



Welcome to Recharge Our Community's Economy (ROCE):

A Community Action Workshop Series

**Chester, CA
Lake Almanor Basin**

Welcome & Introductions

Your RCAC / ERC Facilitators



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Funder Acknowledgment



RCAC and the Building Rural Economies' (BRE) work with the County of Plumas in Chester are possible thanks to support from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Rural Capacity Building Grant Program.

Community Partners & Sponsors



PLUMAS
COUNTY | CALIFORNIA



Rural Community Assistance Corp.

Founded:

Nonprofit in 1978

Headquartered:

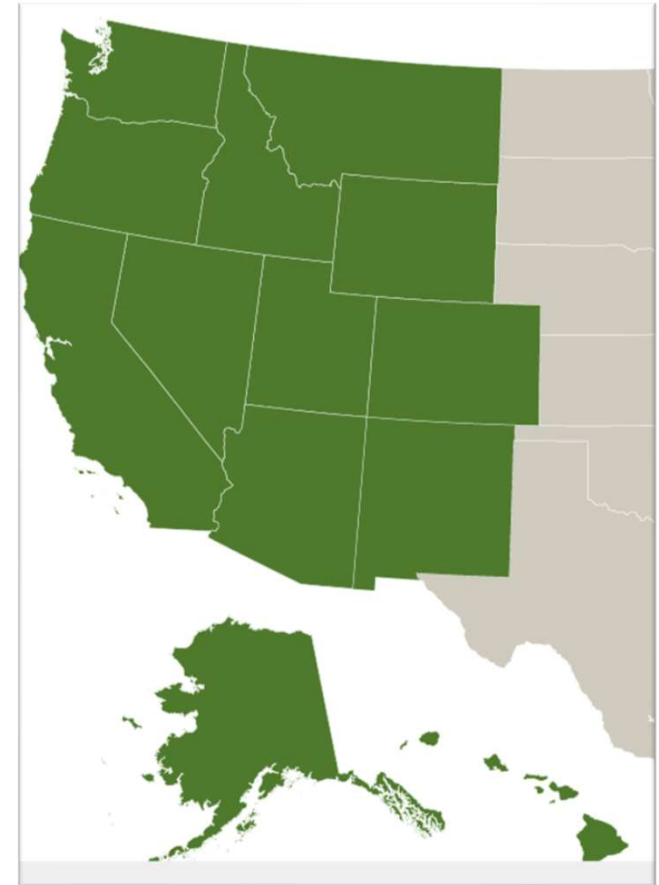
West Sacramento, CA

Service Area:

13 Western states

Mission:

RCAC partners with underserved rural and Indigenous communities to achieve their vision and well-being through technical assistance, training, financial resources and advocacy.



RCAC Program Areas



Water & Wastewater Infrastructure



Affordable Housing Development



Community Economic Development



Community Facilities Development



Project Financing



Rural Community Assistance Partnership



COMMUNITIES
Unlimited



Activity: Introductions

(if you haven't already)
Please:

- Make a name tent
- Write your name (large) in marker on the front
- Please introduce yourself and tell us what motivated you to participate in this workshop?



Today's Agenda

- Welcome
- Introductions
- Workshop # 1 Review
- Community Asset Mapping
- Project Brainstorming and Identification
- Closing

Work with Plumas County

- Timeline: June 2025 - June 2027 and beyond
- Focus of Work:
 - Identify priority economic development projects/programs in and of importance to Chester / Lake Almanor Basin.
 - Find champions and partners needed for implementation.
 - Create action plans and secure funding needed to execute.
- Goal: Create viable economic development endeavors that produce community wealth!

Purpose of ROCE

Identify and foster **community-driven** economic development opportunities through interactive elements that help participants:

- Recognize **assets/resources** that already exist in the community.
- Strategize ways those assets and resources can be used to **create sustainable economic opportunities**.
- Develop and maintain **ownership** of the new opportunities identified.
- **Engage partners** needed to make new opportunities a reality.



