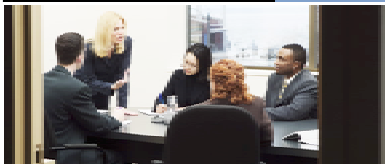


Report:
REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



Presented to:
THE 7-COUNTY NORTHERN NEVADA REGION

NorthernNVision: Regional Economic Development Strategy

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	5
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VISION AND GOALS	7
TARGET INDUSTRY RECAP	9
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRIORITY ACTION PLAN	10
<i>BUSINESS CLIMATE</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>WORKFORCE & EDUCATION</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>SITES & INFRASTRUCTURE</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>QUALITY OF LIFE</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & MARKETING</i>	<i>36</i>
EVALUATION PLAN	43
BEST PRACTICES APPENDIX	44

Delivered to:

THE 7-COUNTY REGION

Prepared by:



This is the third and final report in the NorthernNVision strategic planning initiative for Northern Nevada. Prior reports have included the Database of Assets and the Visioning Document, which presented a thorough evaluation of the region's economic development assets and identified areas of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for competing in the global economy. These reports also identified six key industry sectors that should be the focus of future economic development efforts as well as outlined the vision for the community in the five areas that are critical to economic development.

The Regional Economic Development Strategy will serve as the roadmap for Northern Nevada's future economic development efforts. Its objective is to direct and assist key stakeholders in competing in the global marketplace and embracing a spirit of regionalism. Implementing the action items within will strengthen the ability of Northern Nevada to attract and/or retain the types of global businesses and workers that will secure its economic future and position it as a globally competitive community.

This final report reflects a ten-month planning process with input from nearly 800 citizens through two online surveys, an 86-person Steering Committee, and dozens of business, civic, and community leaders. Significant research and discussion have led to this strategy for Northern Nevada.

Economic Globalization

As we define the global marketplace, it is important to understand that advances in communication and technology, combined with free-market ideology, have given goods, services, and capital unprecedented mobility—a reality known as “economic globalization”. The International Monetary Fund defines globalization as “the growing economic interdependence of countries worldwide through increasing volume and variety of cross-border transactions in goods and services, and a more free flow of international capital as well as more rapid and widespread diffusion of technology”.

Economic globalization is causing severe economic dislocation and instability in formerly healthy regions. Today economic competitiveness is not measured against neighboring cities or towns or even against states. Rather, it is far more complex, and competition can now extend on a worldwide basis. As a result, Northern Nevada is not only competing against communities within its region or within the state's border, but also with cities and communities across the nation and across the globe.

Northern Nevada has undeniable strengths and unique characteristics to actively compete in the global community. However, it must also overcome certain challenges in order to sustain its economic base and expand its economic growth for the future. **Without new investment and renewed vigor to attract high wage jobs and skilled workers, Northern Nevada will not succeed in the global economy.**

The Region is at a Crossroads

We commend the leaders in the community for undertaking this initiative and embracing its regional scope. This is an excellent time to conduct this plan of action because Northern Nevada is in a position of economic strength, having experienced tremendous growth over the past decade. However, this growth has also caused tensions

that have placed the region at a crossroads. There could not be a more critical time for the region to determine its future direction.

With the opportunity to gain additional jobs from future economic development projects, as well as existing companies who are expanding operations, now is the time for the region to focus on its future. Without this strategic vision and planning effort and a serious implementation strategy, the community at large could find itself among those that ultimately face declining or stagnant growth. It is also the time for Northern Nevada to continue to honor its past while forging ahead to create a more diverse economic structure. **Such a structure would include striking a balance between the quality of life for all citizens (including young professionals and retirees) and strong, sustained economic growth through the attraction and retention of high quality, high impact jobs. It is within this context that Northern Nevada is struggling to define itself for the next generation of residents, employers, and visitors.**

The purpose of this strategic plan for Northern Nevada is to outline an action plan for the political, business, and civic leaders of the community as well as the citizens throughout the region to determine Northern Nevada's path to become a globally competitive community. Leaders from business, government, nonprofits, schools, neighborhoods, and communities throughout the region must find the will and the means to collaborate, to implement, and to be accountable in order to garner greater economic success.

Upon acceptance of the plan and continuing throughout the implementation process, it will be critical to ensure that each recommendation has been assigned priority status. This is not an indication that any particular recommendation is not of importance, but rather that some are absolutely vital to the region's economic success. We realize that with potentially limited resources, some recommendations will need to take precedence over others, and we have provided some initial recommendations for priorities as a guide. The recommendations outlined in this strategic plan will provide a blueprint for the area to prepare to compete in the global economy and to help plan for future expansion and growth throughout Northern Nevada.

Northern Nevada as a Global Competitor

In reports one and two, AngelouEconomics attempted to define the globally competitive community through a series of characteristics and best practices. It is clear that no one community can claim to have mastered each set of characteristics, although some excel in various factors. These factors were analyzed with quantitative and qualitative information for Northern Nevada and balanced against AE's experience working in numerous other communities throughout the U.S. and world.

As a review, based on the analysis, AE ranked the region's performance in each factor on a scale of 1 to 5 stars (1=worst, 5=best) in order to prioritize the recommendations and actions that will be required of local governmental, business, civic, and educational leaders. The following list outlines each characteristic in order from worst performing to best performing.

Business Climate



Supports research and development by strengthening ties between researchers and the private sector

- ★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ Encourages entrepreneurial and small business development through incubators, access to capital, and incentives
- ★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ Promotes integrated clusters of "knowledge-based" industries that capitalize on region's assets and provide better job opportunities for residents
- ★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ Promotes business friendly regulations
- ★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ Maintains low cost business environment, or tempers higher costs with incentives

Workforce and Education

- ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ Attracts and retains a young professional workforce that will form the foundation of future economic and population growth
- ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ Attracts and retains a diverse workforce that is adequately trained for region's industry clusters
- ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ Develops an educational system that adequately prepares students for the workforce
- ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ Develops an effective workforce development system that has strong linkages and participation with public schools, technical schools, community colleges, and universities

Sites and Infrastructure

- ★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ Ensures adequate utility capacity for economic development
- ★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ Develops strong telecommunications infrastructure
- ★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ Maintains and upgrades transportation infrastructure, including roads, air, rail, and transit systems
- ★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ Proactively markets supply of "ready to build" sites and available properties

Quality of Life

- ★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ Ensures attainable cost of living and adequate and diverse housing options for residents and target workforce

- ★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆ Invests in maintaining and revitalizing core city centers
- ★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆ Provides an abundance of arts and cultural opportunities for residents
- ★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆ Provides retail choice for residents
- ★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ Promotes recreational and natural assets in the community
- ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ Promotes strong sense of community pride

Economic Development and Marketing

- ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ Develops a strong brand image that differentiates itself from competitors
- ★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ Builds regional, collaborative support for sustainable economic growth
- ★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆ Develops effective tools to retain existing companies and encourages economic development from within the community

For purposes of this report, these factors and the corresponding analysis provided the necessary framework for this final phase of the recommendation strategy. This final Regional Economic Development Strategy addresses and articulates economic development priority action items that will position the community for healthy economic growth. The recommendations presented in this report will help Northern Nevada continue to excel in the factors in which it is strong, while also making critical improvements in necessary areas.

The recommendations in this final report are outlined across the 5 critical economic development areas. In each area we have listed the Priority Action Items that, if implemented, will have the greatest impact on Northern Nevada's future success.

Finally, in the Appendix section of this report, AE has provided numerous Best Practice Case Studies from communities across the U.S. and globe to guide regional leaders in their implementation efforts.

AngelouEconomics would like to thank the staff at the Northern Nevada Development Authority for its support throughout the course of this project. We would also like to show our appreciation to the distinguished individuals on the Steering Committee, and dozens of other individuals, for their invaluable insight and ideas that led to the creation of this plan.

STEERING COMMITTEE

Audrey Allan	Ronnie Hannaman	Mary Pierczynski
Mark Amodei	Shelley Hartmann	Deborah Prout
David Archer	Bill Henderson	Ron Radil
Gary Bacock	Kirsten Hertz	Mike Riggs
Ray Bacon	Dan Holler	Linda Ritter
Tom Baker	Rick Horn	Bruce Robertson
Hale Bennett	Donal Hummer Jr.	Larry Rodriguez
Kay Bennett	Ed James	Mark Rosenberg
Nancy Black	Cami Kaiser	Carolyn Ross
Becky Bosshart	Donna Kristaponis	Tim Rubald
Garry Bowen	Rick Lattin	David Rund
Rafael Cappucci	Jeff Lawrence	Skip Sayre
Kimberly Carrubba	Mike Licciardello	Sean Sever
Tim Casey	Pete Livermore	Herb Shedd
Bill Codick	Joe Locurto	Teresa Shouppe
Don Costa	Nat Lommori	Robert Slaby
Des Craig	Jarrold Lopiccio	Christina Slade
Chuck Davies	Renea Louie	Mark Stuebe
Rick DeMar	Dr. Carol Lucey	Tom Taorimina
John Dimambro	Miya MacKenzie	Juliette Taylor
Kathy Dow	Joe McCarthy	Ken Tedford Jr.
Cary Dyer	Bill Miles	Marv Teixeira
Kimberly Elliott	Dwight Millard	Randy Tobey
Ed Epperson	Bob Milz	Thomas Vetica
Tom Fitzgerald	David Morgan	Pat Whitten
Daniel Fox	Dan Newell	Karen Woodmansee
Jason Geddes	Bill O'Driscoll	Brad Woodring
Brad Goetsch	Pat Patera	Harry York
Kathy Halbardier	Scott Penzel	

SPECIAL THANKS TO NNDA AND WNDD STAFF

Ron Weisinger, NNDA

Ron Radil, WNDD

Judi Bishop, NNDA

Sharon Boos, NNDA

Larie Trippet, NNDA

Every plan must begin with a vision that will guide the community and region in its economic development endeavors to ensure that the plan becomes a reality. A proper vision is the foundation of all activities that will improve Northern Nevada, and it is what drives every aspect of a successful plan. The vision does not describe what Northern Nevada is today, but what it will become when this Strategic Plan is implemented.

Defining Northern Nevada's Vision

In the second report delivered in this NorthernNVision process, AE presented the "Vision for Economic Development" for Northern Nevada. AE believes that successful economic development requires that a region strive to excel in five key categories: **(1) Workforce & Education, (2) Business Climate & Entrepreneurship, (3) Sites & Infrastructure, (4) Quality of Life, and (5) Economic Development & Marketing.** With this as background, the vision that AngelouEconomics has crafted for Northern Nevada is made up of individual visions that the region should strive for in each of these areas.

To review, AngelouEconomics crafted the following "Visions for Economic Development" to guide Northern Nevada's future efforts.

Vision for Business Climate:

Northern Nevada will identify and target a select group of growing, high wage paying industries that will provide diverse employment opportunities and increased prosperity for all citizens in the 7-county region.

These industries will develop by attracting new businesses based on Northern Nevada's strong business assets, by fostering an environment in which local entrepreneurship thrives, and by ensuring that the region's existing businesses are succeeding and expanding their local operations.

Vision for Workforce & Education:

Northern Nevada will develop a well-skilled workforce that will meet the needs of local employers as well as the requirements of the region's future target industry companies.

In order to build and maintain this workforce, the 7-County region will place higher value on education and will develop a world-class educational system, which spans from K-12 to the community college system to an increased 4-year degree presence.

Vision for Sites & Infrastructure:

Northern Nevada will work in a cooperative manner that spans county lines to ensure proper land use planning takes place and that suitable infrastructure and sites exist for future businesses in the region's target industries.

Working together, the region will ensure that the requirements of each county are properly forecasted and met including water resource needs, road and highway transportation capacity, and utility and telecommunications networks.

Vision for Quality of Life:

Northern Nevada's growth will always be tempered with the unwavering commitment to maintaining the region's top asset – its enviable quality of life. The scenic environment and outdoor recreational opportunities will be preserved, and each of the seven counties will develop enhanced arts, culture, and entertainment amenities desired by its citizens.

Coupled with enhancing these attributes, the area must work diligently to ensure that local citizens can afford to both live and work in the community they choose.

Vision for Economic Development & Marketing:

Northern Nevada's economic development efforts will occur on a regional scale with an understanding that the economic prosperity of the entire region will benefit each of the individual counties. City and county governments, as well as regional economic development leaders will strive to work together under a unified approach to economic development.

To support this, Northern Nevada will understand and market its overarching assets while emphasizing the unique strengths of each individual county and community.

