

Douglas County, Nevada Economic Vitality Plan Update – February 2017

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Background:

As the nationwide recession that began in 2008 lingered, Douglas County, Nevada, needed to combat the reality of being a rural community in a state with one of the most battered economies in the country. Its response was to create a plan. Of course, citizens are often skeptical about planning: much more familiar with the private sector's emphasis on action, they can become frustrated with government's focus on process. When a public entity announces that it will conduct a study and deliver a plan, the public it serves is sometimes less than impressed. But Douglas County used an unusual process to develop and implement a plan that has provided rapid, measurable, and, in some cases astounding results.

“In the fifteen months since the plan was adopted, the results achieved are remarkable and an inspiration to the community, especially during difficult financial times.”

Government Finance Review, February 2012

Priority Projects Completed since Economic Vitality Program initiated in 2009:

- **Genoa Destination - \$2.5M Main St. Enhancement and Genoa Vista Trail/5 new businesses**
- **Community and Senior Center - Ground Breaking 10/19/12 - Opened 2014!**
- **High School STEM Center Opened with STEM career exposure and training**

Facts:

- Lake Tahoe “**No. 1 Travel Destination in the U.S.**” 2010, 2008, “No. 10 Destination Worldwide” by Trip Advisor (2008). South Lake Tahoe has 2.57M annual visitors, who stay an average of 4.6 nights, spend \$1.2B annually, with \$371 million spent on food/beverage/retail sales. *source: *LTVA 2007 Economic Impact Analysis of Tourism in the Lake Tahoe Region*
- **Minden-Tahoe Airport** is one of only two financially self-sufficient general aviation airport in Nevada creating an estimated economic impact of \$52 million, 137 airport and aviation jobs, and home to 390 based aircraft in 2016.
- “Stateline to Stateline Trail” attracted 10,000 users in its first month of operation – July 2013, Tahoe Rim Trail “one of 100 best American adventure trips” by National Geographic, Golf the High Sierra includes 70,000+ yards and 171 holes across 9 golf courses under 40-minutes apart, 4,800 skiable acres at Heavenly, Largest Snowmobile Tour Center in U.S.
- GE Bently Nevada is anchor to a robust **Advanced Manufacturing Cluster** with 141 different business locations in Douglas County, 1800+ employees, paying an average wage of \$61,000. 2012 Cluster Survey Nine of 16 advanced manufacturing companies surveyed in 2012 are **exporting internationally** and report that the “strong business climate rather

than strong regulatory climate,” and the “distribution proximity to West Coast and Asia” are two major Douglas County strengths.

- Douglas County is the **Top Rated School District** in Nevada - SchoolDigger.com
- Interactive Whiteboard Technology in ALL elementary school classrooms

Three Key Areas of Economic Vitality Focus

- Develop Distinctive Downtowns
- Capitalize on Outdoor Recreation and Lifestyle
- Develop a Thriving Climate for Business & Learning

Guiding Principles:

- Improve Business Climate
- Enhance Education & Workforce
- Preserve Natural Environment and Improve Infrastructure
- Maintain Exceptional Quality of Life
- Be Unique and Marketable

Vision

- A Community to Match the Scenery

Mission

- Working in partnership, Douglas County and private sector champions provide the leadership to implement eight priority projects to promote the economic vitality

Goal

- By 2022, Douglas County will be recognized as a best place to live, work, learn, and play because of our community commitment to education, recreation and innovation.

2014 Update

- Rejoice Priority Project completion
- Refresh “Ripe” Projects with reenergized champions and refreshed action plans
- Rally “Vision Plans” into “Implementation Plans”
- Redefine projects that appear to be stalled

2017 Update

- Identify Overall Champion and involve in 2017 plan update
- Evaluate new projects that may be ripe with timing, resources, and leadership
- Revisit and refresh action plans and reenergize/add new champions
- Update website and materials with milestones and accomplishments

Objectives:

- Align public-private-and-non-profit partners to nurture environment of trust & credibility
- Communicate the Economic Vitality priorities to attract capital, community & visitors
- Connect plans to create a seamless economic vitality initiative

Role of Douglas County in Economic Development:

- Leadership
- Partnership
- Facilitation
- Communication
- Leveraged Resources

STRATEGIES & PRIORITIES:

(* – tie to Douglas County Board of Commissioners Strategic Plan)

Strategic Initiative #1: Develop Four Distinctive Downtowns

Action Steps

*Valley Vision Implementation - Pedestrian-scale Main Street Vision:

Genoa Destination: New Champion (pending). Identify and secure a source of funding for the purchase of the LeFerme Property; create Historic District parking overlay; research and plan community/catering kitchen at LeFerme with unique Genoa branding; develop community garden/park at property; provide trail head and access to open space in downtown Genoa via the LeFerme property.