Workshop Schedule 2025

- **Workshop #1:** Wednesday, September 3
- **Workshop #2:** Wednesday, October 1
- **Workshop #3:** Wednesday, October 29
- **Workshop #4:** Wednesday, November 19
 - Reception after Workshop #4

8:00am - 2:00pm

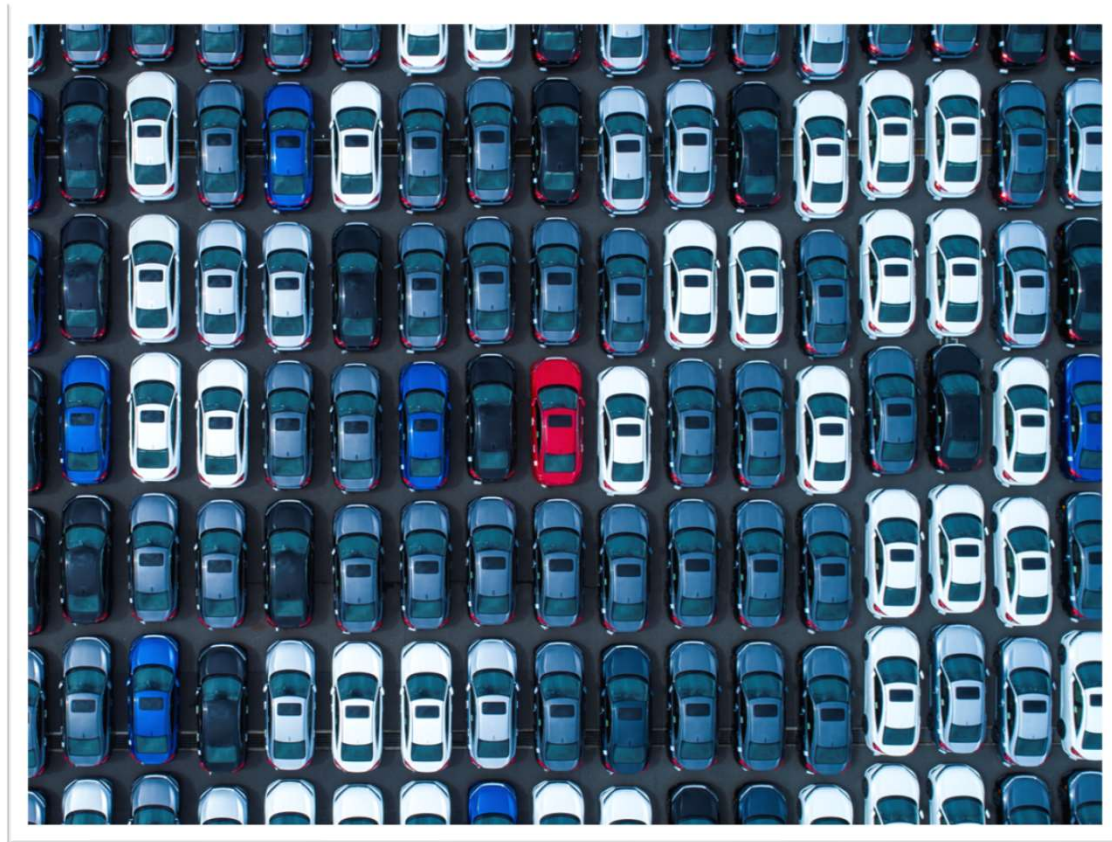


Creating a Trusting & Open Environment

- Be open to this experience and each other.
- Be authentic - speak your truth without blame or judgement.
- Listen attentively and minimize distractions.
- Take space and make space.
- Respect other's thoughts *even* if they differ from your own.
- Notice moments of discomfort and stay curious.
- Assume positive intent.
- Be open to all communication styles.
- Be "All In" - you get out what you put into this process.



Parking Lot



Review – Workshop #1



Activities & Objectives

- **Historic Timeline:** Establishes a mutual understanding of economic history and identifies trends over time.
- **Visioning:** CM1 Formulate a shared vision for the future of Chester that will be a guidepost during the workshop series.
- **Asset Analysis:** Analyze the Eight Forms of Wealth that exist in and around Chester.
- **Leveraging Assets:** Use the Historic Timeline, Vision, and Asset Analysis to help identify economic opportunities that we will focus on during the workshop series.



