

Summary of Final Report

Organization Name: City of Rio Dell

Project Title: City of Rio Dell Economic Development Strategic Plan

Amount of Grant Award: \$30,000

Date of Final Report: 5/07/09

1. What were the project goals and were they achieved?

The project goal was to prepare, for the first time, a comprehensive strategy for the City of Rio Dell's economic development. The effort started with defining a vision for the City:

A "River Village" with a wildwood heritage and a prosperous future that has a vibrant Town Center for residents and visitors, clean and safe neighborhoods, accessible Eel River frontage, and an economy that generates good jobs and business opportunities with linkages to other communities.

Economic goals and strategies were then developed to complement that vision, and covered a range of topics including a diversified economy, with vibrant and productive goods and services sectors, generation of sufficient municipal revenues to deliver quality services, and renewable energy. City staff, contract planners and the City Council all collaborated and were able to get consensus on the strategies the City must pursue for a healthy economy.

2. What were the activities undertaken and accomplishments through the completion of this grant?

Completed a comprehensive economic development strategy which included:

- Baseline Economic Development Profile
- Economic Development Resources
- Economic Development Assets
- Interviews with Stakeholders and Public Meetings
- Economic Development Strategy with goals, and implementation measures

3. What are the lasting benefits of the project?

The greatest benefit is that the City has an accurate assessment of its resources and a plan to capitalize on those resources for the benefit of the community. The strategic analysis quantifies demographics, income distribution, revenue sources and other economic indicators in a concise and illustrated format. The data collected for and incorporated into the economic development plan is being used to attract new business and to grow businesses already in the City. For the first time the City can offer a well documented community profile for those considering investing there, either in land, business or as a place to live. The City will be using the strategies to focus on the types of economic activity to attract and cultivate.

The economic planning included development of a spatial land use database of vacant and underutilized commercial properties. This inventory is being used to show prospective developers and business owners where they might locate in the City. This database will be managed and is already proving to be a lasting benefit of the economic plan.

4. How will you continue work started by this project?

The City is pursuing several activities to continue the work initiated in the Economic Development Strategic Plan. The City will be updating its long range (General) plan to project growth over the next 20 years. The City is also completing the annexation of the Eel River Sawmill site, which will significantly increase its supply of industrial and commercial land. In addition, the City is pursuing a local food collaborative. Also funded by Headwaters, this collaborative will increase employment opportunities and support the agricultural industry in the Eel River Valley and other agricultural areas of Humboldt County.