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February 2007

## Economic Development Newsletter

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CST

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#### As I See It

*Shovel Ready Sites Are in the Eye of the Certifier - By Bob Ady*



In recent years, shovel ready sites have become a buzz word among economic development professionals and site selectors. If a community has a site that is "certified" shovel ready, the common perception is that it has met a series of criteria which indicate that it is ready for new building construction tomorrow or the next day.

Frequently, this provides a sense of security to site seekers that no further due diligence is necessary because the site is "certified." This allows for time tables to be met and the uncertainties associated with property acquisition eliminated. The subsequent surprise, found out at some later date, is that, in fact, there are deficiencies of one kind or another which will delay construction and may necessitate the abandonment of the site entirely.

Not only does this cause much finger pointing among the economic development team but also among the corporate site seekers—"How could this happen?" "Now what do we do?" The fact is that there is some blame for everybody, and yet, maybe no blame for anybody. How is this possible? It is possible because there is no common or uniform definition among states, regions, communities, or site certifiers as to what, exactly and explicitly, constitutes the appellation of "certified" site. All parties are well-intentioned but perceived definitions differ.

Many communities and regions have their own "certification"

programs because they realize that more and more site seekers ask about the availability of “certified” sites. So they draw up their own set of requirements which can be less demanding than the site selectors presume but it keeps the community in the hunt for the project.

Some states such as Oklahoma, Kentucky, Michigan, Oregon, and Indiana, among others, have statewide certification programs in effect. But even here the definitions among the states are different. Some are “certified” if deficiencies can be overcome in six months, others are “certified” if they reach a certain point total based on site characteristics, and still others use certification not so much as a definition of shovel ready but rather an approach used to distribute state funds for site improvements.

In today’s competitive environment for business attraction, every tool that is available to differentiate one state/region/community from another should be considered. Over time and with more experience, I would expect these divergent evaluations of shovel ready sites to become more uniform. Until then, communities should actively strive to achieve site certification, whether it is provided by the state in which they are located or by a credible, independent third party such as Ady International Company.

### **What's a Webinar?**

Ady International Webinars were designed to provide professional economic development practitioners with insight into the site selection process from an insider’s point of view.

Through Bob Ady's webinars he hopes to share some of his 30+ years of experience in site selection with you. When attending a webinar, you will be provided with a link and a phone number through which to view and hear Bob's presentation.

As an alternative to live presentations, webinars give you the ability to be virtually connected with the speaker without all the hassles of travel, all you need is an internet connection and a telephone.

[Learn more about Ady International webinars...](#)

**Ady International Webinars**

### **Webinar: Characteristics of Shovel Ready Sites**

Thursday, February 22, 10:00 am CST

Having sites and buildings available is no longer good enough. Given the increasing speed of site selection projects, sites must be “shovel ready.” But what does “shovel ready” mean? Do you need to get your sites “shovel ready certified”? These and related topics will be discussed in depth, and Bob will share with participants the industry standard in “shovel ready” sites.

Price: \$150.00

[Register Now, Seats are Limited](#)

### **Webinar: Characteristics of Shovel Ready Sites**

Tuesday, March 6, 2:00 pm CST

Having sites and buildings available is no longer good enough. Given the increasing speed of site selection projects, sites must be “shovel ready.” But what does “shovel ready” mean? Do you need to get your sites “shovel ready certified”? These and related topics will be discussed in depth, and Bob will share with participants the industry standard in “shovel ready” sites.

Price: \$150.00

[Register Now, Seats are Limited](#)

Ady International Company is the authority on site selection. Our principal, Robert M. Ady, has conducted more corporate relocations in the United States than any other individual. He brings a wealth of experience to your site selection project, as well as longstanding relationships with economic development organizations nationwide.

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