



ECONOMIC RESOURCE COUNCIL ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

Contract # 15-271

Reporting Period/Annual Report: July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017

Prepared By: Jon Gregory, ERC Executive Director

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Economic Development and Tourism Marketing

The Nevada County Economic Resource Council (ERC) would like to thank the County of Nevada for the opportunity to provide contract economic development and, tourism marketing services, in support of fostering a vibrant local economy. With a very small staff, we greatly appreciate the tremendous amount of expertise and energy we receive from our Board of Directors, members and sponsors, and volunteers who play a critical role in driving these efforts forward.

For realistic context about the ERC's approach to achieve a desired economic outcome, while tens of thousands of economic transactions and circumstances occur naturally every day in a local economy – some good, some bad – the time horizon to plan, implement and realize positive outcomes from an orchestrated strategic intervention of resources, i.e., economic development, requires a longer-term perspective. The ERC has identified three specific market opportunities through which our economic development efforts are being applied (1-locally-based, small innovative companies with differentiated products and services that have meaningful growth potential; 2-the tech sector, among that including digital media and virtual reality, along with solopreneurs and free-lancers; and 3-individuals, families, retirees and small businesses in the Bay Area seeking an in-California alternative either to visit or relocate to). While we need to maintain a sustained sense of urgency, it's equally important to be patient to give the efforts the necessary time to generate the traction necessary to achieve desired economic outcomes. America's most thriving industry clusters typically took decades to mature into jobs and income generating engines in their communities. That said, we are excited to be working with multiple local companies who are growing and creating good jobs in Nevada County right now.

In addition to the narrative report below, there are a number of supporting documents, attached as supplemental information to provide a full picture of the depth of activity undertaken during the contract period.

3-Year Strategic Plan Power Point Presentation	2017 Labor Law E-Blast
Acme Robotics E-Blast	Alexander Rossi Kudos E-Blast
Applied Science, Inc., Job Opening E-Blast	Building Fair E-Blast
Business 2 Business Resource Guide -Western Nevada County Business Connections	California Competes E-Blast
Connected Communities Academy Classes E-Blast	CCA NC Tech Connection Workshops E-Blast
Citizens Academy E-Blast	Disaster News E-Blast

Economic Summit Dr. Christopher Thornberg's Power Point Presentation	Fab 5 Featuring BrewBilt and Applied Science, Inc., E-Blast
Gyro Stabilized Systems Bookkeeper Position E-Blast	Happy Holidays and VRX Tradeshow E-Blast
Housing Inventory Data	Internet of Things E-Blast
It's Who You Know E-Blast	Junior Achievement E-Blast
Luncheon with CoreSol E-Blast	Meet Your Match Job Fair E-Blast
Royal Welcome Business Attraction Power Point Presentation	Search and Rescue E-Blast
San Francisco Destination Nevada County Insert	Sierra Business Council Job Opening E-Blast
Sierra Small Business Development – 2016 Year End Results	Simply Country Store Help Needed E-Blast
STEAM Expo E-Blast	Summit Thank You and Live Streaming E-Blast
Techtonic Tuesday E-Blast	Telestream Kudos E-Blast
T.O.T.A.L Package Post Card	Truckee Roundhouse Open House E-Blast
Various Letters of Support	Various Union Articles

The ERC's work during the contract period for fiscal year 2016/17 was very productive with a number of key activities and accomplishments, coupled with a wide array of support and assistance to growth-oriented companies located in Nevada County. Assisted local companies, such as:

Applied Science, Inc.	Traitware
Gyro Stabilized Systems	CoreSol
Haptical	BrewBilt
XP Camper	Simply Country
Autometrix, Inc.	Eric Little, Law Practice
Erik Christensen, Christensen Law Office & Synergy Systems, Inc.	Augmnt, Inc.

The highlights include:

- Continued work on the ERC's key existing initiatives, including the Marketing Task Force, Royal Welcome Task Force, Special Event Task Force and the Fab 5. In addition, the ERC launched new collaborative initiatives including the Housing Inventory and Readiness project, and the new Connected Communities Academy, NC Tech Connection and the new Incentives Task Force. Finally, the ERC integrated a number of Virtual Reality activities during the contract period, building off the targeted industry recommendations completed by various project consultants who were hired the previous year for the 2015-16 EDA grant. More information relative to these efforts is provided in subsequent sections of this report.
- Launched a proactive, industry-based marketing effort focused on the exploding Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality (VR/AR) sectors, including participation at the VRX Conference in San Francisco and the annual CES Tradeshow in Las Vegas. The ERC (representing Nevada County interests) was the only economic development exhibitor at the VRX conference in December. Numerous key industry thought leaders and partner contacts emerged as a result of participation at these tradeshows. For example, we've added over 200 executive level LinkedIn contacts from companies like Google, Intel, Smithsonian Channel, HTC, Magic Leap and many others.

A number of key VR/AR executives have agreed to be guest faculty at various events & activities

at the Green Screen Institute facility during the Summer/Fall of 2017 including those from the likes of:

Marxent	Nokia Technologies
Stanford University	Intel Capital
Unity	Amgen
Jaunt VR	Keiretsu Forum

- Talent Connection Efforts

The Talent Connection initiative represents a critical component of the ERC's efforts. A new mission of the ERC's Talent Connection Task Force was adopted *Building a competitive, expanding & sustainable tech talent pipeline in Nevada County*. (Technology Talent includes: broadcast/video technology, virtual reality, healthcare, agriculture, technology service providers, and art organizations). Individuals who have participated on the Task Force include Stephanie Ortiz, Jamie Lefebvre, Barbara Bitner, Bob Hudelson, Chris Robert, Dee Rein, Diana Cobbe, Holly Hermansen, Jon Gregory, Jonathan Palmer, Kristine Farrell, Laura Pappani, Lisa Sewell, Louise Bennicoff Johnson, Lynn Strukrud, Manjit Asrani, Mary Owens, Michael Freedman, Michael Hughes, Remington Maxwell, Russ Jones, Sandy Scott, Scott Mikal-Heine, Scott Young, Shavati Karki-Pearl, Steve Monaghan, Tammy Veralrud, Wendy Sweeney, and Yolande Wilburn.

Some of the actions and initiatives the Task Force is involved in:

- Supporting the Connected Communities Academy (CCA) and the new Nevada County Tech Connection (NCTC)
 - Providing assistance with the annual STEAM Expo hosted by the Nevada County Superintendent of Schools at the Nevada County Fairgrounds
- Launch of the Community Connected Academy (CCA) with an expressed focus on implementing classes to build Digital Media workforce skills in Nevada County. During the contract period classes included:

VR Filmmaking	WordPress Drop-in Work Group
Introduction to Software Design as a Career Choice	Fundamentals of Web Development
WordPress Introduction	Introduction to Web VR
Fundamentals of DJ Performance	Photoshop Clinic for Intermediate Users
C# Software Development for Beginners	The Internet of Things
UX (User Experience) Design	Sound for Visual Media
Digital Skills Bootcamp	VR Game Development
Digital Self Defense	OAuth2 in Action

- Attendees in the classes ranged from high school students to unemployed individuals, to engineers from local successful technology companies.
- In addition, through the Connected Communities Academy initiative and working with Connecting Point a "Digital Skills Bootcamp" was created and offered on Wednesday and Fridays for six weeks and completed in May. Another "Digital Skills Bootcamp" is scheduled for July.

The topics introduced over the six week period were:

- Making Email Work
 - Project Management and Collaboration Solutions
 - Presentations & Survey Tools
 - Working on the cloud – Document Creation and Collaboration
 - Efficient Conferencing and Calendaring
 - Creating Marketing Materials like a Pro
 - Intro to Social Media Marketing
 - Email Marketing Basics
 - Intro to Website Management
 - Fundamentals of SEO and Analytics
 - Personal and Small Business Money Management
 - Digital Self-Defense
- Launched the Nevada County Tech Connection as a new industry-driven initiative to build a cohesive ecosystem of local tech-based employers. Industry champions that “stepped up” to help lead the effort include Jonathan Palmer, CTO of Autometrix, Inc. and Michael Anderson, CEO of Client Works and CTO of Spiral Internet. A key focus of this group was creating a tech based website portal for both companies and talent seeking to relocate to Nevada County and wanting information specifically about the depth of the local technology sector. It’s absolutely vital for local tech companies to work in concert on key issues where they don’t compete directly with each other, versus operating in their own individual silos. The premise of Nevada County being one of the only – if not the only – rural tech cluster in California (or the U.S.) is largely driven by ensuring such an environment exists, which provides a key economic development competitive differentiator versus other locations.



Focus groups to determine top priorities for the Nevada County Tech Connection were hosted by Grass Valley – A Belden Brand (located in Grass Valley) and Telestream (located in Nevada City). The four areas of focus for the Nevada County Tech Connection currently are: (1) Outreach and Advocacy; (2) Talent Development; (3) Education, and (4) Recruitment. Key current action items include the creation of the new web site and online marketing program, and finalizing the business model that allows the effort to be sustainable.

Ultimately, the goal of the Nevada County Tech Connection is to create what is called a Next Generation Sector Partnership, a term which has garnered increasing attention across the U.S. where economic development and workforce development initiatives more directly place business/industry at the center, and public and nonprofit partners listen first, and provide support on behalf of the priorities that emerge.

The NC Tech Connection website provides information identifying the companies, their products, employer's, tech-related information and so forth as well as highlights the growing tech freelance community in Nevada County and showcases their skills.

- The ERC also co-hosted an Internet of Things (IoT) workshop in conjunction with the local maker's space, Curious Forge, and is contracting for 3 months with the group as a means to strengthen an ongoing, synergistic relationship. Interestingly, the January IoT (internet of things) workshop was presented by Santa Barbara-based startup Breadware, Inc. which has 4 co-founders who are Bear River graduates from the mid-2000s.
- During the contract period, the ERC Marketing & Communication Task Force spent considerable time honing in on the best target audiences for locating in Nevada County. It identified the "low hanging fruit" as individuals or businesses that have already had some prior contact with Nevada County. Below are the parameters that have been developed to launch a social media campaign at the start of the next contract period (July 2017). These target audiences are in alignment with the random, unsolicited inquiries the ERC has been receiving from individuals, families and businesses. Several have located in the Green Screen Institute facility during the first half of 2017.

Great Reasons to Locate Your Business Here!

Gigabit Speed Internet in Fall of 2017

Lower Costs & Increased Cash Flow

Source Capital & Industry Expertise

Hire and Retain Great People

Efficiently Get to the Bay Area & Los Angeles

Enjoy an Incredible Lifestyle



**Palo Alto planning commissioner
Kate Vershov Downing quits
over high housing cost**



The average rent in Palo Alto was \$3,463 in the second quarter of 2016, according to a report last month from Novato-based RealFacts.

In June, the median price of a single-family home was \$12 million in San Mateo County and \$982,500 in Santa Clara County, according to the CoreLogic real estate information service.

Palo Alto: Losing out on the younger generation as residents

- Social Media Campaigns

Given the proposed campaign budget we decided to choose between Facebook and LinkedIn initially. Facebook was determined to be the better option given how we can target specific audiences with it. For example, people who are from the Bay Area and are in the Tahoe area on vacation will be opening Facebook, not LinkedIn. We determined LinkedIn can be a good supplement, but Facebook is the better starting point. Importantly, to be effective this will be a county-wide campaign emphasizing attributes of both East and West County and the Donner Summit area.

Our \$400 a month budget will allow us to reach between 1,500-6,000 people daily. We developed the parameters below for the social media campaign:

1. Location: (*Greater Bay Area*)
 2. Age & Gender: (*M/F 30-55*)
 3. Demographics: (*income, job title, employer name, language, relationship status, education, financial, home ownership, parental status, etc.*) \$90,000 or higher annual household income. Income was viewed as the key item in this category
 4. Interests: (*Any topics to do with technology, manufacturing, startups, remote work, freelance work, outdoor recreation, angel investment, raising funds virtual and augmented reality*)
 5. Behavior: (*charitable activities, online shopping habits, car shopping, financial spending, mobile devices, travel habits, etc.*) Outdoor recreation - all. Shopping for electronics, online digital education, membership to tech forums, makers' spaces, hackers lab, co-working spaces. Subscribers to TechCrunch, Venture Beat, The Next Web, Wired, Engadget, Gizmodo, Cnet.
 6. Connections: Out of town readers of gonevadacounty.com, theunion.com, moonshine ink.com, sierrasun.com, etc. Individuals who attend the music festivals in town and other functions/events where attendance date is tracked.
- In alignment with our objective to become a Virtual Reality Center of Excellence, the ERC, through the Connected Communities Academy, assisted with the first official VR "Meet Up" on January 12 and hosted a luncheon VR chat with HTC Executive, Brian Lowe, who is a native of Nevada County. Again, furthering an ecosystem of business and individuals who are involved in the sector is vital. Additional VR activities included a VR Film Making class, hosting a VR Lounge at the Wild and Scenic Film Festival, supporting the VR in the Sierra event, and participation in the VRX and CES tradeshow among other activities.