COMMUNITY CHAMPION

A relationship-building visionary who identifies the community rallying flag and unifies everyone around it



RESOURCE MAPPER

A network builder and organizer who researches, gathers, and maintains connections to community resources



STORYTELLER

A natural promoter who finds, shares, or creates stories that establish and celebrate the rallying narrative for the community



GATE OPENER

A connector and bridge builder who holds open entry points for all, connecting marginalized groups into the wider community



MAD SCIENTIST

A confident catalyst who is willing to lead implementation of experiments that are not yet proven but have significant potential for positive community impact



ACTION DRIVER

A results-focused instigator who keeps momentum building, spurring community leaders from inspiration to action to accomplishment



RAINMAKER

A trusted community leader who has earned the respect, credibility, and clout to influence potential funders or political leaders



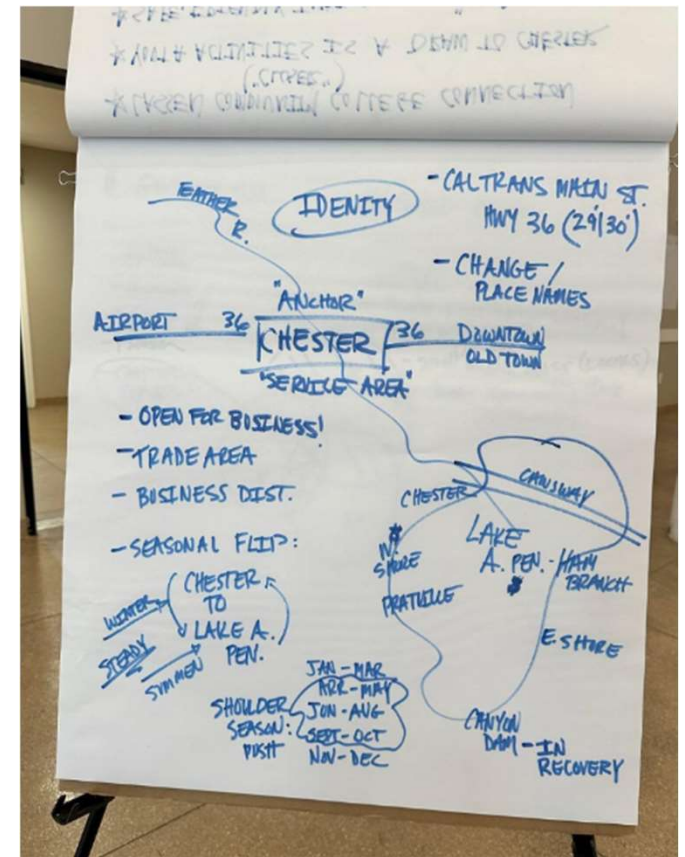
SUPERHERO (BONUS!)

A successful entrepreneur or widely recognized icon who inspires locals to pursue big dreams and can engage their unique network to support the community

What is Your Community?

Key Points:

- Lake Almanor Basin (45-min radius) with Chester as hub
- Mix of locals, retirees, seasonal residents, and visitors
- Shifting demographics, transient feel from 2nd/3rd homes
- Seasonal economy; recreation and tourism central
- Family-owned businesses present but facing revenue declines (road work impact)
- Small middle class; affordability challenges



One Word to Describe Your Community

Opportunity
developed Blue-Collar
Friendly
Struggling Changing

Peaceful
Quaint
Hallmark

Potential
Beautiful
Rural Hometown

Chester, California Community History Timeline

Pre-1900s

- Pre-1800s: Mountain Maidu inhabited the area
- 1854: Plumas County established
- 1867: Dr. William Pratt established Prattville Hotel
- ~1860-1880: Glass Barn built by Peter Olsen
- 1894: Chester post office opened



Hotel Olsen pre-1900's

1900-1950

- 1909: Prattville fire
- 1914: Lake Almanor formed
- 1920s: Red River Lumber in Westwood
- 1930s: Seneca Reach gold mine active
- 1940: Chester Airport established
- 1943: Cullis Pine sawmill operational
- 1944: Fruit Growers Supply Company acquired Red River mill
- 1920-1969: Chester Rodeo held
- 1950: Bridge constructed



