

# CENTRAL SIERRA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT



**2017-2022 CEDS  
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

2017

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction &amp; Executive Summary</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Economic Development Strategy &amp; Components</b>	<b>33</b>
Introduction	4	Approach/ Process	34
Approach	5	Strategies, Projects, and Initiatives	35
Background & Existing Conditions	6		
CSEDD Vision	7	<b>Implementation Agenda &amp; Evaluation Framework</b>	<b>43</b>
Economic Development Strategy & Components	8	Implementation Schedules	44
Impacts on Local Community & Economy	13	Organizational Structure	53
<b>Background &amp; Existing Conditions</b>	<b>14</b>		
CSEDD Background	15	<b>Appendix</b>	<b>56</b>
Existing Conditions	17	Survey Results	57
Industry Clusters	24	SBA Worksheet	64
Industry Growth	25	Photo Credits	65
Electricity Generation Capacity	25	Public Comments	66
Demographic Trends	26		
Education Trends	28		
Housing Trends	29		
Labor Trends	29		
Broadband Availability	30		
Environmental Trends	31		
<b>Vision Statement</b>	<b>32</b>		



The background image is a composite. The top half shows a bright sun setting behind a dark, forested hill, with long, colorful rays of light extending across the sky. The bottom half shows a close-up of a concrete dam structure with water flowing over it, creating a white, turbulent surface. A dark blue horizontal bar is positioned across the middle of the image, containing the title text.

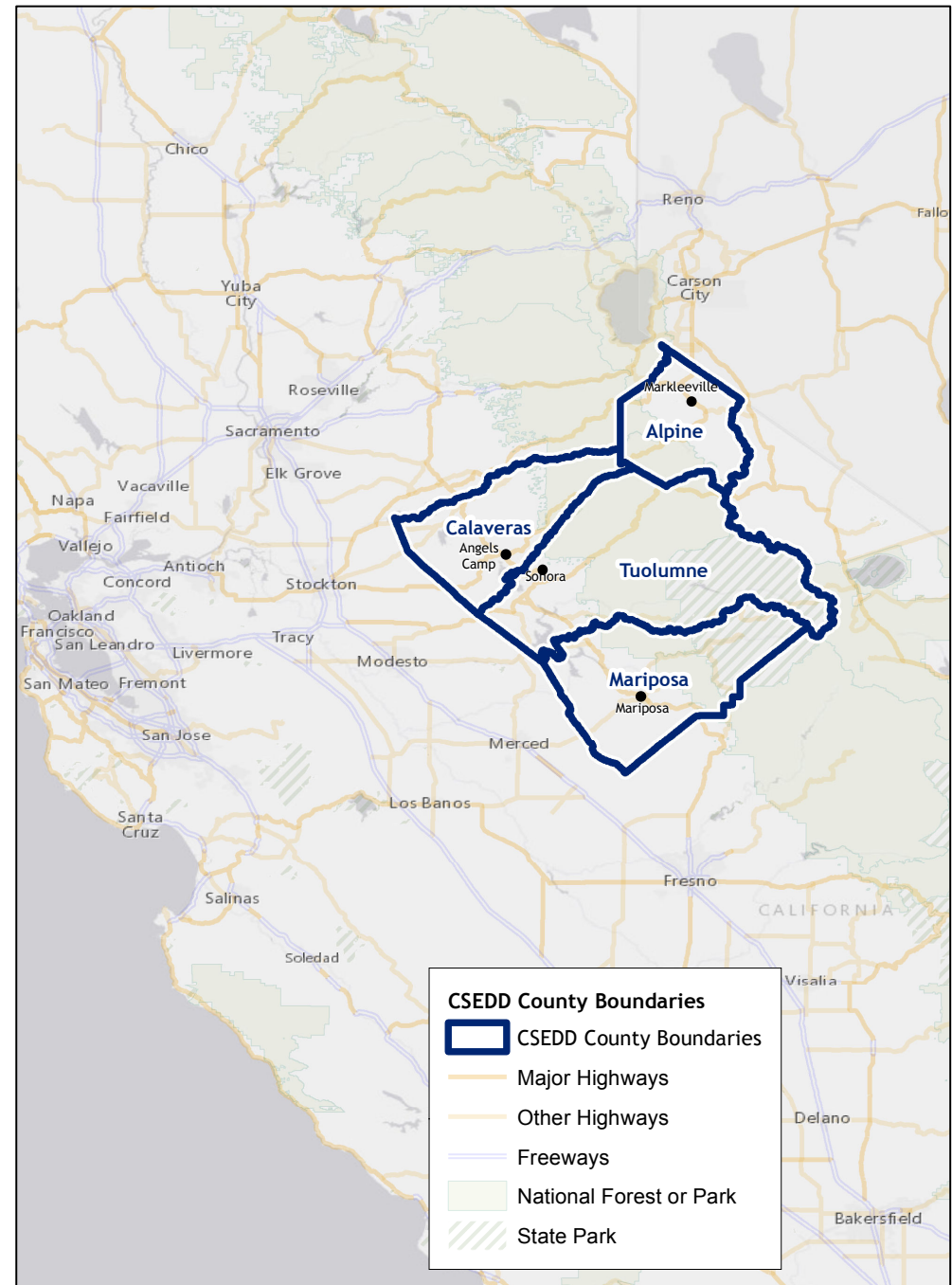
# **INTRODUCTION & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

# INTRODUCTION

In 1976, the Central Sierra Economic Development District (CSEDD) was formed as a Joint Powers Authority (JPA), and established as an EDA-recognized economic development district. The CSEDD region encompasses the four counties of Alpine, Calaveras, Mariposa, and Tuolumne and includes the cities of Angels Camp and Sonora. The Central Sierra Economic Development District's vision is to be an economic development resource to its member entities as well as a leader in communications between local counties and state or federal governments.

The Central Sierra Economic Development District partnered with the Center for Economic Development at California State University, Chico (a competitively awarded EDA University Center) to create a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the CSEDD region. CSU, Chico worked with CSEDD to identify key stakeholders and formed a CEDS planning committee. Upon gathering community members, county officials, and private stakeholders from all four counties, CSU, Chico completed stakeholder interviews, hosted three community meetings and conducted a SWOT analysis in Sonora. This document is the culmination of those efforts and is the five-year road map promoting economic vitality within the CSEDD region.

By focusing on eight key regional objectives including workforce development, business resiliency, infrastructure, and disaster planning, this economic development plan will create a stronger, more resilient region, able to withstand both economic and natural disaster disruptions. This document outlines the region's goals and objectives and their associated implementation agenda, and performance measures.





# ■ CSEDD APPROACH AND DEVELOPMENT

## THE APPROACH

### Development of the CEDS Committee

The CSEDD strategy committee was chosen by members on the CSEDD board. Each CSEDD board member identified a community member who was not currently associated with the CSEDD. Individuals from county governments, non-profits, community organizations, and private entities were selected from each of the four counties to participate on the strategy committee, in addition to three current CSEDD board members.

### Community Feedback & Input

CSU, Chico's Center for Economic Development constructed an 18 question survey about the current and future needs of the region. The survey focused on barriers to economic development, business needs, previous economic development projects in the region, and building regional economic resilience. The survey was created in Constant Contact by the Center for Economic Development and a live link was provided to the CEDS planning committee and the CSEDD board. The survey link was sent out to CSEDD contacts, a press release was sent to local radio and media outlets, and the survey was hosted on the CSEDD and CED website. A total of 17 responses were received. A summarized copy of the survey results can be found in the Appendix of this document.

To gain additional community feedback, representatives from the Center for Economic Development (CED) led three community town hall meetings within the CSEDD region. The results of the community survey were compiled and analyzed, and the key findings were presented to attendees at each meeting. Meetings took place in Angel's Camp, Markleeville, and Mariposa and were two hours long. The key findings were discussed on both a regional and community level. During these discussions, community members addressed further key issues that were not originally identified in the survey results.

All of the feedback received from both the community survey and meetings were compiled along with regional economic and demographic data collected by CED staff. These findings were used as an integral part of the CEDS strategy committee's SWOT analysis. The results helped committee members better understand and address the needs of the region and identify the objectives and goals incorporated within this comprehensive economic development strategy.

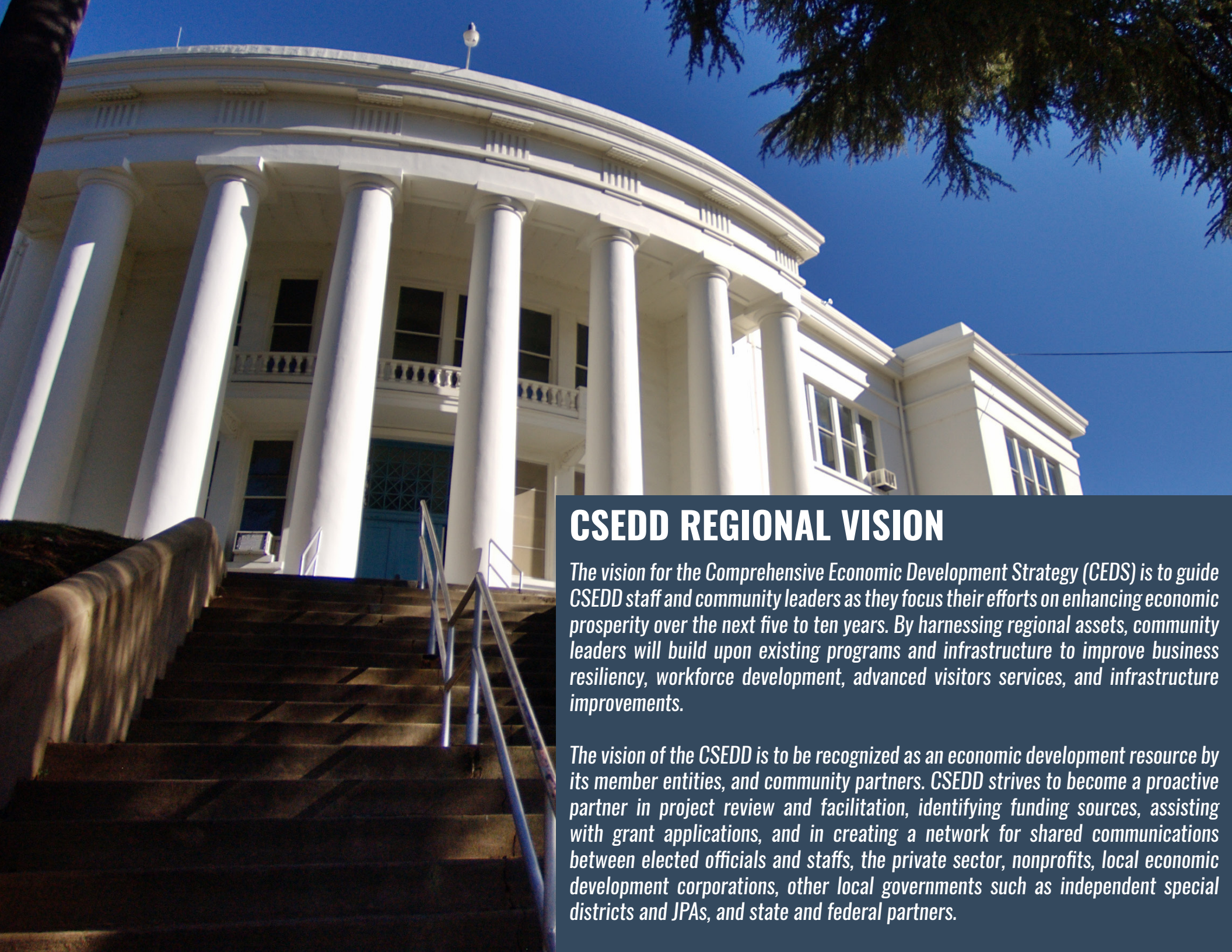
## KEY FINDINGS

- 1 THERE IS A LACK OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE REGION.**
- 2 THERE IS A SHORTAGE OF SKILLED LABOR WITHIN THE REGION.**
- 3 LOCAL ZONING AND PERMITTING IS HINDERING GROWTH.**
- 4 THERE ARE SOME COUNTIES NOT COLLECTING TOT FROM AIRBNB TYPE VACATION RENTALS.**
- 5 INFRASTRUCTURE INCLUDING BROADBAND IS LACKING WITHIN THE REGION.**
- 6 VISITORS' SERVICES ARE INADEQUATE AND IN WRONG LOCATIONS.**
- 7 EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES ARE NOT BEING UTILIZED.**
- 8 ONE-DAY SHIPPING IS NOT AVAILABLE WITHIN THE CSEDD REGION.**

# SUMMARY OF CURRENT CONDITIONS IN THE CSEDD REGION







## CSEDD REGIONAL VISION

*The vision for the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is to guide CSEDD staff and community leaders as they focus their efforts on enhancing economic prosperity over the next five to ten years. By harnessing regional assets, community leaders will build upon existing programs and infrastructure to improve business resiliency, workforce development, advanced visitors services, and infrastructure improvements.*

*The vision of the CSEDD is to be recognized as an economic development resource by its member entities, and community partners. CSEDD strives to become a proactive partner in project review and facilitation, identifying funding sources, assisting with grant applications, and in creating a network for shared communications between elected officials and staffs, the private sector, nonprofits, local economic development corporations, other local governments such as independent special districts and JPAs, and state and federal partners.*



# **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES AND COMPONENTS**

**Objective One:** *Enhance visitors' services within the CSEDD region*

**Objective Two:** *Build a skilled workforce within the CSEDD region*

**Objective Three:** *Promote and develop community and business resiliency within the CSEDD region*

**Objective Four:** *Promote coordinated marketing efforts throughout the CSEDD region*

**Objective Five:** *Promote regional infrastructure improvements*

**Objective Six:** *Expand upon existing business retention and expansion programs*

**Objective Seven:** *Create a uniform Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) collection plan for vacation rentals across the entire region*

**Objective Eight:** *Improve regional airport infrastructure to support faster shipping & delivery services*





# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

## **Objective One: Enhance visitors' services within the CSEDD region.**

**Action Item:** Develop a regional tourism partnership organization

**Action Item:** The CSEDD will review current visitors' services, including location and identify more effective locations for visitors' services

**Action Item:** The CSEDD will successfully move at least one visitor service center to an optimal location

Enhancing visitor services throughout the region was identified in the SWOT analysis as a major opportunity for the region. Three of the six, non-governmental sectors with the highest location quotients in the region are all tourism-related and tourism was brought up in all three community meetings. With its vast public lands, outdoor recreation opportunities, and Yosemite National Park, the four county region has been tourist dependent for decades and will continue to be in the foreseeable future.

The CSEDD region is in a unique position to capitalize on multi-county visitors. Unlike many California counties, most visitors are not just coming to the region to go to a specific location. There are a few exceptions such as Alpine County ski and fishing opportunities that are sole destinations but for the most part, even visitors to Yosemite stay or visit other parts of the region. Because of this multi-destination advantage, it is imperative that groups throughout the region work together to optimize visitor services and cross promote resources throughout the region. By enhancing visitors' services, economic developers in the CSEDD are aiming to create a value-add proposition for would be travelers even in tough economic times. By setting themselves apart from other, less traveler friendly regions the regional economy would become more resilient.

## **Objective Two: Build a skilled workforce within the CSEDD region.**

**Action Item:** Increase school dual enrollment of the Columbia College CTE High School Articulation program

**Action Item:** Enhanced partnerships between CSEDD staff and board members and the Mother Lode Work Force Investment Board (WIB)

**Action Item:** Promote the Columbia College Water Resource Management program

**Action Item:** Establish high school off campus tech center and innovation lab in Calaveras County

Building a skilled workforce was identified in the community survey and all three of the community meetings as being one of the most important issues facing the region today. This is an important issue for two distinct reasons. First, the community members surveyed felt that the business community does not have access to a skilled workforce to fulfil its needs. Second, the "brain drain" throughout the region is one of the worst in the State. All four counties in the region have had negative net migration for over a decade. Opportunities have to exist or young professionals will have no reason to stay in the area. Workforce development is one or several necessary tools for solving both problems.

The CTE High School Articulation program offers a unique opportunity for high school students to receive college credits. Columbia College Career Technical Education (CTE) collaborates with local and regional high school programs to develop articulation agreements, including alignment of course skills and concepts, the possibility of advanced placement, and credit by examination options. The goal of this action item is to have over 200 high school students enrolled in the region with three counties (Alpine County does not have a high school) having at least two high schools with CTE agreements in place by 2019.

In addition, Columbia Community College offers a program in Water Resource Management, leading to a career in in water treatment, water distribution, wastewater management, groundwater management, and much more. CSEDD board members will be promoting the program for Columbia College at

the local level and expects Columbia College will see a 10 percent increase in program enrollment by fall 2020 as a result.

During the SWOT analysis, it was determined that Mother Lode WIB is an excellent resource for local businesses and job seekers; however, it was agreed that it is currently being underutilized. As a result, the CEDS planning committee has determined that it is the responsibility of each of the CSEDD participating members to increase their WIB referrals which are currently very low.

### **Objective Three: Promote and develop community and business resiliency within the CSEDD region.**

**Action Item:** Develop a long-term permanent response recovery strategic plan to replace the existing preliminary plan

**Action Item:** Development of Calaveras County Chamber of Commerce Butte Fire Recovery Center

**Action Item:** Development of Tuolumne County Disaster and Business Resiliency Center

When compared to other regions, the CSEDD region has many outside threats to the health of its business climate. The region is in a constant threat of fire danger, and is currently locked in a prolonged drought. In addition, government furloughs and prolonged recession have historically taken tolls on the region's important tourism industry, so it is imperative that local leaders be prepared to deal with human caused threats. Objectives 1 and 6 are to address the human caused threats while this objective is meant to address natural disasters. Fire danger and drought were far and away the two largest issues identified at the community meetings and the two seemingly go hand in hand. Both the Butte and Rim fires in the past several years have devastated the region, displacing hundreds of residents and destroying home-based businesses. It is the goal of the CSEDD and its partner organizations to reduce the short-term stress and the long-term economic effects on the business community due to the inevitable natural disasters.

The CEDS planning committee has developed a preliminary plan for business disaster response and economic resilience. However, the dedicated staff time necessary to develop a permanent, long-term disaster response plan was not available at this time. The long-term plan will include a process for monitoring and addressing business needs, assigning staff from each county communication responsibilities, developing a revolving loan fund for insurance gap funding, and connecting displaced businesses and employees with resiliency centers.

### **Objective Four: Promote coordinated marketing efforts throughout the CSEDD region.**

**Action Item:** Promote a coordinated marketing plan throughout the region

**Action Item:** Ensure all three counties within the GCVA are voting members of the association

**Action Item:** Partner with regional leaders to cross-train employees

Currently, there are different groups in each of the four CSEDD counties working on visitor attraction. As discussed in Objective One, many visitors to the area are regional visitors, not single destination visitors which means the four counties in the district need to work together to cross promote the region. The Gold Country Visitors' Association (GCVA) in conjunction with Visit California is the primary group coordinating a regional marketing effort. Unfortunately, the GCVA does not include the high Sierra in its region. Currently Tuolumne and Calaveras County Visitor Bureaus are members. Essentially half of the CSEDD region is without an organized marketing effort, including all of Alpine County.

Under the leadership of the CSEDD board, it will be the responsibility of the partner organization formed in Objective One to complete a multi-county strategic marketing plan. The plan will include cross-promotional items for all regional visitors' centers, connecting with Visit California, and a plan that includes out-reach to national and international visitors to California.

The simplest, yet most important, step in organizing a coordinated marketing effort is to cross-train employees and volunteers at all visitors' centers and chambers of commerce about regional efforts. The staff at the Alpine Chamber of Commerce or the Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau need to know what activities are available in Mariposa or Calaveras County and vice versa. This is especially important as many people enter and exit Yosemite NP at different entrances.



## **Objective Five: Promote regional infrastructure improvements**

- Action Item:** Seek State and Federal funding to provide broadband service to underserved and unserved communities
- Action Item:** Seek funding for non-highway road construction improvements to increase access to markets
- Action Item:** Phoenix Lake dredging project for sustainable water storage
- Action Item:** Seek funding for water and waste water treatment facility construction and expansion
- Action Item:** Seek funding for the Sierra Rail Expansion
- Action Item:** Encourage PG&E to expand natural gas infrastructure from San Andreas

During the SWOT analysis, the weakness that was identified as being in most need of attention was infrastructure. While several types of infrastructure were identified as being an issue throughout the region, the three largest identified issues were water storage security, lacking sewer line development, and broadband infrastructure. Upon the completion of the six outlined action items, regional businesses will benefit tremendously as access to markets, water and sewer capacity, and broadband all improve.

## **Objective Six: Expand upon existing business retention and expansion programs**

- Action Item:** Expand upon existing business retention and expansion programs
- Action Item:** AgPlus EDA Technical Assistance
- Action Item:** Obtain funding to further expand the BRE programs
- Action Item:** Provide ESRI Business Analyst support services

Business retention and expansion programs are some of the most important tools available to economic developers. Business attraction is a negative sum game as multiple regions compete for the same businesses that are interested in relocating. Communities are forced to offer more and more economic incentives and most just end up wasting scarce resources with little or no benefit. Additionally, high job growth often accompanies businesses in expansion mode, especially second stage companies. It is much easier to retain a business than it is to attract a new one, as the owner and employees are already routed in the community.

In partnership with the Alliance Small Business Development Center

(SBDC), CSEDD has been awarded a \$50,000 grant from USDA Rural Development to expand current business retention and expansion efforts into underserved communities. By partnering with CSEDD, the chambers, and local government, the needs of local small businesses will be assessed and met. Qualified local consultants will be used whenever possible including current SBDC consultants from San Joaquin and Stanislaus Counties. When needed regional consultants will be recruited to meet business needs where ever local consultant expertise is not available. CSEDD staff will identify clients and provide referrals to Alliance SBDC and will work in conjunction with Alliance SBDC to offer business trainings in the underserved high Sierra region. Furthermore, the CSEDD has entered into a partnership with the EDA University Center, CSU, Chico to provide local businesses with business assistance by utilizing ESRI's Business Analyst. CSEDD staff will make mapping and data requests on an as-needed basis and will remain the single point of contact with the business.

In 2015, the CSEDD partnered with CSU, Fresno, CSU, Chico, and Valley Vision to submit an IMCP designation proposal for food and beverage manufacturing. The designation, known as AgPlus, was awarded in July of 2015 and lasts through at least June of 2017. The federal and subsequent non-federal matching funds will be used to coordinate and develop projects within the region that address components of the AgPlus implementation strategy.

## **Objective Seven: Create a uniform Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) collection plan for vacation rentals across the entire region**

- Action Item:** Create a simple plan for Alpine and Calaveras counties to adopt
- Action Item:** Adopt a plan at the county level

Vacation rentals have skyrocketed throughout the CSEDD region. TOT is vital to many counties throughout California but is especially important to the CSEDD region as tourism is one of the region's most important sectors. Mariposa, Alpine and Tuolumne counties have seen dramatic increases in former long-term rentals being converted to AirBnB type vacation rentals over the past five years. Rentals are popping up seemingly everywhere whether or not the property is permitted or zoned for vacation rentals. Unfortunately, due to staff constraints and lacking a plan, Alpine and Calaveras counties have yet to begin collecting TOT on these types of properties. As hotel and motel nights slow, and the pressure for business

and visitor services increase, CSEDD must assist Calaveras and Alpine counties by helping them create a plan to start collecting revenue within the next year.

