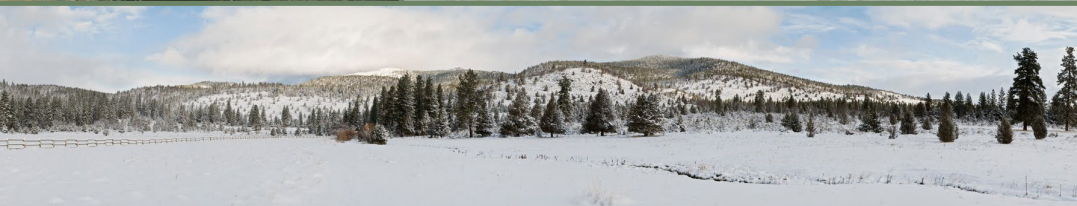


# LASSEN COUNTY

## Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy



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CONNECTING ASSETS WITH OPPORTUNITIES

Funded by State of California Community Development Block  
Grant Program (CDBG) Planning and Technical Assistance Grant

2012



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Lassen County is faced with a variety of economic challenges including the loss of a major industry sector (timber), declining revenues, stagnant population growth, high unemployment history, and an aging population but also has some unique assets that could create some economic opportunities.

The County previously had staff working at least part time on economic development following a 2004 Economic Development Strategy for the county with a 2009 addendum. The City had a similar type staff-driven plan. In 2010 the Lassen Economic Development Committee (LEDC) was organized consisting of key stakeholders to work on issues and constraints to economic development. The LEDC had identified some projects which were being moved forward. However, there was no comprehensive economic development plan for the county and the city.

The County had received funding from the State of California, Community Development Block Grant program to develop an updated Economic Development Strategy. The County felt this was an opportunity to help strengthen the LEDC, a public-private partnership, and requested the LEDC to be the lead on developing a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

The Lassen County strategy follows the CEDS framework, documented in **Section 2.0 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy**. The process looked at Lassen County through a different lens – using assets as the basis for connecting activities to opportunities which create ripple effects through creative collaboration.

**Section 5.0, Action Plan**, outlines the three initiatives identified by the CEDS committee as priority actions with recommended actions for moving forward and measuring performance progress. The Action Plan focuses on Lassen County assets that can generate or drive economic activity:

1. Attracting Visitors
2. Growing Local
3. Enhancing Traded Sectors

Each initiative is designed around Lassen County's key assets.

**Section 6.0, Implementation**, provides recommendations for organizational structure for the LEDC to operate as a public/private partnership. *Action Teams* are recommended for action plan tasks based on pledges provided by CEDS committee members at the August 29, 2012 CEDS priority action planning session. Also included are recommendations for technical assistance for launching the Action Plan Initiatives, professional services and applying to AmeriCorps for an intern to assist in the plan implementation.

An **Implementation Guide**, matrix, with Action Plan Tasks, assignments, resources and timelines is also included to help guide LEDC with implementation.





## 2.0 COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

In addition to developing a “roadmap” for economic development, the County also wanted to prepare the roadmap as an *Economic Development Administration’s (EDA) Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)*.

The CEDS process uses a four-step strategic planning framework that involves significant input from private sector, key stakeholders and public input. This framework was used for the Lassen County CEDS:

1. Analysis
2. Vision
3. Action Plan
4. Evaluation

The overall purpose of a CEDS is to bring together the public and private sectors, nonprofits, community-based organizations, and individuals to build a consensus of actions and priorities that will ultimately generate economic activity.

The LEDC sat as the CEDS Committee, conducting the planning work sessions, outreach, public hearings, and adoption of the CEDS. The Lassen County Board of Supervisors participated in the planning and also accepted the plan at a formal Board meeting for submittal to State of California, Department of Housing & Community Development, and project funder.

### CEDS Strategic Planning Framework

- 1. Analysis** – demographics, economy, investment climate, infrastructure, challenges, capital projects;
- 2. Vision** – stakeholder interviews on vision, goals, and expected outcomes;
- 3. Action Plan** – priority initiatives, engagement and partners’ commitment to implementation;
- 4. Evaluation** – performance measurements for effectiveness and progress.

### 2.1 CEDS Committee

As directed by the Economic Development Administration, the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee is *“an entity identified by the planning organization (County) as responsible for developing, updating, or replacing a strategy and is the principal facilitator of the economic development planning and implementation process”*. The Lassen Economic Development Committee (LEDC) was selected to serve as the CEDS Committee, Planning, and Implementation Organization.

The LEDC is a coalition of stakeholders and institutions including regional business and community organizations, representatives from federal, state, county, regional, and local government agencies. Meeting the EDA requirements for the committee, Lassen County CEDS Committee representatives included:

### **Representing Local Government**

- Jenna Aguilera, Lassen County Planning and Building Services
- Maurice Anderson, Lassen County Planning and Building Services
- Jim Chapman, Lassen County Board of Supervisors
- Jared Hancock, City of Susanville City Administrator
- Jack Hanson, Lassen County Board of Supervisors
- Nick McBride, Susanville City Council
- Martin Nichols, Lassen County Administrative Officer
- Jamie Smith, Lassen County Planning and Building Services
- Brian Wilson, Susanville City Council
- Larry Wosick, Lassen County Board of Supervisors

### **Representing Business and Industry**

- Nick Albonico, High Desert State Prison
- Chuck Downs, Subway
- Bob Edwards, Banner Lassen Medical Center
- Dirk Ellena, Best Western Trailside Inn
- Rhonda Fuller, High Desert State Prison
- Campbell Jamison, Diamond Mountain Casino and Hotel
- Eric Mumaw, California Correctional Center

### **Representing Utilities**

- Bob Marshall, Plumas-Sierra Rural Electric Cooperative
- Theresa Phillips, Lassen Municipal Utility District
- Scott Welch, Plumas-Sierra Rural Electric Cooperative

### **Representing State and Federal Government**

- Stan Bales, Bureau of Land Management
- Dennis Benson, Bureau of Land Management, Eagle Lake Field Office
- Heidi Perry-McCourt, Lassen National Forest

### **Representing Banking and Finance**

- Kathie Garnier, Eagle Home Mortgage and Historic Uptown Susanville Association
- Maria Nye, Plumas Bank

### **Representing Nonprofits**

- Patti Hagata, Lassen County Chamber
- Louise Jensen, Lassen Land & Trails Trust

### **Representing Education and Workforce Development**

- Dr. Marlon Hall, Lassen Community College
- Teri Hiser-Haynes, Alliance for Workforce Development

### **Representing Local Youth**

- Elizabeth Fernandez, Lassen Community College Student Senate

## 2.2 Community Participation

Community participation was a critical component of crafting the Lassen County CEDS.

A diverse group of private and public sector people were contacted and interviewed to gather additional information and input to the initiatives and priorities stemming from the CEDS meetings, work sessions and presentations (July 3, August 17, August 29, and September 11, 2012), and provide any additional input they wished. The CEDS draft document was distributed to all those who participated and was posted on the County’s website.

The following individuals provided comments and input and were also added to the distribution list to receive further updates on the CEDS:

- Bob Pyle, Lassen County Supervisor
- Brian Dahle, Lassen County Supervisor
- Jim Wolcott, Lassen County Fair
- Ron Barnes, High Desert State Prison
- Robert Gower, California Correctional Center
- Robert Kennedy, SIRCo
- Jim Mackay, Susanville Indian Rancheria
- Jeff Trump, Haws, Theobald & Auman (CPA)
- Vicki Lozano, Mount Lassen Properties
- Penny Artz, County Cleaners
- Craig Hemphill, Lassen Agricultural Commissioner
- Eileen Majors, Mountain Valley Living Magazine
- David Lile, U.S. Cooperative Extension
- Seth Peterson, Sierra Cascade Nursery
- Kerri Cobb, U.S. Bank
- Traci Holt, AFWD
- Joel Rathje, Trails Coordinator, Lassen County Public Works Department
- Eloise Debruler, FCI Herlong
- Bill Stewart, LMUD
- George Robson, Robson Planning
- Shelly Noack, Tri Counties Bank
- Garrett Taylor, Lassen College

The comprehensive make up of this planning group helps to ensure that the planning process reflects the needs and desires of stakeholders, local residents, and businesses.

**Figure 1 - Diversity of CEDS Committee and Community Participants**

	<i>Total</i>	<i>% of Total</i>
Public / Private	26 / 26	50% / 50%
Male / Female	34 / 18	65% / 35%
Minority Representation	5	10%
Youth Representation	1	2%



## 3.0 ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

The Analysis Phase of the strategic planning process is a review of the County’s current socioeconomic conditions, review of existing documents and research, identification of local and regional resources and assessment of assets, opportunities, and challenges/constraints. Following are summary findings with detailed data included in the Appendix.

