



## **Business Prioritization Meeting Summary**

On March 20 & 21, the BOS Economic Ad Hoc Committee, West Business Development Center and The Community Foundation of Mendocino County hosted two business information sessions, inland and on the coast. The intention of these gatherings of key employers and industry leaders was to explore ways to develop a structure for economic development capacity building that ensures plans and solutions align with the priorities and desires of the business community. Additionally important was the opportunity to have representative Malinda Matson from EDA at the Ukiah meeting to see progress and continuing impact of MOVE2030 our economic resiliency plan.

### **Key Themes**

#### **Biggest Obstacles**

- Affordable, market-rate housing; lack of housing regulations that support growth
- Permitting complexity; excessive fees negatively impact business growth
- Qualified, trained workforce - finding talent/people who live/work here
- Lack of business support to create thriving downtowns and communities of commerce
- Need to acknowledge aging population and its impact on economic growth
- Lack of awareness on projects, progress and common vision for Economic Development

#### **Recommended Actions**

- More county leadership in making housing a priority
- Shorten process and approval time for business licenses, and permits
  - Allocate more County staff to process permits, and applications
- Better economic project prioritization within the County
- More "can do" instead of "can't do" attitude inside county departments to ensure economic growth
- Hire dedicated economic development staff for the county
- Build a team of resources with entities like West Center to create public/private partnership and implement ED strategies that align with our interests and support larger regional opportunities from federal and state entities such as EDA, CERF, SMEDD, and CDBG
- Establish a standing BOS Economic Development Committee and/or Business Advisory Council
- Hire a dedicated grant writer for economic development funds
- Use % of TOT funds to support economic development
- Develop a county-wide brand and implement county-wide messaging for business retention and attraction (both for inland and coastal)
- Invest in local workforce development - homegrown talent
- Invest in youth and work with local schools - connect educational pathways and career readiness programs with employment opportunities

# CURRENT CHALLENGES

## INLAND Meeting

### ***What is the biggest obstacle facing your business today?***

- Workforce
  - Finding talent who want to live/work here
  - Well-trained field workers - bilingual
  - Workforce - finding contractors
  - Hospitality workforce
  - Lack of engineers
  - Qualified staff
  - Healthcare staff
  - Lack of human resources
  - Need to go outside county for contracting
- Housing and regulations (state/county)
  - Lack of housing; affordability
  - Homeless – lack of service
- Business Support
  - Challenges with pricing/profit margins
  - Lack of thriving downtowns
  - Delayed permitting
  - More nightlife; places close early
- Lack of County thinking of economic development
  - No big employer
  - What's the next industry to support our economy?
  - Retention issues because of geography
  - Competing with "Southern" demographics
  - Positive Branding of county
  - Water needs
  - Need tribal input - support hotel
  - Not received PGE money

### ***Recommended County Actions***

- Develop/dedicate economic development funds to improve communities.
  - Work on infrastructure transportation for goods
  - On the horizon: healthcare, blue economy, renewable
- Make it easier for small businesses to establish and grow
  - More County staff to process permits, applications, etc
  - Shorter processing and approval times esp. for trusted/established businesses
  - Better project prioritization within the County
  - Moving permits
- Highlight/Market Mendocino County Assets
  - Build sustainability into infrastructure projects - also provide funds to run the projects
  - Create more bikeable/walkable communities
- County point person, departments or agencies with
  - Can Do attitude
  - Just say yes
- Work with local public schools to improve school to work connections

- West Center aid with
  - HR
  - Ombudsman
  - Businesses supporting businesses.
  - Dedicated resource for marketing/communications of County assets
- Support more housing creation
  - Work with contractors such as Guillon Construction

## COAST Meeting

### ***What is the biggest obstacle facing your business?***

- Permit Pricing too onerous.
  - Permitting complexity (County & Coastal Commission)
- No "can do" attitude in county departments (permits, etc)
  - No confidence in local government
- Lack of Workforce housing; affordable housing
- Lack of qualified, stable workforce
  - Skilled expertise
  - Quality human resources
- Lack of reliable resources - vendor goods/supplies
- No commitment to local shopping (Amazon/Costco)
- NIMBYism: don't let outsiders in