CSEDD board members will work together to create a simple plan for Alpine and Calaveras counties to start collecting TOT on internet-booked vacation rentals. Partners will explore what is currently working and what is not working in Mariposa and Tuolumne counties, keeping in mind that very little staff time can be dedicated to the monitoring of rentals that do not self-report.

### **Objective Eight: Improve regional airport infrastructure for faster shipping and delivery services.**

**Action Item:** Access current infrastructure and identify gaps to be filled

**Action Item:** Foster relationships with local shipping centers

**Action Item:** With the help of local shipping company representatives, create a plan to address the necessary infrastructure improvements

**Action Item:** Seek and obtain private and grant funding for necessary improvements

Air transportation is a huge barrier to entry (weakness) identified in the SWOT analysis. Businesses located in the CSEDD region have little to no access to one-day or overnight shipping options. This negatively affects the service industry, retailers, and producers. Over the next five years, the CSEDD will partner with the Tuolumne County Airports Department to ensure the proper infrastructure is developed to bring small cargo planes to the region. While the Columbia Regional Airport is located in Tuolumne County, the benefits of having daily cargo planes flying in and out of the County are tremendous and felt region wide.

With assistance from the CSEDD, the Tuolumne County Airports Department (TCAD) will create an asset inventory of current airport amenities. The inventory will also identify infrastructure gaps that may be keeping cargo planes from utilizing the facility. Upon completion, members of the TCAD and the CSEDD will share the report with local representatives from FedEx and UPS. Starting immediately, CSEDD representatives will build a relationship with the local representatives from the major companies to help further define what is needed at the airport to develop a shipping contract. Partners will create a strategic plan to make the Columbia Regional Airport attractable for FedEx or UPS to begin making cargo flights in at least once or twice per day.



## ■ IMPACTS ON LOCAL COMMUNITY AND ECONOMY

- 1** INCREASE VISITOR SPENDING WITHIN THE ENTIRE CSEDD REGION.
- 2** INCREASE BUSINESS PRODUCTIVITY AND REACH WITH FASTER SHIPPING & DELIVERY METHODS.
- 3** INCREASE BUSINESS PRODUCTIVITY WITH ACCESS TO BROADBAND THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE REGION.
- 4** REDUCE THE IMPACTS OF NATURAL DISASTERS BY CREATING AN ECONOMIC RESILIENCE RESPONSIVE PLAN.
- 5** ENCOURAGE PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT WITH IMPROVED WATER & SEWER SYSTEMS.
- 6** INCREASE JOB GROWTH BY PROMOTING BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION THROUGH BRE PROGRAMS.
- 7** INCREASE TAX REVENUES THROUGH COLLECTION OF TOT IN ALL FOUR COUNTIES.
- 8** DEVELOP A MORE EDUCATED AND PRODUCTIVE WORKFORCE.
- 9** INCREASE BUSINESS RESILIENCY.
- 10** PROMOTE EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT BY INVESTING IN SUSTAINABLE WATER STORAGE.





## BACKGROUND & EXISTING CONDITIONS



# ■ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

## About the CSEDD District

The Central Sierra Economic Development District (CSEDD) has been the Central Sierra region's EDA-recognized economic development district for over forty years. Formed as a Joint Powers Authority in 1976, CSEDD's original member entities included Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, and Tuolumne counties as well as the cities of Sonora, Angels Camp, Jackson, Sutter Creek, Amador City, Lone, and Plymouth. Mariposa County was ratified into the District in November 2011.

CSEDD's board was comprised of both public and private sector members. An elected official from each county's Board of Supervisors and an alternate were appointed for a one-year term; one City Council member and an alternate are appointed from Sonora and Angels Camp; and one 5-Cities representative and alternate was appointed on behalf of Amador County's incorporated cities. Per the JPA, during a Mayor's Conference at the beginning of each calendar year, five mayors select their 5-Cities representative and alternate. With 10 available private sector Citizen Members positions, only two were filled as of June 30, 2011. In early 2011, it came to the CSEDD board's attention that its entire district's staff, including its Executive Director, would need to be laid off due to financial difficulties with the entity of employment, the Central Sierra Planning Council (CSPC), whose board is comprised of the same elected officials as CSEDD. Immediate dissolution of the CSEDD was discussed.

An interim solution was reached with the Tuolumne County Economic Development Authority (TCEDA) taking over management for one year starting July 1, 2011. TCEDA's staff of two agreed to finish the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) annual update by its deadline, prepare three years of final grant reports still outstanding to bring the District back into EDA compliance, apply for the next Partnership Planning Grant and, if awarded, research, compile, write and submit a new five-year CEDS by the end of their contract on June 30, 2012. TCEDA completed the ratification of Mariposa County, attended the Mayor's Conference selection meeting, completed the CEDS annual update and final reports by deadline, and was awarded an EDA planning grant #07-83-06806, and produced the 2012-2017 CEDS per contract agreement. Six new private sector Citizen Members were appointed by their respective counties, and together, a strengthened and more diverse CSEDD private/public board became the CEDS Committee to develop a new regional economic development strategy.

Starting on July 1, 2012, TCEDA was awarded a competitive two-year management contract to assist CSEDD manage and implement their regional vision, goals, and objectives. The 2012 CEDS was a work-in-progress, and served as a guide for future communications, cooperation, and planning for the five-county region. A five-year CEDS with annual updates was required to qualify for assistance from the U.S. Department of Commerce for Economic Development Administration (EDA) funding. Development and implementation of a five-year CEDS required a new appraisal of each member entity's needs, abilities, financing options, and project readiness, coalescing the region as a whole. With rapid and intense input and discussion from public/private CSEDD board members, regional economic development professionals, commercial and industrial developers, nonprofits, public utilities, public works departments, other community partners and interested residents; a regional economic development strategy and plan emerged. The 2012 CEDS was a better reflection of new and ongoing rural priorities, challenges and opportunities facing our five counties and seven cities, their businesses, visitors, and residents.

On February 5, 2014 Amador County chose to leave the CSEDD. The CSEDD Joint Power Authority agreement at that time required all cities within Amador County to leave the district also. Since that time the CSEDD Joint Power Authority agreement has been amended to allow cities to join themselves without requiring the county to be part of the district. On April 17, 2014 the CSEDD board extended its contract with the TCEDA for three years. The current contract will end on June 30, 2017.

Starting on January 1, 2016 the CSEDD board started its update to the five-year CEDS. In June of 2016, the CSEDD partnered with the Center for Economic Development at CSU, Chico to assist in the formation of the CEDS. The new five-year CEDS was approved by the CSEDD Board on November 17, 2016. The CEDS was circulated for public review between October 10, 2016 and November 9, 2016. The public comments can be found in the appendix of this document.



## About Alpine County

Alpine County is the smallest county by population in the State of California. There are no incorporated cities in the county. The county seat is Markleeville. Alpine County is located in the Sierra Nevada between Lake Tahoe and Stanislaus National Forest.

Alpine County was created on March 16, 1864 during a silver boom in the wake of the nearby Comstock Lode discovery. It was named due to its resemblance to the Swiss Alps. The county was formed from parts of Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Mono and Tuolumne Counties. At its formation, the county had a population of about 11,000 with its county seat in Silver Mountain City. By 1868 however, the local silver mines had proven unfruitful, and the population fell to about 1,200. The county seat was moved to Markleeville in 1875.

After the silver rush, Alpine County's economy consisted almost entirely of farming, ranching, and logging. By the 1920s, the population had fallen to just 200 people. With the construction of the Bear Valley and Kirkwood ski resorts in the late 1960s, the population increased to the present level. The population at the 2010 Census was 1,175 and has increased to 1,202 in the most recent estimates (2014). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the county has a total area of 743 square miles (1,920 km), of which 738 square miles (1,910 km) is land and 4.8 square miles (12 km) (0.7%) is water. The federal government owns about 96% of Alpine County, the highest percentage in California.

## About Tuolumne County

Tuolumne County is located in the Sierra Nevada of the U.S. state of California. The northern half of Yosemite National Park is located in the eastern part of the county. The City of Sonora is the county's only incorporated city, and Sonora is the county seat.

Tuolumne County was one of the original counties of California, created in 1850 at the time of statehood. Prior to statehood, it had been referred to as Oro County. Parts of the county were given to Stanislaus County in 1854 and to Alpine County in 1864. According to the 2000 census, the county has a total area of 2,274 square miles (5,890 km), of which 2,221 square miles (5,750 km) is land and 54 square miles (140 km) is water.

A California Department of Forestry document reports Tuolumne County's 1,030,812 acres (4,171.55 km<sup>2</sup>) include federal lands such as Yosemite National Park, Stanislaus National Forest, Bureau of Land Management lands, and Native American reservations. The population at the 2010 Census was 55,365 and has decreased to 54,347 in the most recent estimates (2014).

## About Mariposa County

Mariposa County is located in the western foothills of the Sierra Nevada in the U.S. state of California. It lies north of Fresno, east of Merced, and southeast of Stockton. The county seat is Mariposa. The county's eastern half is the central portion of Yosemite National Park.

There are no incorporated cities in Mariposa County; however, there are three communities recognized as census-designated places for statistical purposes. Mariposa County was one of the original counties of California, created at the time of statehood in 1850. While it began as the state's largest county, over time territory that was once part of Mariposa was ceded to twelve other counties: Fresno, Inyo, Kern, Kings, Los Angeles, Madera, Merced, Mono, San Benito, San Bernardino, San Luis Obispo, and Tulare. Thus, Mariposa County is known as the "Mother of Counties".

According to the 2000 census, the county has a total area of 1,463 square miles (3,790 km), of which 1,449 square miles (3,750 km) is land and 14 square miles (40 km) is water. The population at the 2010 Census was 18,251 and has decreased to 17,946 in the most recent estimates (2014).

## About Calaveras County

Calaveras County is located in the Gold Country of the State of California. The county seat is San Andreas. The City of Angels, locally referred to as Angels Camp, is the only incorporated city. Calaveras Big Trees State Park, a preserve of Giant Sequoia trees, is located in the county several miles east of the town of Arnold on State Highway 4. The uncommon gold telluride mineral calaverite was discovered in the county in 1861.

Mark Twain set his story, "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County", in the County. Each year, the county hosts a fair and Jumping Frog Jubilee, featuring a frog-jumping contest, to celebrate the association with Twain's story. Calaveras County was one of the original counties of the state of California, created in 1850 at the time of admission to the Union. Parts of the county's territory were reassigned to Amador County in 1854 and to Alpine County in 1864.

The county's geography includes beautiful landmarks, rolling hills, and giant valleys. According to the 2010 census, the county has a total area of 1,037 square miles (2,690 km), of which 1,020 square miles (2,600 km) is land and 17 square miles (40 km) is water. The population at the 2010 Census was 45,578 and has decreased to 44,921 in the most recent estimates (2014).

# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## Summary of the CSEDD Region

The four counties of the Central Sierra Economic Development District region are blessed with abundant natural assets but continue to face many challenges common to rural areas throughout the American West. One prominent challenge is difficult market access due to distance from interstate highways, ports, and rail facilities. The following sections describe the CSEDD's physical setting and infrastructure access connecting the region to outside markets.

## Physical Setting

The four counties that comprise the CSEDD region include some of the most dramatic terrain in the American West. The CSEDD region straddles the Sierra Nevada mountain range with Calaveras, Tuolumne, and Mariposa counties on the western slope oriented toward the San Joaquin Valley and Alpine County on the eastern slope oriented toward Nevada's Carson Valley. Many of the region's modern communities trace their roots to California's gold rush era, with much of today's population clustered along the same waterways and small valleys in the Sierra foothills that were once dominated by placer mining in the early years of the gold rush. The rugged topography between these foothill and ravine areas translates into winding and often slow-moving routes connecting the area's most densely populated communities. The crest of the Sierra presents another impediment to transportation, with winter weather often leading to pass closures. As home to many important state and federal reservoir projects like New Melones Lake and Lake McClure, the foothill areas of the CSEDD offer many outdoor activities such as fishing and recreational boating opportunities. Higher elevation areas of the CSEDD feature abundant timber resources and dramatic alpine landscapes often framed by exposed granite batholiths as found in Yosemite Valley.

## Highway and Rail Access

State and county highways are the economic backbone that connect communities throughout the CSEDD region's 5,500 square miles of rugged terrain to state and national markets. California State Route 49 serves as the vital north-south artery for foothill communities in Calaveras, Tuolumne, and Mariposa counties. Six east-west state highways provide connections to the San Joaquin Valley: Routes 12, 4, and 26 link Calaveras County to Stockton, Routes 108, 120, and 132 link Tuolumne County to Modesto, and Route 140 connects Mariposa County to Merced. Of these east-west state highways, only three crest the Sierra to provide eastward transportation connections: Highway 4 (Ebbetts Pass), Highway 108 (Carson Pass), and Highway 120 (Tioga Pass), although these passes are

subject to seasonal closures. State Routes 120, 140, and 41 are important gateway routes for visitors to Yosemite National Park.

A single rail connection to outside markets is provided by the Sierra Northern Railway, which operates a 48-mile line connecting Sonora in Tuolumne County to Union Pacific's mainline San Joaquin Valley route in Oakdale. The Union Pacific main line connects with port facilities including the Port of Stockton and the Port of Oakland. While Sierra Northern line does provide freight service for the lumber industry and other business in East Sonora's industrial zones, the railway's tight geometries and resulting speed restriction of 5 mph for much of its length preclude the line from being used extensively for commercial shipping.

## Telecommunications Access

Communities within the Central Sierra Economic Development District region are served by a handful of last-mile broadband service providers offering direct subscriber line, coaxial cable, and fixed wireless services. Direct subscriber lines are wired connections which generally meet the minimum definitions for "broadband service" as defined by the California Public Utilities Commission. Direct subscriber line service providers include AT&T throughout much of the region, along with smaller service providers with smaller focus region including Sierra Tel Internet, CALTEL Connections, Volcano Communications Group, Frontier Communications, and TDS Telecom. Coaxial cable is another wired connection technology that generally enables much higher download and upload speeds. Comcast is the franchisee for cable services for the vast majority of the developed areas within the four counties of the CSEDD region. Finally, fixed wireless services offer connectivity by broadcasting signals to a fixed receiver in a consumer's home or business. This technology can offer moderately fast service to harder-to-reach locations, but price and reliability may be lower than traditional wired technologies. There are many service providers offering fixed wireless connections in much of the CSEDD region, including Volcano Wireless, Conifer Communications, and unwired Broadband, Inc.

### County Size & Population

County	2010 Area Square Miles	2014 Population
Alpine	743	1,202
Calaveras	1,037	44,921
Mariposa	1,449	17,946
Tuolumne	2,274	54,347
<b>CSEDD Region</b>	<b>5,503</b>	<b>118,416</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau County Square Mileage (2010) & U.S. Census Bureau ACS 2014, 5-year estimates (2016)

# ■ CSEDD STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, & THREATS

- Abundance of Natural Resources
- Extensive Community Involvement
- Many Recreational Opportunities
- Access to Educational Institutions
- IMCP AgPlus
- Historic Appeal & Downtowns
- Vital Tourism Industry
- Regional Stability
- Entertainment including Black Oak Casino
- Strong Medical Facilities and Healthcare Industry
- Wine Industry

**S**  
STRENGTHS

- Lack of Affordable Housing
- Shortage of Skilled & Educated Workforce
- Aging and Inadequate Infrastructure
- Lack of Economic Diversity
- Distance to Markets
- Lack of Natural Gas Lines
- Poor Cell Service
- Sporadic Broadband Services
- Poor Public Transportation
- Vacancy of Commercial Properties-some counties have too many vacant; others not enough
- Inadequate visitors' centers
- Shortage of living-wage jobs
- Slow shipping & delivery services

**W**  
WEAKNESSES

- Improving Airport Infrastructure
- Advanced Visitors' Services
- Regional Coordinated Marketing Efforts
- Capitalization of Educational Resources
- Collection of TOT Revenues from AirBnB type rentals
- Build Healthcare Services for senior and aging population
- Quality K-12 education for attracting families
- Promote business training centers
- Expand Community College Opportunities

**O**  
OPPORTUNITIES

- Vocal Minority & Environmental Perception
- Federal & State Government
- Natural Disasters
- Drought
- Global Competitive Market
- Recession
- Marijuana Industry
- Reduction of Healthcare Services

**T**  
THREATS



# TOP STRENGTHS

After reviewing all the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the CSEDD region, community members and stakeholders identified the most important results of the region. While the CSEDD region has a variety of strengths, the following were determined to be the most important and unique to the region:

## 1. ABUNDANCE OF NATURAL RESOURCES

## 2. RECREATION & TOURISM

## 3. EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

## 4. HISTORIC APPEAL & DOWNTOWNS

## 5. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

### Abundance of Natural Resources

The CSEDD has an abundance of natural resources located in and around the region. Some of these include water, forest lands including logging, clean air, energy generation, and mineral extraction. The CSEDD region has been able to utilize these resources in a way that promotes sustainable forest practices and maximizes the benefits of the region's resources. In addition to the market value of these goods, the many lakes, forest lands, and natural resources are amenities to local residents and tourists.

### Recreation & Tourism

All four counties within the CSEDD are primarily rural in nature, and consist of several recreation sites including Grover Hat Springs, Calaveras Big Trees, Columbia State Historic Park, Yosemite National Park, and four national forests providing recreational activities like camping, hunting, fishing, and skiing. Many tourists travel to the region, spending money and renting vacation homes. In addition to the natural recreation within the region, the region has many local wineries attracting tourists to the area.

### Educational Resources

The CSEDD has several different educational resources available close to or within the district. The first is UC Merced which is the newest University in California with a special mission to increase the number of high-school students attending college within its region. UC Merced serves as a major base for advanced research and focuses on sustainable design and construction. The second is the Innovation Lab and Maker Space located in Sonora. The Innovation Lab is a place where businesses and non-profits can intermix and exchange ideas to make their communities a better place. The Innovation Lab is equipped with equipment and meeting spaces for businesses to be successful. In addition, Mother Lode job training is also a valuable educational resource to the workforce within the CSEDD region. Mother Lode provides job-seekers with resources for finding work as well as on-the-job training.

### Historic Appeal & Downtowns

The communities within the CSEDD region have a rich historical past that can still be seen today. The region includes remnants of gold mining and an old-west atmosphere. Also located within the region is the Mark Twain Cabin which is a California Historical Landmark and is also where Mark Twain wrote the short story *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*, still celebrated today in Calaveras County's Fair and Jumping Frog Jubilee which has grown to over 45,000 attendees annually. The rich history and historic appeal is a vital aspect that brings tourists and visitors into the region.

### Community Involvement

The community members within the CSEDD region are actively involved and are passionate about the well-being and growth of the region. Community members are engaged in new planning efforts and are part of decision making processes. Community involvement is a very important aspect of economic development planning because it helps generate ideas for projects and their implementation. The community knows what they want their community to be and actively voice their opinions.

# TOP WEAKNESSES

This section discusses the current weaknesses within the CSEDD region. The weaknesses were decided by broad community and stakeholder participation, and the following were determined as the top weaknesses in the region:

1. **SHORTAGE OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING**
2. **AGING & INADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE**
3. **DISTANCE TO MARKETS**
4. **LACK OF ECONOMIC DIVERSITY**
5. **LACK OF EDUCATED & SKILLED WORKFORCE**
6. **LOCAL PERMITTING & ZONING**

## Shortage of Affordable Housing

Throughout the entire CSEDD region there is a lack of affordable housing with some counties far worse than others. Mariposa and Alpine counties are high tourism areas, and with the ease of use of sites like AirBnB, many long-term rental homes are being converted to vacation homes. This is leaving a shortage of available affordable homes for residents and the region's workforce. In addition, due to the inadequate sewer and water infrastructure as well as local permitting and regulations, new housing developments are currently not being built. Local permitting requirements are also a large concern to local business owners who struggle to create or expand their operations.

## Local Zoning & Permitting

In addition to hindering housing development, local permitting requirements are a huge concern to local business owners who struggle to create or expand their operations. The California State Code of Regulations coupled with local zoning and permitting regulations can sometimes place unnecessary cost burdens on local citizens. Navigating around these regulatory obstacles has been expressed by citizens and businesses as a hurdle to development. Government authorities need to reassess regulations and decide which laws are necessary. However, local governments and authorities can seize the opportunity to

better understand which regulations are causing the largest regional impact and create strategies to lessen the regulatory burden.

## Aging & Inadequate Infrastructure

Infrastructure within the CSEDD region is either inadequate or aging. In some areas, the lack of water and sewer lines have hindered development especially within the residential sector. In addition, the current water and sewer lines are aging and cannot handle more units on the systems. Furthermore, broadband infrastructure is not complete within the entire region. While some areas of the district have broadband access, some blocks or areas are without coverage. The region needs infrastructure improvement for a strong broadband backbone throughout the region. Lastly, natural gas lines are only available to San Andreas and leave the rest of the region underserved.

## Distance to Markets

The Central Sierra Economic Development District is located geographically in an area with two main issues for transportation. First, there aren't any large markets located within the CSEDD region, and second, the majority of the district is connected by a series of high alpine highways reaching elevations of over 8,700 feet. In many areas of the region, seasonal conditions cause main highways to be closed during the winter. Due to snow conditions, highway 4, the main highway connecting Bear Valley and Markleeville in Alpine County, is closed every winter at Ebbetts Pass, significantly increasing commute and transportation times. A person trying to get from Bear Valley to Reno in the winter will expect an additional two hours to their drive time than they would in the summer months. Other winter road closures include the highway 108 pass near Donnell Lake and part of highway 89 in Alpine County, as well as highway 120 in Tuolumne County.

The distance to markets also impacts the availability and speed of shipping. Throughout the CSEDD region, one-day shipping is not available. Because of the distance to markets and inadequate road conditions, one-day shipping would only be possible through air transportation. Unfortunately, current airport infrastructure is lacking and cannot accommodate one-day shipping.

## Lack of Economic Diversity

The CSEDD region's economic base is primarily dependent on tourism. While the many tourism opportunities is a great strength of the region, in the event

of another recession or natural disaster, a decline in tourism may lead to a more significant impact on the region's economy. Another industry sector that accounts for a large portion of the region's economy is the healthcare industry. While the healthcare industry is currently strong, it requires a continued base of patients. The CSEDD region has continued to see a declining population over the past decade, if this continues, it could have an impact on the region's healthcare industry. A small number of economic base industries leave the region susceptible to both man-made and natural disruptions.

### **Lack of Educated & Skilled Workforce**

In the community feedback, business owners and community members stated that one of the key barriers to economic development and reason for business failures is the lack of qualified, educated, and skilled workers. The CSEDD region has experienced a teenage brain drain. Between 2009 and 2014, the number of residents between the ages of 10 and 24 years old decreased by 14 percent. In addition, between 2005 and 2014, the number of high-school graduates eligible for UC or CSU entrance was far below that of the California average.



# TOP OPPORTUNITIES

This section focuses on the potential opportunities the CSEDD region can use to build a more prosperous and economically resilient region. After utilizing community and stakeholder input, the top five opportunities facing the CSEDD region are:

- 1. ADVANCED VISITORS' SERVICES**
- 2. COORDINATED MARKETING EFFORTS**
- 3. CAPITALIZATION OF EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES**
- 4. IMPROVING REGIONAL AIRPORTS**
- 5. COLLECTION OF TOT**

## **Advanced Visitors' Services**

As one of the region's top strengths, tourism brings many visitors to the CSEDD region. However, the region is lacking in advanced visitors' services to direct travelers to local attractions or recreation sites. In addition, without advanced visitors' services within the region, communities are missing out on the chance to get through-travelers to stop and potentially spend money. There are currently visitors' services within the CSEDD region, but many are located in dated sites where new highway improvements have diverted visitors away from the services. Improving current visitors' services or promoting new ones could bring more visitor spending within the CSEDD region.