### 3.1 Socioeconomics Data<sup>1</sup>

Figure 2 summarizes data in three major categories, business/industry, land use/transportation, and demographics. The most challenging factor is the declining population, visitors and revenue. Full data charts and factors affecting economic performance are included in Appendix A.

**Figure 2 - Summary of Social and Economic Analysis**

Business and Industry
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The last lumber mill in Lassen County closed in 2007. \$7.4 million in payroll was lost.</li> <li>▪ 85 percent of Lassen County’s private sector employers have less than 10 employees and average sales of \$100 to \$400,000.</li> <li>▪ Of those, 73 percent have less than five employees.</li> <li>▪ Agriculture and ranching are generally safe and somewhat steady industries.</li> <li>▪ Major employers are federal, state, and county governments.</li> <li>▪ Tourism related assets are underutilized. There are opportunities to capitalize on the market.</li> </ul>
Land Use and Transportation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Approximately 63 percent of the land in Lassen County is owned or controlled by a government agency.</li> <li>▪ Over 300,000 acres are currently in the Williamson Act.</li> <li>▪ Traffic volume, speed, and safety along State Route 36 are a major transportation issue in the county.</li> </ul>
Demographics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lassen County’s unemployment rate has been consistently higher than the state rate and since 2009 the span has steadily gotten greater.</li> <li>▪ Households are growing at a much slower pace than they were in 2000.</li> <li>▪ 64 percent of Lassen County’s 2012 households have no one under the age of 18. A potential problem for employers.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Appendix A – Data Analysis, *Factors Affecting Economic Performance*

### 3.2 Documents Review<sup>2</sup>

An extensive review of 40 reports, plans, studies, and strategies was conducted. Documents included County, City, State and Federal reports as well as organizational reports and plans.

A full listing of the documents and summary of goals/objectives of major reports is included in Appendix B.

Extensive research was also conducted to support the identification of actions and opportunities and development of strategic actions.

### 3.3 Local and Regional Resources

There is access to many local and regional organizations representing a broad range of perspectives and business services – from workforce development to renewable energy development. Many of the necessary ingredients for a successful action plan are already being worked on or are in the planning stage in Lassen County. However, often these assorted efforts are not being coordinated. The goal of the CEDS process is to bring all of these “silo” activities together in a cohesive plan adopted by all.

**Figure 3 - Organizational Resources for the Lassen County CEDS**

	Organizational Functions and/or CEDS Area of Expertise						
	Planning, Economic and Business Dev.	Financing	Business Assistance	Workforce Training & Education	Tourism & Visitors	Transportation & Infrastructure	
Local Government (city, county)	✘	✘				✘	
Alliance for Workforce Dev. (NoRTEC)	✘		✘	✘			
Lassen Community College				✘			
Community-based organizations (Chamber, HUSA, LLTT)	✘				✘		
Bureau of Land Management	✘				✘	✘	
Forest Service	✘				✘	✘	
Utilities	✘					✘	
Susanville Indian Rancheria Corporation	✘			✘	✘		
Banks		✘					

The LEDC is charged with implementation of the CEDS. Partnering with the many local and regional organizations will help to ensure the strategies and projects are successfully accomplished.

<sup>2</sup> Appendix B – Documents Reviewed

### **3.4 Assets, Opportunities, Challenges (Constraints)**

Through review of existing documents, reports, meeting minutes and the first CEDS Work Session, the key assets, opportunities, and challenges (constraints) were identified and are summarized in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4 - Summary of Assets, Opportunities, Challenges (Constraints)

Assets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Consensus on the County’s biggest asset – outdoor recreation and trails</li><li>▪ Susanville Ranch Park</li><li>▪ Talented and dedicated people</li><li>▪ Downtown Susanville</li><li>▪ Highway 395 and State Route 36 traffic (potential visitors)</li><li>▪ Agriculture, local production</li></ul>
Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Under-utilized assets (bike trails, events, public land, visitor traffic, etc.)</li><li>▪ Reno seen as competition but could be a market for recreational assets</li><li>▪ Change is happening, new collaborations are occurring (workforce, education, PSREC)</li><li>▪ New public and private stakeholders at the table</li><li>▪ A belief that there is opportunity if resources and focus could occur</li><li>▪ With recent changes in administration at the County and City level, a renewed interest in economic development, enthusiasm from the private sector, a potentially improving economy, Lassen County may be at a tipping point to revitalize the local economy.</li></ul>
Challenges (Constraints)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Stagnant population and household growth</li><li>▪ Logistically challenged for relocating industries (remote from major transportation corridors, I-5, I-80, etc.)</li><li>▪ Perception of many false starts on plans for economic recovery. In reality, much has been done but no clear definition of expectations was communicated and no organization is viewed as the champion</li><li>▪ Lack of resources (jurisdictions’ have reduced budgets and staff, are faced with limited funding opportunities from the state and federal sources)</li><li>▪ Customer service needs to be improved at businesses and government</li><li>▪ Federal and State control 63 percent of land</li><li>▪ Susanville is a drive-thru community</li><li>▪ Limited collaboration; groups are working independently even during downturn</li><li>▪ A mixed view on the quality of education provided to Lassen County</li><li>▪ No consistent message for economic development or tourism</li></ul>



## 4.0 VISION / GOALS

The ultimate goal for all involved is to increase economic prosperity for Lassen County. The current situation of declining population, visitors, and revenue has had a significant economic impact on the economy and the community.

The vision and goals were identified by the three economic drivers of Lassen County:

1. Visitor Serving Market
2. Population Driven Market
3. Traded Sector Market

### 4.1 Vision

The County's vision is embodied in its General Plan. For the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy a collective aspiration vision is:

#### ***One of the Nation's Top Destinations for Community Living and Outdoor Recreation***

- Where the natural outdoors attracts visitors and residents;
- A vibrant and historic Main Street / SR 36 welcomes visitors to stay;
- A quality learning environment effectively prepares people for life;
- Entrepreneurism is a way of life;
- Niche traded sectors provide a broad range of job opportunities;
- Infrastructure is maintained and developed to meet the needs of community, residents and business; and
- Trusted, collaborative leadership participates in creating the future.

### 4.2 Goal Setting

The process began with the review of existing document goals and during the CEDS Committee first work session they were asked the question "***Where do we want Lassen County to be in three years?***" Goals and Aspirational Goals were developed for each of the three economic drivers.

#### **Visitor-Serving Market – GOAL: Magnet to Draw Visitors**

- ***Aspirational Goal: Become one of the Top 15 Mountain Biking Destination in the US***
- Draw visitors and strengthen tourism and recreational activities
- Comprehensive trail system
- Bicycling facilities, trails, and promotions
- Effective management and preservation of natural resources to enable continued use by residents and visitors

#### **Population-Driven Market – GOAL: Grow Local Business Opportunities**

- ***Aspiration Goal: Become one of the 101 Best Outdoor Towns in America***
- Place making and improved retail offerings
- Skills training
- Entrepreneurial development

**Traded Sector Market – GOAL: Prepare for and Expand Existing and New Opportunities**

- **Aspiration Goal: Create a competitive economic development environment**
- Readiness
- Increased employment
- Business retention
- Expand infrastructure
- City/County coordinated economic development efforts

To start the economic development visioning discussion the CEDS Committee was asked at the first planning work session “Where do you want Lassen County to be in three years?” Figure 5 lists their aggregated responses. As the planning continued and strategies were developed, some of these ideas were expanded upon, modified, or put on a back shelf. The resulting strategies were then prioritized.

**Figure 5 – Lassen County in 2015 – Where do you want to be in three years?**

Visitor-Serving Market	Population-Serving Market	Traded Sector	Implementation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Regional coordinated effort with tourism, recruit to bring people and business</li> <li>▪ Create sense of place; experience for locals and visitors in all areas</li> <li>▪ More events; with BLM and Forest Service; people staying longer</li> <li>▪ Kiosk completed; gateways to community</li> <li>▪ More good, quality restaurants</li> <li>▪ Facade improvements, rehab properties</li> <li>▪ Recreational infrastructure for tourism and locals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sense of pride, local investment through spending</li> <li>▪ Swimming pool</li> <li>▪ Education: Lassen Peaks, an ongoing program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More base industry, manufacturing, etc.</li> <li>▪ Break ground on an industry</li> <li>▪ Three local businesses contracting with prison</li> <li>▪ Three Tech Hubs or business incubator / tech hub with public access and program writers working with Silicon Valley</li> <li>▪ Business park to attract businesses</li> <li>▪ Utility infrastructure, lowest rates, reliable</li> <li>▪ South County: Army Depot, DOD, connect to Susanville</li> <li>▪ Business friendly reputation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City, county support</li> <li>▪ Actionable, diverse, balanced Action Plan</li> <li>▪ Professional economic development point person supported by government and a group of volunteers</li> <li>▪ Mission, motivation</li> <li>▪ Align community college course with vision and objectives</li> <li>▪ High Rec / High Tech; regional initiative: Lassen-Plumas-Sierra “The Lost Sierra”</li> <li>▪ Challenge what we are doing</li> <li>▪ Appreciation</li> <li>▪ Tourism board supported by city, county, businesses, recreation</li> </ul>

## 5.0 ACTION PLAN

Upon undertaking this planning process, a lack of focus and stakeholder fatigue was apparent. Interviews with stakeholders revealed high expectations for the process while also questioning “Why will this be different than other attempts”?