VR/AR – Build the Ecosystem

- Completed, launched and maintained the new GoNevadaCounty.com web site. See attached Website Performance Report.

- ERC's 2017 Annual Economic Development Summit

The ERC's Special Events Task Force, co-chaired by Danielle Scallin, Sara Christensen, MJ Heltsley, Steve Reynolds, with assistance from Hollie Grimaldi-Flores and Janet Augstein, planned and orchestrated the ERC's Annual Economic Development Summit. Titled "Reaching Common Goals" the event occurred on May 18 at the Center for the Arts in Grass Valley. The Summit included a keynote "State of the Economy" presentation by Dr. Christopher Thornberg, Founding Partner of Beacon Economics, LLC and widely considered to be one of the nation's leading economists. Dr. Thornberg is also the Director of the Center for Economic Forecasting and Development at the UC Riverside School of Business Administration. In addition, the Summit featured a series of Business Vignette presentations that highlighted innovation and success occurring at local businesses, along with brief overviews of key ERC initiatives like the Nevada County Tech Connection. Businesses making presentations included Traitware, BrewBilt, Autometrix, Inc., Spiral Internet, and Applied Science, Inc.

The Summit VIP Dinner included a presentation of "Reaching Common Goals", which is the ERC's 3-Year Strategic Plan. The presentation shed light on key county-wide economic development issues and opportunities that will become a top priority focus of the organization over the next 36 months.

Also, during the VIP Dinner a panel was moderated by ERC Board Member, Debbie Plass. The panel focused on the key issues that emerged out of the ERC Strategic Plan. Sponsors of the Summit included: Title Sponsors: Owens Estate and Wealth Strategies Group and the City of Grass Valley/BaseCamp Grass Valley VIP Sponsors: Sierra College, Z.A.P. Manufacturing, PG&E, Tri Counties Bank, and Winding Road Imagery Gold Sponsors: The Union, Dignity Health Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital, Telestream, Comcast, Nevada County Association of Realtors and The Center for the Arts Program & Supporting Sponsors: Cookson & Bowman, Cranmer Engineering, Inc., AP-i marketing, Network Real Estate, Grass Valley Courtyard Suites, Quorum Technologies, Inc., Grande Wood Designs, Lucchesi Vineyards & Winery, and Nevada City Winery.

- Participated on Nevada County Regional Chambers of Commerce organization and was involved in multiple collaborative projects among the group; most notably, the San Francisco Chronicle promotional insert that occurred in September. The ERC also partnered with the Nevada County Regional Chambers and The Union on the Business 2 Business Resource Guide called Western Nevada County Business Connections. The vision behind the Business Connections publication is to provide a resource of relevant information for a wide range of individuals and businesses, having varied interests and skills. The publication is being distributed locally and will be present on multiple websites, enhancing its utility throughout Nevada County and beyond. This guide is a true resource as you navigate opening or growing a business in Nevada County.
- Launched new innovative marketing efforts such as "It's Who You Know" campaign designed to leverage the numerous Bay Area and Southern California business contacts that residents of Nevada County possess, so that key connections can be made on behalf of the ERC to open doors via warm leads to prospect companies and talent we are seeking to locate to Nevada County.



- Generated significant media attention for the ERC, Nevada County and local businesses through articles and stories published or reported in The Union, NACO, KNCO, Sacramento Bee, the national podcast “Community Jobs and Progress”, Comstock’s magazine and others. In addition, Executive Director Jon Gregory served as a featured guest on NCTV’s Main Street program. Finally, he participated as a special guest radio host on KNCO radio lunch time show at Penny’s Diner as a means to help educate the community about why the VR/AR opportunity for Nevada County is so important. Links to various articles are included as supplemental information.
- Provided ongoing assistance and involvement as a member of the SEDCorp Board of Directors in the transition from SEDCorp to the Sierra Business Council to ensure there is a viable federally recognized Economic Development District operating in the region. Having a “District” designation is vital for obtaining grants through the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA). In addition, a high quality CEDS (a regional economic development plan) that incorporates information on high priority Nevada County projects as priorities within the document is an important outcome moving forward from this process.
- Assisted the Nevada County Arts Council with information for its Cultural Arts Designation proposal, and participated in the onsite visit by state officials evaluating the proposal.
- Assisted in identifying consultants for the Penn Valley Community Center feasibility study, and met with the selected consultants to provide insight to help provide them with the “lay of the land” in moving forward with their analysis.
- Fostered community collaboration and awareness of the ERC vision and activities through presentations to:
 - Nevada County Community Leadership Institute;
 - Briar Patch Board of Directors;
 - Nevada County Speakers Series;
 - Nevada County Board of Supervisors;
 - Adult Education Board Meeting;
 - Rotary Club of Grass Valley;
 - Grass Valley City Council;

- Nevada City 49er Rotary Club; and,
- NoRTEC Board of Directors
- Participated in NoRTEC collaborative efforts along with its other “Slingshot” industry partnership grantees to share best practices on industry partnership projects.
- Participated in the Wild and Scenic Film Festival with a VR Lounge which drew several hundred visitors over the festival weekend. The ERC will seek opportunities to participate in The Nevada City Film Festival this fall as they also plan a VR component.
- Secured financial support on short notice from the community to enable the ERC’s participation as an Exhibitor at the December VRX (Virtual Reality) conference in San Francisco. Sponsors included Courtyard Suites, Nevada County Arts Council, Applied Science, Inc., Autometrix, Inc., Greg Ward, Cheryl Rubin, and Nevada County Regional Chambers.
- Participated in the Grass Valley Downtown Association 2016 Strategic Planning sessions.
- Promoted via e-blast to the ERC’s 3,000+ database of key stakeholders contacts a wide variety of businesses, nonprofits and special projects such as:

Job searches for Simply Country, Gyro Stabilized Systems and Applied Science, Inc.	Monthly ERC Board Meetings
Announcement of a California Tax Credit program	Startup Basics – How to Start Your Own Business
Announcement of the NC Citizens Academy	Sierra Small Business Development – 2016 Year End Results
Promotion of Nevada City’s Alexander Rossi nominated for an ESPY award	2017 Labor Law Update & Business Essentials
Announcement of NJUHSD’s Junior Achievement program	VR Lounge at the Wild and Scenic Film Festival
PG&E Economic Development Rate Webinar	The Internet of Things
STEAM Expo 2017	ACME Robotics
Small Business Association – Low Interest Federal Disaster Loans	2017 ERC Annual Economic Development Summit
Meet Your Match Job Fair	WordPress Work Group
Business 2 Business Resource Guide – Western Nevada County Business Connections	Employment Opportunities – Entry Level Electrical Engineer
Sierra Business Council – Position for Planning Tech	Truckee Roundhouse Grand Opening
Building Fair	Fab 5 Event Featuring BrewBilt
Tectonic Tuesday	Education Trends in VR/AR

The ERC also actively promoted the launch of the Grand Opening of the new Truckee Roundhouse in December, a new Makerspace at the Truckee Tahoe Airport.

- Submitted and received approval of final EDA grant reports (both programmatic and fiscal) for the Sierra Digital Media Campus feasibility and strategic planning project.
- Provided a series of letters of support for a variety of grants or causes including:

Bicyclists of Nevada County to U.S. Forest Service – Designate Grouse Ridge Non-Motorized Region	San Juan Ridge - Community Scale Solar Project
Sierra Business Council and Valley Vision – Catalyzing Business Resilience to Climate Change in Wildlife Risk Communities	Haptical - Relocation from Istanbul, Turkey to Nevada County
Gold Country Redevelopment Coalition - Proposed U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Brownfield’s program grant	Traitware - California Competes Incentive Application
Sierra Vintners Association – Increasing Sales and Awareness of Wine Grape Products in Nevada County	NoRTEC – Maintaining Title I and Title II of WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act)
Applied Science, Inc. – Pursuit of Contract with American Cross	

- Hosted business and community meetings at the Green Screen Institute facility such as:
 - Fab 5 meeting featuring BrewBilt and Applied Science, Inc.;
 - San Francisco Insert Town Hall Meeting;
 - Wall Street Journal Reporter Interviews;
 - VR in the Sierra Event;
 - Expert Series: Grant Writing; and
 - Expert Series: Intellectual Property Attorney
 - North State Grow Manufacturing Presentation
 - NJUHSD Budget / LCAP Advisory meeting
- Collaborated with the Service Core of Retired Executives (S.C.O.R.E.) through providing meeting rooms and facilities for its counselors to meet with small businesses seeking business counseling. Assistance was provided to the following small businesses:
 - Nevada City Consultant – Grow and Improve the business
 - Startup Creamery – Funding
 - Startup School – Business Plan
 - Kids Outdoor Program – Information on local economy
 - Climbing Gym – Funding
- As part of its role as the county-wide economic development collaborating entity for Nevada County, the ERC participated in business, capital and community collaboration meetings with a wide array of groups including:

Nevada County Food Hub	Jonathan Collier
California State University, Chico	KVIE
Sierra College re: Maker’s Space Grants	Michael Cross, NoRTEC
Kimberly Martinez, River Valley Community Bank	Abbi Agency PR Firm
Lokesh and Murari Sikari, Moneta Ventures	Eliza Tudor, Nevada County Arts Council
NCTV Board	Chase Bank
Ed Rotberg, ex Atari Executive	Robert Carrol, Marketing Executive
NUHSD District	Steve Monaghan, County of Nevada

Don Rogers, The Union	Sean Powers, County of Nevada
Lynn Saunders, Pam Hobday & Colleen Dalton, Truckee Donner Chamber of Commerce	Melinda Madson, U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration
Mark Prestwich, City of Nevada City	Duane Strawser, City of Nevada City
Larry Burkhardt, Economic Development Consultant	Jeff Thorsby, Analyst County of Nevada
Eileen Mello, Consultant	Neil Scicluna, Banner Bank
San Francisco Academy of the Arts	Gyro Stabilized Systems
Cathie Anderson, Sacramento Bee	Allison Joy, Comstock's Magazine
Morgan Goodwin, Town of Truckee	Jon Blinder, Nevada County Arts Council
Brenda Horton, Project Management Consultants	Courtyard Suites
Rea Callendar, Nevada County Fairgrounds	Nick Schubin, Bayside Capital
Tom Last, City of Grass Valley	ERC Foundation Board Meeting
Keoni Allen, Sierra Foothills Construction	Amy Wolfson, City of Nevada City
Gary Fosberg, local inventor	Tracey Huston, innovative housing options
Jason Muir, Brownsfield Consultant	CoreSol
Sierra Business Council	Bert Spencer, Traitware
Josh Morgan, Edelman PR	Neil Ide, Phanedyne
Jeff Lucas, CDBC Consultant	Arson Klein, Risealyze
Nevada County Regional Chambers Meetings	Union Editorial Board
Valerie Costa, The Union	Brian Lowe, HTC
Jonathan Morgan, Applied Science Inc.	XP Camper, Marc Wasserman
Michael Cross, NoRTEC	Galen Ellis, Ellis Planning Associates
Chad Wingo, The Union	Dan Castles, Telestream
Robert Upton, Campus Properties	Dan Miller, Nevada County BOS
Ed Scofield, Nevada County BOS	Trish Moratto, Comstock Magazine
Ramona Howard, NCTV	Susan George, NC Regional Chambers
Tex Ritter, County of Nevada	Justin Horner, DCA Capital

- Completion of ERC's 3-Year Strategic Plan

As the county's primary economic development resource, ERC seeks to improve the quality of life for local citizens through job creation, new investment, tourism, arts promotion, and other aspects of a positive business climate.

As part of its Strategic Plan, the ERC plans to tackle key issues constraining the ability to succeed in this regard, and seeks consensus on its next priorities and input on effective use of its limited resources.

The Strategic Planning effort is intended to provide the ERC Board, City and County officials and other economic development entities a better understanding of how to achieve the area's economic future, and more specifically how to invest for the best return.

Our vision at the ERC is to help foster Nevada County becoming one of the most economically competitive rural counties in the U.S. in 5 years. To achieve such a vision requires very strategic direction around actions that best enable us to get there.

For context, the plan was developed over the past 90 days with the following process:

1. A ½ day Strategic Planning session facilitated by Galen Ellis of Ellis Planning Associates.

2. As part of that effort a S.W.O.T. (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis was undertaken, along with a force field analysis and some preliminary thoughts on narrowing 10 potential areas of focus for the ERC down to 4 thematic areas.
3. These were prioritized based on (1) whether they can make significant impact on achieving the vision; (2) achievability in terms of realistic resources; (3) potential for high levels of public/private/community support and engagement; and (4) how quickly value can be realized.