### ***Recommended County Actions***

- Business Support
  - Build public-private partnerships to solve problems
  - Sliding scale/resident discount pricing for permits
  - Create a culture for exportable goods and services
  - Continue contracting with West Center for partnerships
  - Identify CERF as a priority for infrastructure funding
  - Support the BOS on
    - community education & outreach
    - Economic Development vision & projects
- Establish "new" housing authority
  - Update the zoning codes
  - Update Local Coastal Plan
  - More Community land trusts to address housing crisis
- Train/promote workers from within - homegrown experts
  - Construction trade program
  - Shared consultant teams
  - EMT shared program with Siskiyou
- *West Center* to be a conduit that connects (local & statewide; local business to government), collective; P & T for projects/grant development
  - Broadband coordination
  - Workforce development

# ECOSYSTEM

## **INLAND Meeting**

### ***What role should an economic development organization play to bolster the economy ?***

- Identify roadblocks, policies, & procedures that work against progress
- Create goals that are sustainable to keep/attract population
- Provide tax sharing development between the County and cities
- Connect educational pathways with job opportunities –
- Address housing needs
- Community
  - Create higher density planned communities
  - Look at ways to increase population density in areas such as Ukiah and Willits
  - more livable /walkable communities
- Harness collective small efforts and leverage to have a bigger impact –
- Streamline activities - businesses can't attend 12 different meetings a month
- Create a big tent of players that include:
  - Industry – Ag, hospitality, manufacturing, healthcare
  - Issues – Water, Climate change, permitting process
  - Opportunities - Renewables
- Support for West Center as convener with community focus

### ***Provide examples of ways to improve awareness inside the business community of economic activities.***

- Solidified a structure and governance
- Establish an Employer's Council
  - Industry Advisory Panel
- There should be more acceptance of all new industries and partnerships into the community
- Create a Torch bearer for Mendocino County
- Promote the remote worker
- Support for the Business & Tourism Alliance
- Community Branding - Brand our County to show added value
  - Active social media activity
  - Find what's unique about this community and use that as a draw
  - Ex: Schat's recognition of Richie (made it into NY Times)

- Help businesses tell their stories
- Create a communication plan for businesses to talk about Mendocino County
- Emphasize local attractions - Rail Trail, water sources like lakes and rivers (to promote summer tourism inland), etc.
- Messaging - needs to be nimble
- Amplify business voices

## **COAST Meeting**

### ***What role should an economic development organization play to bolster the economy ?***

- Support for commercial and recreational fishing/fishers
- Encourage more diversity of people, and businesses
- Better support/attraction for remote workers (broadband)
- Expand recreational opportunities
- Brand the north coast lifestyle
- Improve the harbor with updated infrastructure.
- Create a services guide that informs the public and private industries on resources

### ***Key Industries are***

- Wine
- Weed
- Marine commercial & recreational
- Logging
- Hospitality

### ***Provide examples of ways to improve awareness inside the business community of economic activities.***

Work with key players to develop economic goals and give people/businesses a reason to come here:

- Government
- Harbor District
- City of Fort Bragg
- Board of Supervisors
- City councils
- County CEO
- Planning & Building
- Senator McGuire
- Congressman Huffman

### ***Agencies***

- West Business Development Center
- Chamber of Commerce
- Visit Mendocino

# GOVERNANCE

## **INLAND Meeting**

### ***How to secure economic opportunities in our county?***

- County must balance short-term mandates (such as board appointments) with sustainable, long-term planning efforts and provide adequate resources
  - Look at plans such as Move2030 and the County's Strategic Plan - the plan and tasks are already laid out they need to put forth the funds to implement
  - Fee/tax/cost structures that are achievable provide ability to grow without excessive financial investment.
- County should institute a standing Economic Development Committee
  - The collective agencies should have one shared vision for the county
  - County needs to hire dedicated economic development - one person is not enough
  - Progress with modern & innovative approaches to "fuel" - hydro/bio - thus increasing jobs/visits/growth
  - Create an Economic Development Strategic plan
  - Host Industry convenings
  - Ensure Community outreach
  - Hire Grant writer
- TOT Fund Allocations
  - How to keep focus on interior and not just on coast to benefit inland communities like Hopland, etc?
  - Can a portion of these be dedicated to economic development?