This process looks at Lassen County through a different set of lenses, attempting to **connect the unique assets with opportunities to create ripple effects through creative collaboration.**

What will make this process different than previous attempts is:

- 1) a **focus on public-private process** involvement and **consensus on priorities**, and
- 2) a **commitment to implementation, resource development**, collaboration and realistic/agreed upon expectations.

### 5.1 Planning Process

The first CEDS Committee meeting was held July 3, 2012. At this in-depth work session the CEDS Committee was asked to review the economy based on the economic drivers of the economy:

1. Visitor-Serving Market
2. Population-Driven Market
3. Traded Sectors Market (*those businesses exporting goods and services and bringing dollars back to the community*)



Lassen County’s economy is made up of these three drivers and developing each to its potential requires different initiatives and actions. But the actions of each economic driver are connected and related to other drivers, thus increasing the opportunity for economic prosperity. This helped the Committee better articulate the assets, opportunities, and challenges by economic market opportunity versus broad-based initiatives in hopes of improving the economy.

The CEDS Committee identified a variety of initiatives (existing and new/desired), prioritized them, identified the assets that would support the initiatives, and the challenges that may be in the way of success for each economic driver.

The work session provided the basis for the research and assessment phase during which the consulting team reviewed over 40 reports<sup>3</sup> and conducted over 42 stakeholder interviews to identify common themes and collect input for strategies.

The second CEDS Committee work session was held on August 29, 2012. The committee reviewed findings with the most significant being:

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix B – Listing of documents reviewed, summary of goals and objectives, and common themes.

**Challenges:**

- Decline of population, visitors and revenues
- Logistically challenged for base industries (manufacturing, unless there was an imperative to be in Lassen County, such as a feedstock)
- False starts
- Working in silos (no or limited collaboration)
- No consistent message
- Lack of resources



**Opportunities:**

- Under-utilized assets
- Educational opportunities
- Reno – a competitor and a market
- Sensitivity to the prisons



**Sunshine (Positive) Findings:**

- Change is happening, new collaborations
- New stakeholders – people are at the table
- Talented and dedicated people
- Belief there is opportunity if resources and focus could occur
- Consensus – biggest asset is *outdoors – recreation & trails*



A conceptual Action Plan was presented for each economic driver. Each CEDS Committee member ranked specific actions by 1) easiest to implement/priority, 2) moderate to implement/priority and 3) hard to implement but still a priority. These ranking are the prioritized actions<sup>4</sup> which became the key action initiatives for this strategy.

## 5.2 CEDS Committee Action Plan

Figure 6 - Initiatives and Action Items Adopted by CEDS Committee



<sup>4</sup> See Appendix C – Work Session Participants, Presentations, and Work Papers

## 5.3 Initiative 1: Attracting Visitors

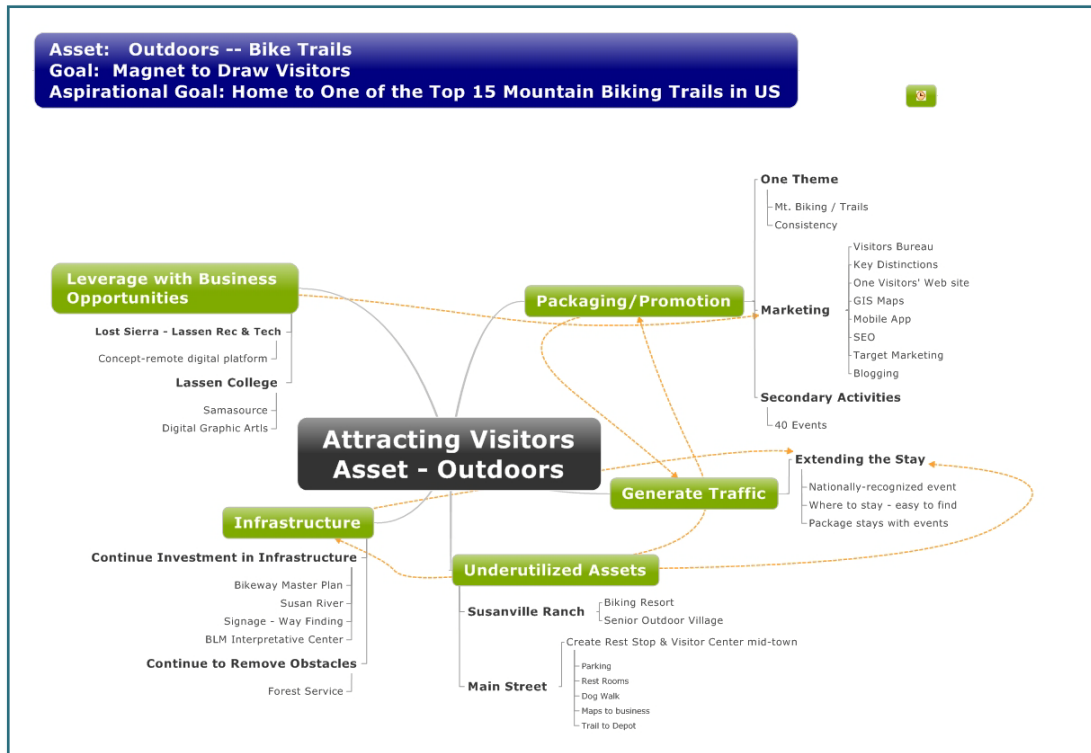
**Goal — Magnet to draw visitors.**

**Aspirational Goal — Home to One of the top 15 Mountain Biking Trails in the U.S.**

Examples (source: 101 Best Outdoor Towns):

- Fruita, CO (population 6,878) – [www.gofruita.org](http://www.gofruita.org)
- Downieville, CA (population 391) – [www.downievilleclassic.com](http://www.downievilleclassic.com)
- Moab, UT (population 4,807) – [www.discovermoab.com](http://www.discovermoab.com)
- East Burke, VT (population 1,676) – [www.burkevermont.com](http://www.burkevermont.com)  
[www.kingdomtrails.com](http://www.kingdomtrails.com)
- Davis, WV (population 624) – [Tucker County Facebook](#)

Figure 7 - Conceptual Action Plan Presented for CEDS Committee's Vote



## Attracting Visitors Priority 1 Action — Package and Promote

- **One Theme – Lassen (Bike) Trails and Outdoors** – is Lassen County’s most unique asset to attract visitors and an asset that rivals other well-known locations. This asset theme should be consistently promoted by all organizations in Lassen County. Yet during the research phase of this project, only one website out of 25 viewed promoted this asset on their front (home) page.

***A new community branding effort is not recommended at this time.*** Instead, consistently promote the Lassen County bike trails – it should become a key part of everyone’s vernacular and continuously promoted.

**Recommend** adopting the Plumas Sierra Rural Electric Cooperative (PSREC)’s Lassen Rec & Tech concept<sup>5</sup> ([www.recandtech.com](http://www.recandtech.com)) as the local brand and the Lost Sierra’s as the regional brand.

For a quick identity promoting the outdoors/bike trails, create a splash page website as the entry point for all Lassen County organizations. The splash page would be a marketing-oriented page which can be developed to be high on search engines but directs people quickly to links such as County, City, Chamber, etc. This will help to create a consistent promotion of the theme.

This will require some planning to incorporate marketing guidelines and promotional activities. The Action Team will need to collaborate on a “common” target marketing campaign and coordinate with PSREC and the other regions. The Lassen Land & Trails Trust (LLTT) has the beginnings of a marketing plan which will need to be expanded and more comprehensive.<sup>6</sup>

A key marketing tool is a map. The County has some excellent older maps that would be a great base map for creating a visitor and bike trail map (resource: Supervisor Hanson). Also the use of billboards in locations before arriving in Susanville and Lassen County would create an image of why the visitor should want to stop, and would promote Lassen County’s assets.

- **Operate like a Visitors Bureau.** The goal is to get on visitors’ radar screen in a different and consistent manner. This requires more coordination and acting like a Visitors Bureau rather than depending on *random acts of marketing around existing events*. Do not set up a new visitor bureau organization. Build from within to be planning, operating, promoting and marketing as a visitor bureau through a team effort (Lassen Land & Trails Trust has the beginnings of a plan). At a later date reorganize as a visitor bureau, when operating aspects are in order.

