

## **Patty Becker**

I am a long-time census data user and intermediary. In my former position with the City of Detroit, I was instrumental in establishing the program in Michigan and was an original SDC affiliate. For the past 25 years, I have worked as a demographer in private practice (APB Associates, Inc., my consulting firm), and serve as Executive Director of the Southeast Michigan Census Council (SEMCC), which is a Coordinating Agency in the Michigan SDC. I am very familiar with Census Bureau demographic and geographic programs, as well as with the Economic Census and some governments data programs. My full resume is available upon request. This past August, I was asked to fill a vacancy on the Steering Committee. I have been pleased to be part of it since, and look forward to continuing in this role.

*1) What do I think the primary role of the Steering Committee is or should be?*

The Census Bureau needs to hear from users representing the world outside Suitland and, indeed, outside the Beltway. Otherwise, it operates in a vacuum. The Steering Committee represents users who are also intermediaries, in that they provide data and understanding of data to others. The Committee should establish the agenda of the annual conference and any other meetings that take place. It should also communicate user issues to Bureau staff and insist upon appropriate responses. It has a very important role in making sure that the Bureau is responsive to those for whom it produces data. The only purpose of collecting data is for users to use the information!

*2) What would my primary goal(s) be as a member?*

My primary goal is, and will be, to work with the other members of the Committee to make sure that its role, as described above, is fulfilled. I believe that my extensive knowledge of Bureau staff, programs, and institutional history is valuable in this process. I especially enjoy helping younger Committee members, as well as younger Bureau staff, understand and appreciate the positive interaction, and positive results of that interaction, that can take place through the cooperative process. In the past, I've worked with the Bureau to achieve many such results. Working within the context of the SDC program, I'd love to do more.

*3) What is your vision for the SDC network for 2017 and beyond?*

I think that the SDC network functions very well for its members and for the ultimate end users. Obviously, it needs to continue to adapt to changes in technology. For example, virtual meetings are now very functional, and should be given serious consideration as a way of receiving sharing, and disseminating information. The Census Bureau is liable to be under fiscal pressure on a continuing basis; the financial support they've provided to the SDC network is certainly a budget item that may end up on the chopping block. We have to be prepared for that. We also need to provide support where states are considering dropping their support for the program and its staffing.

*4) What do you think the SDC network can do to add value to Census data?*

Any shared software and data access system, such as that provided by John Blodgett in Missouri and by the University of Minnesota, adds value. It's also useful to share typologies for end products, and I haven't seen much of that. I strongly believe that the availability of data through vehicles such as AFF doesn't mean that the public has what it needs to access and use the data.

Our role as intermediaries is critical, and one of our jobs is to create what I term "finished data products," such as profiles, that work for end users. I'd also like to see what other SDC members are doing with embedding census data into their own web-based products. It might also be useful to use the existing SDC web site to provide links to products which SDC network members have produced using census data.