Main Street Gardnerville: New Champion (pending). Engage Design Workshop to illustrate Main Street Gardnerville Vision (including: Basque Cultural Center, Pelota, Town Offices, Catering Kitchen/Community Kitchen, Gas Station redevelopment, Martin Slough Trail & Trail/Park Network, Heritage Park, Historic Barns, Murals, S-Curve Redevelopment, Stormwater drainage/sidewalks/lighting); Update Gardnerville Market Analysis (in conjunction with Main Street Minden); promote business opportunities and visitor experience via a GIS mobile map that provides business and visitor information.

Main Street Minden: Develop and promote more retail experiences; engage place-making consultant with the goal to activate elements from street, parks and storefront windows for quick implementation; Develop “Coffee & Conversation” alley project to demonstrate place-making and gathering inspiration; apply for USDA grant to undertake Market Analysis (with Gardnerville).

County and Towns Joint Resolution on Infrastructure: Martin-Sough Trail completion to connect towns; investigate funding alternatives to complete Muller

Parkway buildout; move forward with Complete Streets vision and plan for U.S.395 that will coincide with buildout of Muller Parkway.

- *South Shore Vision Implementation - Pedestrian-scale Neighborhood Vision:
New Champion. U.S. 50 South Shore Community Revitalization Project; entertainment Venue Development (1% Transient Lodging License Tax); Stateline/Heavenly Mountain Co-Working Space; Workforce housing to address the needs of the largest industry in the County; Tahoe Workforce Project and Connected Tahoe Broadband – Dig Once Policy.

Strategic Initiative #2: Capitalize on Outdoor Recreation & Lifestyle

Action Steps:

- *Sports Aviation Destination

Communicate aviation assets of Minden Tahoe Airport throughout the region including the USAF Thunderbirds at 2017 Aviation Roundup, National Landmark designation, east-side development with Sports Aviation & Airport Terminal.

Market availability of Airport's land for aviation and non-aviation economic development using the Site Certification program and potential Brownfield Grant. Identify and facilitate opportunities in cooperation with Accelerating Advanced Manufacturing team.

- Tremendous Trails & Outdoor Experiences

Expand team to include members from Carson Valley and Lake Tahoe; initiate Economic Impact Study to quantify the value of tourism and recreation uses and users.

Identify and recruit a major event and promote major event to community to build excitement and understanding of the asset that trails are to the county; Way finding grant to promote location of and access to trails (pending); engage a coalition of trail users to promote and advocate a for variety of trails and uses.

- *Transportation Attractions

Pony Express National Historic Grant to develop a trail concept plan for the upper Kingsbury Grade segment of the Pony Express National Historic Trail that illustrates routing and signage, addresses concepts for future connector trails, and accommodates hiking, biking, and equestrian trail activity; utilize benefits of Douglas County Lands Bill to fund future recreational opportunities.

- Agrihoods

New Project & Champions. Research "AgriHoods"; Master Plan language to be drafted for consideration in Agriculture Element, Housing Element and Economic Element; communicate benefits and seek buy-in and advocacy from community; if approved through the Master Plan Update process, engage with Development

Community about Agrihood concept and opportunity; promote Agrihood strategy through all platforms and partners.

Strategic Initiative #3: Create A Thriving Climate for Business and Learning

Action Steps:

*Open For Business

Evaluate development review processes to include customer service training and staff support, development coordinator role between County department and applicant, review Carson City's application flow charts as possible Douglas County templates; reinvigorate Broadband Initiative.

*Accelerate Advanced Manufacturing Cluster

Facilitate business expansion and retention opportunities through outreach visits; accelerate the Site Certification program and build to suit demonstration project using the potential Brownfield Grant in partnership with the Airport; enhance workforce readiness customization with JOIN and supply chain opportunities through Nevada Industry Excellence (NVIE); enhance business tracking and reporting of cluster measures;

*Education Innovation

New Champion. Communicate education excellence and experiential options available to residents; identify education needs of families interested in relocating for business/jobs; build pride through outside achievement comparisons, student testimonials, graduate exit surveys, and npwr.nv.gov; support Tiger Talks between business community and Career Training (CTE); raise interest and resources to underwrite a Career & College Counseling Program.

