

By TEYA VITU  
*Tucson Citizen*

July 1, 2005

It's the first official day of Tucson Regional Economic Opportunities Inc., the first time city and county economic development efforts - including the Greater Tucson Economic Council - have rallied under a single entity.

The council and the Tucson Office of Economic Development ceased to exist yesterday. Their phone numbers and Web sites are gone, replaced by the new TREO phone number, 243-1900, and Web site, [www.treoaz.org](http://www.treoaz.org).

Staffers from the three agencies started cross-training in each other's specialties a couple of months ago.

"We wanted to have a seamless start," said Tom Moulton, the new group's vice president of administration and marketing.

Its offices will be at 120 N. Stone Ave., Suite 200, in a Compass Bank building. But last-minute ceiling, carpet and furniture work means the group can't move in until the week of July 11. Employees are working in a number of temporary settings, including their former offices and their homes.

The newly hired chief executive, Joseph Snell, will start in early August.

The new group is a private, nonprofit corporation headed by a board of directors including Tucson's mayor, the chair of the Pima County Board of Supervisors, the president of the University of Arizona, the chancellor of Pima Community College and various business sector leaders.

The new group will largely consist of Tucson Office of Economic Development programs, bolstered by business recruiting from GTEC and city-county contracting with 12 outside agencies such as JobPath and the Southern Arizona Tech Council that do economic development work.

The new group will start with 18 employees from the three entities, with another half-dozen or so added in coming weeks and months.

The group's budget is an odd beast, as salaries of city and county employees assigned to it will still come out of the government budgets.

Salaries for Snell, former GTEC staffers and office staffers still to be hired will come from the new group's budget.

The group will have an operating budget of just under \$1.5 million - \$746,240 from Tucson and \$749,839 from Pima County. The city and county simply

transferred money they had allocated to GTEC along with operating budgets for their respective economic development offices.