

## **BOS Report on Business Report on Economic Development and Recovery – August 6, 2024**

- On July 24<sup>th</sup>, Plumas County, the DFC, IVIH, and the Sierra SBDC held a workshop in Greenville to explain guidelines and benefits of the Greenville Economic Development Grant to local businesses. The total amount of grant monies to be awarded to businesses will be \$567,500 in grant awards up to \$20,000 on a first-come, first-serve basis. Thirteen local businesses attended in person and another two via Zoom. Thanks to the DFC for hosting the event and a special thanks to Tracey Ferguson who did a great job of explaining grant guidelines as well as taking numerous questions on LMI eligibility, what can the grant be spent on, what is a SAM Number, how extensive does the business plan have to be, what can I spend the grant funds on etc.
- Last week Tracey, Ms. Lucero – CAO and I met as part of the CORE Economic Committee of the PC Long Term Recovery Plan, and we discussed questions raised by businesses and which questions we need to get clarified. Major issues included LMI boundaries, as some businesses were only 60 feet from the LMI Boundary; and questions pertaining to former businesses once located in the LMI Boundary but were no longer there because of displacement by the Dixie Fire. There were also concerns of equipment and whether equipment installation would be covered by the grant. FYI, one of my suggestions to local businesses was to use grant funds to buy a generator and also Starlink, as these two things would provide businesses with the ability to offer consistent service and commerce, as rural areas are vulnerable to internet and utility disruption.
- Tomorrow, we will have another workshop for Indian Valley at the DFC Office in Greenville to answer questions from the previous workshop and or questions for businesses that could not attend the previous workshop. We hope to have applicants start applying on approximately August 12, 2024.
- Tomorrow will be the first meeting of the Ad Hoc or Subcommittee meeting on how to spend the \$7.8 M in PG&E money on reconstructing Plumas County facilities and infrastructure that was damaged or destroyed in the Dixie Fire. Interest has been extremely high on serving on that committee, and it will be an interesting meeting.
- Several weeks ago, the IVIH took on a local computer technician that will eventually be our IT person or department. Jacob Williams is bringing the HUB great capacity to finish programs that we have started but not finished, such as our MIPC Program and Business Directory. In addition, he will further develop our website and our Business and Economic Development Newsletter. We are staging to really develop our MIPC program to help businesses market and sell their products, and we want to thank Irshad Stolden and the AFWD for providing the HUB the funds to hire Jacob

or Jake, as we call him to take us up another notch or two in our program and service delivery.

- A couple of weeks ago, I contacted PG&E and asked them how many employees and contract workers they had working in Plumas County this year, and they replied about 150 that will work until the end of the season in November. They expect about half as many employees and contract labor next year and they hope to finish their work by the end of 2025. That will affect businesses throughout Plumas County.
- As for new Fictitious Business Name Certificates, in the month of July there were:
  - a. 5 new businesses in Quincy
  - b. 5 refiles of existing businesses in Quincy
  - c. 5 new businesses in Chester
  - d. 7 refiles in Chester
  - e. 1 new business in Portola
  - f. 1 refile in Portola
  - g. 1 refile in Clio
- I've been talking about the difficulty for young people to move to Plumas County. As you know, almost 2/3 of the people in Plumas County are post-childbearing age in Plumas County. With so few young people in Plumas County, it is no wonder we are not gaining in population. As you know, we are projected to lose 30% of our currently population by 2060, because of low births, high deaths, and little in-migration. To turn our county around, we need to in-migrate young families and entrepreneurs, but here are their challenges:
  - High housing costs, or even accessible housing
  - High insurance rates, if you can get it.
  - High utility costs – almost 50 % increase in the last three years.
  - High gas prices
  - Lack of access to affordable, high-quality Childcare
    - Despite available monies to build childcare facilities, buy equipment, or train employees, there's a shortage in available staffing that is plaguing literally every childcare facility in Plumas County.
  - There are no maternity wards in any of our current three hospitals in Plumas County, resulting in a hesitation for young people to move to Plumas County.
  - These are important factors that have to be overcome if we are to solve the negative populations projections of Plumas County. Until then, we will continue to lose over a family a week for the next 40 years. I don't have the answers and I'm asking or demanding that you solve them either. But please, think about the future of this beautiful place we call home and how we can make it an easier and higher quality of life place to live. Thank you.

Clint Koble