## **Coordinated Marketing Efforts**

With the vast abundance of natural resources and recreation opportunities within the CSEDD region, each county promotes their own community resources, but does not promote the resources of the region. Coordinating marketing efforts for these resources and cross-training employees regionally is an opportunity to promote inter-county spending by visitors.

## **Capitalization of Educational Resources**

The CSEDD region has several educational resources available to its residents. UC Merced, Mother Lode job training, and Innovation Lab are all educational

resources the CSEDD region can utilize more effectively. In addition, Columbia Community College could be a potential partner to create a more educated and skilled workforce.

## **Improving Regional Airports**

The airports within the CSEDD region are lacking in infrastructure which in turn is causing shipping and delivery services within the region to be inadequate. One-day shipping within the CSEDD region is not currently provided which is a hindrance for businesses and slows region productivity. Improving at least one regional airport to support one-day shipping and delivery services, could promote business growth and productivity.

## **Collection of TOT**

With a large portion of the region's available housing being used for vacation homes, the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) is import revenue to local county governments. As online vacation sites like AirBnB have increased in use and popularity, traditional forms of TOT collection are no longer adequate. Only two of the four counties within the CSEDD district currently collect TOT fees from vacation homes booked through online sites. The collection of this tax revenue is vital to the region.

# TOP THREATS

This section outlines the external threats that face the CSEDD region. Because threats are external, the CSEDD region can only prepare for these in the event they occur. The three top threats facing the region are federal and state government, the vocal minority and environmental perception, and natural disasters.

1. **FEDERAL & STATE GOVERNMENT**
2. **VOCAL MINORITY & ENVIRONMENTAL PERCEPTION**
3. **NATURAL DISASTERS**

## **Federal & State Government**

A large portion of the CSEDD district land is managed by federal and state governments, with national forest land management accounting for 32 percent of land in the CSEDD region. Local county governments cannot control the decisions and management of the federal and state lands. Therefore, this could be the top threat to the region. If state or federal funding to these lands change, like a decline in funds for trail maintenance or fish planting, a decline in tourism could have an impact on the local economy.

## **Vocal Minority & Environmental Perception**

While the regional community involvement is a top strength of the CSEDD region, the vocal minority and environmental perception of some community members is a huge threat to the growth and development within the region. The vocal minority and the environmental perceptions can hinder building and industry plans and cause projects to become economically inviable.

## **Natural Disasters**

The CSEDD region's largest threat is the possibility of natural disasters like wildfires which the region has recently seen with the impacts Rim Fire. The Rim Fire burned over 250,000 acres including residential homes and local businesses and has had a significant impact on the local region. Some residents have decided to move to less-risky areas and insurance agencies are denying coverage for residences. Natural disasters are inevitable; however, preparing the region for them will reduce the future threat.



## **THE RIM FIRE**

*The result of a hunter's illegal fire, the Rim Fire started on October 24th, 2013 burning 257,314 acres and 112 structures in the Stanislaus National Forest, making it the most expensive fire on record in the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range.*





# CSEDD INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

In 2014, there were seven industries region wide that had a location quotient (LQ) greater than one. Of those seven, three fall into the tourism cluster. Additionally, agriculture (farm employment) had the highest LQ of all sectors indicating its true importance to the region. Lastly, health care and social assistance is an emerging cluster in the region. With an aging population and out-migration of young working professionals, the need for expanded health care is growing each year.



## AGRICULTURE

While farm employment was only 2.6 percent of total regional employment in 2014, its LQ when compared to the national average was 5. Essentially, an employee in the CSEDD region was five times more likely than the average employee to depend on agriculture for their job. Not only did farm employment have the greatest LQ of any industry in the region, it has also seen the fastest growth in its LQ (12 percent). Farm employment in the region, over the five-year period, grew by 7 percent, outpacing California's farm employment growth (6 percent) and the nation's, nearly stagnant, employment decline in the sector (-0.1 percent growth).



## TOURISM

Due to the fact that a large portion of rental housing in Tuolumne, Mariposa, and Alpine counties, are strictly vacation rentals, the real estate, and rental and leasing industry is being included in the tourism cluster. With a LQ of 4.7 in 2014 real estate is the industry in the region with the second highest LQ (down from scoring the highest at 5, in 2009). Accommodations and food service (LQ of 1.3) and arts, entertainment, and recreation (LQ of 2) rank as the 6th and 3rd highest industries respectively. Not only do the three industries making up this cluster compare favorably to the U.S. as a whole, they also make up a significant amount of the total employment within the region. Combined, the three sectors account of 20.8 percent of total regional employment. It is worth noting that between 2009 and 2014 there was virtually no change in the relative size of the cluster in the region as 20.9 percent of total regional employment came from the cluster in 2009. This measure demonstrates the long-term importance of the cluster but also shows the need for diversification of the economic base for increased economic resilience.



## HEALTH CARE

The health care and social assistance industry is the fastest growing industry in the CSEDD region. Due to data constraints, Mariposa County did not report health care employment in 2009, but when Mariposa County is factored out, the data shows that the industry grew 16.7 percent between 2009 and 2014. That job growth also accounted for a significant shift in the employment make-up of the region. In 2009, 9.3 percent of regional employment was from the sector. By 2014, that percentage had grown to 10.7. As of 2014, the LQ for the sector was still less than 1 (LQ of .89); however, health care is clearly an emerging industry cluster in the region.



# INDUSTRY GROWTH

Between 2009 and 2014, the CSEDD region saw an 11 percent increase in the manufacturing industry which was the largest sector growth in terms of jobs for the region and was much higher than in California which only increased by one percent. Retail trade and farm employment also experienced a large growth in the CSEDD district increasing in jobs by seven percent just slightly above California. Over the same period, the accomodation and food services industry grew by six percent which was ten percent lower than in California.

Jobs by Industry, Central Sierra Economic Development District

Industry	2009 CSEDD	2014 CSEDD	CSEDD 5-Yr Change	California 5-Yr Change
Farm employment	1,223	1,314	7%	6%
Forestry, fishing, and related activities	(D)	(D)	n/a	17%
Mining	(D)	(D)	n/a	41%
Utilities	(D)	(D)	n/a	-3%
Construction	4,022	3,493	-13%	6%
Manufacturing	1,761	1,948	11%	1%
Wholesale trade	(D)	(D)	n/a	9%
Retail trade	5,128	5,498	7%	6%
Transportation and warehousing	783	751	-4%	15%
Information	550	501	-9%	7%
Finance and insurance	1,531	(D)	n/a	0%
Real estate and rental and leasing	3,824	3,671	-4%	9%
Professional, scientific, and technical services	2,727	(D)	n/a	11%
Management of companies and enterprises	(D)	(D)	n/a	13%
Administrative and waste services	(D)	(D)	n/a	19%
Educational services	(D)	529	n/a	16%
Health care and social assistance	(D)	5,069	n/a	32%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	1,565	1,456	-7%	14%
Accommodation and food services	5,151	5,436	6%	16%
Other services, except public administration	3,611	3,867	7%	13%
Government and government enterprises	10,352	9,691	-6%	-4%
Sum of withheld "(D)" values	8,264	7,599	-8%	0%
<b>Total Jobs</b>	<b>50,492</b>	<b>50,823</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>10%</b>

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2009 & 2014

\*(D): In accordance with the U.S. Department of Commerce, the Bureau of Economic Analysis will withhold industry information if it compromises the confidentiality of an individual firm. This is usually the case if there are very few firms in a particular market or if one firm has a large share of the market. Alpine County data is not reported in this table due to a large number of (D) values.

# ELECTRICITY GENERATION CAPACITY

The chart below shows the electricity generation capacity for the Central Sierra Economic Development District. According to the California Energy Commission, in 2014, 98 percent of the electrical generation capacity in the region was from hydro power; two percent is from biomass, and less than one percent was from solar. It is also important to note that the region does not have natural gas electricity generation capacity, while 59 percent of the California average generation capacity comes from natural gas.

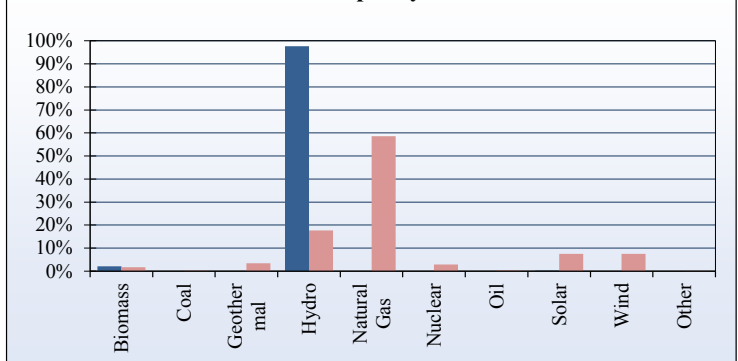
Electricity Generation Capacity, CSEDD, 2014

Facility Type	Total Capacity (Megawatts)	Percent of Capacity	
		County	California
Biomass	33.16	2.1%	1.6%
Coal	0	0.0%	0.2%
Geothermal	0	0.0%	3.4%
Hydro	1522.89	97.7%	17.7%
Natural Gas	0	0.0%	58.6%
Nuclear	0	0.0%	2.9%
Oil	0	0.0%	0.4%
Solar	3.3	0.2%	7.5%
Wind	0	0.0%	7.5%
Other	0	0.0%	0.0%

Source: The California Energy Commission

\*Data for Alpine County unavailable

Electricity Generation Capacity, Licensed Power Plants Over 0.1 MW Capacity



# DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

## Population Trends and Projections

**Current Population:** According to the California Department of Finance, the current population within the CSEDD district has been declining every year between 2007 and 2016 while the population in California has grown by eight percent over the same time period. All counties across the CSEDD region have experienced negative growth

According to the US Census Bureau, the two most populous counties within the CSEDD region are Tuolumne County (54,347) and Mariposa County (17,946). Alpine County has remained the smallest county in the CSEDD region and in California with only 1,202 permanent residents in 2014. The CSEDD region is comprised of rural counties with only two cities in the district. Angel's Camp located in Calaveras County had 3,004 people and the city of Sonora had 4,423 people in 2014.

**Population Projections:** Despite the past decade of population decline, the California Department of Finance projects an overall population growth within the CSEDD region of nine percent by 2025, and by 15 percent by

- **Declining Population:** Population within the Central Sierra Economic Development District has decreased by 1.6% between 2007 and 2016. Conversely, population within California has grown almost 8% over the same time period.
- **10 Years of Negative Growth:** Over the past 10 years, all counties within the CSEDD have seen negative population growth on a county level.
- **Projected Growth:** Despite the recent decline in population, California Department of Finance projects a growth in population of 9% by 2025 within the CSEDD.

Total Population, Central Sierra Economic Development District

Year	CSEDD	CSEDD	California
	Population	Percent Change	Percent Change
2007	121,386	0.4%	0.8%
2008	121,377	0.0%	0.7%
2009	120,821	-0.5%	0.7%
2010	120,348	-0.4%	0.8%
2011	120,286	-0.1%	0.9%
2012	120,148	-0.1%	0.9%
2013	119,970	-0.1%	0.9%
2014	119,802	-0.1%	0.9%
2015	119,629	-0.1%	0.9%
2016	119,432	-0.2%	0.9%

Source: California Department of Finance

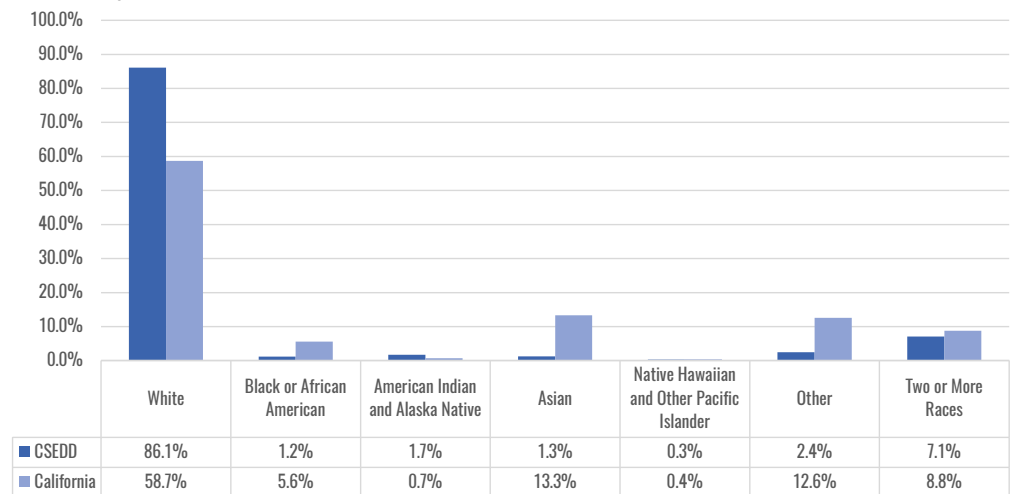
2050. Between 2016 and 2025, Mariposa County is projected to grow the fastest with a 13 percent increase. However, Calaveras County is projected to increase the most between 2016 and 2015, increasing by 12 percent by 2025 and an addition 23 percent by 2050. While all counties are projected to increase between 2016 and 2025, Alpine County is expected to decline by eight percent between 2025 and 2050.

**Psychographic Information:** According to ESRI's Tapestry Segmentation Area Profiles, nearly 45 percent of the CSEDD district is comprised of Rural Resort Dwellers who are residents close to retirement who normally live in scenic rural areas. These individuals are primarily older, married couples with no children at home. These individuals like to spend their disposable income on their hobbies which include freshwater fishing, hunting, and motorcycling. In addition, 81.8 percent of these individuals are homeowners.

The second largest segment of individuals within the CSEDD district are Senior Sun Seekers which account for 10.2 percent of the households in the region. These individuals are retired or are closely anticipating retirement. More than half of these households are currently receiving Social Security benefits. Many of these residents own seasonal homes, and live near areas where they can hunt, fish, or play bingo.

- **Aging Population:** Within the CSEDD, all age groups younger than 45 years are smaller in comparison to California. Conversely, all age groups older than 60 years are larger within the CSEDD in comparison to California.
- **Teenage Brain Drain:** Between 2009 and 2014, the number of residents younger than 5 years of age decreased by 5%. Over the same period, the number of residents between the ages of 10 and 24 years decreased by 14%.
- **Lacking Diversity:** 86% of CSEDD identified as white in 2014, 30% higher than the state as a whole.

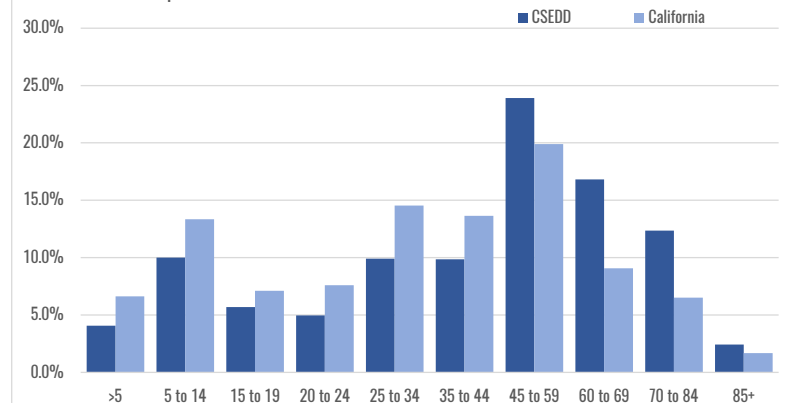
Racial/Ethnic Background,  
Percent of Total Population



**Racial and Ethnic Diversity:** In 2014, the CSEDD region primarily consisted of white residents. According to the US Census Bureau's 2014 American Community Survey five-year estimates, the CSEDD region was 86.1 percent white individuals which was 27.4 percent higher than that of California. The second largest racial/ethnic group in the district was the American Indian and Alaska Native population which accounted for 1.7 percent of the population. Many of these residents may be located in Tuolumne County and are a part of the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians.

**Population by Age:** The CSEDD region's largest age group was individuals aged 45 to 59 years old, and the second largest age group were individuals aged 60 to 69 years old. The CSEDD district had more individuals aged 45 to 85 than California as a whole, and all age groups younger than 45 years old are smaller in the CSEDD region than in California. In addition, between 2009 and 2014, the number of residents between the ages of 10 and 24 years old, declined by 14 percent. This may be resulting in a regional "brain drain" where there is a large portion of college-aged students leaving the region in pursuit of education but cease to return after graduation. This often occurs in rural communities who are unable to maintain a sufficient amount of educated career positions and graduates who would have wanted to return to the region, must find work elsewhere.

Age Distribution,  
Percent of Total Population





# EDUCATION TRENDS

In 2014, within the CSEDD region, 91 percent of the residents 25 years and older had a high school diploma, which was eight percent higher than in California. However, only 23 percent of residents the same age in the CSEDD region had a bachelor's degree or higher which was seven percent lower than in California.

The high school dropout rate in the CSEDD region fluctuated year-to-year between 2005 and 2014 but mostly remained at a lower rate than California. In recent years, the number of high school dropouts in the CSEDD region declined by 53 percent between 2010 and 2014. However, the number of high school graduates eligible for CSU or UC's in the CSEDD district were below California between 2005 and 2014. In the 2014-2015 school year, California had 43 percent of graduates eligible for entrance to a UC or CSU system, while the CSEDD district on average only had 26 percent of students eligible, a total of 17 percent fewer eligible graduates.

- **Lowering the Dropout Rate:** The high school dropout rate has decreased by 53% within the CSEDD since the 2010-2011 school year.
- **Fewer Dropouts Compared to California:** The high school dropout rate for the 2014-2015 school year within the CSEDD was 1.2%, less than half of the California dropout rate for the same year (2.8%).
- **Fewer Graduates Ready for College:** Percentage of graduates eligible for U.C. and C.S.U. system entrance within the CSEDD decreased by 5% since the 2005-2006 school year.

## Graduates Eligible for U.C. and/or C.S.U. Entrance

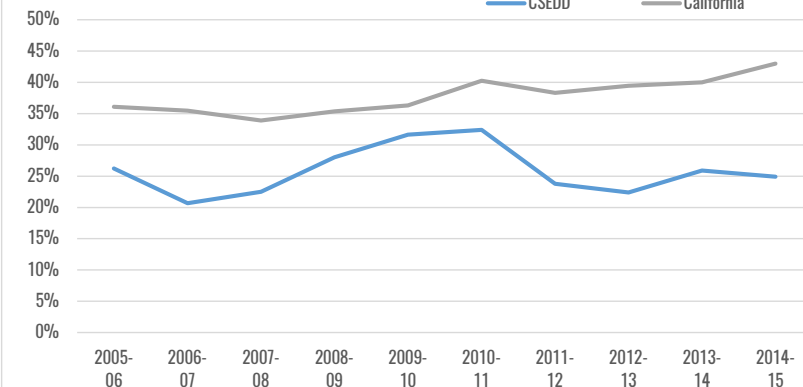
Geography	2005-2006	2014-2015	Percent Change
	% Eligible	% Eligible	
Calaveras	34%	23%	-32.4%
Mariposa	18%	31%	72.2%
Tuolumne	22%	25%	13.6%
<b>California</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>19.4%</b>

Source: California Department of Education

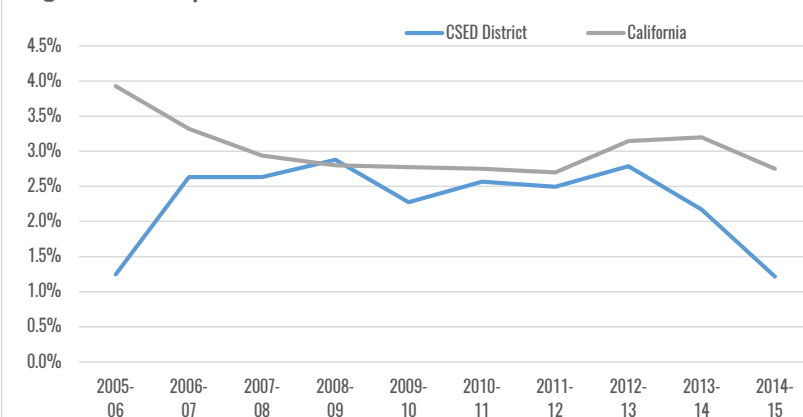
\*Note: Alpine County has maintained 0% eligibility since 2005.

## Graduates Eligible for U.C. and/or C.S.U. Entrance,

All Graduates

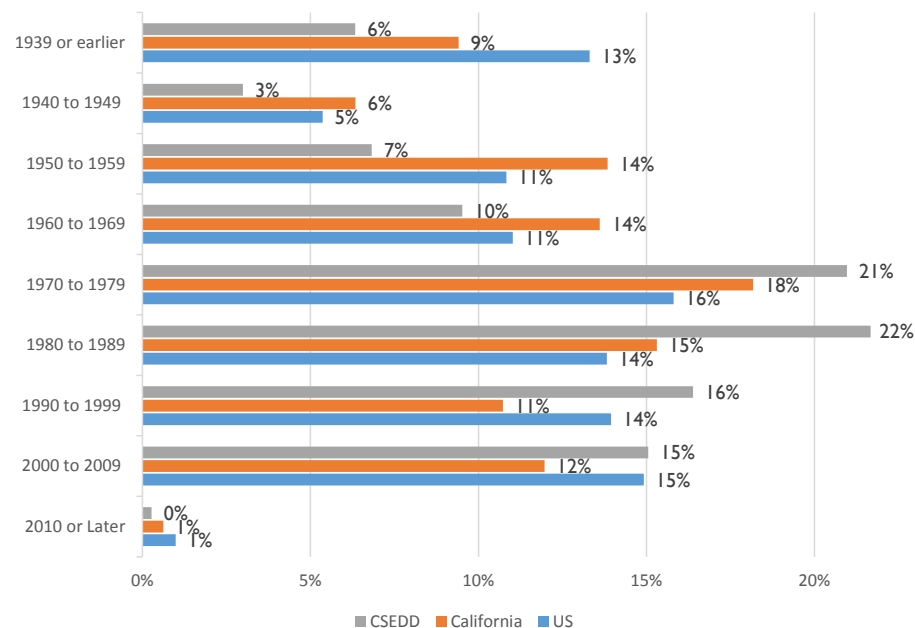


## High School Dropout Rate



# HOUSING TRENDS

Percent of Housing Units Built by Year, 2014



According to the American Community Survey's 2014 5-year estimates, the CSEDD region has more owner-occupied units, and a higher percentage of newer housing units when compared to California and the United States as a whole. The majority of housing units in the CSEDD region were built between 1970 and 2009. Seventy-four percent of housing units in the CSEDD region were owner-occupied compared to California which was only 55 percent and the United States which was 64 percent. However, in 2014, there weren't any homes in the CSEDD region built after 2010, which was about half a percent lower than California and the United States.

In addition, the CSEDD region had a higher rate of vacant housing units (32%) than in California (8%) and the United States (12%). The highest vacancy rate within the four counties in the CSEDD region was Alpine County with 79 percent of housing units classified as vacant; however, this was most likely due to the large number of vacation rentals within the County. Furthermore, the entire CSEDD region has a large number of housing units utilized as vacation homes which could be impacting the reported vacancy housing rates.