The ½ day facilitated session resulted in 4 key thematic areas, which are:

1. County-Wide Marketing and Communications (both to internal and external audiences)
2. Housing
3. Tech Talent and Tech Sector Partnership Efforts
4. Incentives to Attract or Retain Businesses

After the planning session, 4 separate committees were established to drill down further within these 4 thematic areas and establish goals, confirm why the thematic area should be a priority, and finally to determine specific projects and activities for implementation. Throughout the process, over 30 different board members and volunteers participated.

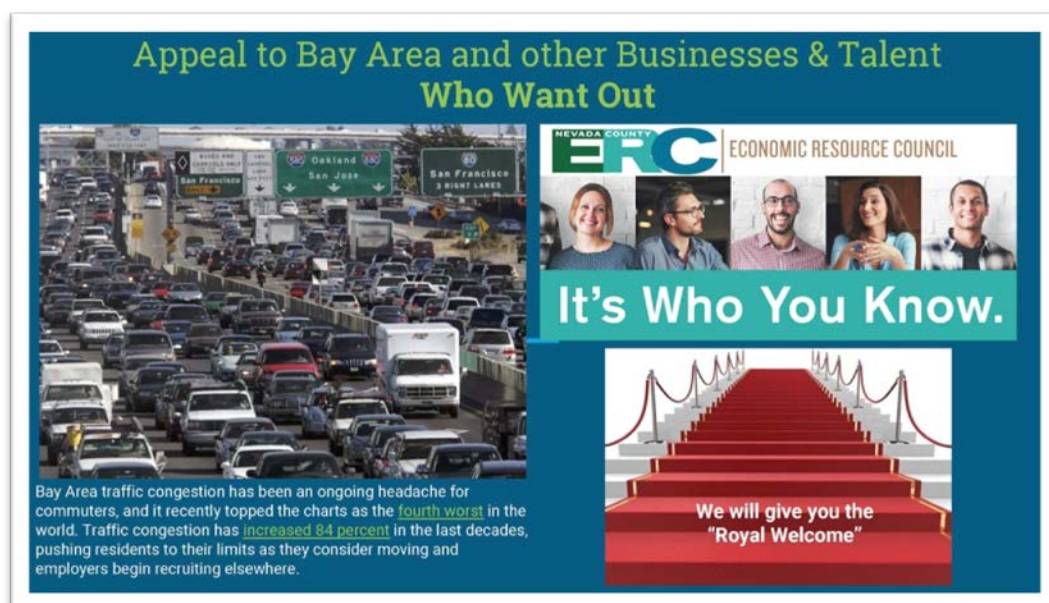
The outcome of the process was the following:

1. County-Wide Marketing and Communications Thematic Area:

Goal: Position Nevada County as a meaningful and feasible alternative location in California for tech companies and other businesses, talent, families and visitors/tourists.

This was determined to be an important priority for the following reasons:

- The ERC's marketing plan from 2015 identified the Bay Area as a top priority marketing target for location in Nevada County. Businesses and residents are leaving the Bay Area due to high costs, congestion, stress and challenges for most companies to compete with the icon tech companies for talent.



- Sustained, differentiated messaging that showcases Nevada County’s attributes and advantages (both on the west side and the east side of the county) is necessary to educate target audiences unfamiliar with Nevada County, and to energize those who are already familiar with Nevada County about taking the lead to move here.
- It can leverage the opportunity in Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality that was identified in the EDA grant. As an example, response from executives from major corporations in the VR/AR industry to be guest faculty or mentors/advisors for various VR/AR related activities in Nevada County has been very strong. This will help build an industry ecosystem and make Nevada County a key emerging market as one area of opportunity.
- Meaningful, sustained impact can be achieved at relatively low cost using social media tools. This component is discussed in another section of the report.
- Finally, full community “buy in” is required to get the horsepower needed to succeed. For example, the ERC recently launched a “It’s Who You Know” campaign as a means to identify great stories of why individuals and businesses located in Nevada County. Often a key reason people locate in Nevada County has to do with some kind of people connection.

Projects/Activities identified for Implementation:

- A. Create a targeted, sustained social media campaign aimed at “the low hanging fruit” – people who already know about Nevada County. Leverage the known assets of the cultural arts, outdoor recreation, and other amenities that make this area so attractive.

Sub-component activities of this include:

- B. Creating a matrix database identifying the various target audiences and supporting data so a series of specific targeted messaging can be delivered
- C. Create an imagery/video library for messaging
- D. Secure testimonials from businesses, executives, and free lancers on why they located in Nevada County
- E. Establish consistent messaging across websites and have companies backlink to these sites
- F. Conduct direct outreach to companies in the Bay Area the ERC has already identified
- G. Engage the ERC’s Royal Welcome Task Force to develop a customized response to leads generated through the marketing campaign that best suit the interests of the CEO, founding team, etc. that is interested in locating in Nevada County
- H. Finally, establish a monthly “VR Newsmakers” (and also other key sectors in Nevada County) show in collaboration with NCTV (which has recently started the process of constructing a new mixed reality studio at the Green Screen Institute facility) as a means to engage industry leaders and broadcast Nevada County’s opportunities via the web and cable TV channels

2. Housing Thematic Area

Goals:

- Get roofs up/build homes
- Educate the community about the issue
- Align community and government on the need

This was determined to be a priority area due to the following:

- Due to cost and other urban pressures, individuals, families and businesses located in the Bay Area are seeking alternative locations, and require housing to fit their specific needs
- The ERC's marketing efforts are likely to drive continued interest in Nevada County
- For nearly a year, multiple individuals (representing multiple segments of the community) have expressed concern about a lack of available, affordable housing, and concern over a realistic timeframe for new housing developments to come on line
- Infrastructure costs appear to be one particular significant constraint
- An important economic factor: the economic resources people bring when they come to Nevada County and that they take away with them when they leave (philanthropic, taxes, expenditures at local businesses, and so forth)
- We are losing residents who want to downsize their residence

Projects/Activities Identified for Implementation:

- A. Host a Housing Forum that ALL key stakeholders (government, developers, key property owners, construction, finance tech companies, education, fire department, special districts, other key businesses) participate in, and contribute to

Sub-components activities of this include:

- B. Define the problem/urgency with data
- C. Identify 2 models successfully implemented elsewhere which can be highlighted
- D. Determine near-term and long-term real estate housing objectives
- E. Determine key themes that emerge from the forum
- F. Develop a sustained effort of collaboration about the need for and importance of housing
- G. Be proactive, and opportunistic, to help move specific, compelling housing projects forward

3. Tech Talent and Tech Sector Partnership Thematic Area

Goals:

1. Develop and implement a business/sustainability model for the new Nevada County Tech Connection
2. Build a competitive, expanding and sustainable tech talent pipeline in Nevada County which provides a competitive differentiator versus other non-metro counties

Why this is an Important Thematic Area:

- A skilled workforce is essential for the types of jobs being created, and also for the free-lance related opportunities that continue increasingly are becoming an important part of the domestic and global economy
- Education and workforce entities need alignment with industries to create impactful, relevant programs
- It's critical to Nevada County's economic competitiveness in attracting tech business and talent

- Existing efforts through the ERC's Connected Communities Academy and the NC Tech Connection already have a head of steam, illustrating the positive impact of cohesive tech industry partnerships
- The tech sector needs a voice on issues relevant to their success

Projects and Activities Identified for Implementation:

- Continue to build upon the efforts of the Connected Communities Academy and NC Tech Connection
- Organize an annual Tech Sector focused event that adds meaningful value to companies and individuals in the sector
- Identify and implement specific seminars, workshops, resources, and networking functions that help the smaller (fewer than 50 employees) companies, solopreneurs, bootstrappers and free-lancers thrive.
- Put a mechanism in place that enables the tech sector to advocate on issues pertinent to the industry
- Continue to plan and implement education programs out of the Talent Connection Task Force that help support a thriving tech sector

4. Incentives to Attract and Retain Businesses Thematic Area

Goal: Establish a business incentive platform that differentiates Nevada County from other locations in California and provides it with a competitive advantage to locate businesses

This was determined to be a priority due to the following reasons:

- While people and visitors COME to Nevada County, in many instances businesses and talent must be ATTRACTED here.
- The strong community and regional competitors ALL offer more than quality of life. Nevada County has to compete with these locations.
- Examples and models of incentive programs exist elsewhere to learn from and tailor to Nevada County's circumstances.

Projects and Activities Identified for Implementation:

- Explore creation of a locally-designated tech or business development zone

Sub-component projects include:

- Interview a combination of 10 start-ups, bootstrapped companies, large companies and individuals in the site selection process to get a current read on what it takes to recruit a company from one location to another (particularly from an urban center to a rural area)
- Identify 3 successful incentive models
- Bring stakeholders together and identify what different entities could put on the table (local, state, federal and private)
- Explore innovative, shared ways to create an incentive fund that can be opportunistically applied to retain or attract specific businesses
- Offer resources essential for a tech ecosystem that other rural areas generally cannot offer, but are commonplace in the major tech hubs

G. Become recognized as the “In California” business friendly alternative to other California locations

In addition to these thematic areas and projects, the ERC – as the countywide economic development entity in Nevada County - in its plan is also evaluating and bringing forward best practices in terms of internal policies and procedures, board governance and organizational accountability.

1. List activities and outcomes in providing technical assistance to local businesses using the following metrics:
 - Payroll, Average high wage salary, number of jobs/high wage jobs
 - Specific assistance provided to businesses
 - Testimonials

ERC’s efforts are largely focused on providing direct business assistance or implementation of initiatives intended to grow high wage/high skill jobs. Related to that, the new Connected Communities Academy (CCA) and Nevada County Tech Connection (NCTC) were created as initiatives to ensure there is an ongoing talent pipeline for local employers and to improve the skill level of under-employed or unemployed individuals so they are able to achieve gainful employment in today’s increasingly digital economy.

A handful of companies listed in section 1.2 that the ERC has been, or is currently working with – like CoreSol, Gyro Stabilized System, Traitware, BrewBilt, XP Camper, Grass Valley Brewing Co., and Applied Sciences, Inc. – all expect to grow and add jobs over the next 6 to 18 months. A majority of the jobs would be in the high wage category, and substantially above the median wages.

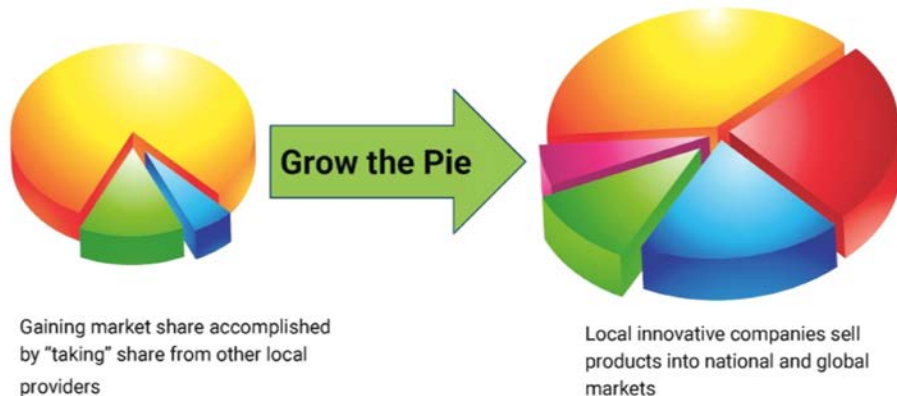
More broadly, but important and worth repeating as it ties back to ensuring Nevada County has a skilled digital workforce, through a Digital Media workforce assessment of 50 employers in the region that was completed in 2016, the following jobs related data was obtained:

- There are approximately 400 new jobs posted or expected to be posted within 5 years from this cohort of companies
- 39 companies stated they had growth plans and a total of 833 jobs were expected to be posted in the next 5 years (including replacement positions due to attrition or retirement)
- Advertised salaries for these roles typically ranged from \$65,000 to \$111,000 per year which is well above the national average.
- Nearly eight in ten middle skill jobs require digital skills. Moreover, digitally intensive middle-skill occupations are growing faster than other middle-skill jobs and pay 18% more on average.

1.2 List activities to connect local businesses to capital, information or technical expertise.

Helping local businesses who have (or can have) meaningful, positive economic impact throughout Nevada County to start or grow is a key priority of the ERC. It is in alignment with our “Grow the Economic Pie Theory” whereby we seek to assist companies that sell products or services on a national or global basis, thereby bringing new income into Nevada County, and “growing the pie”.

Local Economic Pie Theory



Among the business expansion or start-up projects in Grass Valley that the ERC is assisting include Applied Science, Inc., XP Camper, BrewBilt and the new Grass Valley Brewing Co. In Nevada City the ERC has been helping Traitware with its transition from start-up to commercialization and expansion. Of note, the company recently secured a significant infusion of investment capital and was featured in The Union. A link to the article is included as supplemental information to the report. Each of these entrepreneurial companies has the potential to growing quality jobs and income in our communities, thereby growing Nevada County's "economic pie". Of note, is the ERC's effort to work with The County of Nevada and City of Grass Valley to shepherd potential State Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding projects. To that end, the ERC facilitated a site visit by Jeff Lucas in May who visited both the XP Camper and Traitware facilities. Jeff has been a highly successful CDBG project consultant over the past 2 decades working on numerous CDBG funded projects with cities and counties in rural Northern California.