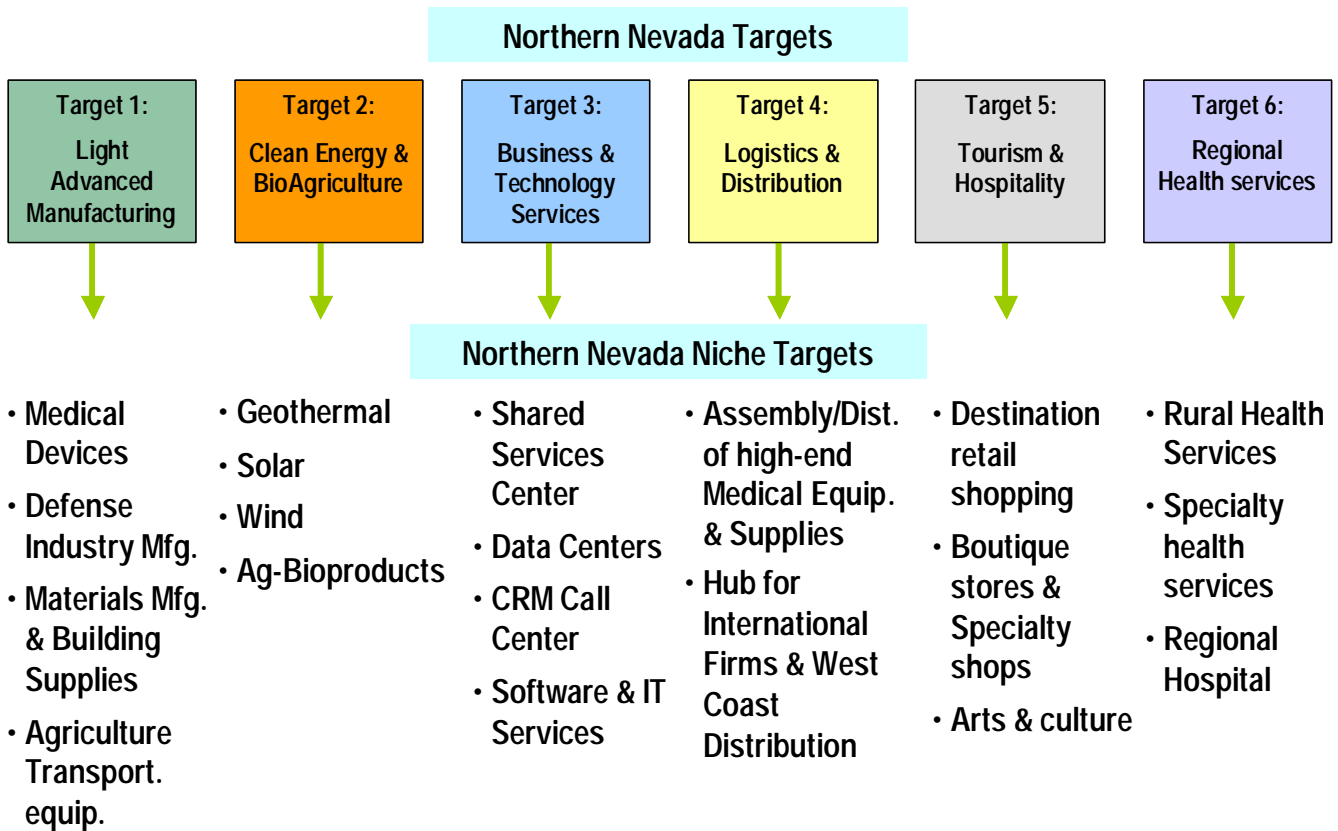
These visions, coupled with the identifications of six key target industries, have guided the development of the recommendations presented in this final Strategic Plan.

These collections of “visions” convey the critical importance for each of the seven counties to operate as a region. Effective economic development cannot occur if a collaborative, regional approach is not undertaken. It will be the responsibility of each county to understand where it can improve and to commit itself to taking the appropriate actions.

TARGET INDUSTRY RECAP

AngelouEconomics conducted an analysis of Northern Nevada’s economic base to determine which industry sectors have the potential to drive future growth in the area. By targeting, limited resources can be used more efficiently to attract the exact type of industries desired by each county in the region. These industries were identified and discussed in detail in Report 2 (the Visioning Document) and are presented here as a review.

Based on this input from the community coupled with AngelouEconomics research and expertise as site selectors, we recommend the following six target industries and niche targets for Northern Nevada:



The seven county region should view the following actions as strategic priorities to immediately implement to achieve the vision of becoming a globally competitive community and to meet other regional economic development goals. This will allow resources to be directed to the most critical areas that can have the greatest long-lasting impact on the area. Each priority summarized below is described in more detail within in this report.

Together, these initiatives represent a roadmap to direct the actions of many organizations (both public and private sector) and to build a truly broad-based approach to economic development. These Strategic Priorities will require a joint effort that spans county lines, utilizes the resources of various organizations and governments, and brings the insights and manpower of the private sector into the mix.

In our meetings and time spent in Northern Nevada throughout the development of this NorthernNVision strategic initiative, AngelouEconomics found that many groups and individuals had a strong desire to play an enhanced role in directing the economic development future of the region. These Priority Actions and the resulting detailed recommendations will provide these willing participants with ample opportunity to play a vital role in the region's successful future development.

The Ten Priority Actions Are:

- 1. Develop a strong support system for entrepreneurs and small businesses.** A critical aspect of building sustainable economic competitiveness is building a strong support network that will encourage entrepreneurs to create new businesses and help small businesses thrive. The stimulation of entrepreneurship through the formation and development of new commercial businesses and social enterprises can play a key role in employing underutilized resources in the region. Among other recommendations, AE encourages the formation of an Entrepreneur Association to direct future efforts in Northern Nevada.
- 2. Establish target industry working groups for each of the six targeted industries.** As outlined within report 2 (the Visioning Document), AE has developed and outlined six specific target industries for Northern Nevada to achieve the maximum results for economic development and the creation of high quality jobs. To become successful in attracting these targeted industries, AE recommends tapping into the vast knowledge and resources of other business leaders within these industries to further define specific messages and assist in recruitment and retention activities to benefit companies in these target sectors.

-
- 3. Expand efforts to attract and retain Young Professionals as this group is a vital element to building a robust workforce.** The declining percentage of young professionals in Northern Nevada can pose a threat to economic development and workforce development efforts. The efforts of the 7-County region to attract and retain the coveted demographic of professionals between 25-44 should be expanded. A younger, talented workforce will make the region more competitive for attracting, retaining, and growing target industry companies. AngelouEconomics recommends that a focused effort be undertaken to specifically make the region a more desirable place for young professionals. This will be a key asset for business retention and attraction to the region. Among other items, AE recommends the formation of a Young Professionals group to harness the collective power of young professionals already located in the region and to lend them a true, meaningful voice in the economic development future of the Northern Nevada.
 - 4. Establish a Business & Education Council to develop a long-term workforce plan for the region.** Establish a Business and Education Council with representatives from the Western Nevada Community College (WNCC), K-12 school systems, area workforce development providers, local economic development authorities, and business leaders (including Human Resource Directors/Recruiters) to develop a long-term workforce plan. All of these entities are key players in the workforce development system, and they should play an even more central and highly visible role in both workforce and economic development. The availability and quality of the workforce among all skill levels was noted as a specific challenge for the seven rural counties. By creating a cross-disciplinary Council, the region can proactively create a strategy to combat this ongoing challenge.
 - 5. Continue to support the efforts of the higher education task force to attract a 4-year degree satellite campus in the seven county region.** While the Reno-Sparks metro is well served by the University of Nevada, Reno for 4-year higher education, the seven county area lacks a strong 4-year degree presence. In the shift to higher knowledge jobs that is reflected by many of the new target industries, the lack of a 4-year degree presence will be a limiting factor for the future economic development of the region. A higher education task force will act as a catalyst with the sole purpose of developing an enhanced 4-year degree presence, specifically the creation of a 4-year degree satellite campus, in the seven counties. As a first step, the task force should continue to lure 4-year degree courses and programs to be offered at Western Nevada Community College locations throughout the area (such as UNR's current MBA course offerings in Douglas County). The ultimate goal of the task force would be to create a standalone 4-year institution or satellite campus of another major university.
 - 6. Create and support facilities that nurture and develop entrepreneurs and accelerate small business formation – Start a regional business Incubator.** The development of a business Incubator to serve the seven counties would be a strong asset for the acceleration of local entrepreneurship and small businesses. Incubators are important institutions for young start-up companies and can hasten the development of emerging technologies with strong market potential. The Northern Nevada region, including all of its individual cities and counties, will greatly benefit by having an incubator that encourages and assists citizens in starting their own businesses.

-
7. **Support the revitalization of key downtown areas in each of the seven counties.** The potential exists for each county to support one (in some cases more than one) vibrant, unique and attractive downtown center. This will provide numerous benefits. First, it will act as a draw to encourage regional tourism, which AngelouEconomics believes has strong potential in each of the seven counties. Second, it will improve the look and feel of the community and make each county more attractive to new relocating companies and skilled workers. Finally, it will give the residents in each community an added sense of community pride and act as an anchor help to retain young residents. Focus should be on enhancing and strengthening Northern Nevada's unique downtown areas in each county on a block-by-block basis through incentives for urban infill, brownfield redevelopment, and streetscape improvements. Develop a funding plan that includes public/private partnerships, EDA funding, and local, innovative fundraising strategies.
8. **Endorse the creation of a cross-county Recreational and Open Space Master Plan.** Arguably the region's most valuable quality of life feature is its open spaces. This was highlighted in the online survey as well as in numerous focus groups and interviews. However, a certain degree of tension exists across county lines stemming from the fact that there is a perception that not all counties hold the same sentiment about preserving open space. One solution to easing the tensions between counties and ensuring that the larger region maintains its desirable recreational open spaces would be to commission a comprehensive Recreational and Open Spaces Master Plan. This effort would represent a joint effort that would be driven by each of the counties, which will help build consensus and break down misconceptions and mistrust about each county's development plans.
9. **Spearhead a regional approach to economic development and create a model for seamless collaboration.** Successful economic development organizations throughout the country understand that existing and prospective new relocating companies do not see town or county boundaries when choosing a location. These companies, rather, see a regional business climate, regional education assets, and a regional workforce. It is imperative, then, that economic development efforts be truly regional in scope. This involves cooperative arrangements across county lines and collaboration between regional economic development organizations, all with the goal of improving the larger region's attractiveness to businesses.
- AngelouEconomics believes that NNDA in partnership with its regional E.D. partners (EDAWN, and Churchill, Mineral, and Pershing County EDAs) should be a catalyst in embracing a truly regional model for economic development. Efforts must focus on creating a seamless, collaborative relationship toward economic development across the seven counties. This collaborative model must also include strong integration with the economic development efforts underway in Washoe County.
- NNDA, EDAWN, and the Churchill, Mineral, and Pershing County EDAs represent a strong team of allies that when working toward the same common goal will continue to have a large impact on the positive future development of Northern Nevada.
10. **Work with regional partners to develop and adopt a regional brand for Northern Nevada.** As a critical element to an overall marketing strategy, Northern Nevada should develop a regional business brand that creatively and succinctly captures the essence of Northern Nevada, and its strategy for

business development. A regional brand that reflects a consistent theme is important for communicating with external audiences and portraying a single message and image. The execution of the branding campaign should still allow flexibility for the counties, cities, and towns to maintain their individual identities.

This branding initiative should not just include the seven county area. The true Northern Nevada region includes Washoe County and the Reno-Sparks Metro area, as well as Lake Tahoe. It will take a diligent broad-based effort to develop and agree on a regional brand that still allows for unique customizations on a county-by-county basis if desired.

The remainder of this report expounds on each of these priority action items and highlights other recommendations to guide regional economic development. While many of these priority actions will take years to fully implement, it is AE's recommendation that implementation efforts undertaken in these areas will provide the greatest immediate impact on Northern Nevada.

In the Appendix of this report, AE presents numerous best practices of communities that have successfully employed many of the initiatives presented below. These best practice case studies will be vital to regional stakeholders in the implementation of this NorthernNVision strategic initiative.

BUSINESS CLIMATE

VISION: Northern Nevada will identify and target a select group of growing, high wage paying industries that will provide diverse employment opportunities and increased prosperity for all citizens in the region.

These industries will develop by attracting new businesses based on Northern Nevada's strong business assets, by fostering an environment in which local entrepreneurship thrives, and by ensuring that the region's their local operations existing businesses are succeeding and expanding

Business climate can be defined as the capacity of the community to support business expansion and development opportunities. In today's competitive marketplace, providing a good business climate is key. Communities must promote business friendly regulations and be flexible and nimble in responding to business needs. In today's economy, more often than not, companies are driven by their bottom line, so costs are a significant consideration in any expansion or relocation decision, and globally competitive communities must provide a structure in which businesses can be profitable.

Additionally, since most jobs are created through small businesses, globally competitive communities must also provide excellent support mechanisms to grow small businesses from within the community.

In general, Northern Nevada's business climate is a strong selling point, and the tax and regulatory climate and general business costs are competitive. However, cost of living is becoming a challenge to the region's workforce. Northern Nevada can do better by having a clear focus on target industry cluster development. In addition, there is room for improvement in its support for entrepreneurs and small businesses. Stronger entrepreneurial and venture capital networks must emerge as they are essential for healthy job growth, diversity, and sustainable economic competitiveness.

Business Climate Strategy One: Develop a strong support system for entrepreneurs and small businesses.

A critical aspect of building sustainable economic competitiveness is building a strong support network that will encourage entrepreneurs to create new businesses and help small businesses thrive. The stimulation of entrepreneurship through the formation and development of new commercial businesses and social enterprises can play a key role in employing underutilized resources in the region.

Entrepreneurs are the economic engines of a community, as are small businesses in general. They are employers, people who mobilize economic resources and stimulate further economic activity because of their efforts, and serve as stabilizing factors in a community.

They provide several major benefits:

- They create jobs at relatively low capital cost, especially in the fast growing service sector.
- They serve as a source of innovation in products, services, and techniques.
- They provide a productive outlet for the energies of enterprising and energetic people.
- They develop a pool of skilled workers who serve as the basis of industrial expansion.
- They contribute to the increased participation of all communities in the economic activities of a region.
- They serve an important social function by creating new career opportunities and fast upward social mobility.

Currently, there is no formal support network in the seven counties to bring entrepreneurs and small business owners together, support them, and allow them to communicate with each other. Northern Nevada needs to rediscover its entrepreneurial roots and encourage and reward risk-taking that is crucial to start up efforts. Establishing a formal entrepreneurship association will provide a valuable avenue for entrepreneurial-minded individuals to congregate and share ideas and to inform the public sector on how to assist small and start-up companies. It will also serve as an important signal to outside individuals that entrepreneurship is valued and supported, which could act as a draw to attract more small business owners to the area.

The goal for Northern Nevada should be to create a “focus” on the importance of entrepreneurs for the region’s economic future and to leverage the region’s current related knowledge base and create a “story” to influence the recruitment of new entrepreneurs.

While Northern Nevada is engaged in some efforts toward this goal, there is room for improvement. It is critical that leaders in each county focus on this important economic development activity.