### ***How to ensure the voices of the business community are heard & acted upon?***

- Industry advisories
- Consistency/accountability to advisory/growth boards
- Reduce inclusionary zoning
- Investing in education/educating the youth
  - Ex: CTE Career/Industry specific - manual w/text and partnering with employers "WBL"
- Community outreach
- Standing committee

## **COAST Meeting**

### ***How to secure economic opportunities in our county?***

- Hire an Economic Development Coordinator and support team
  - Utilize % of TOT Funds in addition to other funds to pay for the staff and/or Contractor (i.e. West Center)
  - County should hire a Grants Coordinator
- Permit ADU in Coastal Zone
- Create a strategic economic development plan that is industry & location specific
  - Includes measurable tasks to allow community to follow success
  - A trusted advisor agency/person to be a bridge between business community and county department and city jurisdictions.

### ***How to ensure the voices of the business community are heard & acted upon?***

- Encourage local county departments to be helpers, not gate keepers - willingness to help is lacking, customer service training is needed
- Encourage engagement of "Yes! In My Backyard" voices to speak and be heard
- Establish a Business Advisory Council - industry specifics gathering to BOS with prioritization
  - Create a system that would tell how to accurately gauge interest
  - not just brainstorming activity
- Develop industry specific training/economic development

## March 31, 202 Economic Development AdHoc Committee Report

Committee priorities: Blue Economy | Renewable Energy | Cannabis | Permits PBS Digital | CERF

### Economic Development Capacity:

- **FUNDING:**
  - Since economic development (ED) program initiation, the contract ED team has contributed to securing **\$7.4 million in ED-related grants** within the County including:
    - **\$1M, Noyo Ocean Science Center** site and business planning grant, Economic Development Administration (EDA), *June 2023*
    - **\$210K SMEDD program** grant from EDA for continuation *Sept 2023*
    - **\$200K COVID Grant** extension for related Economic Projects *Dec 2023*
    - **\$5M, (CERF)** Community Economic Resiliency Fund
      - through our work \$2M went to Mendocino County organization North Coast Opportunities Jan 2023
    - **\$1M, City of Fort Bragg,** Wave Powered Desalination Pilot Project, Department of Water Resources, *January 2023*
  - **\$5.7 M in additional grant proposals have been submitted** including:
    - CERF Pilot Implementation Grant \$3.2 million
    - Rep. Huffman Community Project Grant \$ 650K
    - Sen. Feinstein SEA Cal collective \$ 850K
    - I-hub innovation Grant \$1M
- **CONVENINGS:**
  - **Noyo Ocean Collective:** Proposed, Developed, and refined Noyo Ocean Collective Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to formalize membership and collaboration commitment. Current members include: City of Fort Bragg, Mendocino College, Noyo Center for Marine Science, Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo, Noyo Harbor District, and West Center.
  - **Business Prioritization Convenings:** On March 20 & 21, the BOS Economic Ad Hoc Committee, West Business Development Center and The Community Foundation of Mendocino County convened two business information sessions, inland and on the coast. The intention of these gatherings of key employers and industry leaders was to explore ways to develop a structure for County economic development that ensures plans and solutions align with the priorities and desires of the business community.
    - Convenings involved 27 attendees on the 12 coast and 15 inland. See attached Summary Findings Report
    - West Center secured guest list and provided all invitations, event coordination and presentation and follow up action.
    - Sent out a follow up survey for participants: [Business Prioritization Meeting Survey](#)