Cullis Pine Company 1943

1950-2000

- 1950: Country Club / UACC established
- 1950: High School built
- 1954: Hospital built
- 1970: Diversion dam built
- 1970s: Westshore developed
- 1970s: PG&E raised Lake Almanor to 4500 ft elevation
- 1970s: Highlands Ranch Resort developed
- 1977: UACC golf course established
- 1980: Plumas Bank opened
- 1990: Owl affects lumber industry
- 1990: Bailey Creek developed
- 1993: National Park closed down ski hill
- 1993: NMTA timber tax changes affect counties
- 1995: Chester High School wins state championship



Street scene 1960s

2000-present

- 2000: California landlord laws impact long-term rentals
- Early 2000s: Stover Mountain closed
- Early 2000s: Oyster Mountain project did not happen
- 2000s: Climate change impacts noted
- 2000s: Dog sled races ended
- 2000s: Online travel agencies reduce local short-term rental revenue
- Mid 2000s: Minimum wage increases impact businesses
- Mid 2000s: School schedule changes impact tourism
- 2007-2008: Housing market economy changes
- 2008: Economy greatly impacted, housing bust
- 2009: Almanor Railroad stopped running
- 2015: Parks & Recreation improvements
- 2019: Record low school enrollment (average dropped from 85 to 17)
- 2020: Covid pandemic; remote workers move to area
- 2021: Dixie Fire
- 2024: Park Fire impacts area



present day Chester



Learn more at
<https://www.rcac.org/cheester/>



Community History Timeline



Chester, California Community Visioning Timeline

Future
-2035

Housing & Community Development

- Workforce housing
- Chester housing in town
- Foxwood development: commercial, residential, diverse socioeconomic
- Community incorporation / city status
- Blight enforcement and redevelopment
- Area becomes magnet for young families seeking close community

Education & Workforce

- Huge vocational opportunities (keep youth local, attract others)
- Model for rural schools

Tourism & Recreation

- World-class golf tournament, Pro-Am (Bailey Creek)
- Reopen Stover Mountain, sufficient snow
- Ski economy, snowmobiling
- Fishing tournaments / recreational tourism
- Sierra Buttes trail connection project
- Rec trail around the lake
- Year-round activities for adults & youth 65+
- Family fun center

Infrastructure & Services

- New hospital
- Airport expansion
- Secure internet / fiber optics
- Road upgrades + fiber optics
- Hwy 36 complete street improvements
- Updated park
- Professional service district
- FEMA certification of diversion ditch (Feather River management)
- Infrastructure improvements to adapt to climate-induced winter changes

Economic & Commercial Development

- Pratville commerce on water/docks
- Main Street beautification
- Entertainment district
- Main Street Project 2030
- Merchants' Night (monthly)
- Growth in jobs, services, and family-friendly activities
- Relevant offerings to attract residents and visitors

Future Vision & Community Assets

- Lakefront development @ Walker Ranch
- Sport facility (indoor)
- Year-round recreation and tourism
- Adapting tourism and economy to changing climate conditions

Community Visioning



Principles of WealthWorks



#1 – **Create wealth**, broadly defined, and aspire to do no harm.



#2 – Root wealth in local people, places and firms through **local ownership, control and influence**.



#3 – Build **lasting livelihoods** by intentionally including people and firms on the economic margins.

How is Wealth Defined?

- Beyond cash.
- All assets and/or resources that contribute to the well-being of people, places, and economies.





INDIVIDUAL: skills and physical/mental healthiness.



FINANCIAL: Cash and investments.



INTELLECTUAL: knowledge, innovation, and creativity or imagination.



NATURAL: unimpaired environmental assets (e.g., air, water, land, flora, fauna, etc.).



SOCIAL: trust, relationships, and networks that support civil society.



BUILT: fully functioning constructed infrastructure.



CULTURAL: traditions, customs and ways of doing.



POLITICAL: power and goodwill held by individuals, groups, and/or organizations that can be held, spent or shared to achieve desired ends.