Action Items:

1. The Center for Entrepreneurship and Technology (CET), in partnership with NNDA and the Churchill, Pershing, and Mineral County EDA’s, and private sector leaders should establish an **Entrepreneurs Association (EA)** to support and build entrepreneurial activity in Northern Nevada.
2. Invite the region’s top five to ten entrepreneurs to initially start the association and task them with attracting others to join.
 - ✓ Aim at gathering membership representation from each of the seven counties (identifying top entrepreneurs from each county to serve as champions in their home counties could improve results)
 - ✓ Ensure that the EA is linked closely to the entrepreneurship efforts underway in Reno-Sparks
3. Key initiatives for the Entrepreneurial Association to undertake:
 - ✓ The EA should first be tasked to identify and inventory all entrepreneurship and small business resources currently available.
 - ✓ The EA organizes and serves as a forum for entrepreneurs to share ideas on how to improve their businesses in regularly scheduled meetings.
 - ✓ The EA develops and maintains a website with resources on entrepreneurship, an electronic forum where entrepreneurs can discuss ideas, and a database of best practices that entrepreneurs can adapt for their own businesses.
 - ✓ Acts as the regional “voice” of entrepreneurship and works with: local units of government to promote a business climate that supports entrepreneurship, Western Nevada Community College and K-12 systems to promote entrepreneurship training, and engage discussions with

-
- private sector financing institutions and other potential influencers who could help support funding for small businesses and other entrepreneurial ventures.
- ✓ Serves as a strong proponent to guide the development of a regional Incubator (see recommendation in the Sites & Infrastructure section)
4. Assess how active adults/retirees within the community could utilize their experience and intellectual capital as mentors to entrepreneurs and small businesses through the development of an “Executive Senior Business Council.” Throughout Northern Nevada, there is a wealth of knowledge and experience of individuals (many retirees) who have had extremely successful and fulfilling careers. Engaging these individuals' knowledge and experience with an entrepreneurial and small business network can be a win-win arrangement for everyone involved. Closely involve the local chapter of SCORE to attract members to this Council.
 - ✓ The Executive Senior Business Council would be a part of the EA and be structured as a subcommittee to that organization
 5. Educate citizens on entrepreneurship and small business activity through regular communiqués from the EA, NNDA, and regional county EDAs. Develop presentations for business, civic, and non-profit organizations. Engage small business owners and entrepreneurs to share their success stories, and regularly communicate to the public at large the programs and services that are available to this important segment of the economy.
 6. Improve access to early-stage venture capital by (CET, with private sector leaders should spearhead this initiative):
 - ✓ Supporting the formation of a new angel investor network in the region.
 - ✓ Working with the region's banks to market existing regional loan programs.
 - ✓ Providing local banks with resources that educate them on the best way to support small and start up companies.
 - ✓ Work with the larger Reno-Sparks region to identify funding opportunities and promote what is occurring in the rural counties.
 7. Involve educators in the process by hosting opportunities for students and entrepreneurs to communicate. Support the “Entrepreneurs Week” initiative that is being promoted and run by CET on an annual basis. This allows area high school students to learn the benefits of establishing and owning businesses. Also, allow students the opportunity to visit the business location of their choice to learn more about a particular company.

Business Climate Strategy Two: Establish target industry teams for each of the six targeted industries.

As outlined in the second report delivered in the NorthernNVision project (see Report 2: the Visioning Document), AE has developed and outlined specific target industries for Northern Nevada to focus on to achieve the maximum results for economic development and the creation of high quality jobs. In order to become the most successful in attracting these targeted industries, AE recommends tapping into the vast knowledge and resources of other business leaders within these industries to further define specific messages and activities that could attract these industries.

Northern Nevada's target industries identified in the Visioning Document include: Light Advanced Manufacturing, Clean Energy and BioAgriculture, Business & Technology Services, Logistics and Distribution, Tourism and Hospitality, and Regional Health Services.

AE believes very strongly in the approach of peer-to-peer marketing for the overall development of these target business sectors in Northern Nevada. It is important to fully focus on the target industries, as well as to leverage industry-specific knowledge that currently exists, while simultaneously creating an “investment” on the part of the region through participation in the process and by holding an ultimate “stake” in the outcomes.

The development of target industry teams pulls resources together behind a unified message and mission, while also engaging successful businesses and business owners in the overall goals of attempting to build each target industry in Northern Nevada. This type of effort also demonstrates the community’s commitment to business development to a prospective company and its support of a positive business climate in their respective industry.

Action Items:

1. Form Target Industry (TI) teams of 8-12 members that lend their expertise regarding specific issues, policies, concerns, or opportunities facing the representative industries.
 - a. Each team should be comprised of 4-6 private sector leaders in each industry, 1-2 economic development leaders (from NNDA, and/or Churchill, Mineral Pershing County EDAs), and 3-4 governmental officials from appropriate counties.
 - b. Tap into the knowledge base to gain an intense focus on the issues surrounding these six industries.
 - c. Explore new business development activities through members’ various contacts within these industries.
 - d. These Target Industry teams should be closely aligned with the target industry efforts currently being spearheaded by the Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada (EDAWN). This alignment could go as far as creating joint TI teams for overlapping industries (e.g. Clean Energy, Advanced Manufacturing, Logistics, etc.)
2. Have business leaders representing the target industries whose main purpose is to supply trend information, develop strategies for attracting industry, and develop key messages concerning each industry. Also provide any other pertinent industry details and information.
3. The team should meet quarterly to discuss industry strategies while focusing on specific outcomes for targeted industry initiatives. This team should discuss industry-specific prospects and prepare for site visits by jointly discussing strategies on the specific needs of companies in target industries.
4. Members of each Target Industry team should be available to assist economic development leaders in prospect visits and site selection inquiries in their respective industries.
5. Ask industry team members to help promote the region to their peers. Have them invite their peers to attend industry trade shows and missions and participate in site visits.
6. Explore the possibilities of capturing consulting or outsourcing opportunities in the targeted industries for local skilled retirees.

Business Climate Strategy Three: Provide a pro-business environment that promotes quality investment in each of the seven counties by streamlining governmental processes and supporting targeted incentives to projects in keeping with the region’s development vision.

- A. Form a task force to study ways that units of governments throughout the seven counties can streamline processes and decrease duplicative efforts. Throughout the planning process, one complaint that resonated among participants in the interviews and focus groups pertained to the lack of cooperation between governmental entities within the same county, as well as little coordination across county lines. Business owners, developers, and even the public at large reported that the relationships between

counties (and even within counties) were disconnected, development regulations are not standardized, and processes are not entirely clear. Disconnection and lack of coordination among these entities is harmful to the economic fabric of the region, increases costs for residents and businesses, and inhibits a pro-business environment.

Action Items:

1. Form a task force to study ways the county and city/town governments can streamline and standardize their processes and activities to decrease duplicative efforts and to make conducting business in the region less ambiguous.
 2. Establish regular meetings (quarterly) to be attended by cross-county officials and develop short and long term strategies and action items to be implemented in each county.
 3. Brainstorm best practices that are currently being utilized that can be used throughout each of the seven counties. Let the county or town/city that employs the best practice be the champion for spreading its adoption across each of the seven counties.
 4. Consider methods and practices that can reduce government duplication and find opportunities to share scarce resources.
- B. While company incentives are determined largely by the Nevada Commission on Economic Development at the state level, local jurisdictions have the ability to wield their leverage in providing backing and support to which companies are ultimately granted incentives. The region should actively support providing incentives for projects that support the community's vision, such as companies in the target industries, providing the projects have a positive economic impact. Incentives can be important tools that can be offered to potential investors with the idea of further enhancing the overall community's vision and attractiveness for businesses and residents.

Action Items:

1. Actively support incentive policies that are specifically earmarked for companies in the region's six targeted industries to demonstrate the communities' eagerness to apply incentives to projects that further the development of those industries. Develop a list of potential enticements that would help incentivize businesses, investors, or developers for projects that benefit the community's vision. These incentives could include low-interest loans, density bonuses, and other bonuses for entrepreneurs seeking to establish target industry businesses.
 2. These inducements should be selective and only offered to anchor projects that create a predetermined number of jobs.
 3. These incentives may also be applicable to a project that does not meet the job number criteria as long as the jobs created meet a predetermined wage level or are of strategic importance.
- C. Providing a regulatory environment that eases the burden on businesses can have just as much impact as providing financial incentives to companies. Often, time is money and businesses appreciate locating in areas with minimal government delays and bureaucracy. Northern Nevada communities should provide discounts on building permit, tap, and inspection fees for businesses involved in the six targeted industries depending on the number of jobs created, develop a "fast track" development process that moves target business through the process more quickly, and automate the permitting processes. These are initiatives that local government entities in each county can spearhead to further the growth of the target industries.

Action Items:

1. All communities should be encouraged to foster the growth of targeted industries by reducing permit, tap, and inspection fees as an incentive to recruit businesses.
2. These discounts should also be available to developers who are targeting the six target industries we have identified with spec development projects.
3. Discounted fees should be reclaimed if lease agreements in the spec development are made with businesses in industries other than the six targets.
4. Northern Nevada communities should develop a fast track development process that moves target businesses through the process more quickly. Application of the process should be dependent on the number of jobs the business is projected to bring in.
5. These benefits should not just be earmarked for target industry companies, but also for other desirable developments such as residential projects that include the construction of affordable, diverse housing.
6. Automate the permitting process in each of the counties to the greatest extent possible so that applicants can apply for and pay for permits online. This will help speed up the process and make it easier for applicants to navigate the development process.

WORKFORCE AND EDUCATION

VISION: Northern Nevada will develop a well-skilled workforce that will meet the needs of local employers as well as the requirements of the region's future target industry companies.

In order to build and maintain this workforce, the 7-County area will place higher value on education and will develop a world-class educational system, which spans from K-12 to the community college system to an increased 4-year degree presence.

Workforce development and education should be a primary cornerstone of any economic development initiative. The workforce (labor availability, costs, productivity) has become a much more critical factor in site selection decisions over the past few years as today's jobs demand more skills and education.

Since human capital and innovation are keys to success in the new economy, skilled, flexible workers are a company's primary assets. No community can be globally competitive without an educated workforce.

Without focus on a seamless system between workforce providers, educators, and business leaders, Northern Nevada could lose ground in its ability to attract quality companies, retain a strong existing industry base, and maintain a supply of available, quality workers.

With its booming growth, the challenge of finding ample and quality workers was noted as a primary challenge throughout Northern Nevada. Innovative thinking, increased collaboration, and more integrated processes and systems within workforce and economic development are now required to position each of the communities in Northern Nevada competitively for future growth and prosperity.

Workforce and Education Strategy One: Expand efforts to attract and retain Young Professionals, this group is a vital element to building a robust workforce.

The declining percentage of young professionals (those age 25-44) was one of the findings of the Database of Assets report (Report 1 in the NorthernNVision project). This is a significant challenge for the region as these young professionals represent the early stage workforce that is critical to a region's economic vitality. Increasingly, companies making expansion or location decisions base their choice on the availability of this age demographic.

The efforts of the 7-County region to attract and retain the coveted demographic of professionals between 25-44 should be expanded. A younger, talented workforce will make the region more competitive for attracting, retaining, and growing target industry companies.

AngelouEconomics recommends that a focused effort be undertaken to specifically make the region a more desirable place for young professionals. This will be a key asset for business retention and business attraction to the region.

One of the significant attractions for young professionals is housing specifically geared to their desires and needs. Young professionals are more likely than other age groups to prefer living in downtown locales and near the center of other things that attract them – close to work and entertainment options, in locations that do not require them to drive to get to work, restaurants, bars and night spots, and other amenities.

- A. To begin to attract and retain young professionals, it is important to build a critical mass of support among existing young professionals living in the region. AngelouEconomics recommends the formation of a young professionals networking group that will give a formal structure for which these individuals can interact.

Action Items:

1. Develop a young professionals' networking group, initially housed in NNDA, to provide a platform for this demographic to share ideas, learn from one another, establish business and client relationships, and advance in their careers. This effort should be jointly developed by both NNDA and EDawn:
 - ✓ As an incentive for young professionals to become involved in the young professionals network, offer discount cards for membership. Encourage businesses to donate discounts, products, tickets or items of interest to young professionals.
 - ✓ Establish a mentor program and invite retired executives to speak and coach young professionals and vice versa (Tap the local SCORE chapter to be involved).
2. Have a "special topic" breakfast seminar and invite local business leaders, potential mentors, young professionals, entrepreneurs, investors, and others to speak. Special topics may include entrepreneur success stories, target industry business accomplishments, etc.
3. Develop a program whereby human resource directors of major employers throughout the region interact with the young professionals group so they could learn exactly what interests them.
4. Ask local businesses to support "interest" clubs such as an arts group, specialized outdoor recreation, wine tasting or making, or gourmet clubs
5. Use the young professionals group to gather information on their housing needs and where Northern Nevada is lagging behind.
6. Use that information and work with Town/County planners to determine the feasibility of building housing for young professionals or attracting them to existing housing developments. This information should also be shared with any developers wishing to develop housing for young professionals in different parts of the region.
7. Meet with developers to determine the feasibility of building high density, mixed-use housing developments for young professionals in key areas in the region.

- B. To truly build and sustain a robust young professional community, empower the Young Professionals Group to become involved in local activities and serve on committees and boards. This group should have a significant say in the direction the region is heading. By opening up the doors to positions of leadership, young professionals will feel stronger roots in the region will be less likely to leave.

Action Items:

1. Give the Young Professionals Group a seat on the Board of NNDA or significant Chambers of Commerce, business, civic, or cultural organization, or seats within those type organizations.
2. Lend considerable resources to the YPG to launch their efforts to attract and retain other Young Professionals including meeting space, website development expertise, marketing, and communications expertise.
3. Task YPs in turn with taking the charge in implementing many of the recommendations of this report or volunteering their time in other community improvement activities.
4. Fund a fact-finding trip for regional representatives (e.g. NNDA, EDAWN, or Churchill, Mineral, Pershing County EDA President) and the President of the YPG to meet with other successful YP groups to determine how to develop best practices.

