



**MEMORANDUM  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**  
County of Placer

**TO:** Honorable Board of Supervisors **DATE:** October 11, 2022  
**FROM:** Gloria Stearns, Economic Development Manager  
**BY:** Gloria Stearns, Economic Development Manager  
**SUBJECT:** Placer County Economic Development Division Programs Overview

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**ACTION REQUESTED**

Receive a presentation highlighting the programs offered by the County's Economic Development Division.

**BACKGROUND**

One of the Critical Success Factors for your board is "Outcomes-Focused Economic Development." The County strives to create a business and development environment that balances our agricultural heritage with economic growth. Economic development programs and strategies are focused on primary job creation, employee development, and maintenance of a thriving business climate that supports business retention and expansion opportunities.

The goal of this presentation and staff report is to provide your Board with information about various economic development programs that are happening or will soon happen in the pursuit of outcomes-focused economic development.

Since joining Placer County in May of this year, your Economic Development Manager has interviewed hundreds of business owners, local partners, and other economic development stakeholders and reviewed several economic development reports already completed for the County, as well as the region, and from this research some common themes have emerged. These themes are documented on a map of Placer County as Attachment A.

Eastern Placer County / Tahoe region is emphasizing destination stewardship, so that tourism becomes more sustainable. The Tahoe Prosperity Center released a report emphasizing a need for economic diversity, which may include economic sectors like the study of wildfire and climate change. Downtown revitalization would benefit areas with high commercial vacancies or underutilized buildings. Catalyst projects that have been planned need to continue moving forward as part of economic vitality.

The central, foothills section of Placer County emphasizes agriculture, which is now an over \$100 million industry. Ag tourism is a growing sector and should be leveraged to help agriculture revenues, while carefully balancing the context of neighbors. Economic development works with several departments on ag issues and this cooperation will only increase as we pursue a

planning grant via the Strategic Agricultural Land Conservation (SALC) grant fund. Downtown revitalization would benefit areas with high commercial vacancies or underutilized buildings in central Placer County.

The western or southern end of Placer County is planned for extensive growth. Economic development is already working on branding areas and targeting specific businesses. With the new CSU Placer Center about to break ground, business recruitment should leverage areas of expertise of this future CSU. Cities have mentioned constraints of being land-locked, which in turn limits their potential revenue generation. Economic intensification considers how to maximize revenues with more dense economic development. For example, metrics like jobs per acre or revenue per acre become more important. Placer County Economic Development will work with cities on strategies to intensify their economic development. Also in South Placer, the Western Placer Waste Management Authority (WPWMA) continues to invest in its facility and could be leveraged by identifying manufacturers that use WPWMA products as inputs to their manufacturing process. There are also key catalyst projects, as well as major infrastructure projects that should continue moving forward for economic vitality.

In addition, there are the usual economic development activities, like business retention and expansion (BRE). The Economic Development Board is continuing BRE visits with businesses, with the help of staff. The Business Resource Center (BRC) was just granted Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for planning and technical assistance to re-evaluate the next phase of the BRC. The study will look at services that may be needed or are duplicated and try to identify any gaps, which could potentially become the focus of the new BRC version 2.0.

Staff works on outreach to economic stakeholders by holding monthly calls, which discuss a variety of topics like workforce, notable events, resources, programs, etc. Outreach is sometimes conducted in-person at tradeshows like the I Heart Film tradeshow of El Dorado County, where Placer County, Sacramento County, and El Dorado County Film Offices were lauded for their new level of cooperation, which is gaining film industry recognition. Placer Valley 22 is another tradeshow where Placer County has coordinated a booth including seven Chambers of Commerce from the county.

Economic Development is experiencing staffing challenges, but can still pivot quickly as needed. When the Mosquito Fire started, Economic Development reached out to commercial property owners and the Foresthill Divide Chamber of Commerce. Business support teams were quickly identified with the Sierra Business Council – SBDC and the Metro Chamber. A newsletter was published with contact information for these teams to offer business support and to sign up for future business support emails.

The Economic Development division also reached out to Dr. Tom Harris of the University of Nevada Reno, who was identified by the Tahoe Prosperity Center as having done a “back of the

envelope” calculation of Caldor Fire economic impacts. Placer County Economic Development is currently working on contracting with Dr. Harris and the Greater Sacramento Economic Council (GSEC) to calculate the economic impact of the Mosquito Fire across multiple fire and smoke-impacted counties. The intention is the data may be used to inform policy at a variety of levels.

The Film Office is a lesser-known part of the Economic Development division, but it makes some powerful impacts. Recently, major car manufacturers have been filming commercials in the rugged part of our backyard. A motion picture filmed in Placer County informed us they intend to apply for the Sundance Film Festival. Additionally, Placer County scenery was included in a new Apple Watch announcement which was viewed by over 2 million people around the world.

All of this filming results in hotel room nights, generating Transient Occupancy Tax revenue for the County, while also creating myriad other economic benefits for the County and its businesses. Film permits for the first 9 months of 2022 are already greater than the whole of 2021. The economic impact for the first 9 months of 2022 is over \$2.2 million, nearly five times the total economic impact of permits issues in 2021 of \$460,000. The production types that most frequently film in Placer County are: reality TV/documentaries (34), commercials (29), print ads (17), and indie features (12) from 2019-2022.

The Film Office is considering hosting a film festival in 2023 and is in the process of organizing a team and budget. A film festival was recommended by the consulting firm, Metris Arts when they evaluated the Film Office. Possible FAM (familiarity) tours are also a possibility, and even virtual FAM tours may happen with the new Film Office website.

The Economic Development division currently has a 50% staffing vacancy and is in the process of recruitments. Economic Development hopes to move all of its operations to the Business Resource Center in 2023, which would increase service levels for the BRC. As more staff is hired, newsletters and social media will be emphasized for both economic development and the Film Office. A new CDBG program will be announced in January 2023 which will offer \$50,000 and \$100,000 loans to microbusinesses. Staff also hopes to implement a cloud-based customer relationship management (CRM) which would allow for greater metrics of economic development performance. A CRM would indicate where efforts are showing the greatest returns for the County, which aligns perfectly with the outcome-focused economic development critical success factor.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

None

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: Placer County Economic Themes



**Branding / Marketing / Targeted Recruitment  
Leverage Business / Education Connections  
Economic Intensification  
Recycling/Upcycling Businesses-> WPWMA  
&  
Catalyst Projects**

**Ag Tourism  
Downtown Revitalization**

**Destination Stewardship  
Economic Diversity  
Downtown Revitalization  
&  
Catalyst Projects**