using Zoom? Maybe. Frankly, the decisions we've had to make so far and like everybody, we've all been making decisions as we've had to. You're in St. Louis because you had to. So, we've canceled two conferences, but we did move all of our training courses to virtual. Courses that had never been online before are all being taught virtually in some fashion.

I'm going to be helping to teach the managing economic development course April 23 and 24 or 24 and 25-- I forget which-- and we're going to be teaching a Zoom class. So, we're learning a ton as we go through this and I think it will impact on how we deliver things in the future. We just haven't gotten there with the certification exam yet.



**Chad Chancellor:** Well, Jeff, as we wind down, do you see any long-term changes and that may be an unfair question since we're still in the middle of the crisis right now, but do you think there will be any long-term changes to how an economic developer goes about their business? Maybe there will be more projects if some things are reshored. What do you see for long term say a year from now, are there going to be any changes we need to think about?

**Jeff Finkle:** Yes. I think there will be a number of changes. Let's take what Tony Fauci said within the last two or three days. He says we've got to stop shaking hands. He says that's a bad habit. It spreads germs. Our approach to how we do business may have to change. Should we get on a plane every time we need to go somewhere? Are those petri dishes waiting to happen? Will we get some reshoring efforts out of this as a result of needing to bring some jobs back to the U.S.?

I think all of us have gotten much better using Zoom and some of these other methods of meeting people. Will we do more of that? I will tell you I've been in my house since March 17 and I don't want to be a whiner, but I do look forward to the time when I can have lunch with somebody again. I also don't want to go have lunch with somebody and get sick in the process, not because of them but because of a waiter or somebody I'll talk to on the way to lunch. I think we all need to be a little skittish and that will impact the way we do business.

**Chad Chancellor:** Well, as we wind down, folks, we want to give you again [restoreyoureconomy.org](http://restoreyoureconomy.org) is the website that IEDC has with all the coronavirus advice and webinars and situation. [restoreyoureconomy.org](http://restoreyoureconomy.org). Jeff, is there anything else you'd like to share with our audience?

**Jeff Finkle:** That is not an advertising platform for IEDC. IEDC's kind of main website is [iedconline.org](http://iedconline.org). That's where we advertise all of our conferences, our webinars, our training courses, our book sales, our job mart, to help everybody's approach to restoring their economy absolutely, [restoreyoureconomy.org](http://restoreyoureconomy.org), but we hope all of your listeners are members and if they are not, come to [iedconline.org](http://iedconline.org). Join us and if you can't afford us this year, when your budget gets better, join us.

**Chad Chancellor:** And along that line, let's do end on a happy note rather than all doom and gloom because we do have quite a number of young professionals who listen to our podcast. So,

give them the quick IEDC pitch; how many members you have and why they ought to consider joining IEDC.

**Jeff Finkle:** Well, we have about 5200 members. We do have a young professionals group within IEDC. We are the largest membership organization in the world. It is a great way of improving people's credentials. It's a great way of networking with their peers or potential employers within the profession. I would like to think that if you are a serious practitioner, this is the place you have to be engaged both to prove your metal, so to speak, but also to improve your strength as a practitioner.

**Chad Chancellor:** All right, folks. That's Jeff Finkle. Jeff, thank you for being with us today.

**Jeff Finkle:** Thank you very much for having me. My sign off lately has been stay safe.

**Chad Chancellor:** Thank you. Stay safe.

[Music]

**Chad Chancellor:** If you want to join our movement, which is to create economic growth for small to mid-sized companies, communities, and non-profit organizations, please go to our website at [thenextmovegroup.com](http://thenextmovegroup.com). Browse around and you can see the different services we offer all designed to create that economic growth for the small to mid-sized companies, communities, and non-profit organizations. Most of our leads and growth has come from word of mouth referral. So, even if you don't need a service, we want you to know what we do so when friends and contacts of yours might need something, you know what we do and you can refer us. So, again, go to [thenextmovegroup.com](http://thenextmovegroup.com) to learn more about the Next Move Group.

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