The ERC provided a wide array of technical assistance to local businesses during the reporting period, as summarized below.

- XP Camper (shepherding of potential CDBG project)
- Traitware (investment related guidance, local visibility/public relations, workforce training, customer introductions, technical expertise)
- CoreSol (location to Green Screen Institute, local visibility/public relations, access to grant expertise)
- Gyro-Stabilized Systems (technology collaboration, access to capital sources, access to talent)
- BrewBilt (review of funding materials, local visibility/public relations, shepherding of potential CDBG project)
- Simply Country (access to talent)
- Autometrix, Inc. (technology company collaboration)
- Applied Science (technology company collaboration, advocacy, local visibility public relations, introductions to capital sources, introduction to Dignity Health for pilot project)
- AJA Video Systems (workforce training and tech collaboration)
- Telestream (workforce training and tech collaboration)
- Grass Valley-A Belden Brand (workforce training and tech collaboration)
- Haptical (international relocation assistance, local visibility/public relations, access to local VR collaborators, access to advisors and potential team members)

- Dignity Health, Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital (assistance with local public relations related to its recently completed economic impact report, connection to Applied Science, Inc., for pilot project)
- Augmnt, Inc. (location at the Green Screen Institute)
- Eric Little Law Practice (location at the Green Screen Institute)
- Erik Christensen, Synergy Systems, Inc. (location at the Green Screen Institute)

Sample Testimonials:

- Pat Leach, RCD Engineering, Inc. – “I just want to thank you for the work that has been accomplished by all the committees....once again, the ERC is invaluable.”
- John Paul, Spiral Internet – “I am so grateful that you made the trip down to San Francisco. It makes all the difference in the world to have you speak before the (Public Utilities) Commission. Rachelle and I were watching the Commissioners, and they were engaged....a lot of head nodding.”
- Jonathan Morgan, Applied Science, Inc., - “I found the meeting with all the local stakeholders most helpful. It provided me with insights, both tactical and strategic, on how we might go after this opportunity. I am ready to roll up my sleeves and work with all of you to have this business stay in the United States and here in Nevada County.”
- Jason Fountaine, Gyro Stabilized Systems – “It’s been a really great experience starting a tech company in Nevada County. Many of our local tech business leaders and the Nevada County Economic Resource Council have been great resources to me and GSS the past six years to help us navigate the startup environment successfully. The commitments of our business community when combined with the proximity to the Lake Tahoe area make this one of the best work and play environments anywhere.”

1.3 4.1 List activities to evaluate regulatory, permitting, infrastructure and other constraints to new or existing business and any recommendations to facilitate economic growth in Nevada County.

A key element of the Royal Welcome Task Force has involved an effort to evaluate regulatory, permitting, infrastructure and other constraints to new or existing business and make any recommendations to facilitate economic growth in Nevada County.

A couple of key actions emerged related to this.

- The Royal Welcome Task Force recommended that in the near-term horizon, over the next 24 months, the most realistic focus is on expanding or attracting businesses whose facility needs are 10,000 square feet or less as significant inventory exists with minimal development related regulatory and permitting hurdles to overcome.
- Larger prospects or projects will require longer lead time, and the County has been proactive about wanting to be included early on in meetings with large-sized development projects, so that it can be most helpful in facilitating any regulatory or permitting requirements,

A primary effort emerging out of the Royal Welcome Task Force is a Housing Inventory and Readiness Project. In fact, the topic of Housing has emerged as one of the 4 Thematic Areas of focus for the ERC’s 3-Year Strategic Plan. A key initial project to help identify and address constraints is a Housing Forum planned for the Fall. It is based on the below.

The Status of Housing in Nevada County – Are We Prepared for the Wave?

Why a Need for ERC engagement as a stakeholder in helping to drive Housing availability/affordability:

1. Due to cost and other urban pressures, individuals, families and businesses located in the Bay Area (and to a lesser extent the Los Angeles area) are seeking alternative locations. Numerous articles, reports and anecdotal references clearly point to the issue. The ERC is increasingly receiving inquiries from individuals or business owners referencing difficulties in finding housing (of various types, starter, mid-level and rental). One of the partners of a small tech company from Soquel indicated he had to set up mid-term shop in El Dorado County until they are able to find housing. The issue doesn't appear as significant at the higher end of the market.
2. As part of the ERC's public relations and marketing efforts, Nevada County is starting to receive significant regional, Bay Area, and even national/global media attention as a potential haven for technology companies, entrepreneurs and skilled technical or executive talent. These marketing efforts are likely to drive continued interest in Nevada County.
3. For several months, multiple individuals from the real estate industry (along with the in-bound contact we have received from individuals and business owners) have expressed concern about a lack of available, affordable housing, and concern over a realistic timeframe for new housing developments to come on line. There is currently a lack of comprehensive knowledge and clarity among various key stakeholder groups about the number and status of various housing development projects, and the overall housing inventory when considering what is in the pipeline and associated timeline.
4. Key stakeholder groups (real estate, local government, contractors, developers, economic development representatives) collectively need to fully understand the (a) current state of inventory; (b) projects approved and/or in the planning phase; (c) status and/or any obstacles on approved projects or hold ups on those in the planning process; and (d) options to accelerate development of critically-needed housing inventory.

Desired Outcome:

1. Collective recognition of the status of the housing inventory, and whether there should be a heightened sense of urgency on this critical item.
2. If "urgent action" is determined necessary, collective recognition of the top 2-3 actionable solutions and who will be point entity for the effort.

To this end, a series of meetings to capture data on the existing and anticipated (over next 6-24 months) housing inventory, location, type of housing, timelines, etc. was initiated. It has since become one of the ERC's ongoing Task Forces and a top priority as part of the ERC's 3-Year Strategic Plan.

As described in another section of this report, ERC undertook a Strategic Planning process in the Spring of 2017 which identified key obstacles, opportunities – and more importantly – implementable solutions to help ensure that the Nevada County economic can prosper in the years ahead.

1.3, 1.5 List businesses selected for targeted assistance and describe the support provided, including outcomes such as increased revenues, improved or streamlined services or other tangible benefits.

A number of businesses were identified in prior sections of this report but some specific examples are noted here.

- The ERC has been extremely active in helping to shepherd a potential major CDBG funding project (that could involve a collaboration of the County of Nevada and the City of Grass

Valley) to support a significant business expansion project for XP Camper that would involve substantiated job creation opportunities for low and moderate-income people.

- The ERC continues to assist Applied Science, Inc. with a strategic advocacy campaign aimed at seeking a large contract from The American Red Cross valued at approximately \$25M. More recently, local visibility provided by the ERC to Applied Science, Inc., was instrumental in the company landing a pilot project with Dignity Health, Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital. The Advocacy effort focused on generating support from local government, the Governor's office, and Dignity Health. Applied Science, Inc. develops advanced medical technologies that are simpler, easier and safer to use; this led to the invention of a blood mixer and scale for blood banking organizations. They have expanded into hospital software applications. In addition, the company is pursuing a very large project with a key healthcare company and has continued to have very high level conversations with multiple senior executives. The ERC continues to serve as a sounding board and strategic catalyst for the company. The company has significant high wage/high skills job opportunities should it successfully land one or both of these projects.
- The ERC assisted Traitware with a combination of items including site location assistance, strategic guidance for the company CEO in working through negotiations and legal items with a prospective investor, and key introductions to potential customer strategic partners. In addition, Traitware has been an active user of the Connected Communities Academy classes with several of its team members attending. Traitware is dedicated to making mobile and web computing more secure and enjoyable. Their two-factor authentication solutions protect mobile data and web services while enhancing the experience for your users. Traitware recently expanded its presence at the Green Screen Institute and has hired and/or promoted multiple employees. Early in 2017 the company landed a \$1million investment from a local investor located in Truckee.
- The ERC has proactively assisted the start-up company, Haptical, which relocated from Istanbul Turkey after completing its participation in the Green Screen Institute Accelerator last summer. The ERC has assisted in providing high level visibility in the media, assistance with letters of support to help with bringing the company founder's family over to the U.S.A., introductions to key Advisors and potential engineering team members, and joint participation at the CES Tradeshow in Las Vegas. Haptical was recently ranked one of the top VR/AR brand influencers in the world and has significant growth potential.
- Augmnt, Inc.: The ERC is assisting this company with location at the Green Screen Institute facility and with generating local visibility and contacts. Founded in 2017, the goal of Augmnt, Inc. is to provide "technology kits" that utilize industry leading Augmented Reality headsets and bring these kits and an easy-to-use interface to different market verticals. Targeted market opportunities include education, corporate training, and quality and project inspection and customized viewers for complex data sets. The founders have over 37 years combined experience, and have worked together for the past 12 years at two prior organizations. Substantial experience working with airborne camera systems that have many similar characteristics to head-worn Augmented Reality devices (pointing, spatial mapping, FOV management, real-time processing)

1.7 Describe/list how ERC has continued to positively impact the growth of at least one existing Nevada County business with the retention or creation of 10 jobs or more.

One of the very first Fab 5 companies featured/assisted by ERC was Gyro Stabilized Systems (GSS). Since that time the ERC has continued to positively impact the growth of the company via providing ongoing visibility and public relations, access to technical expertise and mentoring, outreach for potential

employees, and assistance with its expansion plans through site selection assistance. The company continues to grow and currently has grown to approximately 14 employees with significant expansion plans.

As noted previously, ERC continues to assist Applied Science, Inc. If they land the deal, the current American Red Cross project will have a \$24M local economic impact project. That will create high wage / high skill software engineering jobs and which is a precursor to a much larger project they are currently working on with Dignity Health. The company currently employs over 20 individuals with an annual payroll of over \$1 million. When the project comes to fruition they will create significant local high wage job opportunities.

Finally, Traitware is obtaining value add help from the ERC and recently landed a \$1m private investment in the company that will allow it to move into commercialization of its product. Its plans are to grow from 7 to 21 employees over the next two year.

1.8 List business showcase/networking events held, and companies showcased.

ERC hosted multiple business showcase and networking events during the reporting period including:

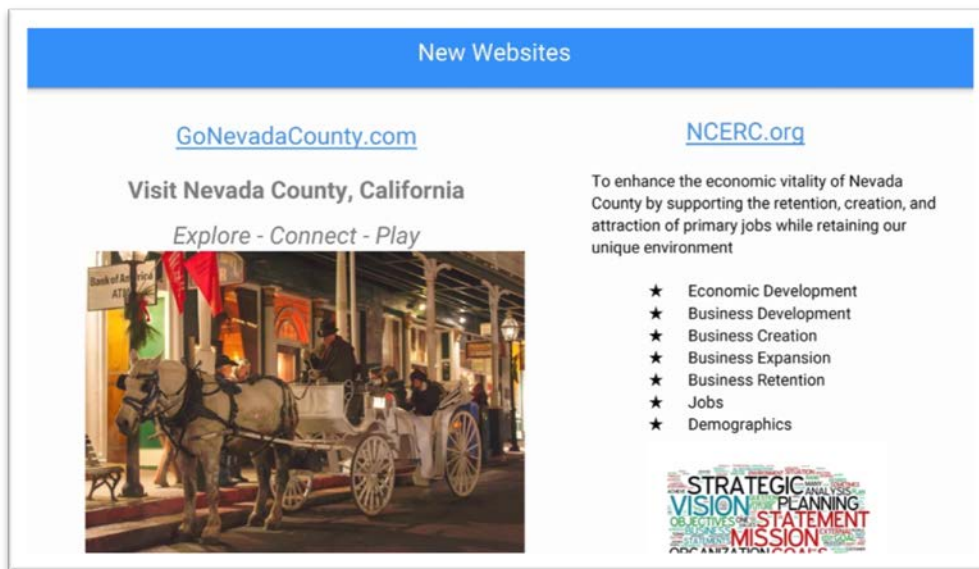
- Fab 5 Event – September 2016 (BrewBilt, Applied Science, Inc.)
- Connected Communities Academy Open House – August 2016 (nearly 80 local businesses, civic organizations, local government leaders and tech free-lancers attended)
- Internet of Things Workshop – January 2017 – (Breadware, Inc.)
- VR chat with Brian Lowe, an Executive with HTC – January 2017
- Nevada County Tech Collaborative Focus Group – January 2017 – (Autometrix, Inc., Spiral Internet, Grass Valley-A Belden Brand, AJA Video, Gyro-Stabilized Systems, Z.A.P. Manufacturing, Client Works, and others)
- Techtonic Tuesdays, beginning June 2017
- VR Meetups – VR/AR Trends in Education – and 5 Critical Drivers of AR/VR, June 2017
- North State Grow Manufacturing Meeting – March 2017

1.9 List specific improvements or additions to the ERC website, and/or examples in providing a unique resource for business and job seekers.