Specific action items to accomplish the goal should include:

- Market key distinctions,
- Have one visitor website,
- Use technology particularly around the trails (GIS maps and mobile version of website),

<sup>5</sup> Appendix F – PSREC The Lost Sierras and Lassen Rec & Tech Concept Paper

<sup>6</sup> Appendix G – Initial Marketing Plan LLTT

- Increase search engine optimization (SEO) so that bike trails show on the first page of a Google search,
  - Conduct target marketing and blog about events and recreational opportunities,
  - Offer visitors to Lassen County an opportunity to be a “tourism journalist;” give visitors a place on the new visitor website to share their experiences in Lassen County<sup>7</sup>,
  - Revisit the 2008 Lassen County Tourism Marketing Plan for items that should be incorporated into the marketing. Note the 2008 Plan also addressed organizational structure as a Visitor Promotion Organization. We would recommend you wait until a marketing plan is developed and roles/actions are on a pathway – it is more important to get started than focus on the organization at this time.
- **Generate Traffic** – Currently there are 40 annual community events in Lassen County which should be incorporated into the marketing. No additional local community events need to be planned or implemented instead work to generate more traffic at these existing events.<sup>8</sup>
- Extend the Stay – Generate more visitor traffic and have those visitors stay longer.
  - Get National Recognition – A nationally-recognized event can help draw attention to the local events. Recruit a new nationally-recognized, hot event such as a [Toughmudder.com](http://Toughmudder.com) or Adventure Racing ([usara.com](http://usara.com)) event that utilizes trails, terrain, or even consider how property at Herlong could be used for an extreme event such as these. Package the opportunity and recruit summer and winter events.
  - Package Stays with Events – provide information on where to stay; make it easy to find; include campgrounds, lodging, and bed and breakfasts.
- **Bike Trails** – Bike trails and the outdoors are Lassen County’s strongest asset and best icons for attracting visitors. To reach the aspirational goal of one of the *Top 15 Mountain Biking Trails in the US*, continuous development must occur to improve, extend, and enhance the experience for avid mountain bikers to earn such a reputation.

**Recommend** an Action Team be organized that is separate from but coordinated with and providing advice to the Package & Promote Action Team. This Action Team would be focused on the development and maintenance of the Bike Trails; should include the County, City, BLM, Forest Service and Lassen Land & Trails Trust.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.ely.org/journalist/share-your-visit-to-ely.html>

<sup>8</sup> Appendix H – Lassen County Annual Events List

**Performance Measurements – Package & Promotion**

- Visitor website launched; number of website hits; number of inquiries from website.
- Search engines optimized for top-of-page returns on searches for bicycle, trails, etc.
- Hotel, motel, and campsite vacancy rates, length of stay.
- Participants in bike events, miles of trails.
- Increase in visitor spending.



## Attracting Visitors Priority 2 Action — Underutilized Assets

- **Susanville Ranch Park**<sup>9</sup> – A key Lassen County asset is the 1,100-acre Susanville Ranch Park with biking, hiking, and equestrian trails. Given the need to attract both population and visitors, consider working with a developer to create:
  - A small bike-oriented resort geared to avid mountain bikers.
  - A small outdoor village for active seniors which ties to becoming a best-rated Outdoor Town, Initiative #2.
- **A Rest Stop & Visitor Center centrally located on Main Street, Susanville** – The City of Susanville’s Main Street (Uptown and Downtown) is an asset on a major thoroughfare (State Route 36). There is an estimated average annual daily traffic of 50,000.<sup>10</sup> To combat the ‘drive-thru’ syndrome and to get traffic to stop, **create a Rest Stop and Visitor (Welcome) Center in mid-town**. The goal is to create a convenient place for visitors to stop and explore.

Rather than kiosks at either end of town, a center-city location will encourage people to explore Main Street, side streets, and businesses in town that are close walking distance now that they are out of the car. A kiosk could be part of the Visitor Center.

Travelers want to stop in safe places where there is ample parking for passenger cars and motorhomes, clean rest rooms, space to walk dogs, picnic tables, and information on the area, local businesses, and events.

Use the rest stop / kiosk as an opportunity to promote and market, offer walking maps to the businesses, trail maps, walking paths to the Depot and other important and interesting places.

An excellent resource for tourism marketing and tourism community development is The 25 Immutable Rules of Successful Tourism, by Roger Brooks and Maury Forman.<sup>11</sup> Appendix E is a summary of the book but does not provide the extensive background of the Immutable Rules.

### Performance Measurements

- Rest Stop and Visitor (Welcome) Center completion.
- New facility developments to attract visitors and residents.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.susanvillerranchpark.com/>

<sup>10</sup> Source: California Department of Transportation; traffic-counts.dot.ca.gov

<sup>11</sup> The 25 Immutable Rules of Successful Tourism, Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, available at Amazon, Barnes & Noble

## Attracting Visitors Priority 3 Action — Leverage Business Opportunities

- **The Lost Sierras and Lassen Rec & Tech** – Plumas Sierra Rural Electric Cooperative (PSREC) has been working on the “Rec & Tech” concept<sup>12</sup> — a collaboration between Lassen, Plumas and Sierra Counties — to market the region’s recreational assets and an emerging technology sector. PSREC will host a joint website and a 50 MB high-speed connection tech hub located in designated spaces in each county.

The purpose is to:

1. Attract technology workers who do not need to live in urban areas if they have high-speed connections;
2. Encourage business travelers to extend and repeat their stays; and
3. Attract small tech businesses.

**Recommend** leveraging *The Lost Sierras as the regional marketing brand* and utilize the Lassen Rec & Tech as the local brand. Also use the donated website, *Lassen Rec & Tech*, as the visitor/economic development website providing the content to populate the website. Work with PSREC to upgrade the website to function with the local brand and other technologies/tool for promoting the Lassen Rec & Tech.

- **Digital Graphic Arts** – Coordinate efforts around building a remote digital platform and work with Lassen College’s new Digital Graphic Arts curriculum.

Review opportunities with [Samasource.org](http://Samasource.org) a non-profit digital platform currently looking for a domestic pilot project to introduce their foreign intensive digital platform training program for low-income individuals. Samasource.org is seeking a partnership with a community and college.

Engage local businesses in creative promotions around the digital and Rec & Tech theme and encourage participation in the tech hubs.

### Performance Measurements

- Adoption of The Lost Sierras regional brand and the Lassen Rec & Tech local brand.
- Lassen Rec & Tech website launched; number of website hits; number of inquiries.
- Search engines optimized for top-of-page returns on relevant search terms.
- Tech hub(s) established; participation/use of tech hubs.
- Contact made with Samasource.org and progress.

<sup>12</sup> Appendix F – PSREC The Lost Sierras and Rec & Tech Concept

## Attracting Visitors Continuous Action — Invest in Infrastructure

- Infrastructure was a close fourth priority with actions to continue *Investment in Infrastructure* particularly around supporting the outdoor visitor attraction infrastructure such as: Bikeway Master Plan, Susan River, Signage, Way Finding and BLM Interpretative Center.<sup>13</sup>

Continuing to remove constraints and obstacles related to the outdoors and trails is critical to the County's future success. It was noted during the interviews that the Forest Service has been an obstacle to expanding the bike trails.

- The County, City, LEDC, and possibly surrounding counties (Plumas, Modoc, Sierra) need to organize as **one voice** and lobby for more assistance and investment in Lassen County to promote the outdoor recreational opportunities and revitalize the economy. This effort is closely tied to the Priority Action 1 – Packaging & Promotion Bike Trails. If this is the key asset to be the County's brand then it needs to be continuously improved and exciting for the visitor as well as local residents.
- Document and maintain other infrastructure needs, e.g. water, sewer, etc. on the *CEDS Infrastructure Project List, Appendix D*, for applications to state and federal agencies for funding.

### Performance Measurements

- Removing constraints.
- Organized efforts to address issues and opportunities with state and federal representatives.
- Amount budgeted for infrastructure improvements; funding acquired; infrastructure investments made.

