

SIERRA REGIONAL Economic News

VOLUME 27

THE PEAKS, HILLS AND VALLEYS OF THE FRONT RANGE OF THE SIERRA NEVADA

DECEMBER 5, 2010

WHERE THE CLIMATE FOR BUSINESS IS PERFECT

WNC and NNDA: A winning partnership



Rob Hooper, NNDA Executive Director

If ever there was an effort that requires vision, creativity, energy and collaboration, it must surely be economic development. Northern Nevada Development Authority (NNDA) is our region's driver in this effort, but it is a mission that demands plenty of fuel in the tank from other community stakeholders.

Western Nevada College (WNC) is one partner, and there are many others, too, who are wholly committed to working with individuals, companies and agencies to help businesses and the members of our workforce succeed.

As the college looks to the future, a key strategic goal is to focus on educational programs and career preparation for jobs in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields. STEM proficiency in our workforce will likely become the catalyst for future business development and success - the fuel that powers our economic engine.

According to Carol Lange, WNC vice president of Academic and Student Affairs, "Our partnership with NNDA allows us to pursue collaborative workforce initiatives. We're able to discuss opportunities and plan for the future. NNDA is positioned to define industry's workforce needs and the college is aligned to offer the necessary training to current and future employees."

Through a number of valuable collaborations, positive results are occurring, including:

- The college's partnership with the Carson City Manufacturer's Collaborative and Nevada Industry Excellence has led to development of a targeted academic program of study helping employees in local companies learn academic skills that are specifically needed in their industry. Companies pay for the academic classes, with the individual employee investing the time outside of their job to improve their workforce skills, thus earning college credits that could apply toward a degree.

- WNC and K-12 educational leaders are supporting NNDA in the effort to pilot the "Dream It, Do It" program, an educational initiative to help our young adults connect to and prepare for careers.

- On the Carson City campus, WNC provides work experiences for unemployed Nevadans who have registered with JOIN (Job Opportunities in Nevada) and welfare services. In addition to helping the college serve the community, the partnership has also afforded some participants the skills to be hired into a permanent job.

- In Lyon County, WNC has provided industrial safety training at companies in the Fernley Industrial Park, and for mining industries in Mason Valley.

- In Churchill County, the college taught the skills required for local residents to qualify for employment in drilling of geo-thermal wells.

- Throughout the region, WNC's Specialty Crop Institute partners with farm industry experts and local growers to offer seminars and conferences on developing low water, high-yield crops such as viticulture and cut flowers, and on practices to extend the growing season.

The efforts are as diverse as the needs and the solutions have broad reach into our communities. Business-education partnerships must continue with vigor and purpose. With engagement and collaboration, our region's economic development efforts can and will succeed.

For more information on these and other opportunities through WNC, please contact Anne Hansen, Director of Information & Marketing Services at anne@wnc.edu or call 775-445-3235. For information about NNDA, visit www.nnda.org, email nnda@nnda.org or call 775-883-4413. ■



Yette DeLuca received a scholarship check to attend the Carson City Chamber Leadership 2011 session from the Chamber's Young Business Professionals at their recent mixer held at the Brewery Arts Center. From left, 2011 co-chair Christina White, DeLuca, co-chair Jonathan Olivas and outgoing chair Megan Walsh.

Brewery Arts Center important for business and the economy

The Brewery Arts Center (BAC) is in the midst of a transition, just as many local nonprofits and small businesses are reassessing how they should conduct their operations in a recession. And like many other nonprofits, the BAC is beginning to shed the concept of presenting itself as a 'charity' and is getting more attune to conducting its affairs as a 'business.'

Yes, we have a cultural and educational mission to uphold, and whatever profits we may be fortunate enough to earn must find its way back into the operations of the institution. However, we are allowed to make a profit, and strategically meeting our fiduciary responsibility ensures that the BAC will be an important economic asset to Carson City and the Sierra Region for years to come.

Wait a minute - did I just say the arts are an economic asset? You bet! Nationally, the arts and culture industry generates \$166.2 billion in economic activity each year. And about two-thirds of that amount is indirect, meaning it's tied to event-related expenditures made by audiences throughout the community at other businesses that benefit from what we do programmatically

Locally, that means the BAC stimulates twice as much economic activity and tax revenue as it generates on its own through the jobs, materials, programs and services it supplies directly. Don't believe it? Just look at what a once little operation like Artown has already done for Reno's downtown infrastructure in just ten years. The arts can have the same impact right here in Carson City just as effectively.

However, like many nonprofits, BAC's success depends a great deal on the availability of your discretionary income - those funds left over for tickets and donations after you've paid for the food, clothes, overhead and other essentials you must provide for your family or business. During a recession, there's less extra money (if any) available for 'charitable' contributions.

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That's why nonprofits have to change their collective thinking about giving policies, because it's really not about providing a charitable handout as much as it is about making an investment in the diverse economic and social fabric that defines our community.

That's why the BAC is now engaged in its new 100/100 program with the goal of generating \$100,000 in 100 days, as a means to kick start new initiatives and renewed relationships we need to support the region's entire cultural community. Our efforts to build greater awareness of the importance of the arts industry will be demonstrated through expanded sponsorships with business, increased collaborations with other local arts and service programs, and providing a more effective experience for our patrons.

We call this effort "Creating Together," which comes from the understanding that the arts

are not just an essential part of what makes a great community, we ARE the community.

For more information, please call 775-883-1976, visit our website at www.breweryarts.org or come in to the BAC at 449 West King Street in Carson City. ■