After an extensive recruitment, scoring and interview process, MC2 was selected to create the new ERC website. It was completed in late June 2016 (Please feel free to visit the site at www.ncerc.org) and is a substantial upgrade over the prior site. It includes the following sections and features:

- The site is now mobile friendly
- It is more aesthetic and visually appealing
- The site flows easier
- Integrated with social media
- Updated contact form
- Highlights the T.O.T.A.L package which was the brand established by the NCERC Special Events Task Force to showcase Nevada County's Talent, Outdoors, Technology, Arts/Agriculture and Lifestyle.
- Includes section on Green Screen Institute
- Includes section on VR/AR
- Added the 2025 Vision for Gigabit
- Links to resources such as Western Nevada Business Connections Resource Guide, Nevada County Demographics and Statistics, and the Farm Guide
- Connects to other sites: www.ncechconnection.org and www.connected.academy

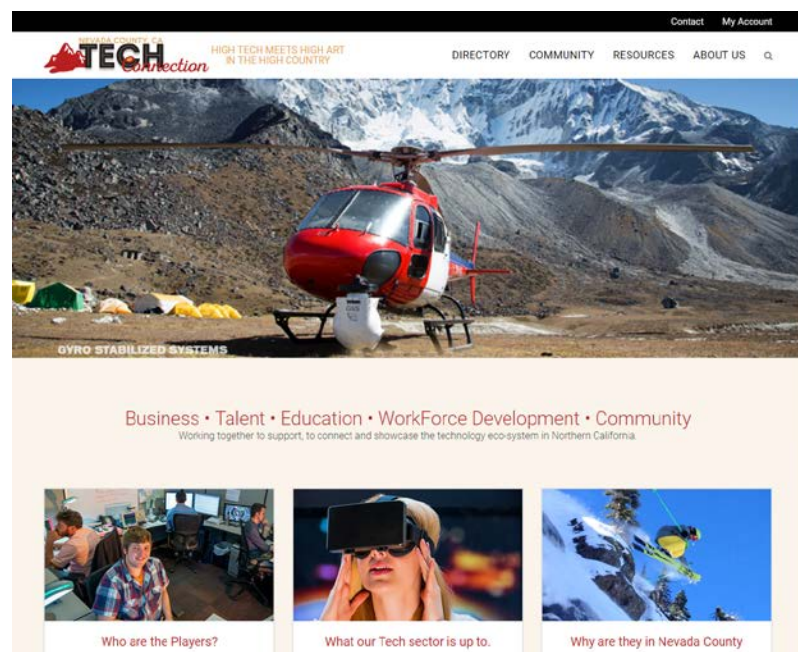
We are pleased with the new site as it represents a major advancement for the organization and is extremely visually appealing. The ERC regularly updates the website with fresh content so that it is a valuable resource for businesses.



GoNevadaCounty.com

Ncerc.org

In addition, through the Connected Communities Academy initiative, a new web site for the Nevada County Tech Connection has been created. Specifically it is a resource for technology companies and tech talent. It includes things like descriptions of local Nevada County tech companies, their products and services, job openings and skill requirements. It also includes a section for individual free-lancers to share their qualifications and expertise. Finally, it will be a “go to” resource for individuals and businesses seeking to locate in Nevada County but who first want to conduct research on the depth and breadth of the local technology sector. This is a vital new web site, as it will help paint a picture that Nevada County is one of a small handful of rural counties in the U.S. that has a world-class technology cluster.



NCTechConnection.com

1.10 List new business startups with the potential to create 10 jobs or more that ERC helped foster in Nevada County.

Traitware	Haptical
Phanedyne	Simlatus
CoreSol	BrewBilt
Gyro-Stabilized Systems (GSS)	Spiral Internet's Bright Fiber Project
Augmnt, Inc.	Grass Valley Brewing Co.
Synergy Systems, Inc.	

1.11 List events hosted by ERC that promote, bring together or provide targeted information for businesses from both East and West areas of the County; and notable outcomes.

The ERC's annual Economic Development Summit serves as the primary event to promote, bring together and provide targeted information to both East and West areas of the County.

At the ERC's Annual Economic Development Summit on May 18, ERC was pleased to showcase five local innovative, entrepreneurial businesses that are creating jobs and making a tangible economic impact in Nevada County every day. These innovators include:

[Traitware](#) – Do you have Password frustrations? TraitWare is a Nevada City-based technology company that provides password-free secure digital resource access for enterprise. Imagine No Password Ever.

[Applied Science, Inc.](#) – Applied Science, Inc. is a local manufacturing and software company that has been operating in Grass Valley for over 25 years. The company provides world class process automation devices and solutions to the Blood Banking and Health Care Industries.

[BrewBilt](#) – BrewBilt Manufacturing LLC, located in Grass Valley, is the only California manufacturer of American-made custom designed brewery equipment for the craft beer, sake, hard cider and distilled spirits industries. The company is committed to creating a highly profitable enterprise in rural America by hiring excellent local personnel, delivering products that exceed customer expectations and fairly compensating our craftsmen for their expertise.

[Autometrix Inc.](#) – Autometrix, Inc. is a leading provider of CNC Cutting Solutions for the Composites and Industrial Textile market. Complete solutions consist of machines and software, all developed and crafted in Grass Valley since the inception of the company!

[Spiral Internet](#) – Spiral Internet is a Nevada City-based Internet Service Provider that took over the customer base of NCCN (Nevada County Community Network) in 2006. This year, it starts building a state-of-the-art all-underground gigabit 100% fiber optic internet network in western Nevada County funded by a \$16.2M CPUC grant.

In terms of outcomes, when these companies succeed, positive economic impacts ripple across Nevada County's communities. Local small businesses often become their vendors or suppliers. Unemployed and underemployed individuals find work. Downtown establishments and lodging facilities get more paying customers, both from the founders and employees of the companies, as well as, from the guests they often bring to visit their companies in Nevada County. Local nonprofits benefit from both charitable financial contributions and volunteer efforts in support of their mission. Local governments benefit from a growing tax base.

The Summit also highlighted the new [NC Tech Connection](#), a sister initiative of the ERC's [Connected Communities Academy](#) (CCA) launched during the County contract period. The [NC Tech Connection](#) is modeled after "Next Generation Sector Partnerships". These are partnerships of businesses from the same

industry and in a shared labor market, that work with education, workforce development, economic development and community organizations to address the workforce and other competitiveness needs of the targeted industry. The initiatives are vital in sharing key information for both businesses and job seekers.

The Summit also included a keynote presentation by a leading economist, Dr. Christopher Thornberg. Dr. Thornberg shared in-depth, current and practical information for Summit attendees. A copy of his keynote Power Point presentation is included as supplemental information to the narrative report.

Sponsors of this year's Summit include:

Title Sponsors: Owens Estate and Wealth Strategies Group and the City of Grass Valley/BaseCamp Grass Valley

VIP Sponsors: Sierra College, Z.A.P. Manufacturing, PG&E, Tri Counties Bank, and Winding Road Imagery

Gold Sponsors: The Union, Dignity Health Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital, Telestream, Comcast, Nevada County Association of Realtors and The Center for the Arts

Program & Supporting Sponsors: Cookson & Bowman, Cranmer Engineering, Inc., Network Real Estate, Grass Valley Courtyard Suites, Quorum Technologies, Inc., Grande Wood Designs, API-marketing, Lucchesi Vineyards & Winery, and Nevada City Winery

2. Report activities and outcomes to assist and support the growth of existing and emerging business “clusters” in the following areas:

2.1 Pursuit of potential sites and/or facilities for the Digital Media Campus

The Digital Media Campus facility, now referred to as the Green Screen Institute (Green Screen), was secured in Spring 2016. It represents a compelling Research and Science Park project that will create high wage/high skill jobs in a rapidly growing industry cluster that already has a 50-year legacy in Nevada County. Green Screen is a 27,000 square foot facility located at 104 New Mohawk Road in Nevada City. The ERC is one of the tenants in the facility. It operates its initiatives, hosts events in the small networking venue at the facility, and has created a classroom for the Connected Communities Academy in which an ongoing series of Digital Media courses and workshops are presented. In addition, the Green Screen Institute facility also has several technology company tenants (Gyro Stabilized System, Traitware, CoreSol, NCTV), and serves as the host location for the annual Green Screen Institute Virtual Reality Accelerator which brings 4-6 start-ups from across California, the U.S. and the world to Nevada County each Summer/Fall for a 10-week business launch program. Importantly, NCTV has finished planning and is about to start construction on a high-end Mixed Reality Studio at the facility. This will provide a compelling differentiator for the facility and attraction for helping to locate VR, AR and other companies to Nevada County. Additionally, three new tenants were added to the facility including Eric Little, Law Practice, Erik Christensen, Synergy Systems, Inc., and Augmnt, Inc. Finally, Traitware has expanded its presence at the facility. All told more than 30 people work daily out of the Green Screen Institute facility, a major revitalization project for what had been a long-vacant tech building.

2.2 Pursuit of funding to complete the detailed Campus feasibility analysis and to secure the campus facilities.

This activity has been successfully completed. The ERC now operates as a tenant out of the 27,000 square foot Green Screen Institute facility. All required reports have been submitted and approved

2.3 Progress in identifying companies to locate at the Green Screen Institute.

The downstairs portion of the Digital Media Campus (the Green Screen Institute facility) is already fully occupied by technology companies Gyro-Stabilized Systems and CoreSol. In addition, Haptical and Traitware are two start-ups with space in the upstairs portion of the facility. Several free lancers also occupy an office or desk space; Augmnt, Inc., Kevin Bundy, Jarratt Moody, Kyle Spaulding, Eric Little, and Erik Christensen. In addition, Film maker Will Keir is located at the facility. Collectively, there are now over 25 technology jobs operating out of the facility with several of the companies expecting to grow their employment headcount in 2017.

2.4 Planning for programs and services that will be operated out of the Green Screen Institute.

The programs and services that operate out of the Green Screen Institute have been planned to address multiple stakeholder groups. At the Green Screen Institute facility, programs and services are underway for each group.

These include:

1. Tech-based start-up companies – programs and services are provided via the Green Screen Accelerator and through the ongoing seminars, classes and networking events that occur at the facility.
2. Small businesses – are assisted via space provided for counseling from the Service Core of Retired Executives (S.C.O.R.E.) and the various business networking and education events. In addition, the ERC and Sierra Business Council (SBC) have started conversations about bringing the SBC's workshops series and counseling services to the facility.
3. Established tech companies – are assisted via the new Nevada County Tech Connection (NCTC), and digital media classes provided through the Connected Communities Academy (CCA) – particularly those that add value to engineers.
4. Local workforce – are assisted via the multitude of skills development classes offered via the Connected Communities Academy.
5. Local Business, Education and Civic groups – are assisted via access to the multiple conference rooms and small event venue to host meetings or planning sessions at the Green Screen Institute.

In particular, a key objective of the facility is to help Nevada County be known as a Center of Excellence in Virtual Reality (VR). An industry expected to grow from .5 billion to an 80 billion dollar industry by 2020. Networking functions like the VR Chat luncheon featuring HTC's Brian Lowe; VR Filmmaking classes offered by the Connected Communities Academy; VR/AR Trends in education event, Grass Valley Rotary VR Demo event, and recruiting VR start-up companies like Haptical and Augmnt, Inc. to launch their companies at the facility represent early components of this strategy.

3. List activities and outcomes to assist businesses with talent-related needs in the following areas:

3.1 Collaboration with industry, workforce development and education partners to improve the labor pool.

To strengthen the local technology talent pipeline, the ERC established a Talent Connection Task Force. Emerging as direct outcomes from this effort are the new Connected Communities Academy (CCA) and NC Tech Connection (NCTC). Each represent new initiatives of the ERC specially designed as collaborations with industry, workforce development education partners to improve the labor pool. Below are key items related to Connected Communities Academy and the NC Tech Connection.

The key focus of CCA include:

- Peer and Facilitated Learning (Ages 13+)
- Events
- VR Activities
- Tech Talent, Business Directory, Community News
- Makers Space, Open House and Field Trips

Since the launch of the Academy, it has become apparent that more than simply offering courses and making them available, the role of the Academy needs to start with building awareness of the transitioning of jobs and careers into a digital skilled workforce, especially as all industries are now utilizing automation in some for the other. As a foundation, we need to educate the community in the career possibility with digital skills not only in Nevada County but also as remote free-lancers and employees. A key purpose of NC Tech Connection is to start bringing the tech ecosystem more to the forefront and highlighting activities and opportunities for the population of the county. Also, our focus is not only on career seeking individuals but also on incumbent workers who can benefit from skills upgrade in their career paths.