- **Secured Malinda Matson, Economic Development Administration (EDA) Northern California Representative to visit Mendocino County:** Malinda attended the inland business prioritization meeting to listen to local issues and see progress and continuing impact of EDA funded MOVE2030 process. Malinda and her Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) colleagues met with CEO Antle and her OES team to better understand disaster response needs.
- **Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC):** meeting to discuss coordinated efforts with West Center, the Sonoma-Mendocino Economic Development District (SMEDD) and RCRC on CERF, broadband and economic priorities.
- **Wave Powered Desalination Demonstration Project:** Coordinating with City of Fort Bragg and Oneka Technologies to facilitate community engagements, education and awareness about the DWR funded wave powered desalination demonstration project planned for off-shore the former GP Fort Bragg mill site. Environmental permitting underway.
- **ENGAGEMENT - Women's Business Center - White House:** On March 27th I was honored to be a part of an invited delegation to the White House for a briefing with President Biden on behalf of the Association of Women's Business Centers. Our center is one of the original centers in the nation established in 1988. We have continuously served our community for 35 years and produced a video that honors this legacy. [Watch here](#). I took this opportunity while in DC to meet with Rep Huffman's policy staff to discuss our Noyo Ocean Collective submission for their Community Projects fund and our partnership on the Sustainable Expansion of Aquaculture for California (SEA-Cal) initiative. Briefing documents are attached.
- **ENGAGEMENT – Redwood Region RISE CERF:** Participated in first post-contract, Redwood Region RISE CERF convening. Provided process feedback and implementation recommendations. Engaged County CEO Antle to provide CERF status update and align efforts to maximize county benefit.
- **ENGAGEMENT – City of Ukiah:** Discussed economic development and governance structure with Sage Sangiacomo, Shannon Riley and Mari Rodin from greater Ukiah district.
- **ENGAGEMENT- Go-Biz:** Coordinated with Go-Biz Regional Representative on how the State can better support cannabis industry technical assistance needs. Meeting attended details in April report.
- **ENGAGEMENT – SMEDD:**
  - Developed a people, place and issues tour with SMEDD service agency (RGS) to develop a current understanding of two county needs. Met with public and private sector stakeholders throughout inland Mendocino County.

- Attended EDA Regional Convening in Seattle. Training focused on how to improve districts and have better engagement with EDA resources.

#### **Establish & manage online ED portal**

- Animation work completed for Mendocino County video called “Invest in the Future” Script development completed.
- Maintained and expanded awareness of economic development program momentum, funding outcomes and opportunities on WestCenter.org, @WestCenter and @MendoEconDev and regular West Center newsletters.

#### **Business Recruitment & Retention**

- **Hired Centro Latino West Program Manager** to build engagement within the latino community and expand services for Business training and counseling.
- Continued engagement with renewable energy interests around potential project sites and partners in Mendocino County.

