

Given our incredible job growth over the past ten years and the recognition by Milken Institute as having the second fastest job growth in the nation, it is easy to see why many may think that all EDAWN does is attract new companies to the region. While everything EDAWN does is linked to quality job growth, the organization addresses that goal in many ways. EDAWN helps start-ups and entrepreneurs grow their companies for organic job growth, while assisting employers with their expansions for continued local job growth. Workforce development and talent attraction are now a priority for EDAWN. Companies will not succeed here without talented and educated employees. EDAWN also engages in community development by identifying and supporting initiatives and programs that will make the region more competitive as a place to do business, while making it even more desirable as a place to live. So how do these efforts support and assist our community?

The Business Retention and Expansion Team focuses on local job growth. While not as exciting as announcing a new company, the retention of our existing employers is helping local companies grow, thrive, and remain in our region. The team visits with 25% of the more than 600 primary employers every year and represents business interests in multiple focus groups, boards, and roundtables related to business support. These groups address sustainability, transportation, workforce development, education, licensing, and many other issues, to ensure that community resources align with industry needs.

Entrepreneurial Development supports the ecosystem that enables start-up job growth. Research indicates that many of the jobs of the future do not even exist now. EDAWN helps entrepreneurs directly through our programming and events and indirectly through our broad support of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Entrepreneurs thrive in a supportive environment that provides access to capital, connections to resources, and professional guidance. Our Entrepreneurial Development team works closely with the University and our many entrepreneurial support partners to help address the challenges entrepreneurs face. Additionally, EDAWN launched the Reno Seed Fund to help fund early-stage companies. The growth of our ecosystem and the concerted effort to support our entrepreneurs helped make Reno-Sparks one of the top-ranked places in the country to start a business. (Business Insider, July '21)

Workforce Development and Attraction are more important than ever! The quality of our education and the skills of our workforce are critical to meeting the needs of existing and new companies coming to our region. This EDAWN team includes a Workforce Development Coordinator, a Robotics Coordinator, and a K-12 School Liaison. The team works directly with the education community to support and create programs that align with current and future employer needs. They also: recruit talent to the region; connect companies directly with job seekers; advocate for community investment and engagement in education; advocate for STEAM-based education programs at all levels; and work with the Chamber and more than 30 government and non-profit groups to coordinate workforce development efforts in the region.

Community Development is the foundation for economic vitality. Businesses will not come here or stay here if the community is not supportive and welcoming for companies and the talent they need to succeed. Our lower taxes and incredible outdoor recreation are only part of that equation. Do we have quality schools adequately funded? How about trails, arts and culture, homelessness, a safe downtown, and affordable housing? All these issues and many more, are essential to our overall attractiveness as a community and have been areas of engagement for EDAWN as determined by the EDAWN Board.

Economic Development is much more than new company attraction. Attracting companies and getting people back to work was the primary focus of EDAWN ten years ago when the unemployment rate was almost 14%. However, thanks to our collective success at attracting many quality companies, we can now address other important areas that impact on quality job creation and our long-term economic success. As we move forward, EDAWN will continue to evolve, guided by a regional community board

committed to meeting the region's economic development needs, while leading the charge on quality job growth for years to come.