Workforce and Education Strategy Two: Establish a Business & Education Council to develop a long-term education and workforce plan for the region.

Establish a Business and Education Council with representatives from the Western Nevada Community College (WNCC), K-12 school systems, area workforce development providers, local economic development authorities, and business leaders (including Human Resource Directors/Recruiters) to develop a long-term workforce plan. All of these entities are key players in the workforce development system, and they should play an even more central and highly visible role in both workforce and economic development. The availability and quality of the workforce among all skill levels was noted as a specific challenge for the seven counties. By creating a cross-disciplinary Council, the region can proactively create a strategy to combat this ongoing challenge.

The purpose of this council will be to connect the private sector more closely with programming in the region's education institutions and workforce development system. This Business and Education Council should also be closely connected to education and workforce efforts underway in Washoe County.

Action Items:

1. Form a Business and Education Council comprised of WNCC, regional workforce development providers (e.g. NV Works, etc.), business leaders (primarily among targeted industries), Human Resource directors/recruiters, and K-12 educators.
2. Discuss and address workforce and economic development programs; changes that should be made in programs and the delivery of services relevant to target industries; issues related to attracting students to stay in the area after high school and college; issues related to increasing the 4-year degree presence in the region; and any other issues related to workforce preparedness and the role each can play in this effort.
3. Evaluate the need for more vocational technical programs offered within the high school to prepare students for certain segments of the workforce.
4. Develop an educational campaign to inform employers and potential workers of workforce development programs offered once the strategy is complete among stakeholders.

Workforce and Education Strategy Three: Establish an innovative program in K-12 education systems that will make Northern Nevada public schools into a world-class system.

The ability of public school systems to prepare students for college is an important factor when businesses decide where to locate. In this regard, the Northern Nevada region is roughly on par with the U.S., with the percentage

of those earning at least a high school diploma just slightly above the U.S. average. However, the public K-12 system should also challenge students in a way that encourages them to continue on to achieve a college degree and beyond. Northern Nevada trails the national average of college graduates quite substantially. Only 18% of the residents in the region have a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to the U.S. average of 27%.

While the high school graduation ratings may be sufficient when compared to the national average, in order to compete in the global economy, attract new workers to the region, and excel in attracting industry, Northern Nevada will need to have an exceptionally focused strategy in place to develop as a world-class system.

Northern Nevada needs to take steps not only to improve its school system, but also to create a world-class school system that is second to none. This is not simply a challenge facing the local school system in the seven counties. The nation's public school systems are under ever-increasing pressure to do a more effective job in preparing students to succeed in the working world and in the world of higher education. For decades, political leaders, educational leaders, and parents have decried the failure of public schools to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to survive after high school graduation and succeed in the business world.

An example of a truly innovative program that could be instituted in Northern Nevada would help to transform the region into a premier education destination.

Best Practice Case Study:

The **Center for Advanced Research and Technology (CART)** is one of the most far-reaching efforts at improving secondary public education ever developed in the United States. CART was created to match the curriculum and instructional strategies of high schools to the needs of a competitive economy.

The program, created jointly by the Fresno and Clovis Unified School Districts in California, is a charter school designed to improve the public education system and prepare students for higher education and participation in the workforce.

CART was created in 2000 to collaborate with businesses and community agencies to educate students in an atmosphere using a variety of curricular disciplines. The program is organized to prepare students to work in four career clusters: Professional Sciences, Engineering, Advanced Communications, and Global Economics. Students work in career-specific laboratories to complete industry-based projects and receive advanced academic credit for English, science, math, and technology. All classes at CART are college preparatory and satisfy all academic requirements of the California State University and University of California systems.

CART is designed for eleventh and twelfth grade students from 18 high schools in the Clovis and Fresno Unified School Districts, who attend half-day classes at the CART facility. Courses are taught in laboratories by teams of instructors from both education and business. The CART program has allowed both school districts to make systemic change in public education in the San Joaquin Valley.

The goals of CART are to:

- ✓ Give students the opportunity to obtain entry-level technological positions, industry standard certification, and/or university admission, so they can obtain degrees in high-technology industries;
- ✓ Collaborate with local, state, national, and global businesses, public and private institutions, and higher education institutions to offer coursework that responds to the changing needs of business and industry,

and to provide CART students with the sophisticated technology environments that meet industry standards;

- ✓ Establish curriculum that combines basic, critical academic standards with business and industry projects that allows participating students to move successfully beyond high school into the world of work and higher education;
- ✓ Bring together a staff with the vision, skills, and knowledge to teach students academics combined with a good mix of business principles that will allow them to succeed in higher education and the world of work;
- ✓ Engage students in their education in a way that makes them interested and committed to life-long learning;
- ✓ Increase student achievement through the combined application of academics, personal attention, real world projects experiences, and choice of career path exposure; and
- ✓ Improve student understanding of the “real world” by giving every first-year student an opportunity to “shadow” someone in a career field they are interested in and giving every second-year student an internship, so they can spend a longer period of time learning about the professional fields in which they are interested.

Establishing a program similar to CART in Northern Nevada would be an effective way not only to improve the performance of high school students and prepare them for college and the world of work, but would also create a direct link between the educational systems in the area and target industries, meeting the needs of both.

Action Items:

1. Check the Center for Advanced Research and Technology’s website, www.cart.org, to get more information on the center’s history, participating partners, and other key information on establishing the CART effort.
2. Determine the type of companies (existing companies already part of one of the recommended target industries) that have an interest in creating a “pipeline” to potential workers for their industry.
3. Begin discussions with a group of specific companies in one of the target industries to determine the types of skills workers need in their industry.
4. Bring together representatives of the school districts, Western Nevada CC, workforce development providers, and the targeted companies to begin discussions on the curriculum that should be offered in the CART program. Give this group the responsibility for developing the CART curriculum.
5. Identify a location and school system in the 7-County region that could host the initial pilot project.
6. Develop the curriculum that satisfies the needs of one target industry as a pilot project, and begin operation of CART for that one target industry. Once that program is in operation and working well, begin development of curriculum for other target industries with the assistance of companies representing those industries.
7. Identify private sector funding opportunities among major local employers.

Workforce and Education Strategy Four: Leverage the strong asset that the Western Nevada Community College represents to play a stronger role in economic development efforts.

The Western Nevada Community College represents a tremendous asset for each of the seven counties. This institution has the capability and desire to be the primary workforce development and advanced education provider in the region. Efforts should be enhanced to closely connect the capabilities of WNCC with the local economic development efforts, especially as it pertains to preparing the region's workforce for jobs in the six targeted industries. More can and should be done to closely align the curriculum and training provided by WNCC to the specific needs of the area's employers and to the projected needs of new employers in the region's target industries.

This starts by developing a clear understanding of businesses' workforce needs. Through a continual workforce assessment and skills assessment, the community can be better prepared to assist, retain, and recruit new industries. Without a thorough evaluation of the type of workforce existing businesses need to survive and thrive and an understanding of the necessary skills these companies need for their employees, communities in the seven counties could be in jeopardy of losing valuable jobs.

Action Items:

1. Regional economic development partners must learn the skill requirements of target industries by reviewing the target industry section of the Visioning Document (Report 2) and by participating in the employer summit meetings.
2. Develop new programs and curriculum or modify existing ones to meet the training needs of target industry employers.
3. Continue studying the needs of employers, basic skills assessment, and overall skill requirements needed in the next 3-5 years and beyond.
 - ✓ Regional E.D. partners organize and conduct Workforce Summit meetings with employers to find out what types of training they need for their employees and find out what types of new skills are required for work in their industries.
 - ✓ Local employers, WNCC, other workforce development providers, and K-12 officials should all take part in the Workforce Summit.
 - ✓ This should take place on a yearly basis.
4. Produce a report summarizing the results of the Summit by industry category.
5. Follow up annually with target industry employers to determine any changes to employee training needs due to changing industry requirements.
6. Consider using software programs that correlate with other business retention efforts for gathering information concerning industry information.
7. Share information with the Business and Education Council to assist with overall strategy.
8. Regional E.D. partners should develop an education campaign to inform employers and potential workers of workforce development and WNCC training programs available in the seven counties.

Workforce and Education Strategy Five: Continue to support the efforts of the higher education task force to attract a 4-year degree satellite campus in the seven county region.

While the Reno-Sparks metro is well served by the University of Nevada, Reno for 4-year higher education, the seven county region lacks a strong 4-year degree presence. In the shift to higher knowledge jobs that is reflected by many of the new target industries, the lack of a 4-year degree presence will be a limiting factor for the future economic development of the region. Many of Northern Nevada's target industries require individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher. While the seven counties can leverage the presence of UNR in Reno, if the area wants to develop a truly self-sufficient, dynamic economy, it will need to be able to provide its residents their own higher education opportunities that are closer to home.

A higher education task force will act as a catalyst with the sole purpose of developing an enhanced 4-year degree presence, specifically the creation of a 4-year degree satellite campus, in the seven counties. As a first step, the task force should continue to lure 4-year degree courses and programs to be offered at Western Nevada Community College locations throughout the area (such as UNR's current MBA course offerings in Douglas County). The ultimate goal of the task force would be to create a standalone 4-year institution or satellite campus of another major university.

The task force should be led by Western Nevada Community College (as WNCC campuses will play a large role in the identification of sites for a stand alone campus) and be comprised of the following groups from each of the seven counties:

- ✓ Elected officials from each county and major city/towns in the region
- ✓ Regional E.D. partners
- ✓ K-12 School districts superintendents
- ✓ Major Employers

Action Items:

1. The task force identifies and works with key decision makers at the Nevada System of Higher Education to begin to garner support and interest for starting a satellite campus or in providing limited degree offerings in the seven county region
2. The task force lobbies the state, with help from state representative, for the creation of a satellite campus in the region and markets the region to UNR and/or other identified prospective institutions.
3. The task force works with representatives from throughout each of the seven counties to identify a site suitable for a satellite campus (in order to attract a 4-year institution, a site may need to be provided at no charge and subsidized by the local municipality)
4. Set a goal to have a standalone satellite campus established and closely linked with WNCC within the next 1-2 years.
5. Consider the role of a state-funded multi-institutional education institution in the region. In this arrangement, the state helps fund the construction of a facility and college and universities from around the region can offer classes and degree programs in that location. A good example of this type of program is in Round Rock, TX. The Round Rock Higher Education Center (RRHEC) combines offerings of Texas State University, Austin Community College, and Temple College to provide regional educational programs. Explore: www.rrhec.txstate.edu for more information.

-
6. A similar arrangement could be envisioned for the seven counties with partner institutions such as UNR, UNLV, and WNCC.
 7. Once an initial satellite campus is established in one location, explore the opportunity of opening up a second satellite campus to serve a different segment of the seven counties.

SITES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

VISION: Northern Nevada will work in a cooperative manner that spans county lines to ensure proper land use planning takes place and that suitable infrastructure and sites exist for future businesses in the region's target industries.

Working together, the region will ensure that the requirements of each county are properly forecasted and met including water resource needs, road and highway transportation capacity, and utility and telecommunications networks.

Land, buildings, and infrastructure are the basic facilities needed to support any company and community and, therefore, vital to economic growth. Communities that cannot provide available, ready sites with adequate infrastructure for business expansion or relocation will not be able to recruit and retain global companies.

However, in today's global economic environment, this "basic" infrastructure is treated as a given. From AngelouEconomics' perspective, Northern Nevada has a sound infrastructure and is well positioned to provide these basic services. In today's marketplace, then, companies are increasingly looking past "basic" infrastructure and toward regions that can provide an infrastructure where innovation thrives. Companies look at strong telecommunications and wireless communications infrastructure. The presence of business incubators and technology research parks are now having a much stronger emphasis in location decisions. To be a globally competitive community of the future, AngelouEconomics believes Northern Nevada should aim to excel in these select areas.

Sites and Infrastructure Strategy One: Create and support facilities that nurture and develop entrepreneurs and accelerate small business formation – Start a regional business Incubator.

The development of a business Incubator to serve the seven counties would be a strong asset for the acceleration of local entrepreneurship and small businesses. Incubators are important institutions for young start-up companies and can hasten the development of emerging technologies with strong market potential.

The Northern Nevada region, including all of its individual cities and counties, will greatly benefit by having an incubator that encourages and assists citizens in starting their own businesses. This is also an ideal project for requesting EDA funding. An incubator, also commonly called a business accelerator, is a facility that educates and supports people in their business pursuit.

The incubator(s) that are developed in the region should be closely connected to Incubator efforts underway in the Reno-Sparks metro area. While incubator projects in Reno-Sparks and the incubator proposed for the seven counties will have different emphasis and areas of focus, the two efforts should still be closely aligned to share resources and to minimize duplicative efforts. The incubator in Reno-Sparks will be more technology focused

and should be closely tied with the University of Nevada, Reno, and the Desert Research Institute. The proposed incubator project in Northern Nevada should serve a broader range of entrepreneurs and small businesses.

Still, the set-up, governance, and operations of each incubator should be similar in nature, which will allow stakeholders in each area to work together to share best practices and get each project off the ground. Each incubator should have similar shared resources offerings including: office space, computer equipment, and labs as needed. If designed as such, these facilities can also become community-gathering places for after-hours networking events. By having dual incubators in different parts of the region, entrepreneurs in each locale can have a better understanding what is occurring throughout Northern Nevada.

The Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education (<http://www.entre-ed.org>) is a resource for economic development leaders for these types of programs. Additionally, time should be spent exploring programs available through The Kauffman Foundation (<http://www.kauffman.org>). NNDA should also review membership programs available through the National Business Incubator Association (<http://www.nbia.org>) for creating direction and organizing resources for the creation of incubators in the area.

Once an incubator is up and running, NNDA should incorporate incubator information onto its website and contain an inventory of the region's entrepreneurship resources.

