

## Summit Focuses On Need For More Housing

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Tuolumne, CA — Around 100 took part in a Tuolumne County Housing Summit held Monday at the Black Oak Casino Resort.

It was spearheaded by the Tuolumne County Economic Development Authority and sponsored by the Tuolumne County Business Council, Tuolumne County Association of Realtors, Rural County Representatives Of California, PG&E and the Central Sierra Economic Development District.

Speakers included Kim Dolbow Vann, the State Director of USDA Rural Development in California, Otto Catrina, State Director of the California Association of Realtors, Peter Turnbull, Manager of the Commercial Buildings and Zero Net Energy Program at PG&E and Craig Ferguson, Vice President of the Rural County Representatives of California. Tuolumne County Supervisor Randy Hanvelt and Tuolumne County Economic Development Authority Director Larry Cope helped moderate the event.

During the morning session, Catrina spoke about the state of housing in California. He noted that it can cost between \$125,000 to \$200,000 in places like the Bay Area to simply acquire all the fees and permits needed to begin construction on a dwelling. He stated that the California legislature currently feels rent control is the solution, but he argued that more supply is the real need. He also noted there has been little to no movement recently on efforts to reform the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). He stated that CEQA “doesn’t need to be blown up, but modernized.”

Supervisor Hanvelt encouraged those in attendance to get involved and let their voice be heard on the issue.

It was also noted locally that during the first quarter of 2018 the average sales price for homes in Tuolumne County was \$344,000, compared to \$319,000 during the same period a year ago. It is much higher in other areas of the state, as the median price for California is \$544,000.

Speaking about the event as a whole, Cope stated afterwards, “What we’re hoping is that some of the individuals that were there heard about things like financing mechanisms or zero net energy opportunities that that they had not known about. We’re hoping that they can apply those for their projects, and we can have more housing for our residents.

The event ran from 11am-2pm. On hand were numerous locally elected officials, business leaders and realtors.

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