



The *Business Alliance...Update* is a bi-monthly publication of the El Dorado Business Alliance (BA). The BA is made up of the following organizations: El Dorado Builders' Exchange, El Dorado County Association of Realtors (EDCAR), El Dorado County Chamber of Commerce, North State Building Industry Association (NSBIA) and Shingle Springs-Cameron Park Chamber of Commerce. Web Address for Subscription Info: [KathyeRussell@gmail.com](mailto:KathyeRussell@gmail.com)

## *“Developing Mutual Support on Community-Wide Issues”*

### COMMUNITY-BASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In the recent (3-15-14) *Business Alliance...Update* newsletter we published a short review of land use issues that were undergoing review and analysis via Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Land Use Policy Programmatic Update (LUPPU) process. The EIR has now been released and will ultimately require Supervisory decisions as to which issues and/or concepts are appropriate to adopt after consideration of the analysis provided and more public input. **It is very important that the public understand how much work has gone forward on the LUPPU process since it began a few years ago.**

The primary purpose of engaging in LUPPU was to implement the existing General Plan (GP) and develop a new Zoning Ordinance (ZO) that is consistent with the GP as required by law. Volunteers who worked with numerous Regulatory Reform Working Groups (hundreds of local community volunteers who participated) had come to the same conclusion: Individuals in several El Dorado County (EDC) departments were randomly applying their own interpretations of the General Plan policies inconsistently and without seeking Board of Supervisors' (BOS) input: Many policies and programs were simply being ignored and the process was mired in the mud of ineffective linear planning.

Since LUPPU began many long-time employees in numerous departments have retired or moved on and the county has refined its Planning Department by creating a new one called *Long Range Planning*. The BA concurred that a Long Range Planning Dept. was a good move, since *planning* land use is very different from enforcing adopted policies and applying simple checklists of things to be done on a proposed project. New Long Range Planning Dept. staff was hired and LUPPU is now moving into its final phase of decision-making.

The simple LUPPU goal was to bring the community together to support the existing GP that was passed by voters and put into place in 2004. It was assumed that **if** the community could not complete this simple effort that local regulations would continue to be dysfunctional and stifling to economic development efforts. Thus the changes recommended by Reg Reform via LUPPU included the caveat that fundamental GP Land Use designations would NOT be changed in the LUPPU process, staying true to the GP vision that voters had adopted. (**Note: This action ultimately spawned LUPPU opposition by those opposing the 1.03% historical growth rate. Many are pushing for new land use designations – a new General Plan - as many of the activists live along Highway 50 or in El Dorado Hills, Cameron Park and Shingle Springs, where growth is directed in attempts to maintain agricultural and rural lands elsewhere in EDC.**)

Although it's been frustrating to have numerous people who did not participate in the positive LUPPU process overall attacking it, here's the good news: Many, many great people did step in and help create the LUPPU process. They tend to be longtime local volunteers that saw the benefits of working together on LUPPU in two specific areas: (1) Keeping the majority of growth within the Community Regions (CRs) along Highway 50 where infrastructure already exists; and (2) Exploring ways to bring more jobs and economic development into local communities with infrastructure to: a) retain agricultural and recreational rural lands elsewhere; and b) assist the community as a whole in **stopping the loss of \$800 million** in annual revenues based on locals shopping in other areas such as Folsom and Roseville. In effect, EDC would automatically increase local tax dollars (revenues) for local businesses, local infrastructure maintenance and amenities such as libraries, schools and safety improvements/police.

With a big THANK YOU to those selfless volunteers who are assisting in this part of the LUPPU process, below is a current synopsis about local *Community Economic Development* efforts, including the new countywide “web portal” effort.

### COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAM MOVING FORWARD

In 2011 the BOS was considering ways to improve the local regulatory environment. They'd already established EDAC, the Economic Development Advisory Committee, in compliance with GP mandates. It was about this time that many community volunteers jumped in and EDAC was soon reconstituted as CEDAC – the Community and Economic Development Advisory Committee. The BOS drew on the extensive volunteer base pulled together by Reg Reformers and “officially” gave those volunteers the respect they'd earned. The vast majority of these folks had no personal agenda being pushed; they weren't seeking a handout but were anxious to gain communitywide support for programs they'd begun. Volunteers from all areas of the county attended meetings from El Dorado Hills' Historical