West Business Development Center Vendor #1036  
Fort Bragg, CA 95437

INVOICE # 1785

Invoice for Month: March 2023

Contract: PM-B22-097

|                                                                |  |  |  |                    |       |             |                     |       |           |                |      |           |                |      |       |                |      |           |                |                  |       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--------------------|-------|-------------|---------------------|-------|-----------|----------------|------|-----------|----------------|------|-------|----------------|------|-----------|----------------|------------------|-------|
| Contract: PM-B22-097                                           |  |  |  | Executive Director |       |             | Eco Dev Coordinator |       |           | Communications |      |           | Administration |      |       | Senior Advisor |      |           | TOTAL INVOICED | Total Staff Time |       |
| Deliverables                                                   |  |  |  | Rate               | Time  | Total       | Rate                | Time  | Total     | Rate           | Time | Total     | Rate           | Time | Total | Rate           | Time | Total     |                |                  |       |
| Economic Development Capacity                                  |  |  |  |                    |       |             |                     |       |           |                |      |           |                |      |       |                |      |           |                |                  |       |
| Convene & attend (internal & external) ED stakeholder meetings |  |  |  | \$ 130.00          | 36.00 | \$ 4,680.00 | \$ 90.00            | 5.25  | \$ 472.50 | \$ 90.00       |      | \$ -      | \$ 75.00       |      | \$ -  | \$ 175.00      | 4.00 | \$ 700.00 | \$ 5,852.50    | 45.25            |       |
| Identify, & pursue relevant grant opportunites                 |  |  |  | \$ 130.00          | 5.00  | \$ 650.00   | \$ 90.00            | 5.25  | \$ 472.50 | \$ 90.00       |      | \$ -      | \$ 75.00       |      | \$ -  | \$ 175.00      |      | \$ -      | \$ 1,122.50    | 10.25            |       |
| Provide regular BOS and Committee reports-updates              |  |  |  | \$ 130.00          | 9.00  | \$ 1,170.00 | \$ 90.00            |       | \$ -      | \$ 90.00       |      | \$ -      | \$ 75.00       |      | \$ -  | \$ 175.00      |      | \$ -      | \$ 1,170.00    | 9.00             |       |
| Establish & manage online ED portal                            |  |  |  | \$ 130.00          |       | \$ -        | \$ 90.00            |       | \$ -      | \$ 90.00       | 4.00 | \$ 360.00 | \$ 75.00       |      | \$ -  | \$ 175.00      |      | \$ -      | \$ 360.00      | 4.00             |       |
| Create & manage quarterly ED newsletter                        |  |  |  | \$ 130.00          | 4.00  | \$ 520.00   | \$ 90.00            |       | \$ -      | \$ 90.00       |      | \$ -      | \$ 75.00       |      | \$ -  | \$ 175.00      |      | \$ -      | \$ 520.00      | 4.00             |       |
| Internal & External Economic Development Point-of-Contact      |  |  |  | \$ 130.00          | 2.00  | \$ 260.00   | \$ 90.00            |       | \$ -      | \$ 90.00       |      | \$ -      | \$ 75.00       |      | \$ -  | \$ 175.00      |      | \$ -      | \$ 260.00      | 2.00             |       |
| Economic Development Capacity Task Total:                      |  |  |  |                    | 56.00 | \$ 7,280.00 |                     | 10.50 | \$ 945.00 |                | 4.00 | \$ 360.00 |                | 0.00 | \$ -  |                | 4.00 | \$ 700.00 | \$ 9,285.00    | 74.50            |       |
| Business Recruitment & Retention                               |  |  |  |                    |       |             |                     |       |           |                |      |           |                |      |       |                |      |           |                |                  |       |
| Business recruitment & retention navigator                     |  |  |  | \$ 130.00          |       | \$ -        | \$ 90.00            |       | \$ -      | \$ 90.00       |      | \$ -      | \$ 75.00       |      | \$ -  | \$ 175.00      |      | \$ -      | \$ -           | 0.00             |       |
| Business development technical assistance                      |  |  |  | \$ 130.00          | 2.00  | \$ 260.00   | \$ 90.00            |       | \$ -      | \$ 90.00       |      | \$ -      | \$ 75.00       |      | \$ -  | \$ 175.00      |      | \$ -      | \$ 260.00      | 2.00             |       |
| Business toolkit development                                   |  |  |  | \$ 130.00          |       | \$ -        | \$ 90.00            |       | \$ -      | \$ 90.00       |      | \$ -      | \$ 75.00       |      | \$ -  | \$ 175.00      |      | \$ -      | \$ -           | 0.00             |       |
| Business Recruitment & Retention Task Total:                   |  |  |  |                    | 2.00  | \$ 260.00   |                     | 0.00  | \$ -      |                | 0.00 | \$ -      |                | 0.00 | \$ -  |                | 0.00 | \$ -      | \$ 260.00      | 2.00             |       |
| Workforce Development                                          |  |  |  |                    |       |             |                     |       |           |                |      |           |                |      |       |                |      |           |                |                  |       |
| Convene & collaborate with workforce stakeholders              |  |  |  | \$ 130.00          |       | \$ -        | \$ 90.00            |       | \$ -      | \$ 90.00       |      | \$ -      | \$ 75.00       |      | \$ -  | \$ 175.00      |      | \$ -      | \$ -           | 0.00             |       |
| Design & execute Mendocino Works campaign                      |  |  |  | \$ 130.00          | 2.00  | \$ 260.00   | \$ 90.00            |       | \$ -      | \$ 90.00       |      | \$ -      | \$ 75.00       |      | \$ -  | \$ 175.00      |      | \$ -      | \$ 260.00      | 2.00             |       |
| Workforce Development Task Total:                              |  |  |  |                    | 2.00  | \$ 260.00   |                     | 0.00  | \$ -      |                | 0.00 | \$ -      |                | 0.00 | \$ -  |                | 0.00 | \$ -      | \$ 260.00      | 2.00             |       |
| Other Direct Costs                                             |  |  |  |                    |       |             |                     |       |           |                |      |           |                |      |       |                |      |           |                |                  |       |
| Marketing/Media                                                |  |  |  | \$ -               |       |             |                     |       |           |                |      |           |                |      |       |                |      |           |                | \$ -             |       |
| Conferences/Travel                                             |  |  |  | \$ 1,207.07        |       |             |                     |       |           |                |      |           |                |      |       |                |      |           |                | \$ 1,207.07      |       |
| Other Direct Costs:                                            |  |  |  | \$ 1,207.07        |       |             |                     |       |           |                |      |           |                |      |       |                |      |           |                | \$ 1,207.07      |       |
| Grand Total:                                                   |  |  |  | \$ 11,012.07       |       |             |                     |       |           |                |      |           |                |      |       |                |      |           |                | \$ 11,012.07     | 78.50 |