Regarding the Connected Communities Academy, here are some of the highlights:

Planned and organized classes and recruited mentors/teachers for VR Film Making (a film on the Yuba River was premiered at VR Lounge at Wild and Scenic Film Festival; Introduction to Software Design as a Career Choice; Wordpress.com workshop; VR Game Development, Digital Self Defense, Programing Fundamentals, and Spin Inc., Fundamentals of DJ. Interestingly, some of the participating students have been engineers from local tech companies.

As a key unintended outcome of this effort, a local VR Meet Up group emerged led by AJA engineer Alan Moore, which adds one more component to the effort of creating a VR Center of Excellence in Nevada County.

Regarding the NC Tech Connection, some of the highlights included:

- The initiative is now officially called “Nevada County Tech Connection” – working to connect and showcase the technology eco-system in Northern California, largely designed as a means to ensure there is a coordinated effort to develop and recruit talent to the area. Even though Nevada County has a solid legacy of technology innovation, many locals and especially outsiders are unaware of this rich history and of the current talent that exists here. The Tech Connection was formed to address this issue.
- Two industry champions were identified – Jonathan Palmer, CTO of Autometrix, Inc., and Michael Anderson, CEO of Client Works and CTO of Spiral Internet
- Purchased domain www.nctechconnection.com and org. The website has been launched.

Sections of the site are:

1. Who are the players? This searchable director of tech businesses, freelance talent and education/training providers. To participate: Fill out your profile and keep it up to date.
2. What are they up to? This section is “where the action is”. It is where we tell the world how alive and vibrant the tech eco-system is. To participate: List your local technology news items, tech related events and meet ups; list your links to tech jobs and internships; list you or your organization/business achievements.

3. Why are they in Nevada County, CA? We all love living here and for good reason, Nevada County offers “The Total Package”, Technology, Outdoors, Talent, the Arts and an enviable Lifestyle. To participate: Submit your links if you are a Community Agency that provides workforce assistance, networking, information, education and training or a service that benefits the tech community.

3.2 Marketing of workforce programs.

The ERC initiated a very proactive outreach campaign to local technology companies. This has occurred through a combination of:

- Development of the new NCTechConnect.com website
- Frequent social media posts via Facebook
- Regular e-blasts by the ERC to its 3,000+ database of key contacts
- Feature front-story news coverage in The Union
- Creating of a VR Lounge as part of the Wild and Scenic Film Festival

In addition, the ERC hosted Focus Group sessions with different key constituencies. One focused on agency leaders and a second being hosted for the tech sector. These occurred on-site at tech companies Grass Valley-A Belden Brand and Telestream.

NC Tech Connection also had outreach efforts in Truckee with the Sierra Business Council and others to collaborate and represent eastern Nevada County and connect the Tech companies with individuals there.

Finally, helping to promote the new VR meet up group, as well as, working with other groups (like Curious Force, a local Makers Space) to promote the ‘hands on’ Internet of Things workshop – presented by Breadware and hosted at the CCA classroom. As described earlier in the report, numerous classes and networking functions were hosted by CCA at the Green Screen Institute to drive visibility and marketing for the effort!

3.3 Status of outreach visits to career days at universities and community colleges and of hosting a “Job Day” in Nevada County for students from Northern California universities.

A STEAM Expo was held in March 2017. A focus of the Talent Connection Task Force and NC Tech Connection is to support and work with the Nevada County Superintendent of Schools to combine a Tech Fair/Makers Space with the future annual STEAM Expos.

3.4, 3.5 Update on integration of technology and talent into the ERC’s marketing campaign.

Both technology and talent represent core components of the marketing campaign and are part of the T.O.T.A.L Package brand and materials that have been created for use as part of the ERC’s marketing campaign. These themes are consistently promoted in news articles, e-blasts, trade show exhibits, the Royal Welcome Power Point Presentation and through other means. A copy of the T.O.T.A.L. package marketing “take away” piece is included as a supplemental item to this report.

4.1 List activities and outcomes to assist businesses seeking to move to the area using the following metrics:

4.2, 4.3 Resources or custom-tailored data provided to companies seeking to locate in Nevada County.

1. The new NC Tech Connection website was created as an information hub for tech business sectors to locate in Nevada County and highlight local company's talent and resources they can quickly get connected to. Visit www.nctechconnection.com for more information.

2. The ERC's Royal Welcome Task Force put together an extensive Power Point Presentation emphasizing key factors and data points that make a move for businesses, talent and families compelling. A copy of the Power Point Presentation is included as supplemental information to the report.

3. Finally, significant thought went into the planning to launch a sustained social media campaign designed to attract businesses, talent and families from the Bay Area to move to Nevada County. The parameters of the campaign are described in another section of the report.

ERC's Royal Welcome Task Force worked on a variety of projects to attract companies and talent to Nevada County, leveraging the efforts of the Marketing Task Force.

The data covers a wide array of things like:

- Housing
- Commercial Space
- Workforce
- Commuter Times
- Accolades
- Outdoor Recreation
- Arts
- Downtowns
- Community Organizations
- Business Services
- Essential Family Considerations
- Relative Proximity
- Testimonials

4.5 Integration of business attraction initiative efforts with the ERC's marketing campaign, including participation in industry trade shows.

During the contract period the ERC participated at the VRX Conference in San Francisco and the annual CES Tradeshows in Las Vegas. The ERC (representing Nevada County interests) was the only economic development exhibitor at the VRX conference in December. Numerous key industry thought leaders and partner contacts emerged as a result of participation at these tradeshows, along with some potential business location leads. For example, we have added over 200 executive level LinkedIn contacts from companies like Google, Intel, Smithsonian Channel, HTC, Magic Leap and many others. A special "Nevada County T.O.T.A.L. package marketing post card has been created as a convenient follow up to contacts made at these tradeshows and conferences.



In addition, the ERC launched a new innovative marketing effort “It’s Who You Know” campaign designed to leverage the numerous Bay Area and Southern California business contacts that residents of Nevada County possess, so that key connections can be made on behalf of the ERC to open doors via warm leads to prospect companies and talent we are seeking to locate in Nevada County. Below is a summary overview of what the campaign is about.

ERC Marketing Campaign: “It’s Who You Know!”

What is It?

It’s Who You Know is an innovative new ERC marketing campaign aimed at generating an ongoing stream of “prospects” (whether businesses, entrepreneurs, or talent) to locate to Nevada County.

What is the goal?

Land a combination of at least one new entrepreneur, business and tech executive each year.
Generate substantial ongoing “buzz” and involvement by the entire Nevada County community.

What are the objectives?

1. Generate 10 new leads per month for Royal Welcome Task Force to respond to
2. Engage 3 new people per month in ERC’s network (people who haven’t been involved but bring forth a lead or express interest in getting involved as a result of the campaign)
3. Beginning in the Fall of 2017 secure at least one business, entrepreneur or talent relocation to Nevada County

What makes it Innovative?

1. Very little out-of-pocket cost, and can be enduring
2. Grass roots in nature, involving all elements of the community (everybody knows somebody!)
3. It can be viral in appeal, and can be active 365 days a year (anytime anyone talks to someone, or makes a presentation on any date at any location at any time)

What is the basis for it?

1. Desire to more effectively engage all stakeholders of the community in ERC (and specifically its marketing) efforts
2. A large (albeit unquantified) percentage of business owners, engineers, executives, entrepreneurs and others have moved here from somewhere else (in many cases from the greater Bay Area or the LA area); AND, most continue to have relations/connections with family, personal or business networks in those metro areas
3. Cost, congestion, safety, and stress issues are driving more interest in these metro areas to look for alternative business or residential locations; a warm, positive reference from a family member, friend or business colleague is far more effective than cold calls
4. It's very easy for anyone in the community to be involved. Just pass on a name or make a warm referral!
5. Tools have been created in the recent past (SF Chronicle insert, updated GoNevadaCounty.com website, Nevada County Calendar of Events, Royal Welcome Task Force Power Point presentation) that can be provided to leads to provide a compelling story about Nevada County as a location

It is important to note that these outreach efforts are leveraging themes and messages created through the integrated marketing plan that was developed last year. Target audiences include Digital Media and VR/AR startups, SMEs (small-to-medium-sized enterprises) and foreign-based companies; angel investors, angel investor groups, early-stage venture capital firms and corporate investors; industry experts to serve as advisors, mentors and C-Level executives. The daily Facebook social media campaign that the marketing committee has spent extensive time developing will serve as the vehicle to launch this out-bound marketing effort.

4.1 List activities and outcomes in the listed elements of an integrated marketing campaign that encompasses tourism, the arts, talent and technology companies using such metrics as:

A number of key activities and outcomes emerged, including:

- Publishing of the Nevada County Destination insert in the San Francisco Chronicle
- The new GoNevadaCounty.com and Ncerc.org web sites which are integrated with social media and mobile friendly. Statistics on the GoNevadaCounty.com site are provided in another section of this report
- Participation as an Exhibitor at the VRX Conference in December in San Francisco
- Attendance at the CES Conference in Las Vegas in January
- Completion of the Nevada County T.O.T.A.L. package post card
- Launch of a series of columns in The Union, and in particular the It's Who You Know Campaign
- Implementation of new types of networking activities including the "VR Chat" lunch in December and the new VR Meet Up Group
- Participation with the VR Lounge at the Wild and Scenic Film Festival in January
- Planning in preparation for the launch of the sustained county-wide social media campaign in July 2017
- Partnering on the Nevada County calendar of events and map with the Nevada County Regional Chambers
- Partnering with The Union and Nevada County Regional Chambers on the new Western Nevada County Business Connections resource guide

Examples of various items from this list are included as supplemental information to the report.

5.1, 5.5, 5.6 Advertising and promotional activities that integrate tourism, the arts, talent and tech to market Nevada County.

The primary advertising and promotional activities during the reporting period included:

- Helping drive the effort that resulted in a joint advertising campaign that resulted in a significant tourism-related insert in the San Francisco Chronicle in September
- Participation in the tourism related brochure that emphasizes the T.O.T.A.L brand described earlier
- Planning for the launch of the sustained, county-wide social media campaign beginning in September 2017
- Numerous media placements of articles or podcasts including: The Union, NACO, KNCO, Sacramento Bee, the national podcast “Community Jobs and Progress”, Comstock’s magazine and others. In addition, Executive Director Jon Gregory served as a featured guest on NCTV’s Main Street program. Finally, he participated as a special guest radio host on KNCO radio lunch time show at Penny’s Diner as a means to help educate the community about why the VR/AR opportunity for Nevada County is so important

5.2 List trade shows and conferences where ERC participated as an attendee, exhibitor, or sponsor, and the value/benefit of such participation.

- Exhibitors at the VRX tradeshow in San Francisco
- Attendance at the CES tradeshow in Las Vegas
- Hosting of the VR Lounge at The Wild and Scenic Film Festival
- Participation in the STEAM Expo at the Nevada County Fairgrounds

Collectively, these efforts heightened the ERC’s efforts both locally and outside of the County about the unique technology cluster that exists here, and also brought significant interest from key virtual reality industry contacts to participate in efforts to create a VR Center of Excellence in Nevada County.

6. Maintenance of the County’s Tourism Website, GoNevadaCounty.com, to ensure the site’s continued growth, success, and integrity.

6.3.2 Provide website traffic reports, including web usage, referrals and page hit analysis to the County via Googly analytics, existing host admin tools or other methods acceptable Report on Growth in GoNevadaCounty.com website traffic, visitation, and social media engagement.

ERC has partnered with The Union to keep GoNevadaCounty.com website and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/GoNevadaCounty) page fresh and full of great content.

See attached report

7. Sustainability measures

7.1 List new memberships, sponsorships (value in dollars).

Some of the key new members and sponsors of the ERC during the year include Myers Investment Group of Baird, PGE, Telestream, Gyro-Stabilized Systems, Network Commercial Real Estate, InConcert Sierra, Industry Grants and Rincon Del Rio.
Membership and event sponsorships during the year totaled \$67,402.00.

7.2 List grants obtained or applied for.
The ERC successfully applied for funding from NoRTEC through its Slingshot initiative. The ERC explored applying for EDA Regional Innovation Strategies Program funding in June 2017 but the high matching fund requirement combined with short timeframe to submit the application made it not a viable option to pursue.
7.3 Describe ERC Foundation/fundraising activities.
The ERC Foundation served as the recipient of EDA planning grant in 2015/16. The NoRTEC contract was done directly through the ERC.
7.4 List any other sustainability measures not covered above.
Other sustainability measures include the launch of the Connected Communities Academy which will provide opportunities to generate revenue through tuition associated with the various classes. In addition, by virtue of its location at Green Screen Institute ERC is able to reduce some of its traditional operating expenses.

CalWORKS activities:
Itemize referrals provided to CalWORKS of local business with staffing needs that may be met through placement of Subsidized Employment Program participants. If placements result from these referrals, note placements and feedback provided to CalWORKS so that they can continue to improve skill development and job placement to best meet the needs of participants and local businesses. See attached reports
Attach quarterly data provided to CalWORKS to help inform workforce development efforts, including local labor market trends, needed skills and opportunities. See attached reports

FOR ANNUAL REPORT: Attached is the expenditure report that includes a breakdown of expenditures of contract funds by category.