Action Items:

1. NNDA, the Entrepreneur Team, WNCC, business leaders, and other community partners should research and visit best-in-class incubator facilities.
2. Work with these existing incubator programs for mentoring and/or "lessons"
3. Research and tap into federal funding opportunities available for starting up Incubators.
 - ✓ The Economic Development Administration (EDA) currently has expressed interest in funding Incubator feasibility studies across the U.S.
 - ✓ Other federal funding sources could be identified and secured to partially fund the creation of the Incubator.
4. Determine an appropriate location for the region's first Incubator. Leaders from each of the seven counties, as well as WNCC and E.D. officials, should work together in a collaborative manner to identify a suitable site. (Note: At the time of this report's publication, an Incubator site has been identified by regional stakeholders)
5. Campaign to obtain private and public funding and lobby the state for funding support. This could be the next major public / private funded project.
6. Set the incubator up as 501c3 non-profit organization with a dedicated board.
7. Hire an executive director to oversee operation of the facility.
8. Identify facility tools, support systems, and equipment needs to create desired activity.
9. Begin to build community support, and identify and attract local experts who would be willing to volunteer their expertise at the Incubator.
 - ✓ These individuals should include local accounting and financial professionals, marketing, strategic management, IP lawyers, seasoned scientists and technologists, retired executives, and entrepreneurs with successful track records.
10. Have a grand opening launch and invite the community to join in the celebration.
11. Build and launch an incubator / entrepreneurial resources website.
12. Promote locally and throughout the region.
13. Create a position for a grant writer to continuously look for additional funding through state and federal sources (focus on the target industries when applicable).

-
14. Identify an individual or group to serve as a “fundraiser”, working primarily with angel investors and venture capital firms to regularly update them as to findings, etc. to work for additional funding.

There are many successful incubators from which regional leaders can learn strategies and programming as this project moves forward:

- ✓ McClellan Technology Incubator (<http://www.mtisac.com/>) in Sacramento, California
- ✓ Blue Ridge Business Development Center (<http://blueridgebdc.org/>) in Alleghany County, North Carolina
- ✓ Center for Entrepreneurial Growth and Technology Innovation (CEGTI) at Lane College (<http://www.lanecollege.edu>)
- ✓ Santa Fe Business Incubator (<http://sfbi.net/>) in Santa Fe, New Mexico
- ✓ Austin Technology Incubator (<http://ati.ic2.org/>) in Austin, Texas
- ✓ Oklahoma Center for Advancement & Technology (<http://www.ocast.state.ok.us>)

Sites and Infrastructure Strategy Two: Provide the infrastructure needed to attract and retain global companies and a global workforce.

Although Northern Nevada has sound transportation networks and excellent telecommunications infrastructure, the lack of a coordinated plan to ensure that the region has suitable sites for target industry companies may hold it back from attracting the types of companies that it wants to drive future growth. Namely, while the region has strong industrial park space, there is limited office space for usage by white collar, service companies.

It is also critical that existing sites be “shovel ready” – that is, these ready for immediate development by a prospective company because it is hooked into utilities, has required telecommunications infrastructure, has access to transportation routes, is zoned appropriately – basically, that it is ready to be used immediately by a prospective company.

Action Items:

1. Regional E.D. partners should conduct a complete inventory of every significant vacant parcel and potential site that might be used for a business location to determine whether it is capable of being connected to basic infrastructure, including water, sewer, electricity, telecommunications, and any other basic services. Also note how the parcel is zoned and whether it is zoned appropriately for use by target industries.
2. The inventory should note any parcels of land that cannot readily be connected to basic infrastructure, and determine how it could be made ready to hook up to services.
3. Publish this inventory of sites and buildings on each regional E.D. website and update it frequently.
4. Work across county lines to make sure that the right mix of sites and buildings are available for future industry growth, and identify which counties will be most appropriate for certain types of developments.
 - ✓ Classify all large industrial, flex-industrial, and office/commercial space
 - ✓ Identify suitable locations within the seven counties for the development of certain real estate types (i.e. Carson City will be a strong location for increased office space development, while Storey and Mineral County may be good locations for large industrial developments)
5. Work with the local developer community and county governments to promote developments that will help to “fill in any gaps” that may exist in the region’s current site and building offerings.

QUALITY OF LIFE

VISION: Northern Nevada’s growth will always be tempered with the unwavering commitment to maintaining the region’s top asset – its enviable quality of life. The scenic environment and outdoor recreational opportunities will be preserved, and each of the seven counties will develop enhanced arts, culture, and entertainment amenities desired by its citizens.

Coupled with enhancing these attributes, the region must work diligently to ensure that local citizens can afford to both live and work in the community they choose.

Traditionally, the location decisions of firms have been driven primarily by factors such as land costs, labor costs, and access to materials and markets. Today, however, location decisions are often driven by the need to succeed in this knowledge-based economy where people are the key to success.

Therefore, firms are seeking locations that will attract and retain a well-educated work force, and quality of life factors are increasingly important. Communities that offer cultural and recreational amenities have competitive advantages over those that do not.

As worker shortages become more prevalent, companies are seeking locations that already have a strong base of workers, but also ones with a high quality of life that can easily **attract** new workers to the region. While Northern Nevada has a good quality of life with low commute times, recreational amenities, and a good proximity to a larger metropolitan area with even greater assets, the region must give serious consideration to its shortcomings in desirable entertainment, shopping, and downtown amenities. Few specialty entertainment options will cause Northern Nevada to lose population, become unattractive to new population, and increase discontent among those residents who have chosen to live within the community.

Quality of Life Strategy One: Support the revitalization of key downtown areas in each of the seven counties.

The potential exists for each county in the region to support one (in some cases more than one) vibrant, unique, and attractive downtown center. This will provide numerous benefits. First, it will act as a draw to encourage regional tourism, which AngelouEconomics believes has strong potential in each of the seven counties. Second, it will improve the look and feel of the community and make each county more attractive to new relocating companies and skilled workers. Finally, it will give the residents in each community an added sense of community pride and act as an anchor help to retain young residents.

- A. The effort to enhance and revitalize downtown areas is already underway in most of the counties in the region. However, some counties are a little ahead of others in their progress. This presents an excellent opportunity for cross-collaboration and sharing best practices of what works and pitfalls to avoid. For example, Carson City has recently undergone an extensive master planning initiative and

has developed beautification standards, design guidelines, and zoning ordinances to guide the future development that takes place in the city. Representatives from Carson City can hold workshops in each county to mentor those officials in how to start on their planning process for their county, what issues to be aware of, how to keep things on track, etc.

Northern Nevada is home to unique towns with an abundance of pioneer history and Western heritage. Each downtown area has the potential to highlight its one of a kind character and improve its supporting infrastructure to become model downtown destinations across the state. In meetings, AE noted that there is a strong desire to make this a reality in each of the seven counties; yet, the overall fabric of what each downtown could be has yet to be connected. Downtown revitalization strategies must focus on 1) large scale, block by block redevelopment and 2) enhancement of the streetscape character of the downtown area through lighting, signage, sidewalks, and landscaping.

Action Items:

1. Key downtowns in each of the seven counties (i.e. Carson City, Fallon, Minden, Gardnerville and Genoa, Dayton, Fernley and Yerington, Hawthorne, Lovelock, and Virginia City) should create and execute a revitalization plan that captures the unique qualities of each city/town center
 - a. Hold regular workshop meetings between planners from each of the seven counties to share best practices and learn from each other.
 - b. Present regular progress updates both within the county and across counties to create a healthy competitiveness and to ensure that all counties are staying on track
 2. Explore incentive options for downtown infill including density bonuses for mixed-use developments, public funding for parking garages, low interest loans, etc.
 3. Improve the cosmetic appearance of downtowns through the development of downtown design standards for new developments, lighting, landscaping, and signage.
 4. Explore additional downtown funding opportunities which might include:
 - a. Public/Private partnerships
 - b. Selling sidewalk bricks to residents for streetscape improvements. Sold bricks would be engraved with the residents' names
 - c. Expanded use of CDBG grant awards
 5. Work with developers to create downtown "destinations" that appeal to the entire community. This could include:
 - a. Enhanced and enlarged public squares for festivals, farmers markets, etc
 - b. Downtown coffee shop/bookstore
 - c. Downtown movie theater(s)
 - d. Downtown recreational spaces
- B. Create "Destination Retail and Entertainment" centers in downtown areas that include restaurants and shopping venues to enhance tourism and economic development opportunities. One of the chief issues mentioned in interviews and focus groups with residents in each county was the lack of adequate retail establishments, restaurants, and entertainment options. While some progress has been made in this effort recently, and interest is increasing with booming population expansion across the region, more will need to be done to build the quality of life infrastructure needed to appease current residents and appeal to new ones.

Action Items:

1. Consider developing a regional retail strategy that would allow counties to collaborate to attract national retailers, rather than competing.
 - a. Determine if further studies are needed to clarify new targets for retail, and if other “home grown” strategies should be a component as well.
 - b. Consider tax revenue sharing agreements between counties for large retail developments that serve a regional population base
 2. Aside from national retail projects, encourage home grown retail establishments in downtown areas. Provide incentives and/or fast track permitting for downtown projects that meet each county’s “vision”.
 - a. Embrace the development of pioneer/western heritage districts in appropriate downtowns, and explore other opportunities to capture each community’s uniqueness throughout the region.
 3. In downtown areas, think in terms of block development efforts rather than one singular retail development effort.
 4. Develop a marketing campaign and collateral to promote the region and available land to selected retailers and development companies. Develop high quality, specifically designed electronic or printed materials to attract new targets.
 5. Continue determining specific locations within each county’s downtown area(s) that would be excellent sites for retail and entertainment activity.
 6. Encourage live-work-play developments in appropriate downtowns that will act as a draw for working young professionals.
- C. Downtown development plans should aim to expand the diversity of Arts and Cultural offerings in the area. In almost every focus group or interview conducted in recent months, the disconnection between the variety and diversity of arts and cultural options within each community was discussed. For example, young professionals would like to see more vibrant night-life amenities and concert events, while other residents would like to have cultural amenities such as the symphony, the ballet, plays in the park, etc. More diverse offerings should be available that appeal to a variety of age groups with a variety and diverse menu of cultural options.

Action Items:

1. Each county should develop a survey to determine what types of activities might most interest the community and prepare an annual plan to offer a variety of events.
2. Suggest hosting events throughout the community that showcase the cultural aspects and influence of Native Americans, African Americans, and Hispanics. Organize festivals and events that showcase the diversity within the community.
3. Hold events that appeal to a diverse group of ages including teens, young professionals, middle-agers, and seniors.
4. Earmark a certain percentage of all capital improvement projects in each downtown for public art.
5. Work with local artists and regional art museums to develop and secure art that falls within the guidelines of the public art plan.

Quality of Life Strategy Two: Endorse the creation of a cross-county Recreational and Open Space Master Plan.

Arguably the region's most valuable quality of life feature is its open spaces. This was highlighted in the online survey as well as in numerous focus groups and interviews. However, a certain degree of tension exists across county lines stemming from the fact that there is a perception that not all counties hold the same sentiment about preserving open space.

One solution to easing the tensions between counties and ensuring that the larger region maintains its desirable recreational open spaces would be to commission a comprehensive Recreational and Open Spaces Master Plan. This effort would represent a joint effort that would be driven by each of the counties, which will help build consensus and break down misconceptions and mistrust about each county's development plans.

The study should be comprehensive including the assessment of current recreational facilities and open spaces, the feasibility of future recreational growth opportunities, projected business and residential growth plans, discussion of public consensus for the project, and the overall development of a master plan for Northern Nevada, which would be comprised of county-by-county specific plans.

As outlined by the "Characteristics of a Globally Competitive Community" in the Visioning Document (see Report 2) regarding quality of life issues, the most successful competitive communities provide an abundance of recreational and natural assets in the community. Outdoor recreation is an important factor impacting the location decisions of young professionals and can enhance the lives of all citizens. While this is a strength for Northern Nevada, it should continue to be treated with great emphasis in order to keep it as a top selling point.

Action Items:

1. NDA and regional E.D. partners should begin to build buy-in and support of this initiative from each of the seven counties.
2. Each county should jointly fund the development of the Master Plan and should be actively involved in the hiring of a consultant to guide the development of the plan.
3. Task the Parks and Recreation departments as well as the planning departments from each county to be the main overseers of the development of the plan.
 - a. Much of the development of the Master Plan will be compiled from county-specific plans
4. Engage in discussions with residents of the region concerning the various elements of the plan including parks, recreation, and the potential creation of sports complexes.
5. Develop a plan to gain consensus among businesses and residents.
6. Determine funding mechanisms that may include public/private partnerships.
7. Determine how this plan could best be implemented through phased development.
8. Establish annual cross-county audit meetings to ensure that each county is complying with the Master Plan.

Quality of Life Strategy Three: Provide diverse housing options that are affordable and attractive for existing residents and those relocating to the area.

The affordability of housing remains the biggest challenge to the region's quality of life. There is a need for more diverse housing options; specifically those that provide opportunities to young professionals or young families that are just starting out.

Action Items:

1. Form a task force with the specific goal of encouraging affordable housing options.
 - ✓ The task force should be represented by officials from each of the seven counties, regional planning and land use representatives, major employers, economic developers, and affordable housing groups such as the Builders Authority of Western Nevada (BAWN), Citizens for Affordable Homes (CAHI), and USDA.
 - ✓ Be an advocate and vocal supporter of affordable housing developments.
 - ✓ Research other similar communities to gain knowledge of best practice programs.
2. Encourage the development of a mix of housing options including high-density housing in some of the region's more urban centers (e.g. Carson City).
 - ✓ For many residents, smaller condos, town homes, or attractive apartments are more desirable than traditional single-family homes. These types of housing are also less costly.
 - ✓ Consider establishing Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts, which have been useful for incentivizing developers to build higher density housing in other regions.
3. Provide incentives to companies that create affordable housing for each job created. Many companies understand the limitation that is caused by unaffordable workforce housing and are willing to help. The Silicon Valley in California has implemented a successful program to encourage employers to take a more active role by creating subsidies to make housing more affordable.
 - ✓ Consider establishing requirements to set aside a percentage of new residential developments for affordable housing for public service workers such as teachers, nurses, and police/fire.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING

VISION: Northern Nevada's economic development efforts will occur on a regional scale with an understanding that the economic prosperity of the entire region will benefit each of the individual counties. County, city, and town governments, as well as regional economic development leaders will strive to work together under a unified approach to economic development.

