

Anyone who has lived here for a while knows that the diversified economy we have now is very different than the one we had just eight years ago. Community leaders gathered on November 17th, 2011, for a Regional Summit on economic development. This Recharge Nevada Summit forged a consensus that we would all work together as a region to grow and diversify our economy. Just prior to the summit, the board at EDawn announced new leadership, and the Governor released the Brookings Report “Unify, Regionalize, Diversify: An Economic Development Agenda for Nevada!”. The collaboration of this “A” Team: government, education, business, and economic development professionals, has dramatically changed the Reno-Sparks economy.

Government led the way. This last recession was the longest since the 1929 Great Depression and much longer than the 10.5 month average of the previous 12 recessions. Making matters worse, was the gaming industry, a staple of our economy, was under attack from increasing competition nationally. The Governor made economic development and job creation his priority. He looked at incentives to help attract these new industries, while local governments agreed to work together and support EDawn, a nonprofit, as the lead economic development agency for the region.

Education community engaged as a partner. The success of the region ultimately depends on the talent provided by the education institutions. The University and Community Colleges adjusted their programs and engaged with the existing and new businesses to ensure they were aligning their programs with the needs of these new employers. The school district took on the challenge of improving the graduation rates from 71% in 2011, to a goal of over 90% by 2020.

The Business community stepped up. The business community increased funding for EDawn, hired a new CEO, and implemented a new strategic plan that focused on an aggressive company attraction plan, included the retention of our existing companies, and supported the growth of start-ups. Local governments, community agencies like the Regional Transportation Authority, Truckee Meadows Water Authority, the RSCVA, and the Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority all aligned and supported this push for quality job attraction and economic diversification.

A team of economic development professionals was assembled:

- **The Attraction Team** is led by Stan Thomas, a true deal maker that came from NV Energy, where he was the Director of Economic Development for 12 years. The team includes Chris Ault, Jr. (name sound familiar) a fourth-generation Nevadan with over 22 years of real estate experience, and Norma Yamaji, a seasoned business executive and former member of the Medical Marketing Association, Bay Area.

- **The Business Retention, Expansions, and Workforce Development team** is led by Nancy McCormick, a “make it happen” executive, retired from AT&T, and a recognized “Woman of Achievement.” The team also includes Cynthia Egan; the “go-to” for business retention and a board member for our local Dress for Success; Amy Fleming, the workforce development manager who comes to us from the Harvard Business School, and our newest addition, Millie Werder, recently relocated from the Bay Area, who will support our talent attraction efforts.

- **The Entrepreneurial Development Team** is led by Doug Erwin, a real entrepreneur having co-founded six companies. He has a vision and a passion for growing our ecosystem into one that is world-class. The team also includes Bryan McArdle, a UNR graduate, entrepreneur, and former downtown business owner, and Katie Romanko-Freeman, former anchor for KAME-TV and account executive for USA Today.

- **Finally, the Operations Team**, consisting of Rae McElroy, the HR, and Finance Director and longest-serving member of EDAWN at 18 years; Sheila Imsdahl, investor and events VP, also named a “Woman of Achievement”; Tamera Pitts, office manager and former business executive; and Pam Matteoni, executive assistant and former representative for US Senator John Ensign.

In short, this team of dedicated economic development professionals, guided by a community board, and supported by local government, business, education, and community partners has revitalized our economy and is transforming the future of our region. It will take this same collaboration with the support of the entire community, in the coming years, to address the challenges we now face. It does "take a village!" Thanks to all of you for being a part of the "A-Team". Happy Holidays.