



**Sunday, April 13, 2008**

## **An Economic Development Lesson for Long Island**

Last week, the LIA board of directors heard from one of the country's leading experts on economic development, Dr. Gerald Gordon, President and CEO of the Economic Development Authority of Fairfax County, Virginia. What Dr. Gordon said was a real lesson for Long Island.

First of all, there are a lot of differences between Fairfax County and Long Island. One county government; one school district; about six districts overall. Compared to two counties; 125 school districts; and over 900 taxing jurisdictions overall on Long Island. But there are many similarities as well. Similar demographics, proximity to a major city. O

Economic development, however, is a major difference. Granted, Fairfax started its remarkable run of development with a pretty clean slate; most of the county was open space 30 years ago. But listen to this record of growth: in the last 25 years, office space in the county grew from 32 million square feet to over 107 million square feet; and jobs grew from 243,000 to 620,000 (more than the District of Columbia). As a result, the property tax rate has decreased from \$1.47 to 89 cents per \$100 of assessed value.

That growth was accomplished through the creation of a coherent plan for growth, plus the disciplined dedication of the Economic Development Authority to the task of bringing companies to the area. The county funds the Authority to the tune of \$7 million each year, which supports a \$2 million advertising program and twenty professionals situated around the country and the world pushing the value of doing business in Fairfax County. Oh, and they use no incentives like tax abatements. None. Never have. And now they're focused on the value of focusing on the creative economy. (Dr. Gordon hosted last year's National Conference on the Creative Economy.) That's real economic development.

And that's what Long Island doesn't have and needs badly.

Posted by [Long Island Association](#) at 19:06