To support this, the region will understand and market its overarching assets while emphasizing the unique strengths of each individual county and community.

The efforts of economic development organizations and local governments, combined with effective marketing programs, position communities for economic success. Marketing improves awareness, creates demand, and drives growth. In this time of fierce global economic competition, coordinated, regional economic development and marketing efforts are of paramount importance.

While Northern Nevada has had success in its economic development efforts, it could be far more effective by developing key messages for its targeted audiences including young professionals, targeted industries, and tourism prospects while promoting activities, events, programs, and initiatives from throughout the community.

All efforts should continue to embrace a spirit of regionalism. This includes close cooperation and an aligned vision from each of the seven counties and their respective cities and towns. It also includes a close working relationship among the region's economic development organizations. The Northern Nevada Development Authority (NNDAA), the Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada (EDAWN), and the Churchill, Mineral, and Pershing County EDAs must create a model for working together in their business retention and expansion, and business recruitment efforts.

It is critically important for this effort that a single brand that captures the essence of the Northern Nevada region be developed and that all stakeholders are utilizing the brand in their external marketing efforts. A consistent brand and message can be critically important in establishing and launching a globally competitive community.

Economic Development and Marketing Strategy One: Spearhead a regional approach to economic development, and create a model for seamless collaboration.

Successful economic development organizations throughout the country understand that existing and prospective new relocating companies do not see town or county boundaries when choosing a location. These companies, rather, see a regional business climate, regional education assets, and a regional workforce. **Therefore, it is imperative that economic development efforts be truly regional in scope.** This involves cooperative arrangements across county lines and collaboration between regional economic development organizations all with the goal of improving the larger region's attractiveness to businesses.

AngelouEconomics believes that NNDA in partnership with its regional E.D. partners (EDAWN, and Churchill, Mineral, and Pershing County EDAs) should be a catalyst in embracing a truly regional model for economic development. Efforts must focus on creating a seamless, collaborative relationship toward economic development across the seven counties. This collaborative model must also include strong integration with the economic development efforts underway in Washoe County.

NNDA, EDAWN, and the Churchill, Mineral, and Pershing County EDAs represent a strong team of allies that when working toward the same common goal will continue to have a large impact on the positive future development of Northern Nevada.

- A. One of the first and most significant steps to begin to create a seamless model for regional cooperation between the seven counties is to agree to the vision for E.D. outlined in this plan and commit to taking part in the effort to implement the strategies presented throughout this NorthernNVision planning initiative. AngelouEconomics recommends that regional stakeholders sign a collective compact agreement to implement the recommendations outlined in this Strategy.

One of the most significant steps leaders across the seven counties can do to develop an organized method to show their commitment and accountability to improving the economic health of the region is to establish an economic development compact. A compact is a public document that details the terms by which each county and various organizations involved in the agreement will be accountable for the success of this economic development effort.

Best Practice Example:

A good example of an economic development compact is one established by the Metropolitan Forum, a partnership of organizations in the St. Louis area among the East West Gateway Coordinating Council, FOCUS St. Louis, and the St. Louis Regional Chamber and Growth Association (RCGA). The three organizations came together in the belief that longstanding and complex regional issues were not being effectively addressed and that a wholly new approach was required. The region's history was filled with highly publicized, yet failed attempts to address major problems, so the Metropolitan Forum arose from the recognition that something must be different this time. Stronger, more meaningful partnerships were needed among government, business, and civic leaders. Bolder actions were needed to have real impact at a scale that mattered. A new spirit of honesty and accountability must motivate fact-based solutions to serious issues rather than public recognition, credit, or blame.

The Metropolitan Forum was formed by the signing of a memorandum of understanding by all involved parties. Although symbolic, this signing showed the community that the leaders were ready to support a regional approach to economic development. For more specific information on the St. Louis compact, please see the case study on in the Best Practices appendix at the end of this report.

Actions Items:

1. Invite all stakeholders to participate in a collective compact agreement to implement the recommendations in this NorthernNVision strategic initiative, and develop an official Memorandum of Understanding among all participants.
 - ✓ At a minimum, representatives from each of the seven counties should be a part
 - ✓ Include regional E.D. partners (NNDA, EDAWN, Churchill, Mineral, and Pershing County EDAs)
 - ✓ Include key "implementer" organizations (WNCC, K-12 Superintendents, NV Works, Chambers of Commerce and Civic organizations, Major Employers)

- ✓ The endorsement of a collective compact agreement and the signing of an official Memorandum of Understanding should take place as a public event.
- 2. Invite residents and businesses to attend.
- 3. Invite and ensure media coverage.
- 4. Develop key metrics for accountability.
- 5. Follow up quarterly to assess progress.
- 6. Conduct an annual accountability session to assess the progress made in improving economic development efforts in the region, pledge continued activities, and celebrate successes (see Annual Regional Planning Summit recommendation below)

B. In order to sustain and enhance the spirit of regionalism, an Annual Regional Planning Summit should be held that includes participation from each of the seven counties. The Summit should be hosted in a different location each year, rotating through each of the seven counties. This is a great venue to discuss top priority projects for the coming year and get buy-in across county lines. This activity will improve dialogue between counties, economic development-related organizations, and private sector businesses. This will also provide an opportunity for each county and economic development organizations to inform the public of the success of their efforts and report on what they have accomplished that is improving the economy. Below, we provide an outline for the Summit, including the program of events and the organizations that should be involved

Actions Items:

1. The Summit should be a region-wide one-day event that is open to the public.
2. The Summit should be launched with a breakfast and include remarks from a notable national speaker(s) discussing the importance of regional planning or other pertinent topics.
3. The Summit would then have breakout sessions in key regional planning areas that are also open to the public. Break-out sessions should include:
 - ✓ Regional land use planning (panelists would be land use planners from each county)
 - ✓ Parks and Recreation (representatives from each county)
 - ✓ Developers and real estate (local professionals in these industries serve on a panel)
 - ✓ Regional Transportation planning
 - ✓ Regional Water Planning
 - ✓ Economic Development (NNDA, EDawn, and Churchill, Mineral, Pershing E.D. officials)
4. The Summit should conclude with another notable speaker (preferably the Governor) and a 1-2 hour happy hour networking event.
5. Invite and ensure media coverage of the Summit.

Economic Development and Marketing Strategy Two: Expand efforts that support the expansion and retention of existing industries, and create new ones where appropriate.

The data varies, but it is widely reported that between 75-85 percent of all new jobs created are in existing industries. Northern Nevada should continue to ensure that its local businesses' needs are met through a regular dialogue.

Business Retention and Expansion efforts should be given a clear priority by the economic development organizations in the region. All efforts directed toward existing businesses should come in the form of a joint effort between NNDA, EDawn, and Churchill, Mineral, and Pershing County EDAs. EDawn has had much

success with its Business Builders program – this effort should be expanded with joint collaboration throughout the seven county area. AngelouEconomics recommends the formation of a Business Retention and Expansion team that is comprised of members of all the E.D. organizations and sets it as a goal to meet with as many existing employers as possible each year.

Action Items:

1. This Business Retention and Expansion team should meet on a monthly basis to provide updates and discuss issues.
2. Continue the strong push to enact the Business Builders program throughout the 7-County region:
 - ✓ A broader base of community volunteers should be developed in each of the seven counties to participate in Business Builders
 - ✓ The Retention and Expansion team should set a goal to meet with at least 300 companies throughout the region per year.
3. In addition to Business Builders inquiries, these meetings should focus on (1) learning more about the company and its future plans, (2) determining what the company needs from local economic developers, and (3) informing the company of what the community can offer them, from workforce development training to expansion incentives.
4. The Retention and Expansion team should also commit to a formalized process for following up with the companies that were met with that had pressing needs.
5. Retention and Expansion efforts should also be closely aware of issues connected to the state. One representative from NCED should be included on the R&E team to make sure that the state is kept abreast of issues affecting its employer base.

Economic Development and Marketing Strategy Three: Working closely with EDAWN and Churchill, Mineral, and Pershing County EDAs, create and initiate a marketing campaign to attract target industries.

As outlined in the Visioning Document (Report 2), AE has described six targeted industries for Northern Nevada that have the potential to make the highest impact. While expanding local companies, including small businesses and entrepreneurial ventures, are important, the recruitment and attraction of new target businesses to the area is equally important to economic vitality. The region should work to target both public and private companies.

For all external efforts, NNDA should collaborate closely with the efforts employed by EDAWN and Churchill, Mineral and Pershing County EDAs. Together, a common message can be conveyed to target industry companies, which will be more powerful than dual messaging strategies. As a campaign, the regional E.D. partners should determine companies within the targeted industries that best match with the unique assets that Northern Nevada offers, then develop a strategy to recruit those companies to the area. The development of a mailing and email contact list is imperative as well as collecting other materials specifically designed for each particular industry. Key messages should be developed for each industry including demographical data that best describes the region's assets.

In addition, NNDA, EDAWN and Churchill, Mineral and Pershing County EDA representatives as well as business leaders should attend selected target industry association events, specialized trade shows, symposiums, or events to personally promote the area to prospects and site selectors. They should also join and attend industry events supported by targeted decision-makers. These associations provide excellent trend data that can help the

E.D. leaders become better informed and prepared. Consider, where applicable, sponsoring events or activities at these functions to invite industry executives for a more personalized approach.

Finally, an assembled leadership team from Northern Nevada should travel to key geographies with a heavy concentration of target industry businesses that could likely relocate to the area. These trips enable local leaders to directly contact potential companies.

Action Items:

1. Identify target industry companies and contacts.
2. Design a campaign of materials, and distribute them regularly to targets.
3. Identify and attend selected target industry association events and tradeshows.
4. Conduct a target industry mission annually.
5. With assistance of the target industry team, strengthen the messages that promote Northern Nevada as a location.

Economic Development and Marketing Strategy Four: Work with regional partners to develop and adopt a regional brand for Northern Nevada.

As a critical element to an overall marketing strategy, Northern Nevada should develop a regional business brand that creatively and succinctly captures the essence of Northern Nevada, and its strategy for business development. Perhaps the most important stride the area can make to build a true spirit of regionalism would be to develop and adopt a single brand. This tells the world that Northern Nevada acts as one concise, collaborative unit.

While powerful, this is also often the most difficult effort to get consensus and buy-in. Each county, city, and town in the region feels like its identity will be lost and often this causes a pullback from adopting a regional identity. However, this does not need to be the case. **A regional brand that reflects a consistent theme is important for communicating with external audiences and portraying a single message and image.** The execution of the branding campaign should still allow flexibility for the counties, cities, and towns to maintain their individual identities. For external purposes, though, the message of Northern Nevada would be lost if every municipality and county in the region were sending out its own message and image.

This branding initiative should not just include the seven county region. Northern Nevada includes Washoe County and the Reno-Sparks Metro area, as well as Lake Tahoe. In fact, from a national perspective, Reno and Lake Tahoe are the most recognizable geographic identifiers in Northern Nevada and will have the greatest name recall for national audiences. It will take a diligent broad-based effort to develop and agree on a regional brand that still allows for unique customizations on a county-by-county basis if desired.

The branding process should just be a part of an overall marketing plan and strategy. Having firmly established target industries, it is critical that the execution of the brand and theme properly convey the goals of the region for its existing and growing business community. It is important that a marketing campaign properly reflect internal and external goals, while creating a desire by targeted businesses to (at a minimum) evaluate Northern Nevada for possible expansion/location.

Action Items:

1. Build buy-in in each of the seven counties to support conducting a branding process for the entire region.
2. Work with EDawn on branding efforts currently underway.
3. Hold branding workshops throughout the region.
4. Test market new brand names to see which might most effectively promote the region.
5. Conduct some perception surveys with businesses and potential industry targets to evaluate effectiveness.
6. Develop a brand that incorporates the region's assets, and one that several communities within the region could utilize as a portion of their own customized brands.
7. Ensure this brand promotes a consistent message and design for the entire region.
8. Develop a comprehensive marketing campaign that will support different executions of the brand that will highlight different parts of the region.

Economic Development and Marketing Strategy Five: Continue to improve the information available on the NNDA website by focusing on updating targeted information.

NNDA's website already contains some valuable information related to economic development, including the buildings and land database that allows site searches. This is valuable information, but additional information, including information on the region's new target businesses, should be added to the site once this plan is adopted. Web sites are one of the most effective communication tools available to key decision makers. The more value a website provides a visitor, the greater likelihood of success in attracting industry and site selector interest. Expanding companies and site consultants begin researching communities through web sites.

A list of attributes of informative websites includes:

- Key messages for target industries
- Make sure the news section is always updated, and organize news by target industry. Keep all information updated and current.
- Target the research you present. Have a web page dedicated to each target industry. For example, present regional assets that a company (within each industry) would be most interested in.
- Utilize PDF's to supply additional data, for instance a Target Industry Datasheet that states why the region is attractive for a particular company.
- Let users download economic and demographic figures, and use them with comparative data when appropriate to display how the region compares to others.
- Make the site interactive by including GIS mapping, surveys, and forums.
- Add local business testimonials and success stories.
- Provide active links where appropriate to other economic development-related organizations and other service providers (e.g. workforce development, WNCC, etc.) within the region.
- Allow web visitors to sign-up to receive e-newsletters.

