

August 13, 2024, BOS Report on Economic Development and Recovery

1. Last evening I was contact by Right-of-way Engineer Jeff Blagg of Plumas Sierra Telecommunications of new developments in the Middle Mile Broadband Initiative with Caltrans as part of the post disaster and SB-156 installing an internet route down Hwy 36 down to Hwy 89. After years of studies and permitting planning, the decision has been made to remove that route of fiber optics cable down Hwy 89 to Greenville. This project has been advocated by Golden State Net, and it is a blow to Chester, Canyon Dam, Greenville, and Crescent Mills. Due to the State of CA over-building areas that already have Middle Mile Fiber in place, and the State's Budget crisis, once again Rural CA is ignored as a worthwhile to invest in the future. I suspect that the slowest area of job growth in the continental United States will remain in Rural CA. I contacted Bob Marshall of Plumas Sierra Telecommunications, and he maintains the battle is not over regarding this. Bob is proposing a route change that may free up monies for Middle Mile in Indian Valley, and he wants a phone conversation on this tomorrow. Supervisor Goss, if you haven't been in contact with Bob Marshall regarding this, I will try and arrange a convenient time for the three of us to talk. I think the overriding message here is that Rural America and in particular, Rural CA, are no longer places of investment. Until we have a State and National Rural Policy that makes Rural Communities as places to invest in, we will continue to see the population decline that is forecast all across the country and especially in NE CA. I want to remind you that the Demographic Research Unit for the State of CA has projected Plumas County will lose 30% of its population by 2060, Modoc County will lose 31%, and Lassen County will lose 45%. This is frightening and disheartening for all of us that have grown up on farms and ranches, and in small communities where the true character of America still exists. While political baloney continues to make promises, we need changes in labor laws, regulations, tax laws, along with the Forest Service deeding over small pockets of public lands for our communities to survive in my public opinion.
2. Recently, I contacted one of the few business owners left in Canyon Dam to join the Ad Hoc Committee to weigh in on how Plumas County should spend the \$7.8 M from PG&E on rebuilding county buildings and or infrastructure. He chose not to join the Committee, but he did tell me what he and other business want first in Canyon Dam: safety and security. As you know, there were no public streetlights in Canyon Dam before the Dixie Fire. Businesses provided their own lighting to prevent or reduce theft in Canyon Dam. After the Fire, the theft increased in Canyon Dam because those business streetlights are no longer there. Theft continues in Canyon Dam, especially in the winter. Sheriff Todd John succeeded in getting temporary generator lighting in Canyon Dam to provide more security but that only lasted so long. I

contacted Rob Thorman and Supervisor McGowan regarding this, and Rob maintains that Caltrans might possibly cover this, though they haven't in the past. There are several lighting districts in Plumas County as you well know, but Canyon Dam is one of them. What to do about this: I suggest that at least 4 Solar Powered pole lights be installed in Canyon Dam, with them staggered on each side of the street. Costs would be approximately \$8,000 per pole to purchase and install the poles, that don't need an electrician to install. I also suggest that monies from various sources could be raised to provide these solar powered light poles and that perhaps Public Works could install at a reduced cost. Supervisor McGowan, I know that The Almanor Foundation approved a grant of \$126,000 in August of 2023 for the Planning and Rebuild of Canyon Dam. Perhaps, if there is any money left, some of this money could go towards the purchase of several or all four streetlights for a cost of \$28,000 to \$32,000 to help rebuild Canyon Dam or at least to protect the few businesses that remain. It is a continuing sore spot to see monies not spent in the burn scar areas of Warner Valley, Chester, Canyon Dam, and Genesee Valley. This may be an opportunity to put monies to places are needed badly.

3. After checking with Cal Fire and the Forest Service yesterday, I was told that Hwy 36 is still blocked below the intersection of Hwy 32 & 36. This has a continuing negative affect on businesses from Chester to the Peninsula to Greenville, as tourists are not coming during in the height of the tourist season. I have an ownership in a resort on the Peninsula and instead of nearly 100% occupancy during the months of June, July, and August, we are sitting at 60%, up from 0% two weeks ago. We continue to lose thousands of dollars per day and while we can absorb those losses, those small businesses from Chester to Greenville are taking it in the gut. Their chance to make their money in a 120-day season has been cut to less than 100 days already and counting.
4. After almost a year of wrangling, I have some good news to report on rebuilding our burn scar communities. Roger Diefendorf of the Community Development Commission is meeting this Thursday with Colette Curtis, the Economic Development and Recovery Director for the Town of Paradise to discuss its Down Payment Assistance Program that has been extremely successful. A local entity has expressed interest in funding the start of a Down Payment Assistance Program, and if it comes to a fruition, I plan on soliciting area Foundations and major employers to stack this fund to offer substantial incentives for people to move to Indian Valley, hopefully young families that will put kids in our schools and customers in our businesses.
5. The Fair Plan continues to ravage businesses and citizens throughout Plumas County and CA. The insurance for our resort will be going from \$17,000 to \$22,000, an increase that will take away from capital investments and improvements that many of our businesses are experiencing.

6. Lastly, the Lost Sierra Chamber of Commerce is initiating a subcommittee on economic development, and it will be using the CEDS for two of its proposed areas of activity. Already, the CEDs is enabling entities in Plumas County, and I can assure you, that more are planned for Plumas County. One project that will use EDA funds will greatly enhance the invigoration of downtown Quincy. More information to come soon.

Thank you for your time.

Clint Koble