<sup>13</sup> See Appendix D – Listing of Infrastructure Projects

## 5.4 Initiative 2: Growing Local

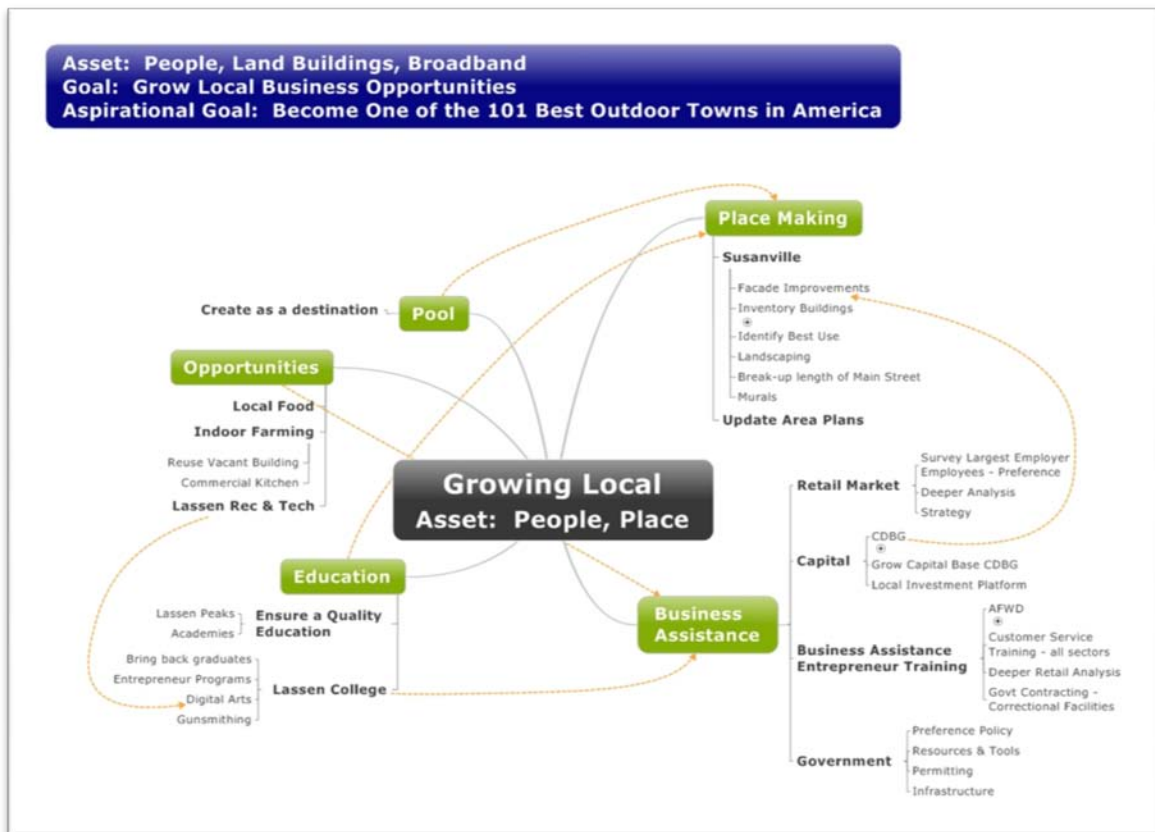
**Goal — Grow local business opportunities.**

**Aspirational Goal — Become One of the 101 Best Outdoor Towns in America.**

Examples, Top Five from *101 Best Outdoor Towns*:

- Lake Placid, NY (population 2,638) – [www.lakeplacid.com](http://www.lakeplacid.com)
- Hood River, OR (population 6,480) – [ci.hood-river.or.us](http://ci.hood-river.or.us)
- McCall, ID (population 2,415) – [www.mccall.id.us](http://www.mccall.id.us)
- Salida, CO (population 5,476) – [cityofsalida.com](http://cityofsalida.com)
- Livingston, MT (population 6,851) – [www.livingstonmontana.org](http://www.livingstonmontana.org)

Figure 8 - Conceptual Action Plan Presented for CEDS Committee Vote



## Growing Local Priority 1 Action — Transform with Place Making

- **Place Making** – was rated by the CEDS Committee as the priority action for *Growing Local*. This mainly focused on Susanville (State Route 36) and building/façade improvements – *how attractive is Susanville to getting visitors to stop vs. “drive thru”*. This action is a critical element to the development of a **Rest Stop & Visitor (Welcome) Center** as noted in Attracting Visitor Priority Action 2.

**Recommend** the first element of change on State Route 36 be the Rest Stop and Visitor (Welcome) Center<sup>14</sup>, then phase building and façade improvements to demonstrate the transformation. The Center should act as a catalyst project that will stimulate investment and change. CDBG may be a source of funding for design and possibly to build it.

- **Building Assessments** – Much can be done by an Action Team to organize and prepare for a place-making, beautification, and revitalization program, such as:
  - assessment of vacant buildings<sup>15</sup> (see Appendix I for resources and forms);
  - agreements with landowners;
  - identification of reuse opportunities;
  - identification of best uses;
  - building constraints – codes, upgrades, frontage; and
  - continue mural program.

The goal for the Action Team is to create a **community-initiated revitalization effort**. This is ground work that would be very beneficial for City/County grant applications and for implementing a façade program.<sup>16</sup> Community-initiative efforts often stimulate more interest, action, and investment.

While assessing buildings the Action Team could also be identifying opportunities for entrepreneurial uses, landscaping, and murals. Slowing down and breaking up the length of Main Street, such as with the Rest Stop and Visitor (Welcome) Center, also needs to be considered.<sup>17</sup>

- **Façade Programs**<sup>18</sup> – These programs can come in many different forms. Typically the goal is to assist business with the exterior of their buildings or frontages to be more attractive or blend with a theme. Façade program design may often depend on the funding source. One successful program design is where a jurisdiction offers businesses a set number of hours of professional architectural assistance for design and conceptual drawings that meet the jurisdiction’s design standards or requirements. The improvements can then be funded through the businesses’ own sources or application to any program loans assuming the business is eligible for the funds.
- **Planning** – The City has a number of plans already in place (or being worked on) that will support additional place making activities, Way Finding, Signage, Susan River, and

<sup>14</sup> Appendix J – CDBG Guidelines for Potential Funding of Design/Build Rest Stop/Welcome Center

<sup>15</sup> Appendix I – Resources for Community-Initiated Building Assessment & Development

<sup>16</sup> Resource: Community Initiated Development: *A Manual for Community-Based Real Estate Development*  
[http://www.downtowndevelopment.com/community\\_initiated\\_development.php](http://www.downtowndevelopment.com/community_initiated_development.php)

<sup>17</sup> Project for Public Spaces ([www.pps.org](http://www.pps.org)) has some excellent examples and resources.

<sup>18</sup> Appendix K – Sample Tool Box and Façade Programs

Revitalization Plan. These may take considerable resources to implement but should be incorporated in the Place Making strategy with budgets and realistic timelines.<sup>19</sup>

- **101 Best Outdoor Towns** – The aspirational goal is to be listed as one of the 101 Best Outdoor Towns, authors Sarah Tuff and Greg Melville. This book is a US Travel Specialty “a unique guide for the millions of American urban dwellers and suburbanites seeking quick getaways to small, breathtaking locales where there are pulse-quicken activities but a slower pace of life”.

#### Performance Measurements

- Progress on Rest Stop and Visitor (Welcome) Center.
- Vacant building assessments completed; re-use opportunities identified.
- Facade improvement program established; funded; number of business using program.
- Area plans funded and moving forward.

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<sup>19</sup> Appendix L – ICMA’s Putting Smart Growth to Work in Rural Communities

## Growing Local Priority 2 Action — Business Opportunities

This is similar to the *Attracting Visitor* initiative, but in this case utilizing existing assets (vacant buildings and entrepreneurialism) is intended to lead to business opportunities.

- **Food Hubs** – Many rural communities are building local food hubs as a key element and community asset – not only for healthy foods for families but as businesses.

Lassen County typically does not grow row crops as an export item because of the short growing season. But consider creating an Indoor Farming Venue utilizing one of the larger vacant buildings in downtown Susanville ([www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/04/11/indoor-farming-sunless-food\\_n\\_847462.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/04/11/indoor-farming-sunless-food_n_847462.html)). From an entrepreneurial standpoint an Indoor Farming Venue could be developed and operated as a co-op. Foods could be sold at local Farmers' Markets, to schools, and at other grocery outlets and markets. See [www.pps.org](http://www.pps.org) for information on public markets and healthy food co-ops.

This concept should be reviewed with the Agricultural Commissioner, agricultural leaders, Lassen College and School Districts for input to design and marketing of the foods.

- **Commercial Kitchen** – Following along with the Food Hubs, there is typically a commercial kitchen associated with the co-op where entrepreneurs can develop new products that are produced locally and possibly sold out of the area. This concept has assisted many businesses in Mendocino County to get started. Also this dovetails nicely with current legislation before the state aimed at helping businesses preparing food at home for retail outlets. Working with the Business Assistance and Entrepreneur Program (AFWD/Lassen College) identify opportunities and demand for a commercial kitchen for locally produced foods.
- **Digital Workers-Tech Hubs** – The Lassen Rec & Tech Hub is also a part of this action. Locate Tech Hubs and connect workers with digital platform work in existing business spaces or a vacant building. PSREC will need assistance in identifying potential Tech Hubs for implementing the program. These facilities will require some equipment, furniture, and basic working space environment, but 'hip' for the creative types, which will attract digital workers as well as be attractive to off-site technology businesses that use teleworkers.