**West Business Development Center  
Expense Statement-Contract: PM-B22-097**

Employee: Mary Anne Petrillo

Date: March 1-31, 2023

| Date         | From / To           | Miles | Miles/.625<br>7.1. 2022 | Other Ground<br>(taxi/lyft) | Purpose                           | Total \$ | Program / Funder | COA |
|--------------|---------------------|-------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|------------------|-----|
| 03/21/23     | Fort Bragg to Ukiah | 115.0 | 71.88                   |                             | County Business Council convening | 71.88    |                  |     |
| 03/16/23     | Fort Bragg to Ukiah | 115.0 | 71.88                   |                             | County RCRC meeting               | 71.88    |                  |     |
|              |                     |       | 0.00                    |                             |                                   | 0.00     |                  |     |
|              |                     |       | 0.00                    |                             |                                   | 0.00     |                  |     |
|              |                     |       | 0.00                    |                             |                                   | 0.00     |                  |     |
|              |                     |       | 0.00                    |                             |                                   | 0.00     |                  |     |
|              |                     |       | 0.00                    |                             |                                   | 0.00     |                  |     |
|              |                     |       | 0.00                    |                             |                                   | 0.00     |                  |     |
|              |                     |       | 0.00                    |                             |                                   | 0.00     |                  |     |
|              |                     |       | 0.00                    |                             |                                   | 0.00     |                  |     |
|              |                     |       | 0.00                    |                             |                                   | 0.00     |                  |     |
|              |                     |       | 0.00                    |                             |                                   | 0.00     |                  |     |
|              |                     |       | 0.00                    |                             |                                   | 0.00     |                  |     |
| <b>TOTAL</b> |                     | 230.0 | 143.75                  | 0                           |                                   | 143.75   |                  |     |

| Date         | name and location           | Rate/day | Total days | Food   | Purpose                            | Total \$ | Program / Funder | COA |
|--------------|-----------------------------|----------|------------|--------|------------------------------------|----------|------------------|-----|
| 03/20/23     | Food North Coast Fort Bragg |          |            | 684.76 | Coast Business Council Conveneing  | 684.76   |                  |     |
| 03/21/23     | Schat's Café                |          |            | 312.50 | Inland Business Council Conveneing | 312.50   |                  |     |
| 03/21/23     | Schat's Café                |          |            | 33.00  | Inland Business Council Conveneing | 33.00    |                  |     |
| 03/21/23     | Safeway                     |          |            | 33.05  | Inland Business Council Conveneing | 33.05    |                  |     |
|              |                             |          |            |        |                                    | 0.00     |                  |     |
|              |                             |          |            |        |                                    | 0.00     |                  |     |
|              |                             |          |            |        |                                    | 0.00     |                  |     |
|              |                             |          |            |        |                                    | 0.00     |                  |     |
|              |                             |          |            |        |                                    | 0.00     |                  |     |
|              |                             |          |            |        |                                    | 0.00     |                  |     |
|              |                             |          |            |        |                                    | 0.00     |                  |     |
|              |                             |          |            |        |                                    | 0.00     |                  |     |
| <b>TOTAL</b> |                             |          |            |        |                                    | 1,063.31 |                  |     |
| Grand Total: |                             |          |            |        |                                    | 1,207.06 |                  |     |

Employee Signature: 

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that this statement, amounts and attachments are true, correct and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief, and that payment for the amount claimed has not been received.