The Community's Forms of Wealth



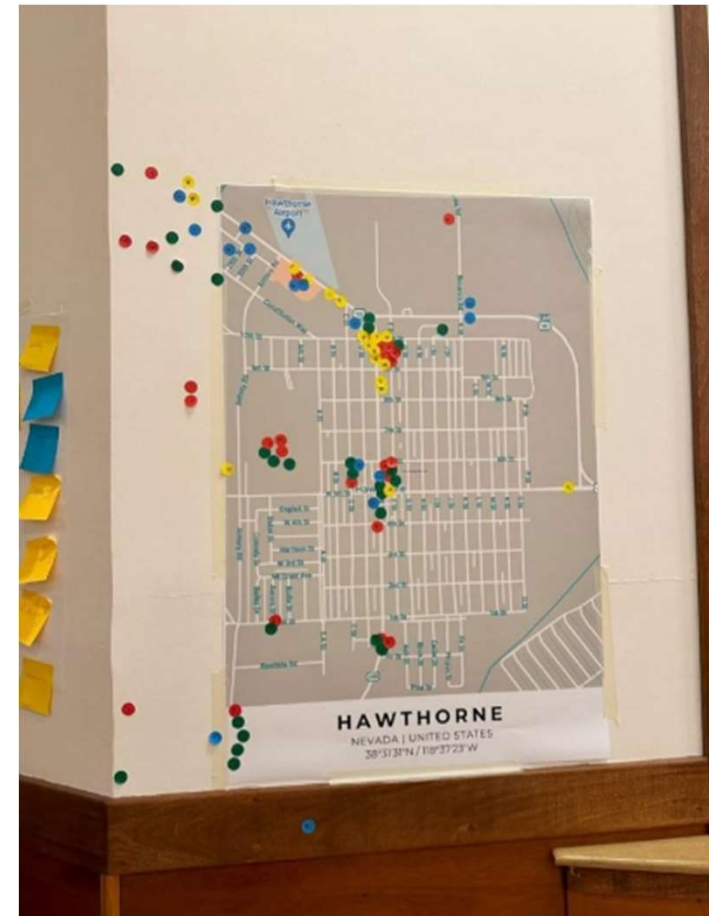
Break



Activity #1: "Our Town" Mapping

"Our Town" Mapping Activity

- Purpose: Map out assets, opportunities, seasonal features, and challenges
- Think back to the 8 Forms of Wealth activity
- Two maps:
 - Chester
 - Lake Almanor Basin
- Debrief



"Our Town" Mapping: Directions

1. Break into groups - each group will receive four numbered dots of each color for both maps (Chester & Lake Almanor Basin)
2. Colors represent four different categories:
 - **Blue (assets)**: existing assets/resources worth celebrating
 - **Green (opportunities)**: opportunities for growth/untapped potential
 - **Yellow (seasonal)**: seasonal features or events to highlight
 - **Red (challenges)**: areas of concern or in need of investment

Directions continued

1. Each map will have slightly different prompts for each color category
2. Use a separate sheet of paper (one per group) to explain what each dot represents/refers to
3. Each group will have around 30 minutes to complete the 16 dots for each map

Chester Main Street Questions

- **Blue (assets):** What are key businesses, spaces, or resources that represent Chester's strengths?
- **Green (opportunities):** What are places/spaces that have potential to generate economic or socio-cultural activity?
- **Yellow (seasonal):** What are seasonal events that happen/where are areas that future events could take place?
- **Red (challenges):** Are there any places that need extra attention or investment?

Lake Almanor Basin Questions

- **Blue (assets):** What are natural resources or historical assets that matter to the Lake Almanor Basin's wealth?
- **Green (opportunities):** Where do you see opportunities for social or economic potential in the Lake Almanor Basin?
- **Yellow (seasonal):** What are areas of focus for seasonal opportunities for enjoyment (current and potential)?
- **Red (challenges):** Which places are impacted by climate change, lack of access or other challenges?

Debrief questions

- Are there any assets/areas/events already established that have potential for growth or investment?
- Are there any hidden gems in the area that could be featured as potential economic opportunities?
- Do you see any potential new business or expansion of business opportunities.
- Are there any challenges that could be addressed by a potential project that we could take on together?

Lunch Break



Project Identification

- Reflect on the assets you identified
- Think about the existing sectors and trends identified during the Mapping exercise
- What opportunities do you see?

Project Criteria

- Are there projects identified in previous planning documents?
- Is there ownership identified?
- Can all or part of the project be implemented within the next 2.5 years?
- Will this support new or current businesses?
- Does this utilize existing assets in the community?