### Performance Measurements

- Building suitable for indoor farming co-op / commercial kitchen identified; availability confirmed; feasibility completed; participants in co-op.
- Feasibility of commercial kitchen.

## Growing Local Priority 3 Action — Build a Community Pool

- The pool is a community-wide priority and adds to the quality of life. The challenge, as with all activities, is finding the resources to build and maintain it.

As planning for the pool proceeds it should be done with the thought of utilizing it as part of the destination experience.<sup>20</sup> Investigate other models; see City of Mustang comments in foot note below.

### Performance Measurements

- Funding for construction and maintenance identified; funding committed; construction progress; number of locals and visitors using pool.

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<sup>20</sup> City of Mustang, OK (population 18,000) created a 59,000 square foot Town Center that includes a community pool, banquet center, etc. This was funded through a sales tax increase that expires when debt is paid. They are paying off the debt quicker than expected because retail sales have increased. Ongoing maintenance is paid through general fund; they break-even or make slight profit each year. Contact: Justin Battles, Parks & Rec Director, City of Mustang, OK, 405.376.3411



## Growing Local Action — Provide Business Assistance

Although not voted into one of the top three initiatives (primarily because the activities are on-going), several business assistance activities were addressed.

- **Retail Market** – There is considerable concern over the leakage of retail purchases to Reno. A high-level *Existing Retail Demand, Supply, and Leakage* report was run as part of the CEDS Analysis.<sup>21</sup> This report indicates sales leakage in seven merchandise categories totaling \$9.7 million in 2011, which is an estimated 7.6% of total household spending demand.

There could be more leakage due to visitor spending locally masking the supply and demand of local household spending. It would require a much deeper analysis to determine what portion of the supply (retail sales) are visitor spending and in which categories. See Appendix A – Data Report for further information on the analysis.

Discovering better methods to serve the local population and visitors could help keep more dollars locally. A study would also help to better understand the complex spending of visitors and residents and uncover opportunities to better serve both markets.

**Recommend** a full retail leakage report be completed as well as a survey of the largest employers' employees. Once both are completed, develop a strategy to take the analysis to existing businesses and work with them on their product mix and other identified needs and opportunities.

- **Capital** – Both the City of Susanville and the County of Lassen have CDBG Program Income and Revolving Loan Funds to assist businesses and microenterprises<sup>22</sup>. The County and City should continue to apply for funds to recapitalize these resources and help businesses that are eligible (County of Lassen received 2012 approval). The County has an active CDBG Business Assistance and Microenterprise Financial Assistance Program with staff and an underwriter. The Microenterprise Technical Assistance Program is contracted with Alliance for Workforce Development. The City has funding for economic development projects and a loan program, however, requires a Reuse Plan before funds could be disbursed. The State will be issuing a standard Reuse Plan in early fall 2012 that the City may adopt and begin administering their program with their existing program income and specific program guidelines. This would nearly double the loan funds that are available to businesses.

Given the County already has the administrative infrastructure in place to market, manage, and distribute the business loan funds:

- **Recommend** the City and County enter into an MOU allowing the County to administer CDBG economic development loan funds for the City, thereby leveraging staff and administration costs. The MOU should be based on a HUD “Subrecipient Agreement” with appropriate changes to the title and language to reflect an MOU<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> Appendix A – data report, *Factors Affecting Economic Performance*

<sup>22</sup> Appendix M – County of Lassen CDBG Loan Program

<sup>23</sup> [http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=DOC\\_17086.pdf](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=DOC_17086.pdf),  
[http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/comm\\_planning/communitydevelopment/library/subrecipient](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/communitydevelopment/library/subrecipient)

- **Recommend** additional training for staff administrating the loan program, such as, economic development financing courses offered by: CALED, California Enterprise Development Authority (CEDA), National Development Council, and International Economic Development Council (IEDC). This will help staff be more effective in screening viable loan projects.

Other local investment platforms are being developed and tested at the regional level through a consortium of nonprofit financing organizations such as NoRTEC and USDA. Given this initiative is in the works, recommend the County/City work with the consortium as they roll out programs to see how the jurisdictions can participate.

In the meantime, alternative financing assistance such as Cooperative Financing can be accessed through Lassen County's underwriter, USDA, and other organizations. USDA's recently released (August 2012) guidebook *Access to Capital*<sup>24</sup> will assist in identifying programs.

- **Business Assistance/Entrepreneurial Training** – Business assistance and training is occurring through the Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD). Given Lassen College's integration of entrepreneurship with key curriculum there will be additional opportunities for assistance and training. Recommend business assistance and training offer programs/courses on Customer Service, Hospitality, Retail Development, and Government Contracting. As part of this role, there should be a concerted business retention visitation program.
- **Government** – As it relates to business assistance, government's role is to provide access to and be a conduit for resources and tools which are deployed in the community by partner organizations.

Key areas where government must be efficient is in permitting and in responding to and serving the public. Government is typically the lead agency on readiness/business recruitment in absence of an assigned person or organization. A preference policy for local purchases of materials is used by many governments as a method of assisting local businesses.

#### Performance Measurements

- Retail demand and leakage; number of Downtown and Uptown businesses; new retail business licenses; Downtown and Uptown vacancy rates.
- Amount available in loan fund(s); amount loaned; amount (percentage) in arrears; dollar amount of loan applications in queue.
- Number of participants in workshops (customer service, hospitality, retail development, government contracting, entrepreneurship).
- Average number of days to issue permits; City/County dollars committed to economic development.

<sup>24</sup> Appendix N – CalFOR Access to Capital, USDA

## **Growing Local Action — Ensure a Quality Education**

Education is always a key element of creating a quality community. Education was not voted as one of the top three initiatives by the committee but was of concern particularly as it relates to delivery of education, quality of the education and bringing back youth. This may need to be revisited after other initiatives are up and running.

## 5.5 Initiative 3 – Enhance Traded Sectors

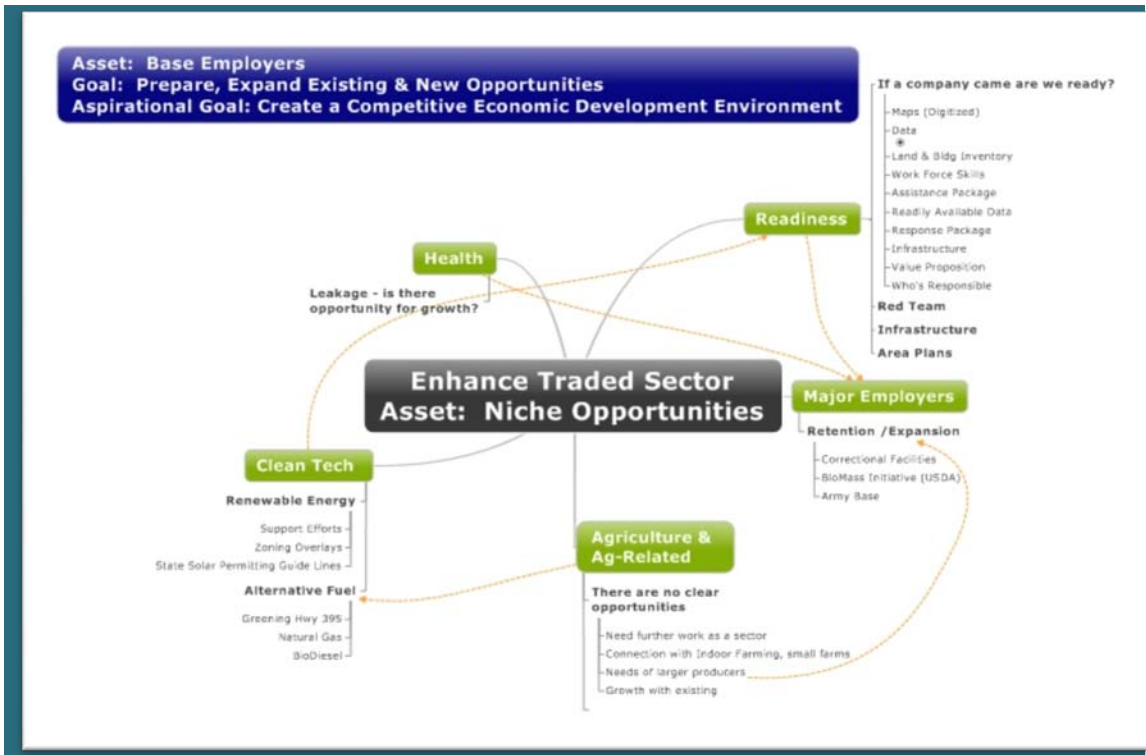
*Goal – Prepare for and Expand Existing and New Opportunities.*

*Aspirational Goal – Create a Competitive Economic Development Business Environment.*

Examples of competitive communities prepared for economic development:

- McPherson, KS (population 13,770) – [www.mcphersonindustry.com](http://www.mcphersonindustry.com)
- Dawson County, NB (population 26,000) – [www.dawsonareadevelopment.com](http://www.dawsonareadevelopment.com)
- Medford, OR /SoREDI (population 75,000) – [www.medfordmaps.org](http://www.medfordmaps.org)  
[www.soredi.org](http://www.soredi.org)
- Grenada, MS (population 21,700) – [www.grenadamississippi.com](http://www.grenadamississippi.com)

Figure 9 – Conceptual Action Plan Presented for CEDS Committee's Vote



## Enhance Traded Sectors Priority 1 Action — Readiness

- The County's preparedness was a key factor of the assessment process. The driving question is "If a company came, is Lassen County ready?" In the consultant's judgment, the answer is no.