**CalWORKS Quarterly Report
July – September 2016**

SUMMARY OF KEY ACTIVITIES FOR THE REPORTING PERIOD:

1. Occupied space donated by Green Screen Institute to set up the Academy.
2. Conducted outreach for mentors for the Academy. So far have recruited mentors for instructing in the following subjects: UX Design, Coding Fundamentals, Intro to Programing, Website Development, Server Administration, API development and IT Essentials along with Virtual Reality Film Production and Game Development and CompTIA certification. Currently speaking with a professional to create a Digital Tech program.
3. Created website [connectedcommunities](http://connectedcommunities.org) and uploaded course and tech industry information
4. Purchased and set up equipment needed in order to create a teaching lab.
5. Held an open house on August 24th to introduce the programs to the community. Had an attendance of over 50 people interested in the classes
6. Ongoing online marketing and outreach to promote the classes
7. Held the first weekend boot camp for VR film production on Sept 17th and 18th with 5 students. Their final film will be showcased in the Wild and Scenic Film Festival in January 2017.
8. Ongoing coordinating and collaboration with Nevada County Works, CalWORKs and Nevada County Adult School to promote the classes to their populations.
9. Program has been presented to and been approved by the Sierra Joint Consortium for Adult Education to allow collaboration, funding and cross-promotions by SJCAE members and the Academy
10. Program presented to Northern Rural Training and Employment Consortium, which resulted in additional grant of \$50,000 to create a Connected Communities Tech Collaborative which will be hosted by the Academy and has a working mission statement of *"Supporting, connecting and showcasing the tech and digital media eco-system as a thriving entity in Nevada County by facilitating events, educational and training opportunities, collaborative efforts and streamlined communication amongst Businesses, Talent, Education providers, Workforce development agencies, Students and the Community at large"*. This initiative of the Academy will include a website promoting Nevada County's Tech Community as well as collaborative meetings between all members during the year 2016-17.

Prepared by:
SHAVATI KARKI-PEARL
<http://connected.academy>
Office: 530-362-7171 • Cell: 818-823-3189
E-Mail: shavati@ncerc.org • shavati@connected.academy



CalWORKS Quarterly Report October – December 2016

SUMMARY OF KEY ACTIVITIES FOR THE REPORTING PERIOD:

Since the launch of the Academy, it has become apparent that more than simply offering courses and making them available, the role of this Academy needs to start with building awareness of the transitioning of jobs and careers into a digital skilled workforce, especially as all industries are now utilizing automation in some form or the other. As a foundation, we need to educate the community in the career possibilities with digital skills not only in Nevada County but also as remote free-lancers and employees. Locally we are building a Tech Collaborative in order to start bringing the tech ecosystem more to the forefront and highlighting activities and opportunities for the population of the county. Also our focus is not only on career seeking individuals but also on incumbent workers who can benefit from skills upgrade in their career path.

Connected Communities Academy:

- Upcoming January Classes and Events at the bottom of the report
- Last year had the following classes between Sept and November (20 students attended in total, average of 5 per class)-
 - VR Film Making (Come see the film on Yuba River at the VR Lounge at Wild and Scenic Film Festival on January 13-14-15. We will be at the KVMR Community Room
 - Intro to Software Design as a Career Choice
 - Wordpress.com Workshop
 - VR Game Development
 - Two of the students from this class who are also engineers at AJA are collaborating with CCA to start an official VR Meet Up. Individuals can join on <https://www.meetup.com/Nevada-County-VR>
- Finally, continued working with Nevada County Works to create a digital literacy curriculum for their clients to be offered this year once they complete their move.
- Made a presentation about the Academy and Importance of Digital Literacy at Nevada County Works as well as CalWORKS staff.
- Met with NU Adult Ed Principal Michael Hughes to strategize on joint marketing in the upcoming year.

Connected Communities Tech Collaborative:

- Now officially called "Nevada County Tech Connection" - Working to connect and showcase the technology eco-system in Northern California
- Purchased domain www.nctechconnection.com and .org. Website development underway - will be able to show completed site next month.
- Two Industry Champions identified - Jonathan Palmer, CEO of Autometrix and Michael Anderson, CEO of Client Works and CTO of Spiral Internet
- Held an Agency group focus group during our last talent connection meeting to identify what engagement they needed from tech businesses and what services they could provide.



- Met with SBC, based in Truckee - to collaborate and represent eastern Nevada County and connect with Tech companies and individuals there
- Finalized date of Tech Business Focus Group meeting on January 25th. Luncheon from 11:30- 1:30 hosted by Dee Rein at the Grass Valley-A Belden Brand conference room.
 - Past event promoted by NCTech Connection - Search and Rescue Tech Demo and Hackathon
 - Upcoming events promoted by NC Tech Connection -
 - First official VR MeetUp on Jan 12th from 6-7 pm
 - Hands On IoT building tool- Demo by Bread.inc (organized by Curious Forge and hosted at CCA)

ETP (employment training panel) feasibility Survey

Manjit Asrani an ERC volunteer is finalizing survey questions and outreach letter after receiving feedback from Sandra Scott (ex Sierra College Dean and educational consultant) and Kirstine Farrell from Business and Career Center as well as gathering company directory. Plans to start the survey by February. Our hope is that if we find that there is sufficient need and commitment of time from Employers to send their employees for training, we will create curriculum and apply for ETP funds.

Prepared by:
SHAVATI KARKI-PEARL
<http://connected.academy>
Office: 530-362-7171 • Cell: 818-823-3189
E-Mail: shavati@ncerc.org • shavati@connected.academy



**CalWORKS Quarterly Report
January – March 2017**

SUMMARY OF KEY ACTIVITIES FOR THE REPORTING PERIOD:

Since the launch of the Academy, it has become apparent that more than simply offering courses and making them available, the role of this Academy needs to start with building awareness of the transitioning of jobs and careers into a digital skilled workforce, especially as all industries are now utilizing automation in some form or the other. As a foundation, we need to educate the community in the career possibilities with digital skills not only within Nevada County but also as remote free-lancers and employees. Locally we are building a Tech Collaborative in order to start bringing the tech ecosystem more to the forefront and highlighting activities and opportunities for the population of the county. Also our focus is not only on career seeking individuals but also on incumbent workers who can benefit from skills upgrade in their career path. This effort will assist in not only bringing attention to our Tech Sector but also provide a valuable resource for our students and individuals looking to get employment in this sector.

Connected Communities Academy:

- Upcoming Classes and Events are attached with this report
- From Jan-Mar 2017, we have held the following classes and workshops. We have had a total of 31 students attend these sessions.
 - C# for beginners
 - UX (user experience) Design Fundamentals
 - Fundamentals of DJ performance
 - Digital Self Defense workshop
 - WordPress workgroup every Friday
 - Digital Skills Boot Camp (currently in session)
- In consultation with Connecting Point, created a digital skills boot camp for their clients which will introduce them to 21st century digital skills required in today's workforce regardless of which companies they work for. We currently have 6 people enrolled in this class. The topics introduced over a 6 week period are as follows:
 - Making Email Work
 - Project Management and Collaboration Solutions
 - Presentations & Survey Tools
 - Working on the cloud - Document Creation and Collaboration
 - Efficient Conferencing and Calendaring
 - Creating Marketing Materials like a Pro
 - Intro to Social Media Marketing
 - Email Marketing Basics
 - Intro to Website Management
 - Fundamentals of SEO (search engine optimization) and Analytics
 - Personal and Small Business Money Management
 - Digital Self-Defense
- Created partnership with Curious Forge to cross promote both hi-tech and low-tech skills workshops to the community over the next three months: March-May 2017



Nevada County Tech Connection:

- Had soft launch of www.nctechconnection.org. Inviting local tech businesses and professionals to upload their information, news and events.
- We finalized the 4 areas of focus for NCTC – Marketing and Outreach (for the website and the collaborative itself), Education (organized business engagement with the education industry), Talent Development (providing skill development opportunities for staff, freelancers and sole proprietors) and Recruiting (of interns and employees) and Advocacy. This month in order to support the above, we have looked at other initiatives within and outside of the ERC in order to consolidate any efforts and remove redundancies.
 - As a result, it was concluded that the existing “[Talent Connection Task Force](#)” which exists of members from education, workforce and some businesses would serve the NCTC’s Education Focus by working on creating a more organized Tech Business engagement as well as build programs to create awareness of tech career pathways for their students and clients. It will also serve as a platform to continue the work of bringing companies together to
 - Secondly, the “[Connected Communities Academy](#)” will be working with the companies directly in order to get advisement on the types of courses to offer through them for novices as well as incumbent workers that want to grow their skills.
 - Thirdly, NCTC will be taking over an existing group called “[Nevada County Digital Innovators Guild](#)” and their event Techtonic Tuesdays as a platform to bring Speakers, Workshops and Demos to the tech professionals and community in the area.
 - Finally, “[The Curious Forge](#)”, a local maker space will be supported by NCTC and efforts are being made over the next three months to bring middle and high school students and their instructors over for field trips to the forge. We held an advisory meeting for the forge on the 27th of March and brought in representatives of the Cities, County, Workforce Development, Nevada Joint Union High School District, the County Library, Nevada City School of the Arts and Sierra College. The dual purpose of this meeting was to make these parties aware of the Forge as well as get input from them on the various ways the Forge could partner and serve their constituents, clients, students, etc.
 - We also launched the first [Free Code Camp](#) meetup on March 21st. This is a free online coding certification program and the meetup is a facilitated joint peer coding session with a flash presentation from an industry expert during the first 15 minutes. The facilitators for this are Ryan Trauntvein from GitHub and Remington Maxwell from Grass Valley-A Belden Brand.

Prepared by:
SHAVATI KARKI-PEARL
<http://connected.academy>
Office: 530-362-7171 • Cell: 818-823-3189
E-Mail: shavati@connected.academy



**CCA Quarterly Report
April - June 2017**

SUMMARY OF KEY ACTIVITIES FOR THE REPORTING PERIOD:

Since the launch of the Academy, it has become apparent that more than simply offering courses and making them available, the role of this Academy needs to start with building awareness of the transitioning of jobs and careers into a digital skilled workforce, especially as all industries are now utilizing automation in some form or the other. As a foundation, we need to educate the community in the career possibilities with digital skills not only within Nevada County but also as remote free-lancers and employees. Locally we are building a using <http://www.nctechconnection.org> in order to start bringing the tech ecosystem more to the forefront and highlighting activities and opportunities for the population of the county. Also our focus is not only on career seeking individuals but also on incumbent workers who can benefit from skills upgrade in their career path. This effort will assist in not only bringing attention to our Tech Sector but also provide a valuable resource for our students and individuals looking to get employment in this sector.

Please review the in- depth coverage and achievements of CCA listed in this month's issue of [Comstock Magazine](#)

Connected Communities Academy:

- From April to June 2017, we have held the following classes and workshops. We have had a total of 19 students who attended or are enrolled for the following three classes.
 - WordPress Clinic
 - Web Development for Beginners
 - A CalWORKS client Timothy Nielsen has received scholarship to attend this class from one of the instructors
 - OAuth2 in Action. This class is being offered by the CEO and staff of Traitware a local tech company.
- FreeCodeCamp, which is a free class that is held once a month has attendance of 12-15 people every session. This class is hosted at different sites (tech companies) in town, so that the attendees may get introduced to companies and jobs locally

Educational Events:

- On June the 7th - we are hosting an NC-VR event where we had the following two speakers: Michael Fruci – 5 critical drivers of AR/VR 2020. We are expecting 17+ people to attend. Alan Moore – Trends in technology and education
- On June the 13th – we are hosting a presentation "Rising above the noise with your Tech Brand" presented by Diana LaGattuta. Named one of Business Insider's "Most Powerful Women in Mobile Advertising" and Mobile Marketer's "Mobile Women to Watch. This educational event is targeted towards tech professionals who need to promote themselves or their services. We are expecting an attendance of 22 people so far



Finally we completed the “Digital Skills Bootcamp” in May, which introduced the enrolled clients of Connecting Point to 21st century digital skills required in today’s workforce. The next class is scheduled to start on July 24th. This class will also have a minimum of 6 students enrolled. The topics introduced over a 6 week period are as follows:

- Making Email Work
- Project Management and Collaboration Solutions
- Presentations & Survey Tools
- Working on the cloud - Document Creation and Collaboration
- Efficient Conferencing and Calendaring
- Creating Marketing Materials like a Pro
- Intro to Social Media Marketing
- Email Marketing Basics
- Intro to Website Management
- Fundamentals of SEO (search engine optimization) and Analytics
- Personal and Small Business Money Management
- Digital Self-Defense

Upcoming:

- DJ Fundamentals for Beginners starting July 8th (two separate sessions for youth and adults)
- Intro to Digital Audio and Mixing will be offered at the Nevada County Library as part of their Summer program on July 17th
- Workshop on “Digital Self-Defense” during the Tech Fair hosted by the Nevada County Association of Realtors on September 15th, 2017

In addition CCA has mentored 4 high school interns (from Ghidotti, Nevada Union and Bitney Prep High Schools) so that they may get involved and learn about technology classes, the eco-system, career pathways and academic administration. We have also hosted 1 client for AARP- experience works program and helped her add to her digital skills.

