

Mendocino and Sonoma Counties Call for Input on First Joint Five-Year Economic Development Plan

Launch Community Survey and New Website Today

Santa Rosa, CA and Ukiah, CA – March 23, 2016 – The Sonoma-Mendocino Economic Development District (EDD), created through a joint powers agreement between Sonoma County and Mendocino County in January 2015, today launched a new website (www.sonomamendocinoceds.com) and community survey to mark the public engagement phase of a joint effort for promoting regional economic development. The effort culminates in the publication of a five-year plan called a comprehensive economic development strategy, or CEDS, expected this fall. The Sonoma-Mendocino EDD invites all community members to share their views on the region's economy by taking the short [online survey](#).

“We really want to hear from members of our communities – that includes businesses and residents – and consider their input essential for this strategy to accomplish the goals it sets,” said John Kuhry, a member of the Sonoma-Mendocino EDD Board. “Their input not only tells us what economic opportunities and challenges we share, or what reinforcing and offsetting strengths and weaknesses we may have, it also helps us devote scarce resources to the issues that matter most to the people who call this region home.”

Survey results, along with input gathered from interviews and public forums planned for late spring, will shape the CEDS. When the public engagement phase concludes, the Sonoma-Mendocino EDD will oversee development of a draft plan they will then submit for public comment in late summer. Following publication of the final CEDS, the Sonoma-Mendocino EDD intends to apply for designation and funding under the partnership planning program of the U.S. Economic Development Administration.

“Leaders in both of our counties recognize an important opportunity to coordinate and pool resources in areas where we can do more for our region's growth and development working together,” said Pam Chanter, member of the Sonoma-Mendocino EDD Board. “By developing a joint CEDS, we can solve problems that demand resources and cooperation from both counties and address common economic challenges and opportunities.”

Throughout the CEDS development process, community members can visit www.sonomamendocinoceds.com to follow its progress. There, they can read about key developments, events and opportunities for input or explore the region's economy through an interactive map. They can also find related documents, reports and presentations or directly contact the Sonoma-Mendocino EDD with questions or comments.

The Sonoma-Mendocino EDD Board of Directors, comprised by business and civic leaders from both counties, will guide the process and approve the final CEDS. Board members include:

- Robin Bartholow, North Coast Builders Exchange (Sonoma)
- Pam Chanter, VANTREO Insurance Brokerage (Sonoma)
- Steve Herron, Exchange Bank (Sonoma)
- John Kuhry, Economic Development & Financing Corporation (Mendocino)
- Mike Nicholls, North Bay North Coast Broadband Consortium (Sonoma)
- Robert Pinoli, Skunk Train (Mendocino)
- Trish Steel, Broadband Alliance of Mendocino County (Mendocino)
- Joe Webb, Foursight Wines (Mendocino)

The Board has hired Civic Analytics LLC, an economic research and consulting firm, to prepare the CEDS under its direction.

Any questions about the Sonoma-Mendocino Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy can be directed to Steve Dunicliff in Mendocino County (dunnicl@s.co.mendocino.ca.us) or Steve Sharpe in Sonoma County (Steve.Sharpe@sonoma-county.org).

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