# LABOR TRENDS

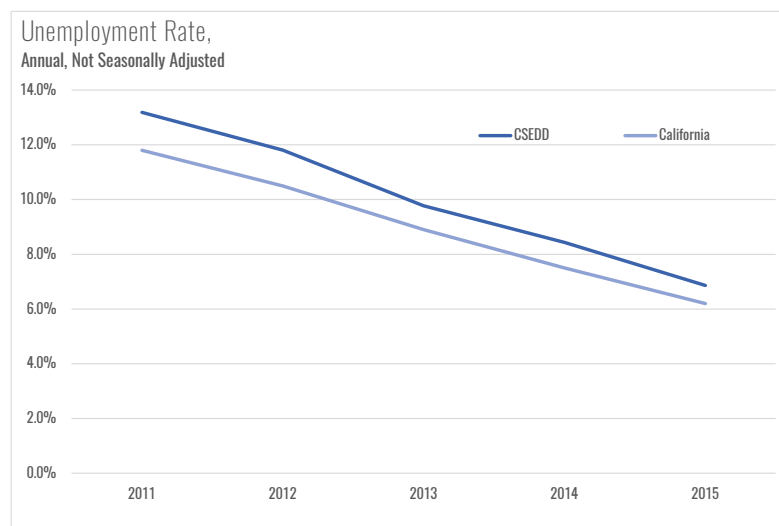
The CSEDD district experienced a decline in both their labor force and unemployment rate between 2011 and 2015. While the unemployment rate dropped between 2014 and 2015 by 1.5 percent, the number of employed residents still remains below what it was in 2011.

Because the CSEDD district is heavily dependent on tourism, the labor force changes in size from the different seasons. During the summer, the labor force is generally higher as people move back into the labor force looking for work as the economy improves. In past years, labor force entrants were able to be hired fairly quickly; however, in recent years, many labor force entrants are not being hired as quickly than in prior years which has caused higher unemployment during the summer months. This indicates a change in the overall CSEDD economy as people who used to be hired are no longer able to.

Employment, Central Sierra Economic Development District

Year	CSEDD	CSEDD	CSEDD	California
	Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment Rate	Unemployment Rate
2011	56,740	49,250	13.2%	11.8%
2012	56,060	49,440	11.8%	10.5%
2013	54,540	49,230	9.8%	8.9%
2014	50,620	46,350	8.4%	7.5%
2015	50,840	47,350	6.9%	6.2%

Source: California Employment Development Department

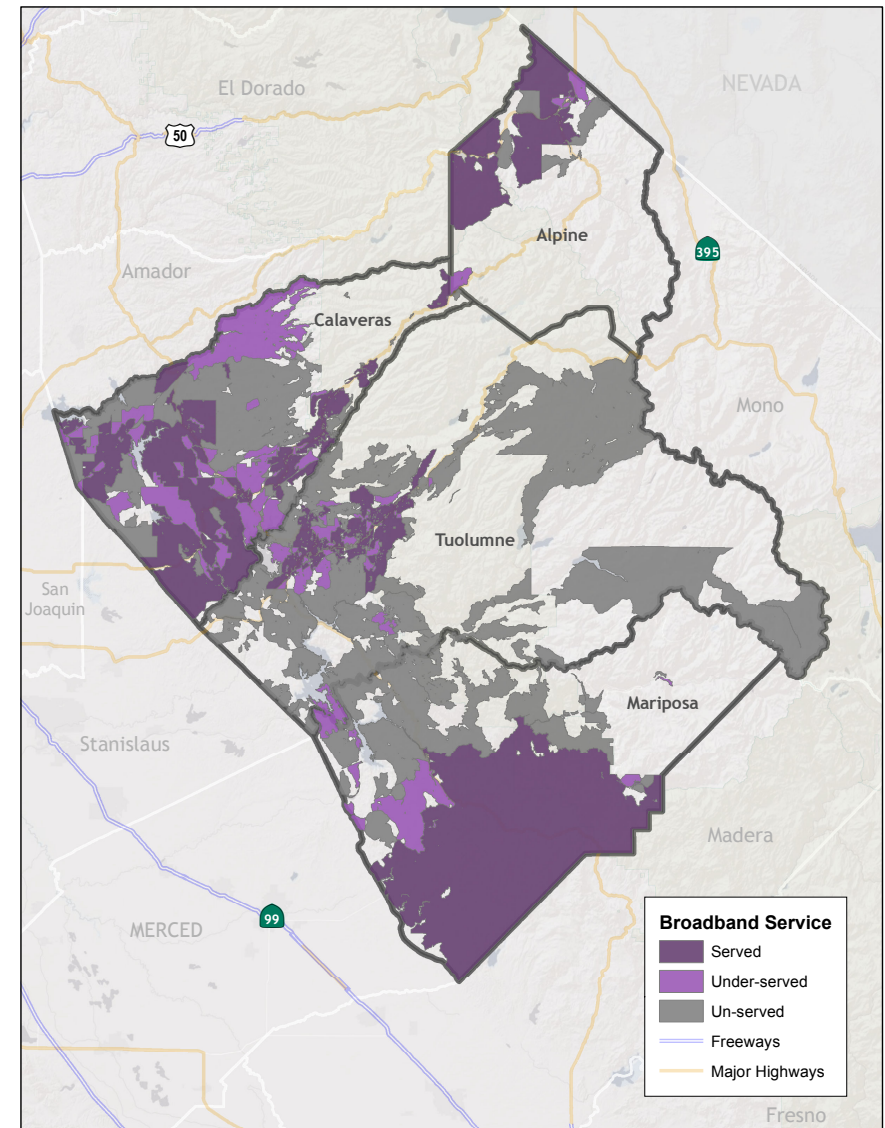


# BROADBAND AVAILABILITY

A region's ability to have universal access to broadband is an important factor to its economic growth. Many rural communities face a digital divide where several rural communities still face slow or inaccessible internet in their community. Access to broadband offers many potential growth opportunities and can many enhance many regional services such as educational resources or business productivity.

In the CSEDD region, some communities have access to broadband while others have little to no access. The map to the right shows the California Public Utilities Commission's broadband availability data. The map shows the areas by census tract that are considered served, under-served, and un-served by broadband. As shown, there are census tracts where broadband is available but a nearby census tract are considered to be un-served.

Communities within the Central Sierra Economic Development District region are served by a handful of last-mile broadband service providers offering direct subscriber line, coaxial cable, and fixed wireless services. Direct subscriber lines are wired connections which generally meet the minimum definitions for "broadband service" as defined by the California Public Utilities Commission. Direct subscriber line service providers include AT&T throughout much of the region, along with smaller service providers with smaller focus region including Sierra Tel Internet, CALTEL Connections, and TDS Telecom. Coaxial cable is another wired connection technology that generally enables much higher download and upload speeds. Comcast is the franchisee for cable services for the vast majority of the developed areas within the three counties of the CSEDD region. Finally, fixed wireless services offer connectivity by broadcasting signals to a fixed receiver in a consumer's home or business. This technology can offer moderately fast service to harder-to-reach locations, but price and reliability may be lower than traditional wired technologies. There are many service providers offering fixed wireless connections in much of the CSEDD region, including Volcano Wireless, Conifer Communications, and unwired Broadband, Inc.



Source: California Public Utilities Commission

## Broadband Service, CSEDD, 2015

County	Total Households (2010 Census)	Households Served	Households Underserved	Households Un-served	Percent of Households Underserved or Un-served
Alpine County	497	260	237	0	48%
Calaveras County	18,886	12,938	3,432	2,516	31%
Mariposa County	7,693	5,219	1,128	1,346	32%
Tuolumne County	22,156	15,453	3,869	2,834	30%
<b>CSEDD Region</b>	<b>49,232</b>	<b>33,870</b>	<b>8,666</b>	<b>6,696</b>	<b>31%</b>

Source: California Public Utilities Commission, December 31, 2015



# ENVIRONMENTAL TRENDS

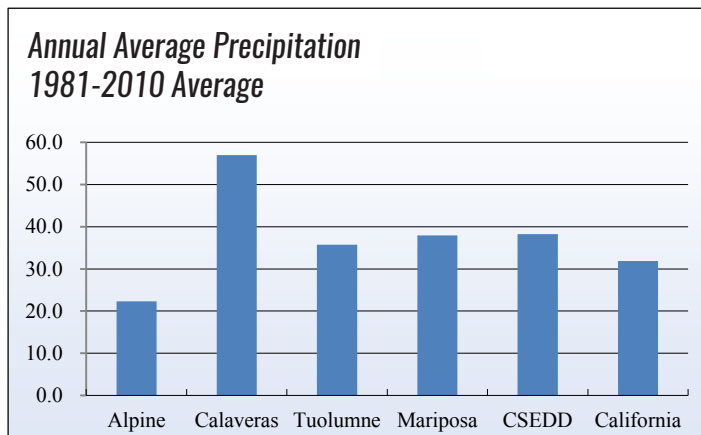
## Average Precipitation

According to the Western Regional Climate Center, between 1981 and 2010, the Central Sierra Economic Development District had on average six inches more precipitation than the California average. In addition, the region experienced on average 30 more inches of snow than the State average. Most of the snowfall occurred in Calaveras and Alpine County. However, because this data does represent the average from 1981 and 2010, rainfall and snowfall in more recent years may be less due to extensive periods of state-wide drought.

**Climate Readings, CSEDD, 1981-2010**

	Alpine County	Calaveras County	Tuolumne County	Mariposa County	CSEDD Average	California Average
Average July Maximum Temp. (deg.)	83.7	80.3	93.3	88.6	86.5	88.7
Average January Maximum Temp. (deg.)	43.6	43.9	55.5	47.9	47.7	51.4
Average July Minimum Temp. (deg.)	51.1	53.5	56.1	56.3	54.3	54.3
Average January Minimum Temp. (deg.)	21.3	28.6	32.1	28.6	27.7	31.4
Average July Precipitation (in.)	0.6	0.2	0.1	0.5	0.4	0.2
Average January Precipitation (in.)	2.4	9.9	6.6	6.7	6.4	5.4
Average Annual Precipitation (in.)	22.3	57.0	35.8	37.9	38.3	31.9
Average January Snowfall (in.)	19.9	23.0	0.0	12.3	13.8	3.9
Average Annual Snowfall (in.)	81.8	111.8	0.4	26.3	55.1	15.4

Source: Western Regional Climate Center



# CSEDD VISION STATEMENT

The CSEDD vision statement was developed through a process which utilized both stakeholder and community involvement. A meeting was held inviting the community to join the CSEDD board in creating a vision for the CSEDD. Board members and community members analyzed the objectives and goals of the CSEDD board and utilized them in developing a vision statement that would reflect the objectives of the board and the CSEDD region. The CEDS specific portion of the vision statement was created as an addendum to the original CSEDD vision statement to ensure maximum stakeholder engagement. Input from the individual community meetings were combined and the vision statement was amended using the goals and objectives identified in the CEDS planning process. The following vision statement was created:

“ The vision for the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is to guide CSEDD staff and community leaders as they focus their efforts over the next five to ten years on harnessing regional assets to enhance economic prosperity through business resiliency, workforce development, advanced visitors services, and infrastructure improvements.

The vision of the CSEDD is to be recognized as an economic development resource by its member entities, and community partners. CSEDD strives to become a proactive partner in project review and facilitation, identifying funding sources, assisting with grant applications, and in creating a network for shared communications between elected officials and staffs, the private sector, nonprofits, local economic development corporations, other local governments such as independent special districts and JPAs, and state and federal partners. ”

The CSEDD vision statement was created along with the 2012-2016 CSEDD CEDS and was circulated for public and community review during the 30-day public comment and review period of the strategic plan. The current vision, with the amendment was circulated during the most recent 30-day public comment period and at this time has yet to be objected to by local stakeholders and therefore has not changed.

## ■ PUBLIC & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The CSEDD will continue to lead meetings and maintain regular communication with the CEDS strategy committee members in order to gauge the progress and monitor completion of the implementation agenda. The CEDS strategy committee will meet annually, and CSEDD staff will regularly lead conference calls with the CEDS strategy committee to keep track of completion on a quarterly basis.

While the CED has engaged public and stakeholder participation throughout the development and planning process of the comprehensive economic development plan, continued public and stakeholder participation will be important to the implementation of the strategic plan. The CSEDD board will continue to encourage stakeholder involvement through personal business visits, speaking events including Rotary and similar organizations, and continued monthly interactions with Native American Indian tribes, government officials, and non-profit leaders.



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY & COMPONENTS





# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES AND COMPONENTS

## THE APPROACH

### Formation of the CEDS Strategy Committee

The CEDS strategy committee was chosen by members on the CSEDD board. Each CSEDD board member identified a community member who was not currently associated with the CSEDD. Individuals from county governments, non-profits, community organizations, and private entities were selected from each of the four counties to participate on the strategy committee in addition to three current CSEDD board members.

### Community Involvement

The CSU, Chico's Center for Economic Development (CED) constructed an 18 question survey about the current and future needs of the region. The survey focused on barriers to economic development, business needs, previous economic development projects in the region, and building regional economic resilience. The survey was created in Constant Contact by the Center for Economic Development and a live link was provided to the CEDS committee and the CSEDD board. The survey link was sent out to the CSEDD contacts, a press release was sent to local radio and media outlets, and the survey was hosted on the CSEDD and CED website. A total of 17 responses were received, 14 from Tuolumne County and two from Calaveras County, and one from Alpine County. A summarized copy of the survey results can be found in the Appendix of this document.

To gain additional community feedback, representatives from the Center for Economic Development (CED) led three community town hall meetings within the CSEDD region. Flyers announcing the meetings were sent out to regional stakeholders and community members, and a press release was sent to local radio and media outlets. The results of the community survey were compiled and analyzed, and the key findings were presented to attendees at each meeting. Meetings took place in Angel's Camp, Markleeville, and Mariposa and were two hours long. The key findings were discussed on both a regional and community level. During these discussions, community members addressed further key issues that were not originally identified in the survey results.

All of the feedback received from both the community survey and meetings were compiled along with regional economic and demographic data collected by CED staff. These findings were used as an integral part of the CEDS strategy committee's SWOT analysis. The results helped committee members better understand and address the needs of the region and identify the objectives and goals incorporated within this comprehensive economic development strategy.



# CSEDD OBJECTIVES

**Objective One:** *Enhance visitors' services within the CSEDD region*

**Objective Two:** *Build a skilled workforce within the CSEDD region*

**Objective Three:** *Promote and develop business resiliency within the CSEDD region*

**Objective Four:** *Promote coordinated marketing efforts throughout the CSEDD region*

**Objective Five:** *Promote regional infrastructure improvements*

**Objective Six:** *Expand upon existing community business retention and expansion programs*

**Objective Seven:** *Create a uniform Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) collection plan for vacation rentals across the entire region*

**Objective Eight:** *Improve regional airport infrastructure to support faster shipping & delivery services*

**Objective One: Promote advanced visitors' services within the CSEDD region.**

Enhancing visitor services throughout the region was identified in the SWOT analysis as a major opportunity for the region. Additionally, three of the six non-government sectors with the highest location quotients in the region are all tourism related and tourism was brought up in all three community meetings due to its level of importance. With its vast public lands, outdoor recreation opportunities, and Yosemite National Park (NP), the four-county region has been tourist dependent for decades and will continue to be in the foreseeable future. The region contains the crown jewel of the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range, Yosemite National Park, countless hiking and backpacking opportunities, numerous lakes, world class fishing, and multiple ski resorts. Additionally, in the lower elevations, agri-tourism has begun expanding as the wine industry flourishes. The CSEDD region is in a unique position to capitalize on multi-county visitors. Unlike many California counties, most visitors are not just coming to the region to go to a specific location. There are a few exceptions such as Alpine County ski and fishing opportunities that are sole destinations, but for the most part, even visitors to Yosemite stay or visit other parts of the region. Because of this multi-destination advantage, it is imperative that groups throughout the region work together to optimize visitor services and cross-promote resources throughout the region.

Due to the inherent risks associated with a tourism based economy, (natural disaster, recession, changes in government policy affecting public lands, etc.) it is imperative that the local leaders capitalize on the economic benefit of tourism during peak times. Also, by enhancing visitors' services, economic developers in the CSEDD are aiming to create a value add proposition for would be travelers even in tough economic times. By setting themselves apart from other, less traveler friendly regions, the regional economy would become more resilient. To accomplish this objective the CEDS strategy committee has identified three action items to be completed within the next five years.

**Action Item: Develop a regional tourism partnership organization.**

Currently, each of the four counties coordinates their own visitor services efforts which has made it so offering the best visitor experience has become inefficient. The CSEDD board and its staff will be responsible for facilitating partnerships between Mariposa County Chamber of Commerce, Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau, Gold Country Visitors Association, Alpine County, and Calaveras County. By the end of 2017, a minimum of eight independent organizations will have formed a partnership.

**Action Item: Review current visitors' services and identify new locations.**

Currently there are three visitor centers, outside of Yosemite Park, in the four-county region. Unfortunately, the current visitor centers are not in locations that take pressure off of Yosemite NP traffic and are not in locations where visitors can walk around local shops and restaurants. By the second quarter in 2019, the partnership formed in action item one will have reviewed the efficiency and the economic impact of each of the current visitor centers and will make recommendations to the individual counties about the optimized location of either a new or a relocated visitor center. Along with the recommendation, a preliminary business plan will be provided.

**Action Item: Successfully move or open one or two visitor service centers in optimal locations.**

One of the major opportunities identified in the SWOT analysis was the potential relocation or opening of a new visitor center. During the follow-up meetings, members of the CEDS planning committee came to the agreement that a new center location located in a down town business district would have two benefits. With more amenities near the center, people will stay in town longer which will increase revenue and sales tax revenue at local retail shops and restaurants. The number of travelers with disposable income being drawn to local business districts will become a significant economic driver. Additionally, by giving travelers a more attractive place to stop, they will likely stay longer which will ease traffic at peak times going into Yosemite NP. The lessened traffic will increase the attractiveness of the NP which should in turn increase visitors.

**Objective Two: Build a skilled workforce within the CSEDD region.**

Building a skilled workforce was identified in the community survey and in all three of the community meetings as being one of the most important issues facing the region today. This is an important issue for two distinctly different reasons. First, the community members surveyed felt that the business community does not have access to a skilled workforce to fulfill its needs. Second, the "brain drain" throughout the region is one of the worst in the state. All four counties in the region have had negative net migration for over a decade. Opportunities have to exist or young professionals will have no reason to stay in the area. Workforce development is one of several necessary tools for solving both problems. By being strategic about what workforce development opportunities are supported, a region can more efficiently train young persons in occupations that give them the option to stay in the area after completion.

**Action Item: Increase school dual enrollment of the Columbia College CTE High School Articulation program**

The CTE High School Articulation program offers a unique opportunity for high school students to receive college credits. Columbia College Career Technical Education (CTE) collaborates with local and regional high school programs to develop articulation agreements. Resulting agreements include alignment of course skills and concepts, the possibility of advanced placement, and credit by examination options. The goal of this action item is to have over 200 high school students enrolled in the region with three counties (Alpine County does not have a high school but they attend high school in Calaveras County and Douglas County, Nevada) having at least two high schools with CTE agreements in place by 2019. The program is expected to have a 90 percent success rate of students either continuing their education in the technical field of their choice or landing a technical job upon program completion.

**Action Item: Enhanced partnerships between CSEDD staff and board members, the Mother Lode Work Force Investment Board (WIB)**

During the SWOT analysis, it was determined that Mother Lode WIB is an excellent resource for local businesses and job seekers. Unfortunately, it was also brought up in the SWOT that the WIB's services are underutilized. As a result, the CEDS planning committee has determined that it is the responsibility of each of the CSEDD participating members to increase their WIB referrals which are currently very low. The individual county members will report back to CSEDD staff their number of referrals each year and CSEDD will monitor progress. The identified goal is that by 2018 referrals from CSEDD and its partner organizations and member counties will be at least 50 per year and will increase to 150 by 2021. As a result of the increased referrals partners are expecting an increase in WIB trainings of 10%.

**Action Item: Promote the Columbia College Water Resource Management program**

The necessity to manage water resources effectively has created an increasing number of job opportunities. There are currently over 30 water districts in the CSEDD region and over 20 waste water treatment facilities. Many of the plant operators running these facilities and districts are nearing retirement age and Columbia College offers a program in Water Resource Management, leading to a career in water treatment, water distribution, wastewater management, and groundwater management. The program will provide an opportunity to succeed in water resource management through the development of



knowledge, skills, and experience. CSEDD board members will be promoting the program for Columbia College at the local level and expects Columbia College will see a 10 percent increase in program enrollment by fall 2020 as a result.

**Action Item: Establish high school off campus tech center and innovation lab in Calaveras County**

Innovation labs with tech centers offer opportunities for potential small businesses to access specialized equipment while gaining a valuable network. Additionally, these types of centers often act as training grounds for high school and college students as they prepare for high paying tech jobs. Currently there is an innovation lab and tech center in Sonora, in Tuolumne County. While most of these types of centers are found in more urbanized areas, the center in Sonora has proven the model in rural areas. While this model may not work in the sparsely populated areas of Mariposa and Alpine counties, there is an opportunity for replication in Calaveras County. Over the next two years, Calaveras County officials, Columbia College, and the high school superintendents will partner to obtain private foundation funding, while seeking EDA assistance, to obtain the proper equipment to run the innovation lab.

**Objective Three: Promote and develop community and business resiliency within the CSEDD region**

When compared to other regions, the CSEDD region has many outside threats to the health of its business climate. The region is in a constant threat of fire danger, and is currently locked in a prolonged drought. This was proven by the Rim Fire, the largest fire ever in the Sierra Nevada even though it did not start until late fall. A normal year's precipitation would have ended that fire fairly quickly, but the extended drought exacerbated the problem. While natural disaster is the most immediate threat to the health of the region, there are other threats that the region faces due to its high dependence on government controlled lands for its tourism revenue. Government furloughs and prolonged recession have in the past, and may again, take their toll on the region's important tourism industry so it is imperative that local leaders be prepared to deal with human caused threats. Objectives 1 and 6 are meant to address the human caused threats while this objective is meant to address natural disasters. Fire danger and drought were far and away the two largest issues identified at the community meetings and the two seemingly go hand in hand. Both the Butte and Rim fires in the past several years have devastated the region, displacing hundreds of residents and destroying home based businesses.

Calaveras County has been hit particularly hard. It was revealed during the Angels' Camp community meeting that several land owners have migrated out of the county all together and sold their property to marijuana farmers from out of state. This has further exasperated the out-migration issue. Additionally, the constant fire danger has made obtaining insurance extremely costly and has even forced many people to self-insure. It is the goal of the CSEDD, and its partner organizations, to reduce the short-term stress and the long-term economic effects on the business community due to the inevitable natural disasters.

**Action Item: Develop a long-term permanent response recovery strategic plan to replace existing preliminary plan**

The CEDS planning committee has developed a preliminary plan for business disaster response and economic resilience. However, the dedicated staff time necessary to develop a permanent, long-term disaster response plan was not available at this time. The long-term plan will include a process for monitoring and addressing business needs, assigning staff from each county communication responsibilities, developing a revolving loan fund for insurance gap funding, and connecting displaced businesses and employees with the two resiliency centers discussed below.