Prepared by:
SHAVATI KARKI-PEARL
<http://connected.academy>
Office: 530-362-7171 • Cell: 818-823-3189
E-Mail: shavati@connected.academy



Website Performance Report

Mining for Insight

GoNevadaCounty.com

Prepared for: Nevada County Economic Resource Council

Prepared by: Tom Harbert and Chad Wingo, Nevada County Publishing Co.

Presented: Thursday, June 29, 2017

Period: Q1 Q2 2017 (preliminary)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Traffic for this period (Q1Q2 2017) is about the same as it was over the prior period (Q3Q4 2016), roughly speaking.

Given the inherent seasonality of tourism, it would be best to compare each month of the current period to the same month in the prior year. But since we don't have access to the data used in prior years, in this report we will look how the first half of 2017 compares to the second half of 2017 for several important metrics.

The audience to GoNevadaCounty.com comes primarily from Google organic search. We see huge opportunity in expanding the audience beyond Google with promoted posts on social media, starting an email newsletter, and even push notifications.

The following page is the standard report for the period, up to June 29, 2017.

The list of recommendations toward the end of this document remain largely unchanged from the prior report.

The dashboard is likely to give rise to new questions and that's good! We are happy to provide further detail on any questions you have about the website's performance, how the data is collected or maintained, or what it means.

GoNevadaCounty.com Audience Dashboard

Jan 1, 2017 - Jun 29, 2017

Some data in this report may have been removed when a threshold was applied. [Learn more](#)



Users (Unique Visitors)

17,996

% of Total: 100.00% (17,996)

Avg. Session (Visit) Duration

00:01:11

Avg for View: 00:01:11 (0.00%)

Total Sessions (Visits)

21,480

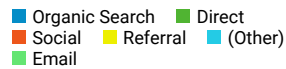
% of Total: 100.00% (21,480)

Total Pageviews (Entire Site)

36,855

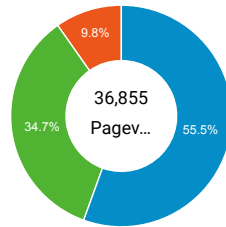
% of Total: 100.00% (36,855)

Traffic Source Breakdown



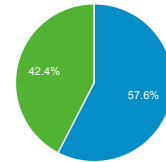
Device Category (Mobile)

desktop mobile tablet

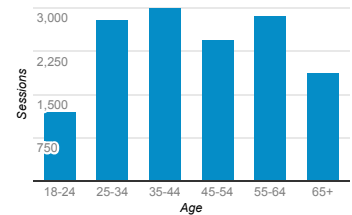


Gender

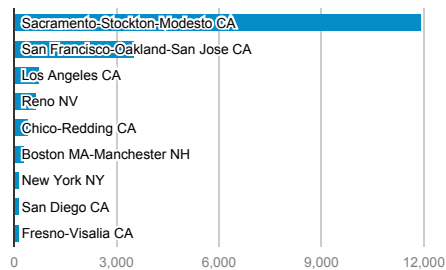
female male



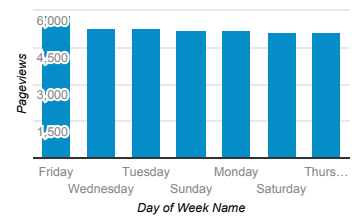
Age



Sessions by Metropolitan Area (DMA)



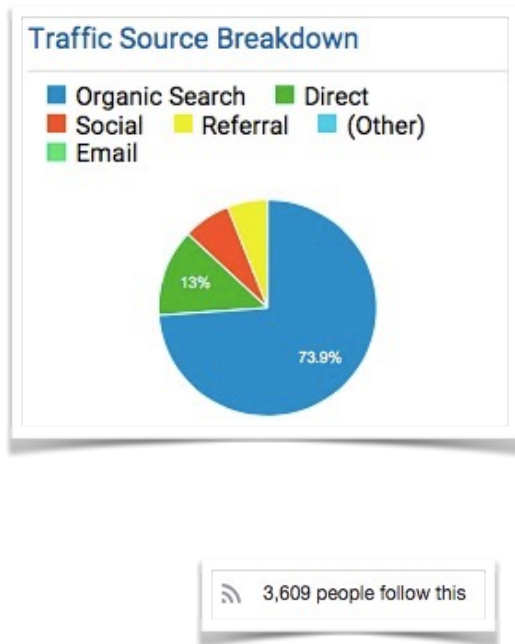
Pageviews by Day of Week



Top pages

Page	Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page
/events/	4,477	00:03:36
/	3,281	00:01:23
/attraction/bowman-lake-recreation-area/	1,463	00:03:10
/recreation/hiking/	937	00:01:12
/2017/04/easter-events-in-nevada-county-2017/	878	00:04:57
/recreation/fishing/	762	00:01:11
/recreation/camping/	645	00:01:00
/2017/04/things-to-do-in-nevada-county-this-month/	561	00:03:18
/history/gold/	559	00:02:38
/attraction/pioneer-park/	459	00:01:52

Traffic from Facebook seems low



The orange slice on the Traffic Source graph on the report shows the percentage of sessions to GoNevadaCounty.com that come from Facebook. Facebook contributed about 1,500 sessions to the website for the six month period. In that time there were about 320 posts to the Go Nevada County Facebook page, of which only 45, or 14%, promoted the GoNevadaCounty.com website.

In other words, the website gained 4.7 new site sessions for each post it made to Facebook, and about 33 sessions to the site for each post that linked to GoNevadaCounty.com.

33 sessions per Facebook post is small given that about 3,600 people follow the Go Nevada County Facebook page. That means that out of every 100 'friends' on Facebook, one clicks to the website to find out more.

Recommendation: In order to better leverage Facebook, either increase the number of FB posts that link to GoNevadaCounty.com and/or pay Facebook for "promoted posts" to reach more of the potential 3,600.

'Other' traffic is nowhere to be found

The pie chart above shows nothing for "email" because there is no email newsletter.

A weekly newsletter that is opened by half of the recipients and clicked on by just 20% of those, would only need to have a 600 subscribers to get the same traffic that Facebook does.

Recommendation: The website ought to have an email newsletter signup form to collect email addresses.

(600 subscribers x 25 posts x .50 open rate x .20 click rate = 1500 sessions)

Vacations In Your Inbox

Sign up for our vacation package email newsletter (free) to take back your vacation time for family fun & adventure.

Remind Me to Go On Vacation

Sessions by Metropolitan Area (DMA)



Preaching to the converted?

Roughly half of the traffic to the website (55%) comes from the “Sacramento-Stockton-Modesto” metropolitan area which includes Grass Valley, Nevada City, Rocklin, etc. Although the “Sessions by Metropolitan Area” dashboard widget doesn’t demonstrate this because it only shows top 9, that means that roughly half (45%) comes from *outside* our Metro area.

If we look at the pages that Users land on when they first come to the site, we can see that a larger percentage of our local audience is interested in “Events” pages than other areas.

We can also see that “Events” page traffic (in blue below) remains pretty consistent throughout the year, yet “Attractions” are very much tied to the time of year.

We have initiated a better method to group different types of pages, and suspect that in future reports we might be able to show that locals are using the site to discover events and non-locals are using the site to research recreation.

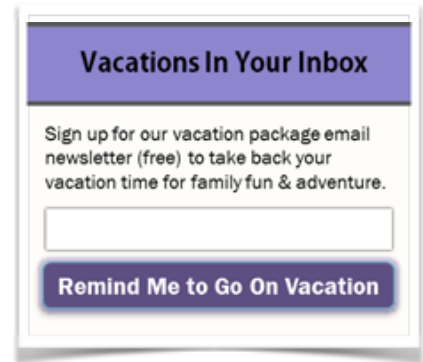
1. Sacramento-Stockton-Modesto CA	
Events	6,822
Recreation	3,387
Attractions	8,477
1. San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose CA	
Events	1,354
Recreation	1,179
Attractions	3,120



RECOMMENDATIONS

Create Newsletter(s) for repeat traffic

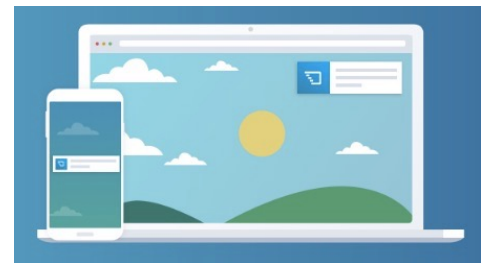
Creating a newsletter signup on the site, and inviting users to sign up for a newsletter is a great way to encourage repeat site visits.



Initiate Push Notification Program to encourage repeat visits

Every time a new article is published on the website, we could invite readers to visit the site to see it with an alert in their web browser, no matter where they are using push notifications.

Push notifications are fairly simple to install, and are relatively inexpensive, depending on the number of subscribers should cost between \$0 and \$75 a month. Push notifications can have a very high open rate; we've seen as many as 50% of push notifications are clicked.



Consider Audience Intent/Audience Extension Advertising Program.

An Audience Extension advertising program would allow us to target likely readers on a multitude of Internet websites and invite them to visit GoNevadaCounty.com.

Consider 'Promoted Posts' on social media

It is a common fallacy to believe that we can reach all of our Facebook 'friends' by posting to our Facebook page, because Facebook only shows our posts to a portion of our friends, and the portion they show it to is up to their algorithm. A simple and inexpensive way to increase traffic to GoNevadaCounty.com would be to pay for Facebook Promoted posts. They allow us to set a budget threshold and target specific audiences. Promoted posts could cost as little as a few dollars a month to test their effectiveness.

Eliminate framed Facebook links on homepage

Although the framed Facebook posts on the homepage look good to the human eye, they are *invisible to Google* content indexing spiders. Even if Google was able to follow the links, it would take them to a Facebook page that (hopefully) linked back to GoNevadaCounty.com. A better way to show Google the importance of site links is by having links to our own articles on our own pages. Please, please consider putting links on the homepage that link directly to articles on the site, and not have them link elsewhere (Facebook). Check out how Google sees the site by visiting www.browseo.net

Improve site performance transparency

We recommend installing Quantcast analytics tags on the GoNevadaCounty.com website template. This will allow stakeholders and members of the public to understand the performance of the website and better understand the demographic makeup of the site readership without relying on website managers to generate the reports. This gives an redundant measure of accountability above that provided by Google Analytics. Once installed, any stakeholder will be able to visit quantcast.com for performance updates and demographic breakdown.

Transfer of analytics data

The raw data collected by Google Analytics for the website is an asset that belongs to the website owners, not to the individuals who set it up. We will be happy to add others to the current Google Analytics account do examine the data at the request of the site owners. Just email tomh@theunion.com.

NOTES

Analytics SPAM

All Google Analytics accounts get fake traffic from automated systems that send out hits to random Google Analytics accounts. The GoNevadaCounty.com analytics account is no exception. It can be almost impossible to filter out all analytics SPAM. In other words, the number of Users and Pageviews reported in the GoNevadaCounty.com is undoubtedly higher than the actual number of folks we truly reach. A better metric to track is the number of “Conversions”. If we want users to sign up for a newsletter, play a video, or download a wine trail map, we can set those Goals in analytics and track how many of those happen. Those conversions are unlikely to be mimicked by Spammers and are a much better metric to track going forward than squishy numbers of “users”.

Ad Blockers and Analytics

Many web browsers (Safari) have built-in ad blockers. There are also web browser extensions that can be downloaded for almost any web browser that block ads. Some ad blockers also block the ability to track users in Google Analytics. So there may be real users on the website which are invisible to Google Analytics. In other words, the number of real human beings reading the site might actually be higher than reported by analytics.

Beware “Vanity” metrics:

We must track metrics that truly matter, and not just those that make us feel good about ourselves. Facebook “likes” is one such vanity metric. The number of people who “like” our page on Facebook goes up and up, but it doesn’t necessarily correspond to the number of people that see our Facebook posts. If it did, the number of referrals to the site would go up and up. The number of Facebook people that “like” a post doesn’t necessarily correspond to the number of visitors to our area, or even the number that follow a link to read a blog post.



Nevada County Economic Resource Council

FY 2016-17 Comprehensive Economic Development Program Management

	Budget	Actual	
Economic Development Services	\$118,600.00	\$187,963.76	\$187,963.76
Tourism Marketing Services			
Website Maintenance-GoNevadaCounty.com	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 12,00.00	
Leveraged Marketing	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 1,824.40	\$ 13,824.40
Total	\$132,600.00		\$201,788.16