

## **Tehama County Jobs Development Committee sets 2017 priorities**

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Red Bluff >> The newly established Tehama County Jobs Development Standing Committee spent its first meeting Thursday night learning what has been done regarding economic development in 2016 and setting goals for the year ahead.

Top priorities included staff working on an economic development strategy plan, figuring out what a business retention plan might look like and creating quarterly newsletters to keep residents and prospective businesses apprised of what is going on in Tehama County economic development. Direction also included looking into attending trade shows to learn what others are doing and at which to eventually market Tehama County.

In the report on 2016 was a recurring theme that economic development takes time, sometimes 10-20 years before substantial impacts are seen, said Tehama County Jobs Development Coordinator Caylyn Wright.

Tehama County is consulting with Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) looking into federal funding opportunities for infrastructure, particularly in the South Avenue area of Corning, an area in the northern half of the county and near the Walmart Distribution Center.

“Infrastructure development is the most fundamental part of economic development,” Wright said.

Supervisor Burt Bundy said, while infrastructure is a key to development, more important is planning when it comes to zoning. The staff was directed to work on the need to craft new definitions under the categories of commercial and industrial.

Several properties were mentioned. The economic development team has begun looking at one on Diamond Avenue, another by Jellys Ferry and a third around the Distribution Center. Nine-Mile Hill in the northern end of the county and properties near Gyle Road were also mentioned.

Attendees received a memo regarding whether or not an enhanced infrastructure financing district would be a good model. While it is feasible it is not necessarily the “be all end all miracle to solve problems,” Wright said.

Wright emphasized the need not only to develop an economic strategy, but business retention using the example of Minneapolis, which has a number of fortune 500 companies that are homegrown businesses.

“We need to take care of what we have and have good infrastructure and shovel ready projects,” Wright said.

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Tehama County Chief Administrator Bill Goodwin gave an update on a proposal to connect the railroad to Humboldt County, which would help with the shipping of Tehama County agricultural projects by getting them to the coast and then overseas much faster, he said.

“Trinity County had received a CalTrans Strategic Partnership grant to complete the Upstate California Railconnect Feasibility Study,” Goodwin said. “The study will investigate the physical and environmental feasibility of constructing a rail line from the Port of Humboldt to the existing north-south railway corridor in Tehama County.”

Included in the study will be the costs associated with constructing up to three alternative alignments, but there will not be a market analysis included at this time. The total budget of \$345,000 for the study includes \$126,000 in State funds and \$160,000 in Federal funds, Goodwin said. The Request for Qualifications for a study consultant should be released by the spring and the selected consultant will begin to prepare the study by late 2017. The anticipated completion date for the study is the summer of 2019.

The group voted to meet on an as-needed basis.

For more information, visit [www.tehama4business.org](http://www.tehama4business.org).

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