There is much to be done to ensure the county is ready to take advantage of opportunities including:

- Digitize maps – Lassen County has not digitized their zoning, land use, or other maps. County planners and others are spending time and relying on hard copy ordinances to respond to questions and issue permits. This manual approach is inefficient and presents a less-than-business-friendly image. See [www.medfordmaps.org](http://www.medfordmaps.org) for one example of digitized maps.
  - Update County and City websites with current data and content. For an example of a content-rich website, see [www.grenadameansbusiness.com](http://www.grenadameansbusiness.com).<sup>25</sup>
  - Inventory land and buildings. See [www.mcphersonindustry.com/eds/properties](http://www.mcphersonindustry.com/eds/properties) for an example of presenting available sites.<sup>26</sup>
  - Conduct a workforce skills assessment that documents the size of the workforce, education and skills, training programs, etc.
  - Prepare a response package that includes detailed information, sites and buildings, specific assistance and/or incentives offered; the value and benefits Lassen County can offer a business, etc.<sup>27</sup>
  - Identify who is responsible for responding to leads.
- **Red Team** – In addition to readiness, it is recommended a Red Team be formed with volunteers who are knowledgeable and prepared to work with businesses interested in locating or expanding in Lassen County.

At the August 29 CEDS meeting, a number of CEDS Committee members volunteered to be on the Red Team. Initially the Red Team should consist of representatives from: County, City, Workforce Development, Utilities, SIRCO, and Lassen College. Other members can be added as needed and dependent on the client.

- **Infrastructure** – As with all the initiatives, infrastructure development is important for the traded sector – transportation, utilities, sewer, water, electricity, and gas. Investments have been made in key areas and should be regularly monitored especially around existing vacant buildings. This will prepare the City and the County for opportunities to accommodate a business expansion or location. Appendix D – Infrastructure Project List.
- **Retention/Expansion** – It is extremely important to call on the County's major employers at least annually. The purpose of the Red Team is to work on readiness and to come together for location and expansion projects. This Team should also be active in calling on the major employers to identify constraints and opportunities with these businesses.

<sup>25</sup> See Appendix Q – Website Data Tables

<sup>26</sup> See Appendix I – Site and Building Inventory Data Collection Templates

<sup>27</sup> See Appendix R – Outline of the Ideal Proposal Content

**Performance Measurements**

- Maps digitized; website content updated; website hits; inquiries from website.
- Sites and building inventory completed; acres ready for development; square feet of commercial, industrial, and retail available.
- Site visits conducted.
- New businesses located in Lassen County.
- Economic Impact Reports prepared by AFWD for major employers or new company expansions.

## Enhance Traded Sector Priority 2 Action — Clean Tech Industry

- **Clean technology, renewable energy, and alternative fuel** are emerging industry sectors that have potential for future growth.

Activities focusing on these sectors should be conducted as a supporting role to the utility companies as it relates to energy. However, adopting or joining north state counties in reviewing clean energy zoning overlays and state solar permitting guidelines is a proactive move.

- The County should monitor the activities, and preferably be at the table, for the USDA North State Biomass Initiative regarding assistance in reopening of closed lumber mills (if the initiative continues).
- With its natural gas, the City of Susanville may wish to look at opportunities of greening SR 36 and seeking assistance from California Energy Commission's AB118 program.

### Performance Measurements

- Assist the utilities in receiving approval for new lines to distribute power.
- New renewable energy or alternative fuel projects.

## Action — Major Employers

- Major employers (the correctional facilities, Army Base, health facilities, ranchers, and agriculture firms) should all be part of a retention/expansion visitation program. The County's Business Assistance programs provide technical assistance to small businesses. An expanded business retention/expansion visitation program focused on larger employers will serve to identify issues, needs, and/or opportunities for expansion and job creation.

## 5.6 Regional Initiatives

The Lassen County CEDS links with regional perspectives. Where ever possible Lassen County and the LEDC should leverage activities with regional initiatives. Currently regional efforts include participating in:

- The Lost Sierras and Lassen Rec & Tech (Lassen, Plumas, and Sierra Counties) – other regional counties will be target market to attract visitors.
- Capital – continue to work with underwriter, they are an excellent resource to help identify new local investment programs and to are working on efforts to streamline CDBG regulations.
- Clean Tech – work with north state counties addressing and adopting energy zoning overlays, solar permitting, and alternative fuel/vehicle initiatives.
- Attraction – there is no active business recruitment being implemented by a regional organization; through the Red Team a lead will be identified to be the point person with State of California, Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz).



## 6.0 ORGANIZING FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Organizing for implementation is critical to the success of the plan particularly given much of the work will need to be accomplished through collaborative actions and volunteers.

Throughout the planning process and work sessions, “ingredients” for successful roadmaps were reviewed. Without all five of these elements there may continue to be false starts, frustrations, and no change:

1. **Vision** – completed
2. **Capacity and Skills** – for the most part these are available but additional economic development technical assistance for implementation and structure may be needed. Also given that all members of the LEDC, except County and City, are volunteers there is need for support to manage and coordinate the various activities and support the Action Teams.
3. **Consensus** – the CEDS Committee came to consensus on priority actions.
4. **Resources** – *this is the major missing component to moving forward on some of the initiatives. There needs to be investment with an assurance of a return on investment.*
5. **Action Plan** – completed.

During the priority setting work session on August 29, 2012 attendees were asked to

- 1) Pledge how they could contribute to an initiative<sup>28</sup>;
- 2) Who they felt should be the Champion for the initiative; and
- 3) Those who should be involved.

These are incorporated in the organization section.

Also a separate Implementation Guide has been prepared for LEDC’s use that includes next steps, moving each initiative forward, identifying key collaborators, champions, budgets and timelines. The Guide may also be used to monitor progress.

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<sup>28</sup> Appendix O – Pledges

## 6.1 Organizational Structure

Because economic development is best facilitated as a public-private partnership, it is recommended the Lassen Economic Development Committee (LEDC) take the lead for managing and guiding the implementation through Action Teams with involvement of both the County and City as lead entities.

The LEDC should expand/revise their current mission statement to include the implementation of the Lassen County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (Roadmap); develop guiding principles; and be a committee associated with an administrative entity such as Alliance for Workforce Development. Through an MOU, the administrative entity can apply for certain funding (e.g. AmeriCorps, grants, foundations, etc.), manage the funds on behalf LEDC, and assist with monitoring performance and reporting to funding agencies.

Through the County or AFWD, LEDC should submit an application to AmeriCorps to request a year-long internship for a fellow student. This would provide some excellent support staff to LEDC.<sup>29</sup>

