

Post Graduate Courses, Economics, Columbia University  
M.S. Mineral Economics, Pennsylvania State University  
B.S. Earth Sciences, Adelphi University, Garden City, New York

**Robert Whelan** is a senior project manager who has been with ECONorthwest since 1996. He specializes in market research, strategic planning, feasibility analysis, and economic forecasting. Whelan has successfully used his skills to advise Indian tribes, local governments, nonprofit organizations, and businesses on strategies, new developments, expansions, and social/economic assessments. He has analyzed a wide range of industries including retailing, tourism, electronics, energy, construction, casino gaming, agriculture, food stores, film and video production, manufacturing, and residential housing. Before joining ECONorthwest, Whelan was a mineral economist for the State of Oregon. He has also worked as a director of strategic planning for a major northwest corporation, as a manager of market research for a multinational materials company, and as a senior economist for a division of the Chase Manhattan Bank.

### **Representative Projects**

- Conducted a comprehensive economic impact analysis of the potential curtailment of Lake Belt crushed stone production as it pertains to the economy of the State of Florida. This analysis was used to educate stakeholders in Florida of the economic consequences of various policies to address mine closures and reserve depletion, which are confronting the state. The analysis was done for the Florida Department of Transportation and was published in 2007 in the “Strategic Aggregates Study: Sources, Constraints, and Economic Value of Limestone and Sand in Florida.”
- Provided consulting services for the Strategic Aggregates Review Task Force, which was appointed by the Governor of Florida.
- Analyzed the spending and future potential land use patterns for a land tract of approximately 10 square miles in rural Florida for the government of Hardee County. Forecast the net economic benefits to the county under various scenarios where land would be mined for phosphate and later reclaimed. This included ascertaining the net present value of future income streams from mining net of lost farm output. The report considered alternatives to traditional reclamation to see if it would make economic sense to prepare post reclamation lands for commercial and residential development.
- Completed a long-term market forecast and evaluation of current transportation and competitive issues for a firm considering entering certain crushed stone markets in the southeast. The market research was particularly focused on likely outcomes regarding mine closures in the Lake Belt region of Florida and how that would adversely affect the availability of crushed stone in perimeter markets of central and northeastern Florida.
- Wrote feasibility analyses for native plants nurseries on behalf of two Indian tribes.
- Measured the static and dynamic economic impacts of a proposed natural gas liquefaction plant in Oregon.

- Provided ongoing work for the Oregon Lottery regarding market developments and the economics of video lottery retailers.
- Produced the semi-annual economic forecast commentary on the national, state, and City of Portland economies for Tri-Met.
- Conducted a market feasibility study of a proposed fiber optic communications network for a major Oregon Indian tribe. In addition, developed the key basic strategies necessary to maximize the economic development stimulus from the network, as this would benefit the tribe while creating high-wage jobs in the community.
- In 1995 built a sophisticated system of construction models for the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries. Highly praised by both industry and government, it was the first construction-based forecast of aggregate demand ever developed for a state. Other researchers around the world have since adopted the forecast methodology.
- Constructed a set of financial, econometric, and operation models of a semiconductor-recycling refinery. Working with Charles River Associates and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the results were incorporated into a business plan for the project.
- Determined the best mix for financial success for a commercial visitors center and retail complex proposed by a major Oregon Indian Tribe. The research focused on the likely demand for campground space, gasoline, convenience store items, gift shop products, and travel assistance.
- Conducted a market feasibility study for a living-history Indian village for a northern California tribe that would offer visitors the opportunity to experience what it would have been like to live in a village 500 years ago. The village concept centered on the need for an experiential learning environment where visitors would stay overnight in traditional Indian dwellings.
- Wrote a groundbreaking report on the cost of methamphetamine addiction on the residents of a metropolitan county, which calculated the cost to the general public of the hidden “meth tax” on society.
- Conducted a revealed and stated preference survey for a Washington tribe. The findings were used to develop a business expansion plan and to identify topics for focus groups.
- Assisted a city with the determination of impacts from a large tribal casino-retail development. The analysis was then used to aid the city in its negotiations for suitable mitigation measures.
- Built an integrated model of the casino industry using economic, demographic, traffic, and consumer survey data. The model forecasts revenues and attendance and has been used to assess the revenue potential of casino sites in Washington, Oregon, California, and Idaho.
- Produced the first complete study of the nonprofit sector of the Oregon economy. This groundbreaking report showed that the nonprofit industry is the largest private employer in Oregon.

- Conducted studies for several hotel projects including forecasts of operating conditions and costs, financial feasibilities, and the testing of various scenarios of market and operating conditions.
- Analyzed the potential outcomes and competitive responses a regional business would likely face during a transition from being a regional monopoly to becoming an oligopoly with a comparable, single competitor.
- Completed an extensive study of the competitiveness of the metals industry in the Portland metropolitan area. Through interviews with key industrial leaders, recommendations were made to the City government on ways they can facilitate the competitiveness of the metals industry and aid in its continuation as a growing source of family wage jobs.
- For a Northwest Tribe, determined the economic and fiscal revenue impacts on a county from the Tribal government and its business operations, which include a farm, housing authority, health clinic, assisted living center, hotel, and casino. Through the analysis, found that the Tribe has substantial positive impacts on County employment, retail sales, tourism, and local taxes.
- Produced several economic impact studies for the film industries of Washington and Oregon. For the Oregon Film & Video Office, the value of various proposed legislative initiatives were calculated.
- Conducted a financial and market analysis of two aerospace composite manufacturers being considered for acquisition.
- For a private developer, conducted a market feasibility study for a major mixed-use development near a Portland hospital. Work included an analysis of the rental and condominium markets, the feasibility of retail development at the site by comparing the stock of retail space with the local retail demand of residents, employees, and visitors, and a vacancy/rent assessment of office space.
- Given two building options for a property in the Pearl District of Portland, determined the market feasibility for a movie theater versus building of starter condominium housing. Research employed cluster analysis and demographic data to determine the viability of a theater and the absorption rate for housing.
- Analyzed the need for more aggressive cost of living provisions for a construction union engaged in labor negotiations.
- Conducted a market demand forecast for a planned natural gas distribution system that was to be built on the Oregon coast.