**Action Item: Development of Calaveras County Chamber of Commerce Butte Fire Recovery Center**

EDA has awarded the Calaveras County Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with CSEDD, \$250,000 to open a fire recovery center in San Andreas for those affected by the Butte Fire. One-half of the Chamber's time will be dedicated to operating the resiliency center and partner organizations will be hiring a half-time business outreach person. The outreach person ensures that the center will be maximizing its impact rather than being reactive as businesses look for help. Most business owners affected by disaster are preoccupied putting their lives back together and may not know what resources to approach for assistance. In addition to the employees working directly on the project, the Alliance Small Business Development Center (SBDC) will offer nine consultants to work with businesses coming through the Center. The facility will be operational in 2017 and is funded for two years. In that time period, the partners plan to seek funding from other public and private sources to keep the facility operational. By keeping the center open indefinitely, partners will be much more proactive rather than reactive in their response to future disasters such as inevitable fires. In the meantime, the first round of EDA funding will help save or create (from dislocated workers starting businesses) 30 businesses affected by fire.

**Action Item: Development of Tuolumne County Disaster and Business Resiliency Center**

Tuolumne County and the State of California partnered to obtain \$70 million in HUD funds as part of the National Disaster Resilience Competition. Of the \$70 million, \$20 million is dedicated to business development and resiliency through construction of a community resiliency center. The project will be fully operational by the end of 2017, and within two years of being operational, the Center will have assisted in the creation or saving of 30 small businesses.

**Objective Four: Promote a coordinated marketing plan throughout the CSEDD region.**

Currently, there are different groups in each of the four CSEDD counties working on visitor attraction. As discussed in objective one, many visitors to the area are regional visitors, not single destination visitors which means the four counties in the district need to work together to cross-promote the region. The Gold Country Visitors' Association (GCVA) in conjunction with Visit California is the primary group coordinating a regional marketing effort. Unfortunately, the GCVA does not include the high Sierra in its region. Essentially half of the CSEDD region is without an organized marketing effort, including all of Alpine County.

**Action Item: Promote coordinated marketing throughout the region.**

Under the leadership of the CSEDD board, it will be the responsibility of the partner organization formed in Objective One to complete a multi-county strategic marketing plan. The plan will be complete by Q1 2019. The plan will include cross-promotional items for all regional visitors' centers, connecting with Visit California, and a plan that includes outreach to national and international visitors to California. This effort will in no way compete with the GCVA effort, rather it will supplement what GCVA is currently lacking.

**Action Item: Ensure all three counties within the GCVA region are voting members of the association.**

Currently Tuolumne and Calaveras County Visitor Bureaus are members. It will be the responsibility of each county's CSEDD representatives to ensure their respective county stays active in the association. By Q3 2017 Mariposa County will have also joined GCVA. Membership is \$750 per year and will likely be paid for by chamber membership dues, county general funds, or TOT.

**Action Item: Partner with regional leaders to cross-train employees.**

The simplest, yet most important, step in organizing a coordinated marketing effort is to cross-train employees and volunteers at all visitors' centers and chambers of commerce about regional efforts. The staff at the Alpine Chamber of Commerce or the Tuolumne Visitors' Bureau need to know what activities are available in Mariposa or Calaveras County and vice versa. This is especially important as many people enter and exit Yosemite NP at different entrances. There will be information about things to do in Mariposa County even if a visitor is entering the NP through the Groveland entrance in Tuolumne County. Information will also be readily available in Mariposa about Tuolumne and Calaveras counties for people entering the NP through Mariposa County. Additionally, both Madera and Mono counties will be approached about a potential cross-promotional effort to maximize visitors coming from the east and south entrances. This effort will require limited resources, such as staff time for cross training, and will take up minimal space at chambers offices and visitor centers for the other counties to put promotional materials. It is the goal of the CEDS planning committee to have marketing materials in shared spaces and staff cross trained by Q3 2017.

**Objective Five: Promote infrastructure improvements throughout the CSEDD region.**

During the SWOT analysis, the weakness that was identified as being in most need of attention was infrastructure. While several types of infrastructure were identified as being an issue throughout the region, the three largest identified issues were water storage security, lacking sewer line development, and broadband infrastructure. Upon the completion of the six outlined action items, regional businesses will benefit tremendously as access to markets, water and sewer capacity, and broadband all improve.

**Action Item: Seek State and Federal Funding to Provide Broadband Service to Underserved and Unserved Communities**

Communities within the Central Sierra Economic Development District region are served by a handful of last-mile broadband service providers offering direct subscriber line, coaxial cable, and fixed wireless services. Direct subscriber lines are wired connections which generally meet the minimum definitions for "broadband service" as defined by the California Public Utilities Commission. Direct subscriber line service providers include AT&T throughout much of the region, along with smaller service providers with smaller focus region including Sierra Tel Internet, CALTEL Connections, and TDS Telecom. Coaxial

cable is another wired connection technology that generally enables much higher download and upload speeds. Comcast is the franchisee for cable services for the vast majority of the developed areas within the four counties of the CSEDD region. Finally, fixed wireless services offer connectivity by broadcasting signals to a fixed receiver in a consumer's home or business. This technology can offer moderately fast service to harder-to-reach locations, but price and reliability may be lower than traditional wired technologies. There are many service providers offering fixed wireless connections in much of the CSEDD region, including Volcano Wireless, Conifer Communications, Frontier Communications, and unwired Broadband, Inc.

Unfortunately, many portions of the CSEDD Region remained completely unserved by any type of broadband service. An even greater portion of the region is deemed "underserved" by the California Public Utilities Commission, meaning that broadband service of some type does exist in the area, but the speeds offered do not meet the State of California's minimum threshold of 10 megabit per second download speeds and 3 megabit per second upload speeds. According to the most current statistics from the California Public Utilities Commission dated December 31, 2015, only 33,870 of the CSEDD Region's 49,232 households were deemed 'served' by fixed broadband, with 8,666 households (17.6 percent) deemed 'underserved' and a further 6,696 households (13.6 percent) with no service at all.

State and federal funding sources exist to provide grants or subsidized loans to public and for-profit entities seeking to expand broadband connections into unserved and underserved areas. Through the encouragement of the CSEDD board, county planners and potential service providers should partner to identify opportunities to take advantage of these funding sources to extend services to unserved and underserved area. Specific funding programs include the California Advanced Services Fund, a revolving grant and subsidized loan account administered by the California Public Utilities Commission, and Rural Development Community Connect grants, a program funded by USDA Rural Development.

**Action Item: Seek funding for non-highway road construction improvements to increase access to markets**

While state-funded highways form the backbone of connectivity between the CSEDD region and outside markets, many locally-maintained roadways serve as the critical feeders and regional connectors to and from the state highway system. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) should pursue a strategy of connecting the CSEDD counties with Highway 99 and Interstate 5 by completing capacity upgrades on important east-west routes such as Highways 120 and 108. At the same time, planners within Calaveras, Tuolumne, and Mariposa counties

should pursue capacity, safety, and reliability improvements along important routes connecting communities to these and other critical State Highways.

The Caltrans Local Assistance Division offers a variety of grant programs aimed at expanding capacity, safety, and reliability of locally-maintained roadways that feed into the State Highway system. The most prominent of these grant programs is the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), a flexible program that is intended specifically for projects that increase road capacity for multiple modes (passengers, freight, and transit). County planners should pursue STIP and other state grants that increase the capacity of local feeder roadways, leading to better connections to outside markets.

**Action Item: Phoenix Lake dredging project for sustainable water storage**

The Tuolumne County Resource District will complete engineering plans for the Phoenix Lake improvements including: dredging plans, sediment forebay design, and wetland enhancement design, complete the necessary environmental review, obtain the required regulatory permits and compliance for Phase 3, and purchase the required land for the sediment forebay. Phase 2 to be completed by the end of 2018 followed by seeking funding for Phase 3, the actual dredging.

**Action Item: Seek funding for water and waste water treatment facility construction and expansion**

Water and wastewater issues are substantial throughout the region. Water storage has become a major concern due to sediment in the reservoirs and long-term storage has been exposed in the recent drought. Water transportation is even a bigger issue. Wooden flumes, open air ditches, and old pipes transport the majority of the region's water and some studies have shown that between 40 and 50 percent of water is actually lost during transportation due to leaks in the aging infrastructure. Over the next five years, the joint powers authorities (JPA) for Tuolumne and Calaveras counties, alongside Alpine and Mariposa counties will be prioritizing which projects need to be addressed first. Through CSEDD board facilitation, the counties and respective JPAs will identify five distinct projects for which to apply for EDA, USDA Rural Development, State Proposition 1 and Proposition 84 funding. It is the CEDS planning committee's goal to see at least two projects funded at the federal level and one \$0.5 million waterline improvement project funded through State Proposition 1 bond funds.

**Action Item: Seek funding for the Sierra Rail expansion**

The Tuolumne County Transportation Council in partnership with the Sonora



industrial park, and the Tuolumne County Economic Development Authority will be seeking funding over the next five years to improve the current rail line that runs from Sonora to Oakdale where it connects to the main Union Pacific line. At present, the current rail is only capable of supporting train cars at five miles per hour. The cost for updating the rail to a 20 or 25 mile per hour rail line has been determined to be \$2 million and with TIGER or DOT funding can be completed by 2022. The updating of the rail would be a major boon to Tuolumne County. Rail would be the most efficient way to transport both lumber and cheap propane to the Sonora industrial park. Also, the improved rail system could be used for visitor services related activities, offering short-haul dinner trips to tourists.

#### **Action Item: Encourage Pacific Gas and Electric to Extend Calaveras County Natural Gas Connection**

Currently, the only portion of the CSEDD region with natural gas infrastructure is the community of San Andreas in western Calaveras County. San Andreas is provided with natural gas by Pacific Gas and Electric, via a small-diameter pipeline connected to PG&E's larger pipelines in Lodi. The remainder of the CSEDD Region, including all of Tuolumne and Mariposa counties, lack natural gas availability. Tuolumne County is the most populous county in California without any residential natural gas availability.

Tuolumne County and the CSEDD region should pursue strategies that grant incentives for Pacific Gas and Electric to extend its current natural gas pipeline south and east along Highway 49 from San Andreas to Sonora, thus providing this vital residential service to the more densely populated parts of the CSEDD region. Given PG&E's focus on upgrading and maintaining existing structure in the face of increased regulatory scrutiny in the wake of the 2010 San Bruno accident, any extension of the San Andreas pipeline will not come easily.

#### **Objective Six: Expand upon existing business retention and expansion programs**

Business retention and expansion programs (BRE) are some of the most important tools available to economic developers. While BRE is conceptual and refers to numerous programs throughout the community, these programs include but are not limited to Small Business Development Centers, Chambers of Commerce, and job training facilities. Business attraction is a negative sum game as multiple regions compete for the same businesses that are interested in relocating. Communities are forced to offer more and more economic incentives and most just end up wasting scarce resources with little or no benefit. Additionally, high-job growth

often accompanies businesses in expansion mode, especially second stage companies. Also, it is much easier to retain a business than it is to attract a new one, as the owner and employees are already rooted in the community. As shown in the appendix, other than workforce development, survey respondents said that expanding business retention and expansion programs was listed as the second most important step that the region needed to take for economic development purposes. In an effort to address those concerns, the CEDS planning committee has come up with the following action items.

#### **Action Item: Expand upon existing business retention and expansion programs**

In partnership with the Alliance Small Business Development Center (SBDC), CSEDD has been awarded a \$50,000 grant from USDA Rural Development to expand current business retention and expansion efforts into underserved communities. Currently Alliance SBDC serves Tuolumne and Mariposa counties and the Delta College SBDC in Stockton is responsible for serving Alpine and Calaveras counties. Due to severe financial constraints in recent years the Delta College SBDC has been unable to adequately serve the needs of existing and emerging small businesses in these two counties. Presently no other business assistance programs are serving Alpine and Calaveras counties.

By partnering with CSEDD, the chambers, and local government, the needs of local small businesses will be assessed and met. Qualified local consultants will be used whenever possible including current SBDC consultants from San Joaquin and Stanislaus Counties. When needed regional consultants will be recruited to meet business needs where ever local consultant expertise is not available. The program will begin Q4 2016 and run through Q2 2018. CSEDD staff will identify clients and provide referrals to Alliance SBDC and will work in conjunction with Alliance SBDC to offer business trainings in the underserved high Sierra region. The District will strive to provide ongoing guidance and financial resources to our partnership organizations and/or directly to local business owners to help them create or save 20 additional jobs through an established BRE process and that will be measured by the total number of jobs created per year over the next 5-year reporting period.

#### **Action Item: AgPlus EDA Technical Assistance**

In 2015, the CSEDD partnered with CSU, Fresno, CSU, Chico, and Valley Vision to submit an IMCP designation proposal for food and beverage manufacturing. The designation, known as AgPlus, was awarded in July of 2015 and lasts through at least June of 2017. In September 2016, a two-year, \$250,000, EDA Technical Assistance grant was awarded to the region with \$35,000 in federal funds staying

in the CSEDD region. The federal and subsequent non-federal matching funds will be used to coordinate and develop projects within the region that address components of the AgPlus implementation strategy. Through implementation of the pillar group strategies, businesses will be assisted as they are connected to regional projects and financing opportunities. It is estimated that five jobs will be created or saved as a result of these efforts.

**Action Item: Obtain funding to further expanded the BRE program**

For the reasons outlined in action item one, there are too many businesses in the four county region, especially Alpine and Calaveras counties, that are severely lacking business support services. The allocation of scarce resources in the valley has left these rural communities underserved. The USDA program is a boost to these businesses but by the end of 2018, CSEDD plans to increase BRE funding by 10 percent region wide.

**Action Item: Provide ESRI Business Analyst support services**

CSEDD staff used to purchase ESRI Business Analyst to assist start-ups in the region. As the cost become prohibitive CSEDD has entered into a partnership with the EDA University Center, CSU, Chico to provide local businesses with the same service at a fraction of the cost. Starting in October 2016, CSU, Chico will subsidize the business assistance by utilizing inexpensive, bulk educational licensing. CSEDD staff will make mapping and data requests on an as needed basis and will remain the single point of contact with the business. ESRI reports will be created for a minimum of 15 businesses per year.

**Objective Seven: Ensure a plan for Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) collection on vacation rentals is in place in each of the region's four counties.**

Vacation rentals have skyrocketed throughout the CSEDD region. TOT is vital to many counties throughout California but is especially important to the CSEDD region as tourism is one of the region's most important sectors. All of the region's visitor services are funded through TOT as well as many other local services. TOT is an excellent source of revenue for a county because it is a way to provide the necessary services to its residents without placing a larger tax burden on them. Mariposa, Alpine and Tuolumne counties have seen dramatic increases in former long term rentals being converted to AirBnB type vacation rentals over the past five years. Rentals are popping up seemingly everywhere whether or not the property is permitted or zoned for vacation rentals. Due to their proximity to Yosemite NP, Mariposa and Tuolumne counties have already begun tracking and collecting TOT

on these types of rental properties. Unfortunately, due to staff constraints and lacking a plan, Alpine and Calaveras counties have yet to begin collecting TOT on these types of properties. As hotel and motel nights slow, and the pressure for business and visitor services increase CSEDD must assist Calaveras and Alpine counties by helping them create a plan to start collecting revenue within the next year.

**Action Item: Create a simple plan for Alpine and Calaveras counties to adopt**

CSEDD board members will work together to create a simple plan for Alpine and Calaveras counties to start collecting TOT on internet booked vacation rentals such as AirBnB. Partners will explore what is currently working and what is not working in Mariposa and Tuolumne counties keeping in mind that very little staff time can be dedicated to the monitoring of rentals that do not self-report. This plan will be complete by Q3 2017.

**Action Item: Adopt the plan at the county level**

CSEDD will work with boards of supervisors in Alpine and Calaveras counties to introduce the plan. It is expected that both counties will adopt the plan and assign staff members to monitor and collect TOT by Q2 2018. The additional TOT revenue collecting through the monitoring will make up for the cost of the added staff time.

**Objective Eight: Improve regional airport infrastructure for faster shipping & delivery services within the CSEDD region.**

Air transportation is a huge barrier to entry (weakness) identified in the SWOT analysis. Businesses located in the CSEDD region have little to no access to one-day or overnight shipping options. This negatively affects the service industry, retailers, and producers. Over the next five years, the CSEDD will partner with the Tuolumne County Airports Department to ensure the proper infrastructure is developed to bring small cargo planes to the region. While the Columbia Regional Airport is located in Tuolumne County, the benefits of having daily cargo planes flying in and out of the County are tremendous and felt region wide. In many small, rural communities FedEx or UPS fly in and out of the regional airport multiple times per day. This allows both a morning and afternoon pick-up and drop off for next-day shipping. With many online competitors and an impatient customer base, retailers and even some wholesalers are forced to offer expedited shipping or they simply cannot survive. The same thing works in reverse, local manufacturers and retailers would benefit from decreasing any lags in their supply chain's distribution. It is also noteworthy that because

of the CSEDD region's issue with out-migration, expedited shipping is one more amenity that may or may not help keep young professionals in the area.

**Action Item: Assess the airport infrastructure and identify gaps to be filled.**

With assistance from the CSEDD, the Tuolumne County Airports Department (TCAD) will create an asset inventory of current airport amenities. The inventory will also identify infrastructure gaps that may be keeping cargo planes from utilizing the facility. The asset inventory will be completed by Q4 2017.

**Action Item: Foster relationships with local shipping carriers**

Upon completion of the asset inventory, members of the TCAD and the CSEDD will share the report with local representatives from FedEx and UPS. CSEDD representatives will build a relationship with the local representatives from the major companies to help further define what is needed at the airport to develop a shipping contract. The development of these relationships will start immediately.

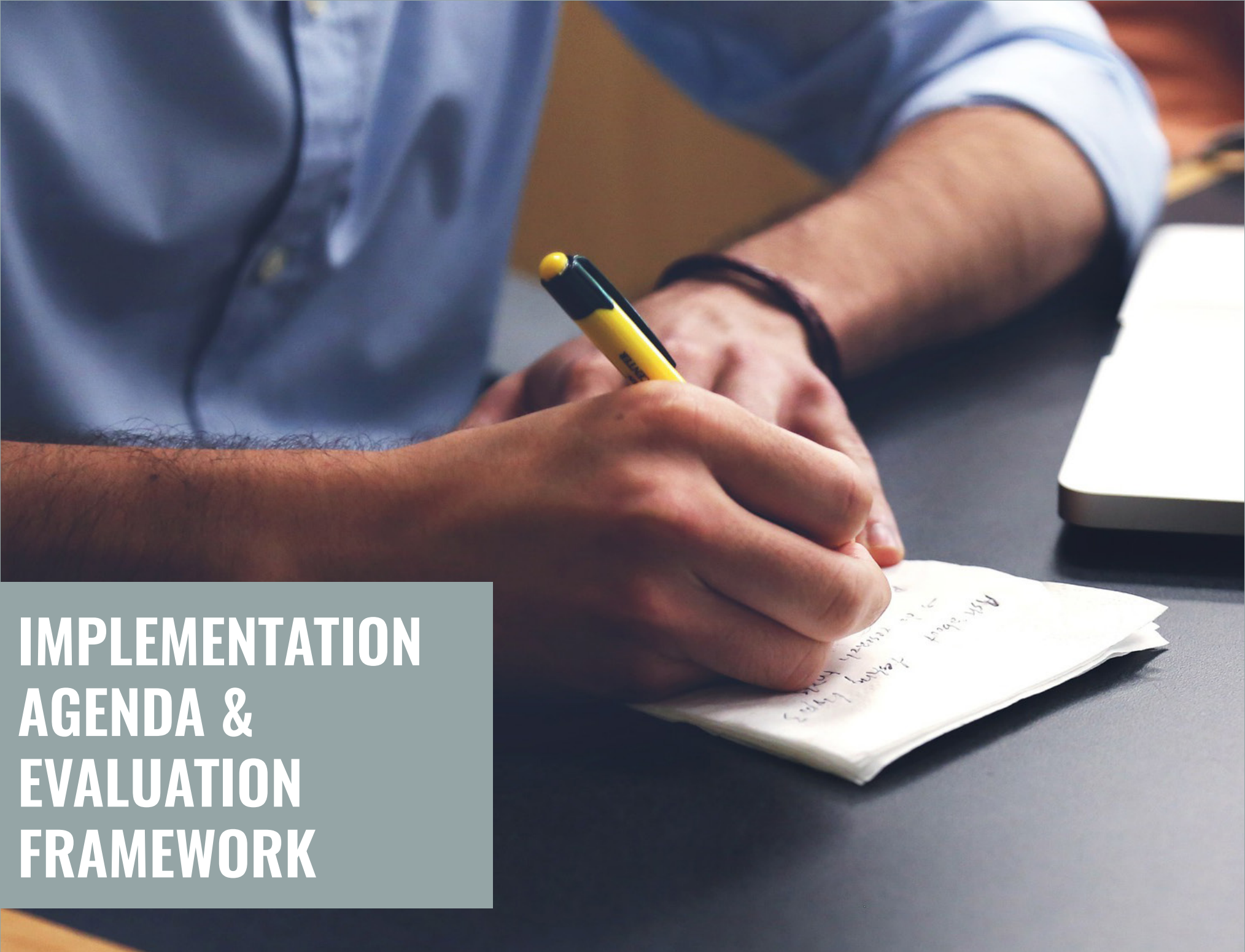
**Action Item: With the help of local shipping company representatives, create a plan to address the necessary infrastructure improvements.**

Partners will create a strategic plan to make the Columbia Airport attractable for FedEx or UPS to begin making cargo flights in and out at least once or twice per day. This plan will be complete by Q2 2019 and will include cost estimates for all improvements. The plan will also include a draft of what a proposed agreement with a shipping company may include.

**Action Item: Seek and obtain private and grant funding for necessary improvements**

Staff from Tuolumne County will be needed to dedicate time to writing proposals for infrastructure improvements and to put the strategic plan in place. At this time, it is assumed that two separate proposals will need to be submitted with the anticipation that at least one will be funded. Until the strategic plan is complete the total amount of funding necessary has not been identified but it will likely be around \$250,000. The most likely source of funds will be FAA Small Airport Grant funds, supplemented by private match. It is the goal of the CEDS planning committee to have funding in place by Q2 2021.



A close-up photograph of a person's hands writing on a small, white, rectangular notepad. The person is wearing a light blue button-down shirt and a dark wristband. They are holding a yellow marker with a black cap. The notepad is resting on a dark, flat surface, and a portion of a laptop is visible to the right. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the person's shirt and the desk.

# IMPLEMENTATION AGENDA & EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

# IMPLEMENTATION AGENDA & EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

This section outlines the CSEDD implementation agenda and the performance measures that will be used to measure the outcomes of the objectives. The objectives and goals are prioritized in order of regional importance. The timeline is listed with three abbreviations: NS; not started, ID; in development, C; completed.