Measures

Distinctive Downtowns

- Increased Private Investment
- Main Street Commercial Improvement Permits and Net New Businesses
- Growth in Room-Nights and Overnight-Tourist Spending
- Reduction of Pollution (traffic congestion, air quality, water quality)

Outdoor Recreation and Lifestyle

- Airport Based Aircraft
- Airport Annual Operations & Economic Impact
- Airport and Aviation jobs
- Airport Generated Tax Contribution into General Fund
- Trails Economic Impact (travel spending, employment, earnings, business taxes)
- Trail Use Count

Innovation, Education and Workforce

- Advanced Manufacturing Survey: jobs, internships, Certifications, Sales & Exports

- Average Annual Manufacturing Wage
- Student Performance on AP and Standard Based Tests (reading, writing, math)
- High School Graduation Rate

Communications

- Press Clippings - earned media generated
- County Website visits to Economic Development page and Doing Business Portal
- Awards given to Douglas County priority projects
- Top lists and publications

Milestones Achieved Since 2010:

Distinctive Downtowns:

- South Shore Vision Plan 2011
- Regional Plan Update approved by TRPA 2012
- South Shore Area Plan approved by TRPA 9/2013
- Tahoe Basin Recreation and Tourism Plan 12/2013
- Valley Vision Plan 2013
- \$2.5 million Genoa Destination Main Street Enhancements & Genoa Vista Trail completed 2013
- Valley Vision Implementation Joint Resolution by County & Towns, approved 2014
- Main Street Gardnerville 60 New Businesses Since 2009
- Minden COD Garage Renovation - \$3.1 million casino renovation
- Eagle Gas Station Renovation Project
- Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Opening 2015
- Minden Bently Heritage Distillery and Mill District Redevelopment – Ground breaking 2015
- Sharkey's Renovation 2015
- Overland Restaurant and Pub Renovation 2015
- Genoa Mesh WiFi Project 2015
- Main Street Minden formed 2015
- Edgewood Lodge Groundbreaking – 2015
- Loop Road Project Match - 2015
- Redevelopment Area created at Stateline created – 2016
- Tahoe Beach Club Groundbreaking 2016

Outdoor Recreation and Lifestyle

- Sports Aviation Destination 2014 Standard Class National Championship awarded
- Thunderbirds featured at 2015 Aviation Round Up
- Airport – 2 new businesses, 4 expansions

- 1000 students participate in aviation day
- Stateline-to-Stateline trail 2.3 miles; initial phase opened 2013
- Genoa Vista Trail - 1.3 miles opened 2013
- Genoa Foothill Trail System - 16+ miles in 2013
- Clear Creek Trail - 10 miles opening spring 2014
- Jakes Wetland Trailhead completed – 9/2014
- New Trailheads at Eagle Ridge and Van Sickle Bi State Park
- Pinyon Trail Loop – 5.2 miles 2015
- 16.3 miles of Tahoe Rim Trails reroutes and connectors added
- “Relaxed, Rugged, Reachable” - Carson Valley Visitors Authority brand development
- EPIC Discovery open 7 days a week on Heavenly Mountain – 2015
- 4 videos to promote Outdoor Recreation in Carson Valley
- Outdoor Recreation Rach Card, Trails Rach Card and Distribution plan
- Online trail maps – TahoeBike.org & VisitCarsonValley.org
- Mountain Resorts Video promotion of outdoor activities in the Carson Valley

Thriving Climate for Business & Learning

- Technology Cluster Study funded by WNDD - completed 2012
- GE Bently Nevada / Western Nevada College engineering and manufacturing curriculum alignment to prepare students for GE workforce / applicant test
- K-12 Innovation \$1.2M grant for Interactive Whiteboard Technology in ALL elementary school classrooms funded via Community Foundation of Western Nevada
- Project Lead-The-Way Curriculum/Teacher Training grant via Douglas County/NNDA in 2013
- 83,000 sq. ft. Community and Senior Center opens 2014
- \$7.1M for STEM Center at Douglas High opens 2015
- 11% increase in number of manufacturing businesses from 2010 to 2015

Benefits

- Ensure the prosperity of Douglas County through diversification!