

ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVES

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NNDA
Northern Nevada
Development Authority

Update: Sierra Region Strategic Focus



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When NNDA developed its current strategic plan, it became clear that there were six strategic areas of focus for economic development of the Sierra Region of Nevada. The graphic at right identifies these areas, which I detailed in this column back in August 2017. What follows is an update about our current priorities and activities for the region's economic ecosystem.

ECOSYSTEM: Monitoring our region's economic ecosystem is an ongoing activity. The first meeting of the Sierra Region Economic Council (SREC) back in September 2017 validated that better metrics were needed for assessing the region's achievements and identifying gaps. NNDA has been working to develop a set of useful metrics for presentation during the upcoming Spring SREC meeting. The NNDA Construction and Design Committee has been working diligently to enhance the Nevada Certified Sites program and facilitate adding to the region's inventory of available industrial space.

WORKFORCE: Workforce development is an ongoing priority for the U.S., the state, and our region. Western Nevada College (WNC) recently established the Realizing Opportunities for the American Dream to Succeed (R.O.A.D.S.) Workgroup which will report to the WNC Institutional Advisory Council. The workgroup will complete, launch and monitor the non-traditional student pipeline project initiated as a partnership between WNC and NNDA. R.O.A.D.S. will focus on recruitment of qualified students for career programs which support workforce development and are part of a labor pipeline which meets the needs of Sierra Region employers. State Senator Ben Kieckhefer and State Assemblyman Al Kramer volunteered to be adjunct members of the workgroup, as they support the project's vision and goals.

The Western Manufacturing Alliance (WMA) is also part of the R.O.A.D.S. partnership, as the region's manufacturing sector is rapidly growing and skilled workers are needed. WMA now has its permanent executive board in place, and is represented on the R.O.A.D.S. Workgroup. Visit www.wmanevada.com for more information about the organization.

INFRASTRUCTURE: All eyes are on Washington, DC, as President Trump and the U.S. Congress determine how to address our nation's infrastructure needs – roads, bridges, energy, transportation, and internet. Here in the Silver State, NNDA is working on expansion of the region's rail industry sector. The Sierra Region is well positioned to become an intermodal logistics hub anchored by an enhanced rail infrastructure and with easy access to Nevada's excellent air and highway arterial infrastructure. At the request of a group of manufacturers, NNDA is working with their area's local internet provider on an affordable solution to better meet the internet needs of the companies.

FUNDING: While access to capital remains limited, NNDA is encouraged that the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) understands this is an issue which must be addressed. In addition to improving the ability of small businesses to contract with federal government agencies, SBA is also working on expanding access to capital for rural areas through local banks and on easier access to SBA-guaranteed loans. U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is also working to expand access to USDA-guaranteed loans.



Graphic by Michelle Tibma Marketing & Graphic Design

EMPLOYERS/JOB: The Sierra Region economy is growing once again, stimulated by both the end of the Great Recession and the recent tax cuts by our federal government. Since January of this year, we have five new serious projects and a total of twenty-eight active projects within the region. NNDA has business development campaigns initiated which showcase the region's many possibilities and support the objectives of our partner counties. We are also working directly with our resident businesses to assist with their desired growth and expansion. Our outreach to Nevada tribal communities is ongoing, as we present possible business opportunities or provide requested strategic feedback regarding tribal economic development initiatives.

PLACE: Meeting the requirements of the region for all types of real estate continues to be a challenge. The expansion and growth of the Sierra Region's many industry sectors is accompanied by the demand for mid-tier homes. NNDA continues its partnership with Nevada Rural Housing Authority to focus on obtainable housing to meet workforce needs. The Nevada Certified Sites program has added three approved sites to the region's inventory of available industrial space. Three more sites are currently undergoing the approval process.

While NNDA is focused on economic development priorities for the Sierra Region as a whole, we also support the objectives of each partner county. Please join us on Wednesday, March 28, 2018 for our monthly educational event from 6:45-9:00 am at the Carson Nugget Casino. Bob Potts, Research Director with the Governor's Office of Economic Development, will define economic impact, followed by our partner county representatives who will discuss how each county is supporting regional economic development and individual county goals. The panel includes: Mayor Bob Crowell, Chair Carson City Board of Supervisors; Bob Hastings, Chair, Lyon County Board of Commissioners; Lance Gilman, Vice Chair, Storey County Board of Commissioners; Pete Olsen, Chair, Churchill County Board of Commissioners; and Steve Thaler, Chair, Douglas County Board of Commissioners. Nevada's U.S. Senator Catherine Cortez Masto will then provide an update about Washington, DC activities. Visit www.nnda.org for more information.