Action Items	Lead Agency and Partners	Evaluation Framework	Timeline				
			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Objective One: Promote advanced visitors’ services within the CSEDD region							
<b>Action Item:</b> Develop a regional tourism partnership organization	<b>Lead Agency:</b> CSEDD <b>Partners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Gold Country Visitors Association</li><li>Mariposa County Chamber of Commerce</li><li>Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau</li><li>Alpine and Calaveras Counties</li></ul> <b>Resources:</b> No additional resources needed	<b>Measures:</b> Partnerships developed with at least eight organizations.	ID	C	C	C	C
<b>Action Item:</b> Review current visitors’ centers and identify new locations	<b>Lead Agency:</b> A sub-committee of the partnership <b>Partners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>CSEDD</li><li>Gold Country Visitors Association</li><li>Mariposa County Chamber of Commerce</li><li>Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau</li><li>Alpine and Calaveras Counties</li></ul> <b>Resources:</b> Increased staff time from partner organizations	<b>Measures:</b> Review three visitors’ centers	NS	ID	ID	C	C
<b>Action Item:</b> Successfully move or open one or two visitor service centers in optimal locations	<b>Lead Agency:</b> CSEDD <b>Partners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Gold Country Visitors Association</li><li>Mariposa County Chamber of Commerce</li><li>Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau</li><li>Alpine and Calaveras Counties</li></ul> <b>Resources:</b> Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) from the county or counties that move or open a visitors center will be used for funding	<b>Measures:</b> Move a minimum of one visitors’ center	NS	ID	ID	ID	C

44

## Objective Two: Build a skilled workforce within the CSEDD.

<b>Action Item:</b> Increase school dual enrollment of the Columbia College CTE High School Articulation program	<b>Lead Agency:</b> Columbia College <b>Partners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tuolumne County</li> <li>Mariposa County</li> <li>Calaveras County</li> <li>Alpine County</li> </ul> <b>Resources:</b> No new resources needed	<b>Measure One:</b> Two agreements in place by second quarter of 2017	C	C	C	C	C
		<b>Measure Two:</b> Four agreements in place by end of 2017	ID	C	C	C	C
		<b>Measure Three:</b> All four counties have at least two agreements in place by end of 2019	ID	ID	C	C	C
		<b>Measure Four:</b> Get 200 students region-wide enrolled in the program by end of 2019	ID	ID	ID	C	C
		<b>Measure Five:</b> 90% success rate of getting kids enrolled in further tech study or tech jobs	ID	ID	ID	ID	C
<b>Action Item:</b> Enhanced partnerships between CSEDD staff and board members, the Mother Lode Work Force Investment Board (WIB)	<b>Lead Agency:</b> CSEDD <b>Partners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mother Lode Work Force Investment Board</li> </ul> <b>Resources:</b> Increased staff time from each county involved with CSEDD	<b>Measure One:</b> Increase referrals to Mother Lode WIB to 50 per year	ID	C	C	C	C
		<b>Measure Two:</b> Increase referrals to Mother Lode WIB to 150 per year	ID	ID	ID	ID	C
<b>Action Item:</b> Promote Columbia College Water Resource Management program	<b>Lead Agency:</b> Columbia College <b>Partners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul> <b>Resources:</b> No new resources needed	<b>Measures:</b> A 10% increase in program enrollment	ID	ID	ID	C	C
<b>Action Item:</b> Establish high school off campus tech center and innovation lab in Calaveras County	<b>Lead Agency:</b> Calaveras County <b>Partners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Columbia College, Calaveras Unified School District, CSEDD</li> </ul> <b>Resources:</b> Seek \$50,000 in funds from EDA or USDA with private match from Calaveras Community Foundation, Sierra Pacific Industries	<b>Measures:</b> Purchase all equipment and acquire space from the County	ID	ID	C	C	C



Action Items	Lead Agency and Partners	Evaluation Framework	Timeline				
			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5

### Objective Three: Promote and develop community and business resiliency within the CSEDD region.

<b>Action Item:</b> Develop a long term permanent response recovery strategic plan to replace the existing preliminary plan	<b>Lead Agency:</b> CSEDD sub-committee <b>Partners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alpine County</li> <li>Calaveras County</li> <li>Mariposa County</li> <li>Tuolumne County</li> </ul> <b>Resources:</b> Increased staff time from each member county	<b>Measures:</b> Complete a multi-county business resiliency disaster preparedness strategic plan	ID	ID	ID	C	C
<b>Action Item:</b> Development of Calaveras County Chamber of Commerce Butte Fire Recovery Center	<b>Lead Agency:</b> Calaveras County Chamber of Commerce <b>Partners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSEDD</li> <li>Alliance Small Business Development Center (SBDC)</li> </ul> <b>Resources:</b> EDA funded project; has been awarded and will be funded with \$250,000 for 2017 and 2018	<b>Measure One:</b> Get the facility functional by the second quarter of 2017.	ID	C	C	C	C
		<b>Measure Two:</b> Help create or save 30 small businesses	ID	ID	C	C	C
		<b>Measure Three:</b> Obtain alternative funding to keep the Center open indefinitely for a quicker response for business resiliency	NS	ID	C	C	C
<b>Action Item:</b> Development of Tuolumne County Disaster and Business Resiliency Center	<b>Lead Agency:</b> Tuolumne County <b>Partners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tuolumne County Economic Development Authority</li> </ul> <b>Resources:</b> HUD and private foundations have committed to funding the center with \$70 million of which \$20 million will be directly related to business development and resiliency	<b>Measure One:</b> Have a functional facility by the end of 2017	ID	C	C	C	C
		<b>Measure Two:</b> Help create or save 30 small businesses	NS	ID	C	C	C

Action Items	Lead Agency and Partners	Evaluation Framework	Timeline				
			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5

#### Objective Four: Promote coordinated marketing efforts throughout the CSEDD region.

<b>Action Item:</b> Promote a coordinated marketing plan throughout the region.	<b>Lead Agency:</b> A sub-committee of the tourism partnership <b>Partners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gold Country Visitors Association</li> <li>• Mariposa County Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau</li> <li>• Alpine and Calaveras Counties</li> </ul> <b>Resources:</b> Increased staff time from partner organizations	<b>Measures:</b> Complete a multi-county strategic marketing plan	ID	ID	ID	C	C
<b>Action Item:</b> Ensure all three counties within the GCVA region are voting members of the association.	<b>Lead Agency:</b> <b>Partners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul> <b>Resources:</b> \$750/year for each of the three counties	<b>Measures:</b> All three counties are voting members in good standing	C	C	C	C	C
<b>Action Item:</b> Partner with regional leaders to cross-train employees	<b>Lead Agency:</b> CSEDD <b>Partners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mariposa County Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Ebbetts Pass Visitors Center</li> <li>• Alpine County</li> <li>• Calaveras County</li> </ul> <b>Resources:</b> Increased staff time from each county involved with CSEDD	<b>Measures:</b> All visitors' centers have marketing materials about the other three counties and all employees staffing the centers are knowledgeable about those materials	ID	C	C	C	C

Action Items	Lead Agency and Partners	Evaluation Framework	Timeline				
			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5

### Objective Five: Promote infrastructure improvements throughout the CSEDD region.

<b>Action Item:</b> Seek State and Federal Funding to Provide Broadband Service to Underserved and Unserved Communities	<b>Lead Agency:</b> CSEDD <b>Partners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alpine County</li> <li>Mariposa County</li> <li>Tuolumne County</li> <li>Calaveras County</li> <li>Caltel</li> </ul> <b>Resources:</b> <i>Measure One:</i> Increased staff time from Tuolumne and Calaveras County staff <i>Measure Two:</i> Increased staff time from Alpine and Mariposa County staff <i>Measure Three:</i> Increased staff time from CSEDD, and Alpine and Mariposa County staff. Funds will be requested from the California Advanced Services Fund and USDA Rural Development broadband revolving loan funds	<b>Measure One:</b> Develop a partnership group to expand Caltel and comcast “the last mile”	ID	C	C	C	C
		<b>Measure Two:</b> Develop a partnership group to expand “back bone” to Alpine and Mariposa Counties.	NS	ID	C	C	C
		<b>Measure Three:</b> Write and submit three proposals for broadband expansion funding assistance	NS	NS	ID	C	C
<b>Action Item:</b> Seek funding for non-highway road construction improvements to increase access to markets	<b>Lead Agency:</b> CSEDD board member facilitation <b>Partners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tuolumne County</li> <li>Calaveras County</li> <li>Alpine County</li> <li>Mariposa County</li> </ul> <b>Resources:</b> <i>Measure One:</i> Increased staff time from each member county <i>Measure Two:</i> Funding needed from EDA, TIGER or DOT	<b>Measure One:</b> Apply for funding for eight distinct projects region wide	ID	ID	ID	C	C
		<b>Measure Two:</b> Obtain funding for at least four projects	NS	ID	ID	ID	C
<b>Action Item:</b> Phoenix lake dredging project for sustainable water storage	<b>Lead Agency:</b> Tuolumne County Resource Conservation District <b>Partners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul> <b>Resources:</b> <i>Measure One:</i> Phase 2 funding from California Prop 84 bond measure; \$1,670,250 awarded <i>Measure Two:</i> Phase 3 funding from California Prop 84; unknown amount to be requested in 2018	<b>Measure One:</b> Complete engineering plans for the Phoenix Lake improvements including; dredging plans, sediment forebay design, and wetland enhancement design, complete the necessary environmental review, obtain the required regulatory permits and compliance for Phase 3, and purchase the required land for the sediment forebay.	ID	ID	C	C	C
		<b>Measure Two:</b> Obtain funding and begin dredging	NS	NS	ID	ID	C



Action Items	Lead Agency and Partners	Evaluation Framework	Timeline				
			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<b>Action Item:</b> Seek funding for water and waste water treatment facility construction and expansion	<b>Lead Agency:</b> CSEDD board member facilitation <b>Partners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tuolumne County Joint Powers Authority</li> <li>Calaveras County Joint Powers Authority</li> <li>Alpine County</li> <li>Mariposa County</li> </ul> <b>Resources:</b> <i>Measure One:</i> Increased staff time from each county and city involved with the identified projects <i>Measure Two:</i> Funding needed from USDA Rural Development, EDA, or the State <i>Measure Three:</i> Request \$500,000 in State Proposition I funds for waterline improvement	<b>Measure One:</b> Apply for funding for five more distinct projects region wide including improved infrastructure at New Melones and water transportation	ID	ID	ID	C	C
		<b>Measure Two:</b> Obtain funding for at least two projects	NS	ID	ID	ID	C
		<b>Measure Three:</b> Complete one waterline improvement project	ID	ID	ID	ID	C
<b>Action Item:</b> Seek funding for the Sierra Rail expansion	<b>Lead Agency:</b> Tuolumne County Transportation Council <b>Partners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sonora Industrial Park</li> <li>Tuolumne County EDA</li> </ul> <b>Resources:</b> <i>Measure One:</i> Increased staff time for TCTC to write proposals <i>Measure Two:</i> \$2 million in TIGER or DOT funding will be needed	<b>Measure One:</b> Apply for two TIGER or DOT grants	ID	ID	C	C	C
		<b>Measure Two:</b> Upgrade rail lines from 5mph to 20mph	NS	NS	ID	ID	C
<b>Action Item:</b> Encourage PG&E to extend Calaveras County natural gas connection.	<b>Lead Agency:</b> CSEDD sub-committee <b>Partners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PG&amp;E</li> </ul> <b>Resources:</b> No new resources needed	<b>Measure One:</b> Form a group to work directly with PG&E to work towards expanding natural gas distribution	NS	ID	C	C	C
		<b>Measure Two:</b> Expand natural gas distribution out of past San Andreas	NS	NS	ID	ID	C

Action Items	Lead Agency and Partners	Evaluation Framework	Timeline				
			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Objective Six: Expand upon existing business retention and expansion programs							
<b>Action Item:</b> Expand upon existing business retention and expansion programs.	<b>Lead Agency:</b> CSEDD <b>Partners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Alliance Small Business Development Center (SBDC)</li></ul> <b>Resources:</b> USDA Rural Development funding of \$50,000 over 2017 and 2018	<b>Measures:</b> Create or save 20 additional jobs through BRE program	ID	C	C	C	C
<b>Action Item:</b> AgPlus EDA Technical Assistance	<b>Lead Agency:</b> Valley Vision <b>Partners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>CSEDD</li><li>CSU, Chico</li><li>CSU, Fresno</li></ul> <b>Resources:</b> Awarded \$250,000 for business technical assistance; \$35,000 staying in CSEDD region	<b>Measures:</b> Create or save 5 additional jobs through BRE program	ID	C	C	C	C
<b>Action Item:</b> Obtain funding to further expand the BRE program	<b>Lead Agency:</b> Alliance Small Business Development Center (SBDC) <b>Partners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>CSEDD</li></ul> <b>Resources:</b> Will submit proposal to SBA, EDA, and USDA Rural Development	<b>Measures:</b> Increase funding for programs in underserved communities by 10% by 2018	ID	ID	C	C	C
<b>Action Item:</b> Provide ESRI Business Analyst support services	<b>Lead Agency:</b> CSU, Chico <b>Partners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>CSEDD</li></ul> <b>Resources:</b> Contracting with CSU, Chico for \$1,500 per year	<b>Measures:</b> Provide ESRI Business Analyst support services to at least 15 businesses per year	C	C	C	C	C

Action Items	Lead Agency and Partners	Evaluation Framework	Timeline				
			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5

**Objective Seven: Create a uniform Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) collection plan for vacation rentals across the entire region**

<b>Action Item:</b> Create a simple plan for Alpine and Calaveras counties to adopt	<b>Lead Agency:</b> CSEDD sub-committee <b>Partners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alpine County</li> <li>Calaveras County</li> </ul> <b>Resources:</b> Increased staff time from each county involved with CSEDD	<b>Measures:</b> Create a simple plan for Alpine and Calaveras counties to adopt	<i>ID</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>C</i>
<b>Action Item:</b> Adopt the plan at the county level	<b>Lead Agency:</b> Alpine and Calaveras Counties <b>Partners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul> <b>Resources:</b> No new resources needed	<b>Measures:</b> Adopt the proposed plan at the county level	<i>NS</i>	<i>ID</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>C</i>



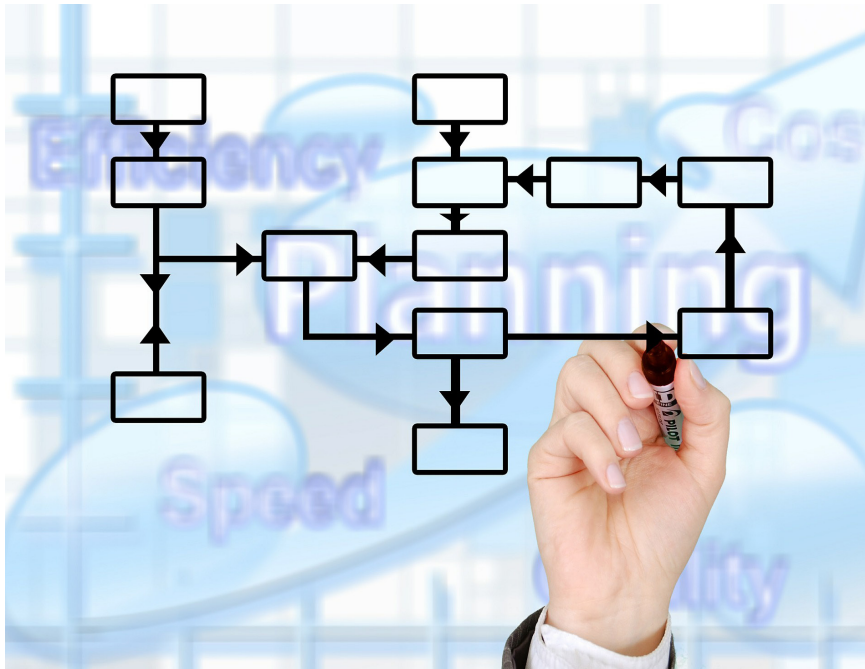
Action Items	Lead Agency and Partners	Evaluation Framework	Timeline				
			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Objective Eight: Improve regional airport infrastructure for faster shipping & delivery services.							
<b>Action Item:</b> Assess the current airport infrastructure and identify gaps to be filled	<b>Lead Agency:</b> Tuolumne County Air-ports Department <b>Partners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>CSEDD</li></ul> <b>Resources:</b> Tuolumne County staff time needed	<b>Measures:</b> Create an asset inventory to fill gaps	ID	C	C	C	C
<b>Action Item:</b> Foster relationships with local shipping carriers	<b>Lead Agency:</b> Tuolumne County Airports Department <b>Partners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>CSEDD</li></ul> <b>Resources:</b> Tuolumne staff time needed	<b>Measures:</b> Develop marketable relationships with a minimum of two shipping carriers and create a list of all necessary partners	ID	ID	C	C	C
<b>Action Item:</b> With the help of local shipping company representatives, create a plan to address the necessary infrastructure improvements.	<b>Lead Agency:</b> Tuolumne County Airports Department <b>Partners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>CSEDD</li></ul> <b>Resources:</b> Request funding or staff time from Tuolumne County and Tuolumne County EDA	<b>Measures:</b> Create a tangible strategic plan	NS	ID	ID	C	C
<b>Action Item:</b> Seek and obtain private and grant funding for necessary improvements	<b>Lead Agency:</b> Tuolumne County Airports Department <b>Partners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>CSEDD</li></ul> <b>Resources:</b> Measure One: Request funding or staff time from Tuolumne County and Tuolumne County EDA Measure Two: Requesting \$250,000 from FAA Small Airports grant	<b>Measure One:</b> Write and submit two or more proposals to fix identified infrastructure issues and enact the strategic	NS	ID	ID	C	C
		<b>Measure Two:</b> Obtain Funding	NS	NS	ID	ID	C

# ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Comprehensive Economic Development strategy committee has developed an organizational structure to ensure the timely implementation of this comprehensive economic development strategy.

The CEDS strategy committee will meet annually, and when needed, more often. The CEDS committee will be responsible for the following:

- Organizing regular communication between the CSEDD region's counties
- Tracking and evaluating the progress of the region objectives and goals
- Creating partnerships between regional stakeholders
- Recommending and encouraging use of local workforce development or educational programs
- The CSEDD will act as the lead agency in the event of an economic or natural disaster in communication between state and federal agencies.



# BUILDING REGIONAL ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

In many locations economic prosperity is dependent on a region's ability to withstand sudden changes in the economy. The resilience of a region's business community is dependent on numerous factors including the type of disruption, displacement of customers, displacement of the workforce, access to and from the business, and disruptions in the supply chain. When compared to other regions, the CSEDD region has many outside threats to the health of its business climate. The region is in a constant threat of fire danger, and is currently locked in a prolonged drought. While natural disaster is the most immediate threat to the health of the region, there are other factors that threaten to disrupt the economy. Due to its high dependence on government controlled lands for its tourism revenue the CSEDD region could be wildly affected by government furloughs and prolonged recession.

Fire danger and drought were the two most prominent issues identified at the community meetings. Both the Butte and Rim fires in the past several years have devastated the region, displacing hundreds of residents and destroying home based businesses. Calaveras County has been hit particularly hard. Many people did not have fire insurance or cannot now afford home owners' insurance due to a drastic increase in rates. As a result, many multi-generation land owners are selling their property pennies on the dollar and exiting the area. This is causing further disruptions in the customer base and workforce. While the most proven way to ensure economic resilience due to government policy changes is to diversify the economic base, it is the goal of the CSEDD and its partner organizations to reduce the short term stress and the long term economic effects on the business community due to the inevitable natural disasters. The CEDS planning committee has identified multiple steady-state and responsive actions to be taken to ensure proper economic resilience.

## **Steady-State Economic Resilience**

Moving into 2017, CSEDD will be taking a leadership role for the entire region in terms of putting steady-state economic resilience initiatives into action. Many of the objectives and action items described earlier in this document not only seek to increase economic prosperity long term, they also have the inherent goal of better preparing the region for disruptions in the economic base.

## **Increasing partnerships with Mother Lode EDC**

The Mother Lode WIB is an excellent resource for local businesses and job seekers, however, the WIB's services are underutilized. Starting in 2017, each of the CSEDD participating members will increase their WIB referrals with CSEDD increasing its total referrals to 150 per year over the next 4 years.

## **Capitalizing on a Broadening Economic Base**

As noted in the industry clusters section, tourism is and has been the economic base industry for the region for a very long time. Unfortunately, tourism is very susceptible to disruptions during peak seasons. This is especially true for the CSEDD region as much of an entire tourist season could be lost due to one devastating fire. By supporting sector growth in health care and value-added agriculture (the two identified emerging clusters) the region's economic base is broadening. A diversified economy is much more likely to withstand future disruptions.

## **Expanding BRE program**

Businesses with owners and employees rooted in the community are less likely to relocate, even when facing a disruption. They are simply too invested in the community. Business retention and expansion programs are an excellent opportunity for regional economic developers to ensure their businesses are both happy and healthy. By providing services during the good times, businesses will be better prepared to last through disruptions and will know where to seek help during the rough times.

## **Development of a Long-term Permanent Response Recovery Strategic Plan**

The CEDS planning committee has developed a preliminary plan for business disaster response and economic resilience which is outlined below, in the responsive section. However, the resources and dedicated staff time necessary to develop a permanent, long term, disaster response plan was not available at this time. The long term plan will include a process for monitoring and addressing business needs, assigning staff from each county communication responsibilities, developing a revolving a loan fund for insurance gap funding, and connecting displaced businesses and employees with the two resiliency centers.



## Responsive Economic Resilience

As discussed above, the development of a long term disaster response plan will be begin in 2017. However, should a disruption occur in the near future, to ensure there is an interim plan, an outline of the responsive plan is included below:

### Process for regular communication

In the interim, CSEDD has agreed to act as the point of contact of a network of information passing the business community in each county and the counties themselves. Until a final responsive action plan is created, the following people will be responsible for communicating with businesses, and CSEDD board and staff:

Tara Schiff – Mariposa County  
Larry Cope – Tuolumne County  
Michael Oliveria – Calaveras County  
Terry Woodrow – Alpine County

### Monitoring and updating business needs

As part of the communication process each of the four people listed above will be responsible for distributing the Small Business Administration (SBA) Estimated Disaster Economic Injury Worksheet. It is understood that in the case of a substantial disruption where the business owner themselves must evacuate, it may not be appropriate to have the formed immediately returned. However, timely distribution of the worksheet will ensure there is a proper assessment of the short term economic impact of the disruption. The worksheet is included in the appendix.

### Rapidly Contact Key Officials to Communicate Business Needs

After the four sub-region contacts report back to CSEDD, CSEDD staff will be responsible for reaching out to state and federal officials to inform them of the disruption's impact. Once provided with the proper data, state and federal officials can make better informed decisions on how to allocate scarce resources.

### Connect Businesses with Resiliency Centers

With the assistance of EDA, HUD, and private donors, local partners have been able to obtain funding to develop two disaster recovery centers. All local partners will have the ability to refer displaced businesses and employees to either center

once they are fully operational.

EDA has awarded the Calaveras County Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with CSEDD, \$250,000 to open a fire recovery center in San Andreas for those affected by the Butte Fire. One-half of the Chambers time will be dedicated to operating the resiliency center and partner organizations will be hiring a half time business out-reach person. The out-reach person ensures that the center will be maximizing its impact rather than being reactive as businesses look for help. Most business owners affected by disaster are preoccupied putting their lives back together and may not know what resources to approach for assistance. In addition to the employees working directly on the project, the Alliance Small Business Development Center (SBDC) will offer 9 consultants to work with businesses coming through the Center. The facility will be operational in 2017 and is funded for two years. In that time period, the partners plan to seek funding from other public and private sources to keep the facility operational. By keeping the center open indefinitely partners will be much more proactive rather than reactive in their response to future disasters such as inevitable fires.

Tuolumne County and the Tuolumne County Economic Development Authority partnered to obtain \$72 million in HUD and private foundation matching funds to open a Tuolumne County Disaster and Business Resiliency Center. Of the \$72 million, \$20 million is dedicated to business development and resiliency. The project will be fully operational the end of 2017.



# APPENDICES





## ■ APPENDIX A: SURVEY RESULTS

1. In what town/city do you live in?

City	Responses	Percent
Angels Camp	1	6%
Columbia	1	6%
Twain Harte	1	6%
Sonora	11	65%
Valley Springs	1	6%
Other unincorporated areas (Tuolumne County)	2	12%
Total	17	100%

2. Are you aware of any previous planning activities, documents, or reports undertaken that might be relevant to creating a new five year economic development plan?