Action Items:

1. Make sure the website is data rich and contains information targeted to specific industries.
2. Have the website evaluated for content, design, and ease of use.

-
3. Ensure that the website is focused and organized so that it is easily navigated by key decision makers.
 4. Show recent results of any activities including when a facility has been leased or sold or when new businesses have purchased land or located within regional industrial parks.
 5. Allow web visitors to sign-up to receive e-newsletters.
 6. Promote the web site URL in every marketing activity.

AngelouEconomics has identified several data sets that we believe will be good measures of economic performance. These data are easily found at state and national sources, are available at the county level, and should be considered good indicators of the overall economic health of the community and its citizens. The first step will be to apply threshold levels for each of the categories listed below. Final consensus should be reached between the President of NNDA and the Board on the ultimate levels for each of the performance metrics. Performance metric categories for each recommendation area of this plan are below:

Business Climate

- Net new firm creation
- Increase in venture capital funding or angel funding (track in conjunction with Sierra Angels and Nevada Ventures)
- Membership growth in Entrepreneur Association (track with CET assistance)
- Reduction in development permitting timelines
- Job growth in target industries
- Average wage growth
- Progress on enacting target industry specific incentives

Education and Workforce Development

- Percentage of population in the 25-44 year-old demographic
- Membership rates in the Young Professional Networking group
- Percentage of college educated workers
- Changes in SAT scores and dropout rates
- Changes in educational attainment, particularly higher education enrollment
- Use and quality of workforce development programs
- Employer satisfaction of worker skills and availability (focus specifically on target industry companies)

Quality of Life

- New retail, entertainment, and cultural establishments in downtown areas
- Number of new beautification projects completed in downtown areas
- Housing affordability, with focus on median home price and the availability of diverse housing options

Sites and Infrastructure

- Progress on the creation of a regional business Incubator
- Complete inventory of sites and facilities for target industry companies throughout the 7-County region
- Office and industrial vacancy rates

Economic Development

- Local, state and national media mentions relating to economic development
- Prospect activity (info requests or visits) in target industries
- New project announcements in target industries
- Number of companies met with by Retention and Expansion Team

Northern Nevada could have an annual “scorecard” meeting where an outside consultant reviews progress made and gives the region a score on each goal and strategies implemented or not implemented.

As part of the strategic plan for a competitive community and as outlined in Reports One and Two, Northern Nevada leaders should utilize the following best practice case studies to assist in the implementation of this strategic plan. Notable best practices employed by some of the nation's globally competitive communities are highlighted in this section.

Best Practices

Business Climate And Entrepreneurship

Best Practice: The Bank of North Dakota (BND), located in Bismarck, ND, is the only state-owned bank in the nation. Its mission, established by legislative action in 1919, is to encourage and promote agriculture, commerce, and industry in North Dakota. In this role, the Bank acts as a funding resource in partnership with other financial institutions, economic development groups and guarantee agencies.

Programs include interest rate buy-down loan program called PACE that provides financing for primary-sector businesses through a partnership between local lenders, local government, and BND.

Recently, BND expanded this program to include non-primary sector businesses. The new use of the program called FLEX PACE provides an interest buy down of up to 5% up to a maximum of \$250,000 of BND share of funding to non-PACE qualifying businesses where the Community determines eligibility and accountability standards. The program was initiated based on a recent survey of area economic developers that showed a desire to make incentive programs available for retail and service type businesses.

FLEX PACE will allow communities the ability to provide assistance to businesses that would not meet the current requirements of PACE such as: jobs retention, retail businesses, smaller tourist businesses, and essential community businesses.

Best Practice: The Santa Fe Business Incubator (SFBI) is a 501c3 non-profit corporation funded by state, local, and federal government sources as well as private foundations. Housed in a 30,000 square foot facility, the program has assisted 35 companies since its inception in 1997. Client companies of the Santa Fe Business Incubator have created over 200 job opportunities. The Santa Fe Business Incubator offers onsite business workshops and seminars, access to the skill and support of its professional staff, and experienced business advisors from the community. A business library and resource room is available, providing a wide range of reference materials, manuals, software, and office equipment.

The Incubator also has created a unique business assistance program for low-moderate income clients that provide them with subsidized rent, educational opportunities, and technical assistance. The Incubator receives CDBG funds from the City of Santa Fe for the administration of this program. In conjunction with the 30th anniversary celebration of the CDBG program, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development recently presented the Santa Fe Business Incubator with a Community Development Excellence Award for this unique program.

Best Practice: Mankato, a small city of 30,000 people located in south central Minnesota, is the center of a diverse cluster of activities related to wireless technologies. The cluster is composed of two regional

wireless service providers, Midwest Wireless and HickoryTech, several mid-sized manufacturers of electronic components for wireless and communications, and the Institute for Wireless Education, based out of Minnesota State University-Mankato and South Central Technical College, which provides basic and advanced informational training about wireless technologies to major wireless companies such as Nokia, AT&T, and Lucent.

Today, Mankato's primary sources of competitive advantage in wireless technologies rest with its base of highly skilled engineers and technicians and its educational infrastructure that has continued to produce engineers and technicians with an orientation toward wireless and communication technologies.

Both formal and informal institutions have played a role in catalyzing the development of the wireless cluster in Mankato. The most important formal institutions have been Minnesota State University-Mankato and South Central Technical College. MSU and SCTC have close connections with the local industry base and have recently worked together to eliminate overlaps and foster cooperation between complementary programs relating to wireless technologies. Also, the Wireless and Communications Technology Alliance was recently formed to provide leadership and organizational capacity to Mankato's wireless cluster.

Informal networks like the radio club have also been important in facilitating networking and social capital among individuals knowledgeable in wireless technologies. These networks are crucial to fostering growth within the cluster.

Best Practice: Business friendly regulations have been developed through a new one-stop business-licensing program at the Capital Regional District (CRD), a regional government structure, in Victoria, British Columbia. Canada has encouraged the establishment of such regional governments since 1966.

Before this initiative was implemented, each municipality in the CRD had different regulatory requirements and fees. Businesses had to obtain a separate license from each municipality in which they wished to do business—an uncoordinated and piecemeal approach that was definitely less than business-friendly.

The District of Saanich took the lead role in developing a better scheme and encouraged 10 other municipalities to join in by each adopting a common bylaw.

Today, a business can now take out one license in their "home" jurisdiction that is valid in all participating municipalities, subject to a flat fee of \$100. Interestingly, the CRD has seen an increase in number of licenses issued since the system has been in place.

Best Practice: The Pittsburgh Life Sciences Greenhouse (PLSG) is a public/private partnership, founded by the University of Pittsburgh, Carnegie Mellon University, UPMC Health System, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and its regional foundation community. Initial funding came through the leveraging of \$100 million of State tobacco settlement funds. With additional funding support of private industry, including Heinz Corporation, PLSG invests in, researches, and supports the growth of regional life sciences companies in the areas of: bioinformatics, bionanotechnology, diagnostics, medical devices, medical robotics, therapeutics, and tools and services. PLSG's various programs support all stages of industry development, from research support to fledgling start-ups to venture capital outreach for established companies.

Public sector partners include the Pittsburg Regional Alliance, Allegheny Conference on Community Development, Catalyst Connection, Innovation Works, and Johnstown Area Regional Industries. Industry partners include the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO), Medical Robotics and Information Technology for Medicine and Surgery (MERITS), Pennsylvania BIO, and the Pittsburgh Technology Council.

PLSG is currently looking to raise a \$150 million venture fund whose aim would be to create 15 new Pittsburgh-based life science companies over the next decade.

Workforce and Education

Best Practice: For years, the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce has struggled with retention of young professionals. They began a dialogue with many of them through focus groups and interviews. From these focus groups emerged the establishment of the Chamber sponsored Young Professionals Council (YPC).

The primary goal of the YPC is to “make Omaha one of the top communities in the nation where young professionals want to live and work.” The council wants to achieve this goal by creating excitement about living in Omaha. One of the best features of the YPC for young people is that it is a free organization.

Thirteen council members representing member organizations across the metropolitan area lead the YPC. The group has established committees designed to address the needs of its age demographic, including issues of economic development, diversity, research, and attraction/retention. Innovatively, the Chamber also recognizes the council chairman as a full voting member of the board of directors. Council members meet monthly, engage young professionals through monthly networking and social events, and lead committees that provide hands on opportunities to get involved. All Greater Omaha young professionals can participate in the council's activities by joining one of its committees. Most importantly, the Chamber believes that creating opportunities for young people to get involved in city affairs will inspire them to remain in the region when looking for employment.

The YPC also conducts regular surveys of young professionals throughout the region to find out what their attitude toward staying in Omaha is.

An independent, non-profit grassroots initiative called All About Omaha (AAO) joins the YPC in the effort to reinvigorate Omaha for young adults through civic, as well as community involvement, and social interaction. The mission of the AAO is “to unite a diverse group of young leaders through social networking and civic commitment.” Since 1999, AAO has recruited a couple hundred members, in-kind and corporate partnerships, as well as a visible identity in the community. In fact, the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce touted AAO as “the single leading initiative aimed at keeping young people engaged and participating in the community.”

AAO committees include community service, Omaha awareness, and public relations. Additionally, AAO works with its corporate sponsors, including Allstate, the Gallup Organization, and Niche to recruit young professionals for job openings.

Best Practice: Located outside of St. Louis, the School District of Clayton has earned Missouri's "Distinction in Performance Award" for 5 straight years. The state awarded the honor based on the District's academic performance and progress in MAP testing, ACT test scores, attendance, and other criteria. In fact, Clayton received a *perfect* score on its 2004-2005 Annual Performance Report.

School district leaders have recognized that a key component to maintaining those levels of excellence include community engagement in the school system.

In 2003, the Clayton Board of Education authorized the formation of a Citizen Task Force, a broad-based coalition of citizens to be known as LEGACY--a community initiative for continued excellence. The Board's charge to this group was to:

- Examine priorities related to the District's long-range goals.
- Examine key academic issues facing the Clayton School District.
- Evaluate resources available to the Clayton School District.
- Consider the way Clayton School District resources are allocated.
- Examine financial challenges currently being experienced by the Clayton School District.
- Develop recommendations to address future financial needs.

In total, 273 citizens of this district participated in this study and evaluation of the district, and a long-term strategic plan was developed with their input.

Best Practice: Northland School-to-Career Partnership (NSTCP) in Kansas City, Missouri, is a collaboration of the Platte County Economic Development Council (PCEDC) and three school districts in the Northland area of metropolitan Kansas City. It is one of the few school-to-career partnerships in the country led by an economic development organization. The PCEDC's leadership provides an industry-focused approach that often eludes similar education-based partnerships designed to produce well-trained workers.

The NSTCP was developed to help prepare students by expanding classroom opportunities to obtain first-hand awareness of the knowledge, skills, educational requirements, and attitudes necessary for various occupations. The primary economic development goal of NSTCP is to focus educational institutions on specific industries so that students get more specialized skills.

The NSTCP creates awareness of the program by making on-site presentations at schools and businesses, sponsoring workshops, and speaking at luncheons. The NSTCP also has developed a website to promote and explain the partnership and to provide links to the collaborating school districts as well as the National Employers Leadership Council, the National School-to-Work Learning and Information Center, and The Learning Exchange (a national center for educational consulting, training, research, and hands-on learning experiences).

Employers participate in the partnership at various levels, from speaking in the classroom to sponsoring internships for students or externships for teachers. Educators participate by more closely tying academic subjects to their relevance in the real-world businesses that students are exposed to by the program. Educators may also participate in educator externships where teachers work directly with a business, thus experiencing firsthand and making the connection between, school-based and work-based training. In addition, educators and employers work together to develop projects and work teams

that reflect today's work environment. Such projects reinforce the messages sent through other efforts and teach students to value their own skills as well as those of their peers.

Sites and Infrastructure

Best Practice: El Paso Water Utilities (EPWU) is one of the nation's most progressive water agencies. As a pioneer in water reclamation, EPWU has attained international recognition for its innovative and extensive use of recycled water. The agency now operates the most extensive and advanced reclaimed water system in Texas for industrial use and landscape irrigation. EPWU currently supplies golf courses, city parks, school grounds, apartment landscapes, and industrial uses with over four million gallons per day of reclaimed water.

One current project under construction is the NW Wastewater Reclamation Facilities Project. This multi-phase project provides over 300 million gallons of reclaimed water per year through 22 miles of pipeline to various locations in Northwest El Paso. The project value is \$23 million paid for by grants from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the Texas Water Development Board, and through City of El Paso Water and Sewer revenue bonds from EPWU.

Best Practice: Blacksburg, Virginia is known as one of the most wired cities in the U.S., even though it's a small town of only 40,000. Town leadership has recognized the potential of technology in the community and has enthusiastically partnered with Virginia Polytechnic Institute (Virginia Tech) on several initiatives – most significantly the Blacksburg Electronic Village, or BEV.

The concept for the Blacksburg Electronic Village (BEV) came about in early 1991. Virginia Tech had a sophisticated campus-wide voice/data network and was exploring ways to extend network access to faculty, staff, and students living in Blacksburg. Virginia Tech, the Town of Blacksburg, and Bell Atlantic (now Verizon) have gained national and international attention by partnering to create the world's first "electronic village." Initially, the Blacksburg Electronic Village expanded the university's electronic campus to the entire community, providing residents' access to the Internet. The next two years were spent readying the town's information infrastructure by installing digital switching equipment and a fiber network.

In 1995, local Internet entrepreneurs began offering local access, and BEV turned over its modem pool customers to the private sector, creating jobs and new economic development opportunities in the region. By late 1997, there were at least 24 new high-tech businesses in the Blacksburg area that provided a wide range of Internet, consulting, hardware, and programming services. In 1998, BEV turned over its residential Ethernet operations to the private sector, again creating new jobs and new business opportunities in the region.