Ownership and Control

- Entrepreneurs
- Cooperatives
- Non Profit Organization
- Community land trusts
- Local governments
- Others.....

Activity #2: Project Brainstorming



Homework

- Discuss project ideas with peers
- Is there demand for the project?
- What problem will this project solve?
- Who has this problem?
- Where should “ownership” reside?
- Who else should be at the next workshop?

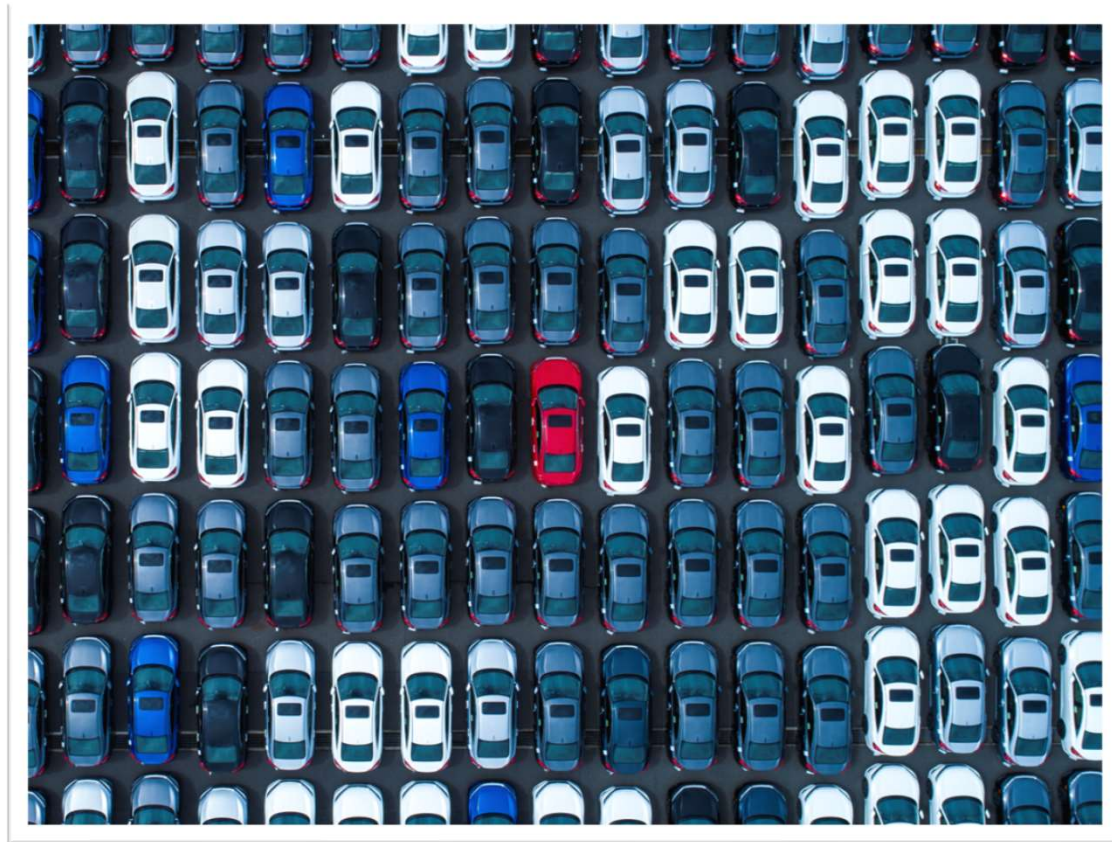
Preview: Workshop #3

- ☐ Brief Review
- ☐ Project Refinement
 - ☐ Value Chain Mapping
 - ☐ Problem – Solution
 - ☐ Finalize Project Ideas
- ☐ Project Teams and Action Planning

Workshop #3 : Date & Time Check

- **Workshop #3:** Wednesday, October 29

Parking Lot

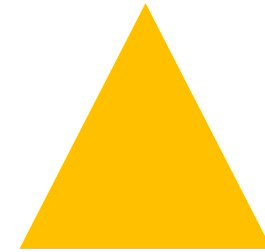


Closing: Pluses & Deltas



Things you liked?

Things that worked well?



Things we can improve on?

Opportunities for change?

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

- Margaret Mead

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Thank You!