Planning Activity	Responses	Percent
Community Assessment	2	20%
Economic Development Plan (EDA, CDBG, HUD, USDA-RD)	2	20%
Workforce Study or Analysis	0	0%
Target Industry Study	0	0%
Project Feasibility Study	0	0%
General plan (economic development element)	4	40%
Affordable housing	1	10%
Cell phone coverage	0	0%
Other	1	10%
Total	10	100%

3. Please list the names of the studies marked in question 2 above.

Community Assessment Focus Group  
 "Tuolumne County General Plan and related EIR  
 Community Assessment funded by Sonora Area Foundation  
 TUD Urban Water Management Plan  
 Columbia Airport Master Plan"  
 TOURISM & BUSINESS EXPANSION STUDY BY THE BUXTON COMPANY CDBG #13-CDBG-8948  
 Not sure what the "NAME" is. Tuolumne County General Plan?

4. In your opinion, what are the three leading causes of unemployment in your community? (Select up to three)

Cause	Responses	Percent
Lack of job opportunity within the region	14	29%
Ability to find qualified candidates	10	21%
Resident's willingness to work	3	6%
High business costs	5	10%
Slow business growth	4	8%
Availability of jobs	7	15%
Other	5	10%
Total	48	100%

5. What are the three leading reasons that businesses fail or private businesses, companies, or entrepreneurs might not be successful in business in your community? (Select up to three)

Reason	Response	Percent
Distance to markets	5	12%
Funding/capital access	3	7%
Community support	3	7%
Cost of energy	4	10%
Availability of skilled labor	7	17%
Employee recruitment and retention	5	12%
Cost of land	3	7%
Transportation/ cargo/ shipping	1	2%
Other	11	26%
Total	42	100%

6. How do you rank the following barriers to economic development within your community?

Barriers	Very Important		Somewhat Important		Not Important		Don't Know/ No Opinion		Total Responses
Distance to markets	3	21%	10	71%	1	7%	0	0%	14
Funding/ capital access	8	57%	5	36%	1	7%	0	0%	14
Community support	8	57%	5	36%	1	7%	0	0%	14
Finding qualified employees	8	57%	5	36%	1	7%	0	0%	14
Finding enough employees	7	50%	6	43%	1	7%	0	0%	14
Cost of energy	4	31%	6	46%	2	15%	1	8%	13
Real estate prices	6	46%	6	46%	1	8%	0	0%	13
Broadband access	11	73%	3	20%	1	7%	0	0%	15
Cell phone coverage	7	50%	6	43%	1	7%	0	0%	14
Local taxes/ licensing/ permitting	11	73%	4	27%	0	0%	0	0%	15



## 7. Are there any other barriers important to economic development within your community not listed in question six?

We don't need to look like cities in the valley, we need to build upon our unique location and history. Can you buy a pair of shoes or bedding or home goods here? We are sending our "customers" to other counties to purchase what should be here and in doing so send our sales tax dollars to other counties; Declining condition of roads and lack of Stategovt funding even though there are adequate funds raised through State license fee and gas taxes to fix these funds are diverted to other programs (health care, high speed rail, urban areas, etc) long permitting time frames and cost of development; Need more rentals. A large apartment complex, town homes, or condos is necessary immediately if any business is to survive in TC; Onerous regulation and related fees which discourage local investment; Lack of social outlets for young people. While the area might be attractive for its beauty and outdoor activities, there is nothing here to attract young professionals and families.

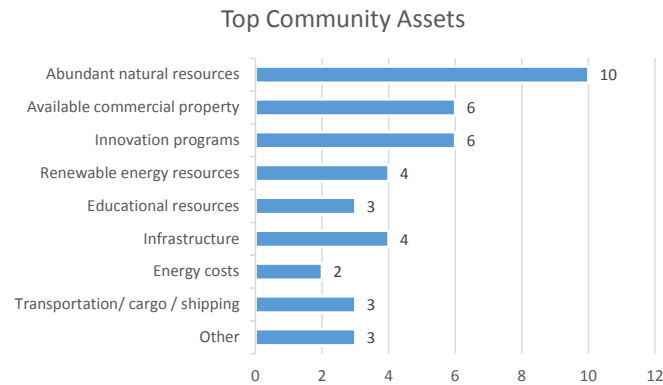
## 8. What has been done in the past to promote, support, and leverage economic development programs or initiatives in your community? (Check all that apply)

Past Action	Response	Percent
Participated in a regional program	7	19%
Created a program	6	17%
Obtained government grants or funding	9	25%
Obtained private or non-profit funding	4	11%
Don't know	7	19%
Other	3	8%
Total	36	100%

## 9. Of the items marked in question eight, which have been successful?

Past Action	Very Successful	Somewhat Successful	Not Important	Don't know/ no opinion
Created a program	2	2	3	0
Obtained government grants or funding	1	2	4	0
Participated in a regional program	0	4	2	0
Partnering with educational institutions	0	3	2	0
Other	1	1	1	0

## 10. What are the top three assets for doing business in your community? (Select up to three)



## 11. How important are the following business programs as a strategy for your community's economic development plan?

Business Programs	Very Important		Somewhat Important		Not Important		Don't know/ No opinion		Total Responses
Address needs of existing businesses (retention/expansion)	8	47%	9	53%	0	0%	0	0%	17
Promote entrepreneurship (startup)	13	76%	4	24%	0	0%	0	0%	17
Attract new businesses (recruitment of new companies)	14	82%	3	18%	0	0%	0	0%	17
Prepare workforce with training, skills, and education	13	76%	4	24%	0	0%	0	0%	17
Business advocacy	8	44%	10	56%	0	0%	0	0%	18
Subsidized access to capital programs	6	35%	8	47%	2	12%	1	6%	17

## 12. How do you see the private sector participating in local economic development/ business development program in your local community?

Participation	Very Likely		Somewhat Likely		Not Likely		Don't know/ No opinion		Total
Participating in ongoing planning activities (board member, advisory council)	4	21%	15	79%	0	0%	0	0%	19
Formation of strategic partnerships (business ventures, joint ventures)	4	22%	8	44%	4	22%	2	11%	18
Contractors for implementation of specific strategies	0	0%	14	78%	3	17%	1	6%	18
Project/ program financing	1	6%	12	67%	5	28%	0	0%	18

## 13. Are there any other ways not listed in question 12 that the private sector will very likely participate in local economic/business development in your economy?

Better support for proposed projects that will enhance and or generate economic development during the permitting process, work to "streamline and simplify" the permitting process; Local participation will be based on perceived value to the local business. It is an educational process to show cause and effect; The private sector will not be energetically involved unless and until the governmental/regulatory posture of the County changes; The local economy is basically very small businesses that depend on tourism and they aren't very aggressive.

14. How economically resilient do you think your community is? (The community's ability to recover quickly from a shock, withstand a shock, and avoid a shock altogether)

Resilience	Response	Percent
Very resilient	1	6%
Somewhat resilient	6	33%
Not resilient at all	9	50%
Don't know	2	11%
Total	18	100%

15. Which of the following tactics would best help your community become more economically resilient? (Select up to three)

Total		
Action	Response	Percent
Planning efforts to broaden the region's industrial base	10	24%
Adapting business retention and expansion programs	11	26%
Creating a more resilient workforce through workforce development	8	19%
Promoting business continuity and preparedness within the region	10	24%
Other	3	7%
Total	42	100%

16. What do you see as the two most successful business clusters in your region for job creation, investment, and economic development? (Select up to two)

Total		
Cluster	Response	Percent
Agriculture	1	3%
Manufacturing	3	8%
Retail Commercial	1	3%
Entertainment & Hospitality	8	22%
Business or Personal Services	1	3%
Healthcare	13	36%
Technology	2	6%
Recreation	2	6%
Other	5	14%
Total	36	100%

**17. What should be the top three goals of the region's economic development program? (Select up to three)**

Goals	Response	Percent
Increase/ retain jobs	13	25%
Develop or improve relations with businesses in our region	4	8%
Identify top businesses for relationship development and maintenance	4	8%
Improve/ change community image (internal and/or external)	5	10%
Improve/ preserve quality of life	4	8%
Program assessment of our current	2	4%
Better community planning	4	8%
Train & educate the workforce to fill skills gaps	6	12%
Increased capital access	1	2%
Business advocacy	5	10%
Other	3	6%
Total	51	100%

**18. In the next five years, what would you like to see accomplished as part of an action oriented economic/business development program within the region? (Select up to three)**

Item	Response	Percent
Supporting small and medium-sized enterprises	11	22%
Investing in physical (hard) infrastructure	11	22%
Ensuring that the local investment climate is functional for local businesses	7	14%
Encouraging the formation of new enterprises	7	14%
Investing in soft infrastructure (educational and workforce development, institutional	4	8%
Attracting external investment (nationally and internally)	4	8%
Supporting the growth of particular clusters of businesses	4	8%
Other	1	2%
Total	49	100%

**Survey Comments:**

**2. Are you aware of any previous planning activities, documents, or reports undertaken that might be relevant to creating a new five year economic development plan including:**

Other, Urban water Management Plan, Columbia Regional Airport Master Plan; Community Assessment Focus Group; Tuolumne County General Plan and related EIR, Community Assessment funded by Sonora Area Foundation, TUD Urban Water Management Plan, Columbia Airport Master Plan; TOURISM & BUSINESS EXPANSION STUDY BY THE BUXTON COMPANY CDBG #13-CDBG-8948; Not sure what the "NAME" is, Tuolumne County General Plan?.

**4. In your opinion what re three leading causes of unemployment in your community? (Select up to three):**

Other, State and Local Government regulations on development, abuse of CEQA, NIMBYism, Lack of ability to utilize natural resources in forest, conflicting State and local permitting regulations, too many state agencies with complex and slow permitting requirements; Other, communications systems, phone and internet, Example, downtown Angels Camp has zero cell phone service and limited internet/wifi. Political will to make use of our resources to benefit the county such as removing fuels from the forest is cheaper than fire suppression costs and could generate income from bio-mass; other, technology infrastructure, poor leadership at county level, lack of understanding of the essential need for a well-balanced general plan to update; Other, Lack of Capital Investment in our County, Our county policies have effectively driven resident capital out of the county and created barriers to outside capital coming in; Other, lawsuits by opposition groups; Other, Apart from government there is not activity that allows for full time decent paying jobs.

**5. What are the three leading reasons that businesses fail or private businesses, companies or entrepreneurs might not be successful in business in your community? (Select up to three):**

Other, Aging population, fairly low median income, lack of skilled work force, We have an aging population, reduction in population growth, lack of affordable housing and marginal education system. Kids are moving away. When groups propose economic development projects they are often met with resistance and lawsuits that are easy to file with the well intended but broken CEQA system; Permit process for start up business. Lack of understanding of what it takes to run a successful business by owner; Other, Failure to establish and work a business plan. Wanting the business to run on their schedule rather than when customers are around. Unwillingness by Caltrans and county to permit signs to inform tourists of what is offered; Other, I don't know, perhaps local businesses working together to engage with the visiting public/tourists... setting a welcome atmosphere, a sense of community, a small town sense of place; Other, Excessive regulation and related fees/taxation; Other, County Over Reach; other, overregulation; other, government, The State of California puts so many regulations on businesses. They make it hard for any business in California, especially a small business, to thrive. Raising minimum wage will be putting many small businesses out of business in the upcoming years; Other, Education & mentoring on how to run a business inc. employee and money management, Community Support goes both ways. Employee retention relates to wages and benefits; Other, successful business planning; Other, Lack of high-speed internet; Too close to Nevada where it is much cheaper to set up a business. No support/interest in bringing in industry.

**6. How do you rank the following barriers to economic development within your community?**

Declining condition of roads and lack of Stategovt funding even though there are adequate funds raised through State license fee and gas taxes to fix these funds are diverted to other programs



(health care, high speed rail, urban areas, ect) long permitting timeframes and cost development; We don't need to look like cities in the valley, we need to build upon our unique location and history. Can you buy a pair of shoes or bedding or home goods here? We are sending our "customers" to other counties to purchase what should be here and in doing so send our sales tax dollars to other counties; Need more rentals. A large apartment complex, town homes, or condos is necessary immediately if any business is to survive in TC; Onerous regulation and related fees which discourage local investment.

**8. What has been done in the past to promote, support, and leverage economic development programs or initiatives in your community? (Check all that apply):**

Other; Black Oak Tribe, Sonora Area Foundation and service organizations support; Innovation Lab, Resiliency funding, Grant funding for County Govt funding, tree mortality funding; The county has had a paid Economic Development person in the past. The concept was part of past General Plans. This is not a function of the Chamber of Commerce to do but they are trying to fill the void. Just as Destination Angels Camp or Angels Camp Business Association. Many efforts over the years, some successful but most spin into limited results for the money and time spent; Bureaucratic/governmental programs full of platitudes and political agendas but nothing of any consequence that seriously tackles the need to attract capital to our county; Other; Not much; Larry Cope, TCEDA Director has done a phenomenal job in all the above areas; The Alpine Biomass Committee has part of its mission to promote a sustainable local economy.

**9. Of the items marked in question eight, which have been successful?**

Economic Development should be the incubator of new ideas and be able to let others take the steps needed. It is not just about the money, the educational tools, or the level of noise generated around this activity. It is about being innovative and helping others to see opportunities.

**10. What are the top three assets for doing business in your community? (Select up to three):**

Other; Close proximity to large population centers and high income demographics, Have abundant natural timber resources but severely limited in ability to utilize, good recreation but road and transportation infrastructure is lacking; The tree mortality will be an ongoing project for the next decade or more. With it we will need to develop the "on the ground" ability to work with the bio-mass issue. Create jobs to improve our watersheds and our strengthen our communities by making use of the resources here. Reduce the fuel loading saves fire suppression costs and provides income; Other; desirable location; Other; lack of competition.

**11. How important are the following business programs as a strategy for your community's economic development plan?**

Assist in building a workforce trained in how to use the resources currently in the county. Water and wastewater operators, environmental work, forestry, minerals, and watershed management. Some of this is starting with Columbia College now; I assume the question is what we should be doing because if it is what we are doing the Not Important boxes should be checked.

**14. How economically resilient do you think your community is? (The community's ability to recover quickly from a shock, withstand a shock, and avoid a shock altogether):**

Our rural community tends to lag economic upturns and lead economic downturns. Rural communities are also at a disadvantage with urban areas for grants funding and legislation; We proved that with the Butte Fire; We learned from the Butte fire that we were not prepared and had no means of recovery in place. We had to rely on State and Fed funding, and help from FEMA, Red Cross and other non-profit organizations. That being said, there was little immediate organization in place; the narrow economic base of our County makes it very vulnerable to economic shock and likely prone to slow recovery; Its resilience comes from the dependency

on government.

**15. Which of the following tactics would best help your community become more economically resilient? (Select up to three):**

Other; Communication and Technology infrastructure; Other; Eliminate onerous regulations and fees, Focused and innovative efforts to attract capital to our County.

What do you see as the two most successful business clusters in your region for job creation, investment and economic development? (Select up to two):

Black Oak Casino is major; Chicken Ranch Casino is ok in spite of poor management; Sonora Regional Medical Center is a major asset from a jobs and service standpoint; Other; Timber and water; think of the largest group of highest paid workers in the county work for CCWD. And Sierra Pacific Industries has the greatest private investment of land and resources in the county; A healthy base of light, clean manufacturing would do much to bring jobs and financial stability to our County; Other; Aging Population.

**17. What should be the top three goals of the region's economic development program? (Select up to three):**

Better community planning should entail a more streamlined and SIMPLIFIED entitlement process that does not take years and cost tens of thousands of dollars (often hundreds of thousands); Calaveras is quickly becoming known as the new "pot capital" of the Sierras, not a good family image to present when young families are looking for a place to raise families; Other; technology infrastructure; Avoid bureaucratic or governmental flag-waving for political purposes. Focus on what needs to be done to ATTRACT CAPITAL to our county. Only then will we see job growth and new wealth developing here; Other; more resources into upkeep of our regions used for tourism; Other; Create vibrant town; Other; Forest restoration; There is the possibility of forest restoration providing significant jobs without having an adverse impact on tourism.

**18. In the next five years, what would you like to see accomplished as a part of an action oriented economic/business development program within the region? (Select up to three):**

We have had a number of interested individuals over the years that have tried to develop very viable projects and have run into so much regulation and/or opposition that they left or failed. Some notable examples are Bell's project in Tuolumne, Winery project on the Jamestown mine site, Mountain Springs master planned community. There are several notable residential, commercial and resort destination projects currently proposed that should be encouraged, supported and facilitated; We don't need more government programs to drain our already over-taxed community. We need innovative ideas for creating incentives to invest here and creating an environment that will support investors placing capital at risk. Period; Other; Forest restoration.

# APPENDIX B: SBA WORKSHEET

## ESTIMATED DISASTER ECONOMIC INJURY WORKSHEET FOR BUSINESSES

Accurate responses to the questions below will assist in the evaluating a request for an economic injury disaster declaration from the U. S. Small Business Administration.

<b>Name of Business:</b> _____	<b>Type of Business:</b> _____
<b>Owner Details</b>	
<b>Business Owner Mailing Address</b>	
Last Name: _____	Address 1: _____
First Name: _____	Address 2: _____
Work Phone: _____	City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
Home Phone: _____	County: _____
Email: _____	<b>Physical Business Street Address</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Same as Above
Property Owner: _____	Address 1: _____
<b>Dates of Economic Impact</b> When did the impact start and what is the estimated end date? From: <input type="text"/> To: <input type="text"/>	
Address 2: _____	City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
County: _____	

### Estimated Adverse Economic Impact

What were your businesses' revenues during the affected damage period? \_\_\_\_\_

What were your businesses' revenues during that **SAME** period of the prior year? \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of business interruption insurance received or anticipated, if any: \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide a brief explanation of what adverse economic effects the disaster had on your business: \_\_\_\_\_

How many people did you employ prior to disaster? \_\_\_\_\_ How many did you employ after disaster: \_\_\_\_\_

### Physical Damage to Business Property

If your business also suffered property damage, please answer the following questions:

Estimated dollar loss to: Real Property (Building), if owned: \_\_\_\_\_

Contents \*: \_\_\_\_\_

\* - includes machinery and equipment, furniture and fixtures, inventory, leasehold improvements, etc.

Insurance recovery expected or received for property damages: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Form Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that the information provided above is correct and accurate to my best knowledge.

Form Completed By: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

## ■ APPENDIX C: CSEDD STRATEGY COMMITTEE ROSTER

**Terry Woodrow**

Alpine County  
209-753-2551

**Randy Hanvelt**

Tuolumne County  
209-533-5521

**Michael Oliveria**

Calaveras County  
209-754-6370

**Paul DeBaldo**

209-785-7697

**Marshall Long**

Mariposa County  
209-966-3222

**Tara Schiff**

Mariposa County  
209-742-1214

## ■ APPENDIX D: PHOTO CREDITS

Thank you to the photo contributors of this document. If you have any questions about the photos used in this document, please contact the Center for Economic Development at 530-898-4598.

*Russell Neches*

*Cover*

*Brian Cantoni*

*Page 14*

*Jose Machado*

*Cover*

*US Department of Agriculture*

*Page 22*

*Jason Jenkins*

*Page 3*

*Michael Koncuska*

*Page 23*

*Tom Hilton*

*Page 7*

*Helen Gordon*

*Page 33*

*David Berry*

*Page 8*

*Jose Machado*

*Page 52*

## ■ APPENDIX E: PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Central Sierra Economic Development District released the CEDS document for public comments and review between October 10, 2016 and November 9, 2016. The document was posted on the CSEDD website, and a press release was sent out to local media sources.

The Center for Economic Development at CSU, Chico (CED) received two public comments during the 30-day period. Where appropriate, the comments were incorporated into the CEDS. However, most comments were regarding the validity of the idea that government is at all responsible for the creation of jobs or the meeting of the outlined goals and objectives. The comment's author feel it is the business owners themselves and therefore not the regions place to claim job creation through business assistance and disaster relief. The comments also question the validity of disaster relief planning, as they feel it is more of an organic process. However, preliminary plans were made in accordance with EDA CEDS guidelines.

The second public comment was received on November 7, 2016 which highlighted the needs for a trained workforce at the local community college, improving and promoting the tourism industry, and enhancing regional water storage; all of which is already included within the CEDS. The objectives and goals in the CEDS were derived from community surveys and town hall meetings, and reflect the desires of the community members. Any suggestions not incorporated, were because they did not fit with the feedback the CED received during the community outreach.

From both the comments, the Center for Economic Development made changes to the CEDS. Objective three was reworded to better reflect the action items that are being completed in order to achieve the objective and goals. In addition, the description of the action items was changed to better convey how these will impact the regional community and business resiliency. The CED also addressed the term "BRE" within objective six. It was mentioned the term and definition of "Business Retention and Expansion" programs was confusing and not clear. The CED added further explanation to the term "BRE" and mentioned that it is a conceptual term and not a verbatim, dictionary definition.

To better acknowledge local zoning and permitting issues within the CSEDD region, the CED added "local zoning and permitting" to the top weaknesses

section of the document. Because it was mentioned in the public comments that this is a significant regional issue and should be addressed more thoroughly, an additional written explanation and opportunities for improvement was added to the CEDS.

If anyone has any questions regarding the incorporation of public comments, please contact the Center for Economic Development at 530-898-4598.



Fri, 4 Nov 2016 23:17:57

November 4, 2016

Meagan Weaver  
Project Specialist  
Center for Economic Development  
California State University, Chico  
Chico, CA 95929-0765

Mr. Larry Cope, Director  
Central Sierra Economic Development District  
99 North Washington Street  
Sonora, California 95370

**Subject:** 2017-2022 CEDS Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Dear Sirs:

In response to the draft 2017-2022 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) (herein referred to as Strategy) we are submitting for your review and consideration of the following "Response." As one successful business leader in the county recently stated when discussing this purposed Strategy - "If you have complaints, not only speak up but provide constructive comments and practical solutions. And then ask yourself, what do you want?"

First, we would like all interested parties who are concerned about the economic future of the region to read a copy of this Strategy. Then they would review our Response and speak up, either in writing or at public hearings, if they have any of their own concerns and suggestions. To help those that might feel intimidated by the length and breadth of the Strategy, listed below is a quick look at what we feel are some of the more important findings.

- The Strategy is a five-year road map to fulfill the District's regional vision to ***promote economic vitality within the CSEDD (Central Sierra Economic Development District)***. The Strategy was developed, in part, from a community survey and in which eight (8) Key Findings were uncovered.
- The eight Key Findings are represent the general concerns of citizens about current economic conditions throughout the four-county region (Alpine, Calaveras, Tuolumne and Mariposa).
- There are eight (8) goals and objectives have been purposed that will focus on addressing these regional economic concerns.
- Our Response provides comments and recommendations that focus primarily on the goal: and performance measures and whether or not they can be successfully implemented.
- Our Response provides a number of comments and recommendations that can be summed up in the following statement: "In many cases, local governments can promote economic development, but it cannot create, private sector businesses or jobs. Business

owners and private capital investment create them, thus being the primary driver of economic prosperity in the region - not government."

We encourage the community to take advantage of this public review process, which will hopefully start a much needed conversation with elected officials and their appointed organizations to ensure they are doing everything within their authority and financial resources to assist local businesses "***create a stronger, more resilient region, able to withstand both economic and natural disaster disruptions,***" as stated in the Strategy's Vision Statement. And since this is a five-year strategic road-map, the public will have a chance to make future comments and recommendations when the required Annual Reports must be published. It is never too late to become part of the planning process.