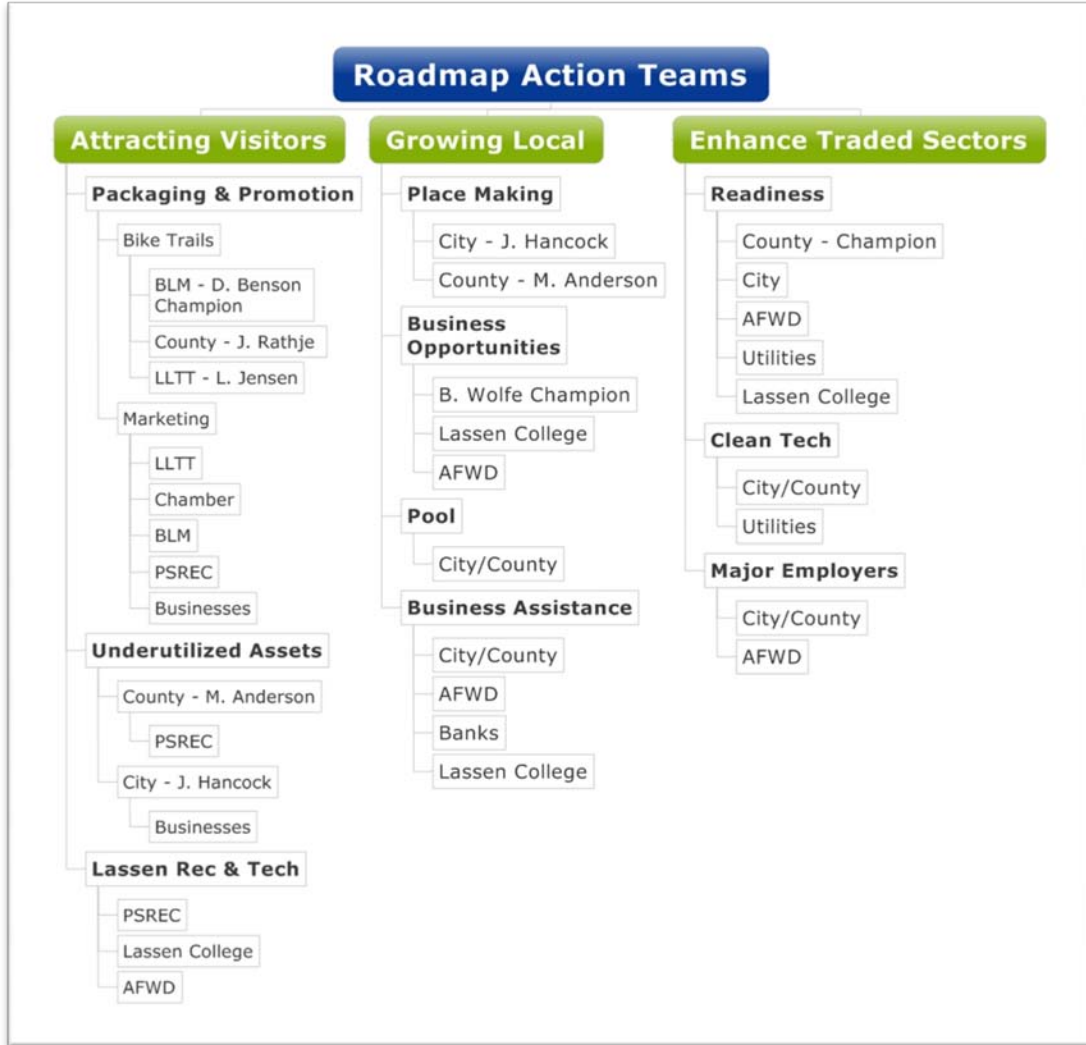
Figure 10 outlines a proposed organizational structure for the LEDC.



<sup>29</sup> Appendix P – AmeriCorps program information and applications

At the August 29, 2012 work session, several members pledged to work on action items and identified “Champions” to lead Action Tasks, as shown in the **Action Team** graphic below.

Figure 10 – Proposed Action Teams



## 6.2 Capacity Building

To launch this action roadmap LEDC may need some additional professional assistance for the first 30 to 90 days, a capacity building phase. In the Implementation Schedule, a matrix is provided for “getting organized” action items which include:

- Public meeting and acceptance of the CEDS Strategy.
- Additional work session(s) with Steering Committee to review action teams, champions, tasks, resources, and timelines.
- Reviewing the “low hanging fruit” i.e. one-time and organizational actions that will prepare LEDC to move forward quickly.
- Applying for an AmeriCorps Intern that could work with the Action Teams. This process could take 6 to 12 months to secure an intern.
- Requesting assistance from regional organizations such as NoRTEC for assistance in launching the plan.
- Requesting assistance from AFWD to be the administrative arm.
- Retaining professional services for key elements of the plan such as marketing.
- Additional CDBG / Loan Management training for county staff.
- Forming the Red Team.

## 6.3 Resource Development

Many of the actions can be developed through collaboration and pooling resources. Others will require seeking investment opportunities or grants.<sup>30</sup>

**Recommend** a **Lassen Opportunity Fund** be created whereby collaborators, private businesses, and individuals could provide initial or seed funding and on-going funding to initiatives based on deliverables and leveraging of funds. The Lassen Opportunity Fund goal should be \$150-\$250,000.

- Opportunity Fund could be “seeded” with a one-time \$35,000-\$50,000 pledge each from the City and County and an agreement to provide a percent of the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) and Sales Tax Revenue (which would be negotiated between LEDC, City and County) based on agreed upon deliverables and measurements.
- Raise additional seed funding from partner organizations.
- Raise seed and ongoing funding from local businesses particularly those who could benefit from participating in the plan.
- Request AFWD (a non-profit) manage the fund for LEDC.

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<sup>30</sup> Appendix S – Potential Funding Sources

## About the Consulting Team

Chabin Concepts' core competency is strategic thinking, creative marketing, and economic development program implementation.

We are more than a consulting group – we are a solutions **network**. We use our network to bring our clients the best practices of renowned experts in urban and rural economic development, site location analysis, and hands-on experience in implementing and managing competitive and results-oriented economic development programs.

Our goal is to assist in positioning cities, counties, regions, and states to win new jobs and investment by engaging the community and leadership in strategic planning **and** tactical implementation – *delivering a “Roadmap” to accomplish the mission.*

The consulting team for the County of Lassen included Audrey Taylor, President of Chabin Concepts and Victoria Doll, Principal Chabin Concepts. Advice and assistance was also provided by Mary Bosch, President, Marketek, and Rick Farley, experienced professional in CDBG management and implementation.



**Audrey Taylor, President and CEO, Chabin Concepts, [www.chabinconcepts.com](http://www.chabinconcepts.com)**

With over 32 years' experience, Audrey has assisted and represented over 350 communities in California, Colorado, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Hawaii, and Alaska. She has worked with companies such as 3M, Sony, Spectra-Physics, Joy Signal, Rio Pluma, and NCI Building in strategic location analysis. Audrey is a member of the USDA CalFOR Access to Capital working group appointed by Dr. Glenda Humiston and also serves as the Marketing Chair for TeamCalifornia. She has been honored with the prestigious CALED Golden Bear award for her vision and drive in economic development.



**Victoria Doll, Principal, Chabin Concepts**

Victoria has spent the last 25 years of her career in economic development. She has written and implemented marketing and business attraction plans, business retention programs, market feasibility studies, conducted community assessments, industry research and cluster analysis, and implement Chabin's partner tool EDsuite web.





# Participants in Lassen County CEDS Committee

This plan is a reflection of the opinions and priorities expressed by a cross-section of the community, including local, state and federal government, business and industry, banking and finance, education and workforce development, utilities, nonprofits, and local youth. Their active participation gave meaning to the recommendations within.

Jenna Aguilera, Lassen County Planning and Building Services | Maurice Anderson, Lassen County Planning and Building Services | Jim Chapman, Lassen County Board of Supervisors | Jared Hancock, City of Susanville City Administrator | Jack Hanson, Lassen County Board of Supervisors | Nick McBride, City of Susanville City Council | Martin Nichols, Lassen County Administrative Officer | Jamie Smith, Lassen County Planning and Building Services | Brian Wilson, City of Susanville City Council | Larry Wosick, Lassen County Board of Supervisors | Stan Bales, Bureau of Land Management | Dennis Benson, Bureau of Land Management, Eagle Lake Field Office | Heidi Perry-McCourt, Lassen National Forest | Nick Albonico, High Desert State Prison | Chuck Downs, Subway | Bob Edwards, Banner Lassen Medical Center | Dirk Ellena, Best Western Trailside Inn | Rhonda Fuller, High Desert State Prison | Campbell Jameson, Diamond Mountain Casino and Hotel | Eric Mumaw, California Correctional Center | Kathie Garnier, Eagle Home Mortgage and Historic Uptown Susanville Association | Maria Nye, Plumas Bank | Dr. Marlon Hall, Lassen Community College | Teri Hiser-Haynes, Alliance for Workforce Development | Bob Marshall, Plumas-Sierra Rural Electric Cooperative | Theresa Phillips, Lassen Municipal Utility District | Scott Welch, Plumas-Sierra Rural Electric Cooperative | Patti Hagata, Lassen County Chamber | Louise Jensen, Lassen Land and Trails Trust | Elizabeth Fernandez, Lassen Community College Student Senate | Bob Pyle, Lassen County Supervisor | Brian Dahle, Lassen County Supervisor | Jim Wolcott, Lassen County Fair | Ron Barnes, High Desert State Prison | Robert Gower, California Correctional Center | Robert Kennedy, SIRCo | Jim Mackay, Susanville Indian Rancheria | Jeff Trump, Haws, Theobald & Auman (CPA) | Vicki Lozano, Mount Lassen Properties | Penny Artz, County Cleaners | Craig Hemphill, Lassen Ag Commissioner | Eileen Majors, Mountain Valley Living Magazine | David Lile, U.S. Cooperative Extension | Seth Peterson, Sierra Cascade Nursery | Kerri Cobb, U.S. Bank | Traci Holt, AFWD | Joel Rathje, Trails Coordinator, Lassen County Public Works | Eloise Debruler, FCI Herlong | Bill Stewart, LMUD | George Robson, Robson Planning | Shelly Noack, Tri Counties Bank | Garrett Taylor, Lassen College |



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