Society's Betty January, to the organizers of Apple Hill; From Ron Wolfsfeld of the Georgetown Divide area to lone visionary Davey "Doc" Wiser who runs free stagecoach rides in Placerville and locomotive train rides in Shingle Springs/El Dorado. All were full of enthusiasm and optimism that was contagious. At one meeting these volunteers were asked what their "wish list" included, and it was almost heartbreaking that Doc Wiser even had to ask for help to finance a new wheel for his stagecoach. Betty January, though active in many events and programs in El Dorado Hills, wished for a building to house a *countywide* museum (many local families are descendants of our historical gold-rush era). Bottom line is that the requests were selfless: Volunteers sought help to finance projects that would benefit the entire community. Thus the need to seek government and private grants was born.

Another idea born of this time was the need for an all-inclusive, one-point-of-reference, communitywide online "Web Portal" to direct visitors and residents to any area of interest locally, a much-needed resource. There were existing independent on-line links and web pages, just as there were some departments and organizations independently seeking grants, but it was support for a "full community web portal" benefit that has held this group together and brought it full circle.

CEDAC remains active today and includes efforts by the original land-use policy wonks via Community Identification and Community Design efforts. Not only does CEDAC spearhead the Web Portal and Community Grant efforts, but Community Regions also have an opportunity to set community standards for development projects that are proposed. Shingle Springs has always had a railroad influence while Coloma is the perfect area to capitalize visually on the discovery of gold. It is incumbent on each area to come together with Long Range Planning staff to develop the attributes desired of projects, such as retaining historic facades for each area. There are grants available to help fund the process of local community planning as required. (Ref: GP Policy 2.4.1.2 on page 37).

### **FIRST YEAR GRANT PROGRAM A SUCCESS**

EDAC (now CEDAC) originally envisioned ways of utilizing grants in promoting this area by a variety of recommendations.

**Seed grants** were recommended to seek and support grants that increase the EDC Economic Development bucket, but don't increase the General Fund. EDC would pay the matching funds or seed money required for grants that benefit *the whole community*.

Utilizing a contracted **external grant writing firm** was another recommendation of CEDAC. The \$100,000 projected annual cost would be recovered by successful grant funding awards received. The County is now under contract with a grant search/writing firm to help locate and apply for grants the County may be uniquely qualified to win.

Funding **for specific purposes** that benefits the entire community was recommended and is moving forward. The first consideration embraced by the community and the BOS in this category is for an area-wide **Web Portal**. Meetings are currently underway to implement the new portal. Funding specific purposes such as the community-wide Web Portal was specifically included and is moving forward (a detailed update will be included in the next issue of this newsletter).

**"Tom Sawyer" grants** (now identified as **Cultural and Community Development Grants**) are intended to fund local groups to encourage, promote and reward volunteerism, which resonated with the BOS. The grants require matched sweat equity and/or in-kind contributions and are funded based on their effective support for the local economic community good. This was the first fiscal year (2013/14) that grants were made available locally.

Fast forward to the October 8, 2013 BOS meeting where staff sought approval to fund a variety of Cultural and Community Grants for fiscal year 2013-14. The item was approved and included an interesting mix of recipients from El Dorado Hills to South Lake Tahoe and all communities in between. Twenty-six applications were received by the County with 20 approved for a total of \$80,000 funded. The BOS approved the following (selected examples):

The lowest grant approved was \$500 to the El Dorado Hills Genealogical Society for library reference material; and \$1075 for a Clean Tahoe project. There were numerous grants funded at the maximum \$5,000, including: Cameron Park CSD for Chamber of Commerce/Visitors Center web tool benefitting Cameron Park and Shingle Springs; Clarksville Historical Society for a new wrought iron fence and ornamental entry gate; Divide Chamber of Commerce for a Coloma/Lotus welcome signs (\$3730); and another \$5000 to the Divide for North County Community Phase One of sign project. Perhaps the most visible project funded was the Ice Rink that was temporarily constructed at the Fairgrounds in Placerville during the Christmas holidays.

All told the local Grant Program is a unique and successful program that LUPPU volunteers can be very proud of. Matching sweat equity with volunteer's enthusiasm and creative ingenuity is a win-win for everyone and is proof that EDC can work together with volunteers and local government, and can solve many problems when we all think of the community and not just of our own desires.