## **Introduction**

There is no question that the Strategy contains ambitious economic development and disaster response plan goals. It is commendable for taking on so many important issues. But in several cases described below, this Response questions whether the District is actually accountable for all these objectives and goals and whether or not they can be achieved within the purposed timeframes. Why? Because in most cases governmental agencies and many of their associated governmental partnership organizations have limited control or influence over whether or not local economies thrive, except when they can limit the number of burdensome and conflicting regulations, excessive fees and requirements that they imposed on local businesses in the first place. This is especially true when businesses are trying to create a new product or try to provide a new service in this ever changing marketplace. To demonstrate this point, look at some of the recent news headlines across America.

The Wall Street Journal has reported almost daily that “the US economy is inching along, productivity is flagging and millions of Americans appear locked out of the labor market (Sputtering Startups Weigh Down Growth).” In several of the Strategy’s Key Findings found on page 5 of the report, these are similar issues facing all of us at the local level. Business creation is down in lumber, forestry, mining and construction jobs are hard to find. Our young adults are still leaving the area seeking education and employment elsewhere. In just the last couple of weeks, a number of business owners have approached us and said that the Strategy’s “Key Findings and survey results” do reflect these same challenges. Government data also shows a decade long slowdown in entrepreneurship. However, it seems to us that the bigger big-box stores are doing very well regionally and seem to have survived the Great Recession. But they are not creating the type of jobs discussed in the Strategy, such as those found in small business involved in manufacturing and hi-tech. Add to this that our region’s job growth continues to be primarily in the low-paying service industry. Government jobs, however, continue to be available at a greater pace than in the private sector. These jobs are usually higher-paying with exceptional retirement and medical benefits, but are harder to qualify for given most require college degrees or years of specialized experience.

We do believe that the Strategy’s goals and objectives are needed for an economy that continues to struggle from the Great Recession, but we believe if they are to be achievable, certain changes or modification need to be made. Stated another way, we believe in many cases doing less is more. In addition, many times governmental organizations make promises they cannot possibly keep – like creating new businesses and jobs. So the focus of our Response, stated again, is to provide recommendations for those goals and objectives which we believe cannot be realistically completed.

Note: The authors of this Response each have over 30+ years of professional experience and educational training in senior level positions in both government (former County Directors of Environmental Health; Senior Staff Code Enforcement Officer and Rural County School Educator) and within the private sector (Local Private Land Developers, Private Business Owners; Construction Contractor) and Corporate Vice President of Environmental Affairs- both in the US and Internationally at companies with over 10,000 employees and with annual revenues between 1-3 billion dollars.

## **CSEDD Strategy - Overview:**

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), dated 2017, stated that three (3) community town hall meetings were held by District staff and that a public survey (questionnaire) was conducted to elicit community feedback on what citizens were concerned about regarding local economic conditions and how the District and its partner organizations might find ways to “*promote a more resilient economy.*” A resilient economy is defined by how well a community can withstand and/or respond to certain types of disasters, i.e., fires and economic recessions. From these meetings and the survey questionnaire, a number of ‘*Key Findings*’ emerged that were reviewed at both regional and community levels. These key findings were to be used as an integral part of the CEDS committee’s SWOT analysis. The resulting SWOT analysis was used, in part, to develop the District’s five-year road map which attempts to address identifiable obstacles affecting economic growth in region.

After reviewing all of the material, as well as submitting written questions to CSEDD, Community Development Agency (CDA) officials, and Chico State University staff who helped in the writing of the Strategy, we have put together a list of comments and recommendations that we believe not only take into account our understand of the economic conditions that exist today in the region, but reflect our professional views of whether or not the purposed goals and objectives in the Strategy can be achieved.

## **CEDS Public Survey Results and Key Findings**

In preparation of the Strategy, a community survey (18-questions in all) was completed by employees from CSU – Chico University, California - Center for Economic Development. The survey was designed to uncover what citizens in the region were concerned about relative to current and future economic and business development needs. The survey questions were distributed to District Board members, as well as various community members and households via the internet, radio and media outlets. It is not known how many survey notices were actually sent out or how many individuals actually received them. This would have been helpful to determine the statistical validity of the results and whether or not they truly represent the concerns of the region.

There were only 17 responses received from the survey, of which 15 of them were from Tuolumne County residences. As survey goes, this is a very low response rate considering the large number of potentially affected citizens throughout the region, which could be in the tens of thousands. It would have also been helpful to know the breakdown of responders. Did they come from governmental employees, were they business owners, private sector hourly workers, retired citizens or from local land use developers and so on.

## **Comment and Recommendations:**

In our opinion, this was not a statistically significant survey of the community. Given the uncertainty of the distribution method and the extremely low response rate, we would recommend a follow-up phone survey of at least 400 households per county and city. This would

allow the District to verify the accuracy of results and to give a clearer picture of what citizens are concerned about (baseline) and then allow for tracking of any the changes in perspective over the next five-years (trends).

From the SWOT, the public survey and regional meetings, the following is a list of the Strategy's Key Findings.

**Key Findings:**

1. **THERE IS A LACK OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE REGION**
2. **THERE IS A SHORTAGE OF SKILLED LABOR WITHIN THE REGION**
3. **LOCAL ZONING AND PERMITTING IS HINDERING GROWTH**
4. **THERE ARE SOME CONUNTIES NOT COLLECTING TOT FROM AIRBNB TYPE VACATION RENTALS**
5. **INFRASTRUCTURE INCLUDING BROADBAND IS LACKING WITHIN THE REGION**
6. **VISITOR' SERVICES ARE INADEQUATE AND IN WRONG LOCATIONS**
7. **EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES ARE NOT BEING UTILIZED**
8. **ONE-DAY SHIPPING IS NOT AVAILAIBLE WITHIN THE CSEDD REGION**

Finding 1, 2 and 3 were of no surprise to us. They reflect what many of us have always believed - that there are just too many regulations and conflicting governmental requirements that impose unnecessary rules and costs on businesses without adding any measureable value to the local economy. This reality has also contributed, in our opinion, to the reported lack of jobs and skilled labor throughout the region, i.e., businesses are reluctant to expand and young adult coming out of local community colleges continue to seek better paying jobs elsewhere. There are many examples of where businesses or development projects have not been started due to the cost of obtaining regulatory approvals. And even if a particular project was actually viable and could have possibly made its way through the process, there still is this persistent and discernable belief that it is just not worth the hassle or expense. This negative community perception has become reality in many of cases, which results in a persistent negative view of local government – unfair or not. This negative perception of local government has been discussed many times at public meetings and before policy makers, but the perception persist to this day because little has visibly been done, in our opinion, to eliminate these governmentally created obstacles.

The other Key Findings (4 through 8) did not appear to originate from the public survey results. We are assuming they came primarily out of internal discussions between CSED staff, Chico employees and District board members. We have made no attempt to address them in this Response, although many of our recommendations about the limited power of government to create jobs and new businesses still applies throughout.

In summary, we believe most of the concerns articulated in Key Findings 1, 2 and 3 are nearly identical to our own and reflect the overall concerns of the community. A number of community members have expressed similar feelings to us that continues to be an unfriendly places to do business and more of the same is expected in the near future regardless of which political party is in power. We agree, as a group, that the concerns expressed in this Response will be difficult to address and that the Strategy's goals and objectives, although commendable, can ever be

successfully implemented or completed for the reasons detailed in the remainder of this Response.

**Response to: CSEDD OBJECTIVES AND ACTION ITEMS for 2017-2022 –**

In this Response only the first three Key Findings and several of the corresponding objectives, goals and action items have been addressed. The comments and recommendations are intended to not only give the District a general overview of what is believed to be the key economic issues facing the community, but also to point out why many local business owners believe that government cannot, and will not, create or save private sector jobs as promised. The goals and objectives in this Strategy, along with the goals and objectives in the previous Economic Development Strategy (2012-2015), as well as the grant funding that goes along with such efforts, will no doubt benefit those that currently work in government. These are the type of jobs that government can most readily create.

Listed below are the first three Key Findings and some of the corresponding objectives -

**A. KEY FINDING: THERE IS A LACK OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE REGION**

- **Objective number Six: Build a skilled workforce within the CSEDD region.**
- **Action Item:** USDA Rural Development Program - Expand upon existing retention and expansion programs.

**Measures:** Create or save 20 additional jobs through BRE program; Create or save 5 additional jobs through BRE program.

**Comments:**

Besides the goal of creating or saving 20 jobs, the goal was also designed to “assess the unmet needs” in the community. This is to be accomplished by “hiring qualified consultants (whenever possible including existing consultants).”

How is this goal going to “create or save 20 jobs” by “studying the unmet needs for next three years” (see the timeline table for completion) and then provide referrals to Alliance SBDC for “business training.” Nowhere in the purposed “action item” does it describe how this is going to be completed, how many jobs per year will be created and what types of jobs are being targeted. We recommend that more details be provided, either in the Strategy or provide to us in this Response.

A number of local business owners recently discussed among themselves what could government possibly do to prevent a job loss if a local business couldn't make enough revenue to make pay roll, rent or pay their suppliers? How would the District or its partnership organizations help prevent an employee(s) from being laid off in this circumstance? What if the product or service is no longer in demand and the business is on the verge of going under? What can the District within the context of this Strategy to save the business? If the goal is to merely study these

unmet needs over the next three (3) years through “studies, consulting reports and making inquiries,” how would this achieve the goal? What would be the performance measures for each of the five years? Five (5) jobs per year or all 20-jobs at the end of year five? And who is going to report these outcomes, if any, in the CSEED’s Annual Report. Do the other partner organizations have their own internal and public Annual Reports? If so, wouldn’t your efforts be a waste of duplication of time and money? Besides, this is a USDS Rural Development grant. Who initially applied for the grant and who is ultimately responsible for the outcomes? Are the goals and measures for years 1 through 5 the responsibility of SBDC, Valley Vision or the District. This should be clarified to transparency purposes.

Continuing with this line of questioning, recent discussions with Chico University staff revealed that term BRE (business retention and expansion), which is used repellingly in the Strategy to describe how the goals and objectives would be achieved, turns out to be more of a conceptual term. Clarification of the meaning of BRE was requested and the following verbatim response was given to us:

*“BRE is conceptual and in the context of your question refers to numerous programs throughout the community. That could all be classified as BRE programs. Most of which are discussed though out the document. The SBDC is the primary example but the chambers, TCEDA, and Motherlode Job training all participate in these types of activities to an extent.”*

We might be wrong, but this explanation is somewhat vague and difficult to understand how it could effectively apply to the District’s goals. Since there are no specific BRE programs identified in the Strategy targeting specific goals and objectives, we again don’t understand how the District can achieve the stated goal of “**creating or saving 20 additional jobs through BRE programs**” over the next five years. The goals and action items (i.e., performance measures) do not provide a clear path towards accomplishing this commendable but vaguely worded objective.

Even if it were possible to accomplish the goals, it is difficult to see how such an objective could reasonably be accomplished in year one. Even if you could, the timeframe boxes for year 2, 3, 4, and 5 should be left “blank” since the goal would have already been completed in year 1. Secondly, how could one determine if any of the new jobs were in fact created or saved by the implementing agency (SBDC) rather than the current business owner or investor who actually does all of the work in the first place? The District or SBDC might have an important role to play, but it is the business owner that makes this happen. As stated in the Strategy, the \$50,000 grant awarded to SBDC is going to be used for “consultants to conduct studies” about the needs of local businesses and to offer future business training. It is hard for us to understand how business training can create jobs or save them, especially when the economy continues to undergo tumultuous shifts that sometimes seems to happen overnight.

In summary, objective number six (6) seems unrealistic and the performance measures do not clearly articulated who will be responsible for the ultimate outcomes and the methods that will be used to track and inform the Public of the successful outcomes.

#### Recommendation:

- 1) Since BRE was reported to be a conceptual term and one that even the University staff had trouble defining, District staff might want to provide a better description in the Strategy and how it specifically applies to each goal where the term was used. Alternately, it is recommended that the goal itself be rewritten to better reflect what can actually be accomplished when promising to create private sector businesses or jobs. For example it might be purposed:

*“The District will strive to provide ongoing guidance and financial resources to our partnership organizations and/or directly to local business owners to help them create or save 20 additional jobs through an established BRE process and that will be measured by the total number of jobs created per year over the next 5-year reporting period.”*

- 2) This might seem a bit nit-picky but we recommend that the word “Measure” be replaced with the word “Goals.” For example in Objective 6, it states that the “Measure” is to create or save 20 additional jobs through BRE program.” This is the goal. The performance measure is the outcome and results, which is designed to generate reliable data on the effectiveness of the program or goals. In another example the “goal” in Objective Two is to “get 200 students region-wide enrolled in the program by the end on 2019.” A performance measure would record the results each year (maybe in an Annual Report) on how many students actually became enrolled in years 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. If problems should arise and this goal cannot be achieved, then modification can be instituted quickly and effectively. At the end of year 5, if 200 students have been successfully enrolled, the performance results would be 100%, thus achieving the stated goal. As the goal is stated now, no new students will be enrolled in the program in year 1, 2, and 3, but all 200 will have been successfully enrolled in years 4 and 5. So for first three years this goal will be “IP – In Progress.” Why would it take three years to study this goal and then have it be completed in years 4 and 5? And isn’t this already an established program in the community? If so, three years seems a bit excessive and should be modified to reflect the comments above.

#### **A. KEY FINDING: THERE IS A SHORTAGE OF SKILLED LABOR WITHIN THE REGION**

#### **Objective number Two: Build a skilled workforce within the CSEDD region (page 44).**

Action Item: Increase school dual enrollment of the Columbia College CTE High School Articulation program.

According to local sources, Columbia College already manages this community educational program. So how will the District play a role in its continued operations and success? And yes, it is true that some business owners in the region cannot find “skilled” employees for their business, but most have said they will settle for “suitable” employees, meaning employees that show up on time, learn the job quickly, are honest and have good interpersonal communication skills. This doesn’t require technical skills beyond these type of simple, but desired important



employee traits. So the term suitable seems to be a much more meaningful term than skilled in the context of building a workforce that can do the types of jobs most in demand and can do the job when called upon. When business owners are asked what they look for in an employee, they would choose suitable over skilled any day. Employers are also looking for employees that can fill out a simple resume or application. High schools in the region currently provide this type of student training. Yes, these are not technical skills like being able to write computer code or operate complex robotic machinery. However, these are not the type of entry-level jobs that are in high demand in the region. The type of jobs in demand today, here in the Motherlode, don't required a skilled workforce in the context of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math).

We know of a couple successful local business owners in the construction trades that have offered these types of entry-level jobs to local citizens looking to start the careers. But the sad truth today is that so many of them do not possess these very basic skills due to dropping out of school, having prior criminal records or limited work experience. So the goal of creating a skilled workforce is not as important as teaching young adults that they need to graduate from school, learn about responsibility and what it takes to be successful in this economy.

Rather than focus CDA grant money towards creating technical level skills for an area that has very little manufacturing or companies that create intellect capital, the focus should be on entry level employment skills for kids coming right out of high school or community colleges, especially in service jobs such as plumbers, carpenters, housing construction, truck drivers, agriculture and so on, which are much more in demand. The goals and objectives that are ultimately selected in the Strategy should be based upon what is important to the region now and what regional assets can be leveraged in the next couple of years. We are not Silicon Valley or San Francisco. This is a challenging problem for any rural community in California, except in the high populated cities where those jobs are readily available for anyone graduating with advanced college degrees.

## **B. KEY FINDING: LOCAL ZONING AND PERMITTING IS HINDERING GROWTH**

### **Local Zoning:**

Local zoning (i.e., County General Plans) has been a hot button topic for the past several decades. There is a strong belief today that local zoning and governmental permits have, and will continue to, hinder economic development in the region. But it is interesting to note that no evidence, facts or historical narratives were provided in the Strategy to explain why District staff or others believe local zoning requirements hinder local economic growth. They are certainly annoying and can potentially drive up the cost of development projects, but there is no evidence that they in fact hinder economic development in the region (i.e., economic development is defined as the process by which a community improves the economic, political, and social well-being of its people). It is also interesting that this issue was included as a "Key Finding" but no new goals or objectives are being purposed to address them. In fact, only a few vague public comments about zoning were recorded in the survey's comment section. Most of the responses were more concerned about regulatory permitting requirements and the cost of government regulations being imposed on businesses and the local economy. For this reason, our Response

does not have any comments concerning local zoning, at this time. However, as community General Plan draft updates make their way through the various Board planning committees and are released for public review, will we update our Response.

### **Local Permitting:**

Local permitting requirements are a big concern to local business owners who struggle to create or expand their operations. It is well documented that most of today's federal and state regulatory permitting requirements hinder and/or suppress economic development, especially in rural communities and towns that are already facing unique challenges of their own, such as declining populations, lack of employment opportunities, poor work skills and loss of farms and working lands.

***At \$1.885 trillion, the cost of regulations now exceeds the cost of federal individual and corporate income taxes, which raised about \$1.82 trillion last year.***

The California State Code of Regulations - which includes CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) – can place unnecessary cost burdens on local citizens. However, most of the environmental regulations that affect locals are controlled by the state and federal government. Once you add up all of these regulations, it can be economically stifling to small businesses who have to navigate these numerous obstacles. If the District is really committed to promoting economic development and addressing the concerns as expressed in the community survey, then they should develop clear, achievable and measureable objectives that help businesses navigate around these regulatory obstacles. What is needed more than anything else today is for government to reassess the impact of their environmental and permitting laws created over the past 30 years. Counties should go back and look at what is not working, what laws just add cost without adding value and then repeal or replace them. Just in the last eight years over 10,000 new laws have been enacted in the United States, having an estimated 1.8 trillion dollar impact on the economy. We can't control most of these costs at the federal and state levels, except when we vote with our pocket books. But at the local level, this Strategy could seize an opportunity to better understand which regulations are having the largest impacts and then come up with strategies to lessen the regulatory burdens government has created in the first place.

Another permitting related problem that could be studied and addressed is California's strict rules on obtaining professional licenses, such a cosmetology, tattoo artist, plumbers, dental assistant, and other certified practitioners. This makes it very expensive for graduating students to find entry level jobs in the trades and is holding back growth and investment in the service sector. California is 43<sup>rd</sup> in the US ranking of states where it's easiest to start a new business. This might be an area where local policy makers can recommend reforms that remove barriers and promote competition in the service sector, especially in health and education. Every dollar reduced in start-up and operating costs is important to small businesses. Nearly 30% of jobs in the U.S. now require an occupational license, up from 5% in the 1950s. According to the Wall Street Journal, the service sector is expected to generate almost 95% of new jobs in the next decade. Nurses and personal-care and home-health aides are projected to make up 1.2 million of the 9.8 million new jobs expected by 2024.

**Objective number One: Promote advance visitor' services with the CSEDD region.**

No Comment

**Objective number Four: promote coordinated marketing efforts throughout the CSEDD region.** No comment

**Objective number Five: Promote infrastructure improvements throughout the CSEDD region.** No comment

**Objective number Six: Expand upon existing business retention and expansion programs.**

Besides the comments already provided regarding a request for a clear definition of BRE programs, no further comments are being provided.

**Objective number Seven: Create a uniform Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) collection for vacation rentals across the entire region.** No Comments provided

**Objective number Eight: Improve regional airport infrastructure for faster shipping.**

No comments provided

**Additional Recommendation:**

***Objective Three: Promote and develop business resiliency within the CSEDD region.***

**Action Items:** Expand upon existing business and expansion programs; Develop a long term permanent response recovery strategic plan to replace the existing preliminary plan; Development of business resiliency centers.

These three Action Items appear to primarily address natural disasters. But how do these action items help "create 30 small businesses?" Objective three should be rewritten to clearly define what the District is trying to achieve – which according to the description – "*develop a permanent, long-term disaster plan.*" How are these three objectives going to promote business resiliency? The term could be more appropriately changed to "*community resiliency.*"

As we have learned, the State of California, along with Tuolumne County submitted a \$55,000,000 grant request and received \$19,755,000 for "*Community Resilience Centers*" as a result of the RIM fires and other natural disasters. In addition, the description in Objective Three goes on to state that the plan is to "*monitor and address business needs and connecting displaced businesses and employees with resiliency centers.*" Again, the Action Items should be rewritten to reflect the more appropriate term – "Community Resiliency Centers" instead of "*Business Resilience Centers*" as purposed in the Strategy. Would only businesses have access to the Centers in times of emergency or would others within the community have access? In addition, the \$55,000,000 federal grant award to the State, which in the Strategy mentions that \$20,000,000 will be "*directly related to business development and resiliency.*" However, it has been reported on the Tuolumne County website that the \$20,000,000 will be allocated to building a new "bio-mass facility" not for business development and resiliency centers. How does the construction of a biomass facility "help create or save 30 small businesses?" We hope this will

be the case, however, and will look forward to tracking the progress of this project and the positive impact it might have on local small businesses over the next three (3) years.

**Final Recommendation:**

All of the goals and objectives are based on a five-year performance-time horizon. Shouldn't each objective and goal be established within a specified timetable necessary to complete each of them? Some objectives may in fact take longer than five years, but most listed in the Strategy are projected to be completed within 2-3 years. Is there any justification for making every performance result five years in length? Having each goal and objective with its own timetable for completion would make it easier for the District Board to track them each year for the desired results and if not achieved, measures could be taken to identify the specific weak points and/or identify better approaches and new timetables assigned. In addition, if an objective or project was unable to be continued for whatever reasons, it should be eliminated or updated with a new completion date. The Annual Reports will be able to document whether or not the actual results were met, exceeded, or fell short of projected outcomes.

The authors and contributors for this Response want to acknowledge the exceptional work by all CSEDD Board members and staff, as well as the assistance from Chico State University project specials, to develop this five-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

Thank you for your public service.

Sincerely,

Ken Perkins

Cc: Malinda Matson, Economic Development Representative for Northern and Coastal California

**Mon, 7 Nov 2016 16:23:21**

My name is Susan Reichle and I live in Tuolumne County. Unfortunately, I could not open up the 5 year strategic plan ( I wouldn't have read 63 pages anyway ), but for what it's worth, I wanted to put in my 2 cents. I am happy we have some outside help to give a much needed different perspective.

I agree with the 7 key points identified in the newspaper, depending on which zoning and permitting laws you want to get rid of. We need to keep young people and their families in the County, with viable jobs, i.e not expansion of Walmart jobs, especially as the Walmart grocery will probably take away union jobs at Safeway and Savemart. I've often thought that appealing to small manufacturing firms that would have minimal impact on our environment and culture--a key reason tourists bring their dollars here--could be enhanced by having work ready employees trained at our local Community College. Also, our meat industry could be revived by stressing healthful, sustainably raised livestock that could be marketed as such, so when Bay Area people think "Tuolumne", they think "excellent quality meat to buy". Hopefully this would also keep our traditional ranchers and their families in business into the future. The other component of that is having our own slaughter industry, saving money and providing viable jobs. Again, the Community College could be utilized. Modern communication technology is essential for many reasons. Also, maintaining the environment that attracts tourists. It's been shown that high end tourists are an economic boon. These tourists from urban areas want outdoor opportunities that they don't get where they live, and will pay for it. Oh, and how we collect and store water in this changing climate situation will be critical to how we adapt and develop. We need forward thinkers, not outdated ways.

That's all I can think of just now. I look forward to reading what you come up with.