Today, BEV works closely with the Town of Blacksburg, local civic groups, businesses, and individual citizens to ensure that new communications technologies are used to support the daily activities of Blacksburg.

Best Practice: The Kalamazoo Brownfield Redevelopment Initiative (BRI), begun in 1994, was one of the first EPA Brownfields Pilot Programs and one of the first among Michigan communities to complete a brownfields redevelopment plan. Representative of many subsequent brownfields initiatives stimulated by funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other state and federal agencies

in the 1990s, BRI has implemented partnerships, site inventories, community outreach efforts, developer agreements, and economic development programs targeted to existing industry.

One key element in the program's success was a state allowance to use tax increment financing (TIF). The TIF commits future property tax revenue growth from redevelopment for a limited period of time to repay eligible environmental testing and cleanup costs, once the city creates a local Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA) and a brownfields plan. In the early stages of BRI, the city sold four properties to private-sector firms and renewed interest in industrial and commercial investment in economically distressed city neighborhoods. In addition, BRI has generated a job training and employment initiative. As a result, BRI demonstrated how brownfields initiatives can initiate and support local economic development and urban revitalization.

Best Practice: In 2004, the Oregon Economic Development Association and Pacific Power launched the OregonProspector (www.oregonprospector.com), a robust web-based database of certified "project ready" sites across the state. Each site is no more than six months away from development, exceeding national standards for "project ready" status. The website organizes available sites and buildings by city, county, type of property, and size using a powerful geographic information system. Detailed community profiles and a contact list of statewide economic development professionals are also available.

Last year, Lowe's announced its decision to build a distribution center in Lebanon, Oregon on one of the sites that was proactively marketed on the OregonProspector. The site has been widely promoted in Site Selection Magazine.

Quality of Life

Best Practice: Chattanooga, Tennessee was having a difficult time recruiting teachers to the region to teach in several targeted, distressed areas. In response, the city pioneered a unique community effort to offer low interest mortgages to teachers in the area. Through a partnership of the Mayors Community Education Alliance (CEA) and the Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise, Inc. (CNE), this program offers up to \$10,000 in equity to teachers and low interest second mortgages to all teachers who teach in one of 9 low-performing schools.

The Lyndhurst Foundation and the Benwood Foundation in partnership with CNE agreed to put up a total of \$600,000 to fund the equity portion of this program for educators. Teachers in these elementary schools are provided an opportunity to purchase a home, in one of nine designated downtown neighborhoods, with a down payment of only \$3,000. The buyer is eligible to take advantage of a second mortgage at a special CNE rate of 6 percent for 30 years to cover 20 percent of the appraised value (maximum loan of \$25,000). Through the Lyndhurst and Benwood grants, those teachers buying one of these homes are enrolled in the equity program. This program essentially eliminates 10 percent of the total cost of the home (including rehabilitation expenditures) providing equity of up to \$10,000. The equity is provided by a zero interest loan totally forgivable over a five-year period.

Best Practice: The Louisville Downtown Housing Fund is an innovation housing initiative that combines public funds and private investment raised from local businesses and banks to create a pool of \$7.5 million available for low-cost loans to developers engaged in new construction or renovation of downtown housing units. The loan pool is controlled and administered by the Downtown Development Corporation, a local nonprofit membership organization composed of many of Louisville's leading

downtown businesses. Borrowers pay zero interest on the city-funded portion of the loan and a below-market interest rate on the private loan. Developers may also combine the loans from the Downtown Housing Fund with state and federal tax credits to finance a project.

The fund's resources helped create four new downtown housing venues in Louisville, ranging in size from a three-unit renovation of an old fire station to the construction of Waterfront Park Place, a \$42 million, 23-story residential tower with 78 condominiums and 44 apartments. The projects also demonstrated to lenders in Louisville that there is strong interest in market-rate housing downtown. In turn that business confidence is creating momentum around a number of other projects to give buyers new housing options. With more people, especially middle-class families moving back, these new developments have also been instrumental in attracting new businesses to downtown Louisville and convincing existing businesses to stay.

Best Practice: Once the retail center of the area, Greenville, SC's downtown began to languish in the 1960s. As shopping centers lured the major retailers to the suburbs, downtown was left with countless vacant buildings and no people. Greenville faced what other cities faced, a dying downtown in the midst of a growing region. To meet the challenge, Greenville embarked on "downtown redevelopment," remaking Main Street and creating an atmosphere conducive to office, residential, specialty retail, entertainment, and the arts.

During the 1970s, a streetscape plan for Main Street was developed. This plan narrowed the street's four lanes to two and installed free, angled parking, trees, and decorative light fixtures, as well as created parks and plazas throughout downtown.

During the 1980s, Greenville recognized the need for the public sector to step forward to provide the impetus for private investment. The Greenville Commons/ Hyatt Regency project created the City's first luxury convention hotel located directly on Main Street. Funded through a unique public/private partnership, it became a visible manifestation of Greenville's faith in the future of downtown. Greenville also understood that a master plan was necessary for the downtown's revitalization success and developed the Downtown Master Plan. The new vision stated that "by the year 2000, Greenville will have a thriving downtown which is recognized nationally as an example of a 'state-of-the-art' community in which to live, work, and play, and which serves in itself as a national attraction." With the public investment and plan in place, many Main Street buildings began to be renovated and major new office buildings constructed.

During the 1990s, a languishing industrial area was redeveloped into the Peace Center for the Performing Arts, a performing arts complex that incorporated historically significant buildings with new architecture and landscaping. The West End Market, a mixed-use project of shops, restaurants and offices, was developed to stabilize a stagnant historic district. The Bi-Lo Center, a 17,000 seat arena, brought a full-scale sports and entertainment venue to the heart of the City. In addition, downtown began a residential renaissance, filling vacant upper stories along Main Street.

Today, Greenville is focused on its neglected riverfront. The city has recently embarked on an ambitious \$70 million plan for a world-class public garden with a one-of-a-kind pedestrian bridge over a waterfall. They have noted that the key to a successful downtown revitalization is the encouragement of public/private partnerships.

Best Practice: Located at the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Charlottesville, Virginia has been exemplary in promoting its wide variety of natural, outdoor assets, as well as developing new recreational amenities.

The city's recreational awards include:

- #1 Best Tennis Town, Tennis Magazine
- #1 Best Retirement City for Golfers, Golf Magazine
- #2 Healthiest Place to Live, Kiplinger's
- #3 Healthiest Small City, Men's Journal
- #7 Best Places, Outdoor Magazine

Charlottesville and surrounding Albemarle County have taken advantage of a small, historic river that runs through the region - the Rivanna River. Through the direction of the non-profit Rivanna Trails Foundation, an 18-mile urban trail system has been developed that has been called possibly "the best urban trail system in the South." Along the trail, bikers, hikers, and joggers will find historic sites, nature and environmental centers, footbridges, and exercise stations. In addition, the trail connects the community's three largest urban parks and golf courses.

Best Practice: In the 1950s, 90 percent of the Washington, D.C.-area retail was in the downtown area. Today, that figure is only about 6 percent, with most of the retailers locating in the affluent suburbs. In order to attract retailers to downtown, the Downtown D.C. Business Improvement District (BID) set up a \$30 million Tax Increment Financing District with the city and the eight largest building owners with vacant retail space. It is authorized to spur up to 250,000 square feet of retail development.

The Washington TIF issues bonds, which are repaid through the new or incremental sales tax revenue. The bond money is given to developers upfront to make it affordable to build retail projects in the existing office buildings.

Earlier this year, the BID closed its first deal with H&M, a specialty-clothing store, loaning \$3 million for a 27,000 square foot store.

Best Practice: In 2004, AngelouEconomics prepared an economic development strategy for Santa Fe that contained specific recommendations to improve the region's economic health. The primary recommendation was that Santa Fe "will be the leading Arts, Design, and Cultural Industry Center of the U.S."

One initiative that was prompted by this report was the Santa Fe Arts and Culture web portal, www.santafeculture.org. The portal was formally launched on October 26, 2005 as a collaborative project between New Mexico Culture Net, Netman, and the City of Santa Fe Economic Development Division. Santa Fe needed a centralized source for Arts and Cultural information that contains a master calendar of events and information on educational and training opportunities in this industry along with information on jobs, studio space, and other information important to strengthening and expanding the Arts and Culture industry.

The web portal includes:

- The most extensive calendar of cultural and arts events in New Mexico with links to *Tickets Santa Fe at the Lensic* to purchase tickets for performances
- Santa Fe Trip Planner plans trips to the City: go rafting, take a photography class, or tour an art museum – activities can be tailored to any visitor's interests
- Online Magazine: Read about the rich and diverse cultural life of Santa Fe – unique collection of cultural content provided by local authors and publishers
- Culture Map: Use the map to find a restaurant, performance hall, bookstore, or hotel
- Arts Directory: View the work of local artists and find out when studios are open to the public. Connect with arts organizations, agencies, galleries, and businesses.
- Online Marketplace: Purchase locally made arts and crafts using secure online shopping cart
- Classifieds: Free listing of jobs, services, housing, studio space, and items for sale, trade, or donation
- Local Resources: Access cultural, educational, community, and recreational resources including information about affordable housing

Best Practice: In the late '70s and early '80s, Chattanooga's downtown quickly became blighted as businesses vacated the area in order to relocate to larger and more prosperous cities in the state. As a result, the Chattanooga economy suffered, and unemployment rates soared.

Concerned civic leaders began conducting public meetings that involved 1,700 residents to listen to people's fears and ideas for improvement. Chattanooga's civic entrepreneurs invited in consultants from far and wide - anyone they thought might have innovative ideas on how to restore Chattanooga's downtown. Festivals and events were held to restore confidence in the downtown.

The Vision 2000 plan that emerged from the community process has been hailed as a model of successful revitalization and re-instillation of community pride. In fact, that pride has been called the catalyst for success. A recent article in the Realty Times noted, "the resounding pride of Chattanooga's residents was strong enough to turn a smog-ridden, abandoned city into an economically thriving one."

Economic Development and Marketing

Best Practice: The Metropolitan Forum is a partnership among the East West Gateway Coordinating Council, FOCUS St. Louis, and the St. Louis Regional Chamber and Growth Association (RCGA). The three organizations came together in the belief that longstanding and complex regional issues are not now being effectively addressed and that a wholly new approach is required.

The foundation for the collaboration was set following the annual RCGA Leadership Exchange trip to Toronto in the fall of 2000. Each year, the regional chamber sponsors a three-day leadership trip of 125 elected, business, and civic leaders to another community. Some 50 of these community leaders who participated in the Toronto leadership trip sought to build on the energy and enthusiasm cultivated during the leadership exchange and, along with the RCGA and FOCUS St. Louis, initiated the Regional Governance Policy Group. The Regional Governance Policy met over eight months concluding with the adoption of 15 recommendations spanning tax policy and government structure, transportation, and healthcare.

What followed was a yearlong candid discussion among the staff directors of three regional organizations, FOCUS St. Louis, East West Gateway Coordinating Council and the Regional Chamber

and Growth Association, about the efficacy of the recommendations and how to act on them. These meetings helped to build trust, establish a common language for collaboration, and, ultimately, to plan for a leadership retreat of the organization's board members. In late January 2003, some 36 board members of the three organizations convened for a two-day retreat to discuss regional issues, to challenge each other, and to determine whether the three-organization collaboration might work. Participation was at the highest level, the discussion was extraordinarily honest, sometimes passionate, and occasionally heated, but it was never divisive. The participants ultimately came to the conclusion that a new approach to regional problem solving was indeed needed, and they agreed to take responsibility for figuring out how to do so as a three party collaboration.

Since its formation, the Forum has prepared a coordinated and regional public spending and investment strategy for the St. Louis metropolitan area called "More for the Money", dialogue has improved throughout the region, and the Forum is used as a model for regional cooperation across the country. The region was recently ranked 4th in the country by a ranking of the most "hot growth companies" by Business Week Magazine.

Best Practice: The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) leads the state's accomplished business retention program. It began approximately 10 years ago out of the realization that existing industries create a majority of new jobs and are extremely important to the economic base of a state. Michigan has account managers across the state, and they are required to visit companies at least once a year. Between 4,000 and 5,000 companies, on average, are visited. According to Susan Novakoski, MEDC's Media Relations Manager, "one of the most successful portions of the program is that account managers uncover issues that could affect corporate operations, and it allows them to be proactive regarding any concerns the company may have." As a result, the MEDC has a pulse on the existing industry rather than being surprised if there are major concerns.

The MEDC is also focused on engaging the existing corporate leadership in the state. One way they are accomplishing this task is by governing itself through a private sector board. The board is comprised of local business people, economic developers, and educators. As a result, the board is increasingly focused on programs and initiatives that are concerned more with local and state business incentives, than out-of-state.

The Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council recently named Michigan the "#5 Small Business-Friendly State".

Best Practice: After the aftermath of the Murrah Federal Building bombing, the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce embraced the opportunity to change perceptions about the region and embarked on a massive marketing and branding campaign. The Chamber embraced the city's heritage by marketing and branding the city as a land of opportunity and created the tagline "**Oklahoma City: Capital of the New Century.**" This tagline embraces several facets of Oklahoma's presence as a "Capital" - that it is a Western Capital, Technology Capital, Medical Capital, Multicultural Capital, and Jazz Capital.

This brand creates an inclusive, well-rounded image of a city that excels both in economic and quality of life factors.

Best Practice: The St. Louis Regional Chamber and Growth Association (RCGA) is the chamber of commerce and economic development organization for the bi-state St. Louis region. The RCGA also drove the formation of the Metropolitan Forum, highlighted earlier in this section.

It was formed from the merger of three separate organizations: the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan St. Louis, the St. Louis Regional Industrial Development Corporation, and the St. Louis Research Council. All of its programs have a regional, bi-state focus.

The RCGA has also focused on an “inside-out” approach that uses the region’s businesses and residents as the primary ambassadors for economic development. In fact, marketing materials focus on success stories from small businesses in the region.