

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE



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Front row, left to right:

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Economic Development Committee has the responsibility to investigate the County departments which comprise the County Economic Development Agency as follows:

Economic Development Department
Department of Workforce Development
Redevelopment Agency
Department of Community Development and Housing

Subcommittees were formed to review the performance of each department. Visitations were made to all of the above. The department heads and staff that we met were cooperative, professional, knowledgeable and dedicated. The actions of the Economic Development Committee resulted in the following final reports:

Economic Development Agency
Redevelopment Agency

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

BACKGROUND

The Workforce Development Department is one of four departments within the Economic Development Agency (EDA). The main function of this department is to create jobs working with public and private partners. The Grand Jury made four visitations to this department, three of which are included in this report. They were the One Stop Resource Center in Rancho Cucamonga, San Bernardino International Airport (IVEDA), and the Southern California Logistics Airport (SCLA) in Victorville (Victor Valley Economic Development Agency - VVEDA).

FINDINGS

1. The Grand Jury found Workforce Development Department functioning well despite the economic downturn. It has developed a proactive job placement base in the One Stop Employment Centers. The agency currently operates these centers in three strategic locations of the County: Rancho Cucamonga (visited by the Grand Jury), San Bernardino and Victorville. The Rancho Cucamonga location is a full-employment center that screens applicants for the best job suited to the individual. Job placements are based on the applicant's training and experience. The Center also offers enhanced career training and retraining for career changes where applicable. This training is fully-funded by the Federal Government.

The Department solicits and maintains a list of numerous industry and business companies who partner with the County in order to place customers in employment. The Department is active in expanding areas of opportunity with a group of 11 individuals from Workforce Development who search the field and are required to make 44 new contacts per month. The quota for the department is 500 new listings per month.

The Resource Room has a large number of computers which customers use for testing, training, job search of their data banks, completing applications and other tasks. Several Center employees are in the room to assist in computer usage. These resources are above and beyond those supplied by the State Employment Development Department (EDD). In addition, the department works in conjunction with IVEDA and VVEDA. Applicants are usually interviewed by a placement specialist and have the goal of one hour to complete the original application.

2. The Grand Jury visited IVEDA and VVEDA. Both airports are in a functional capacity, but operating differently. Both airports cooperate with the EDA to support satellite business and industries which benefit from air, rail and trucking transport. IVEDA plans to operate as a completely functional passenger airport by the end of 2009. A fully operational terminal with shops and restaurants is powered and

online. VVEDA is equipped to handle aircraft from small general aviation to the Airbus E-380. This includes a repair service and paint shop for all sizes. A recently opened school trains Airframe and Powerplant (A&P) mechanics to fill an increasing nationwide need. Surrounding businesses and industries help to expand the job base and create opportunity for growth.

COMMENDATION

The Grand Jury found a highly functioning Workforce Development Department whose vision focuses on a strong, proactive job placement for its clients. Eleven employees of the Workforce Development Department are in the field, making contact with prospective employers. These employees generate in excess of 500 new listings each month. During these challenging economic times this is a commendable effort.

The services being provided by the One Stop Employment Resource center to individuals seeking employment exceed the services provided by the State Employment Development Department.

REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

CEDAR GLEN

BACKGROUND

The Cedar Glen Disaster Recovery Project Area (CGDRPA) was created under special legislation in 2004 after the Old Fire of 2003. It had previously been declared a Federal Disaster Area in 2003, but additional rains and flooding occurred in 2004. Area boundaries were determined based upon primary and secondary damage reports.

San Bernardino County approved a \$10 million loan to the Redevelopment Agency to be repaid by generated tax increments. Only \$2.4 million was appropriated in December 2005 and \$4.9 million was appropriated in November 2008, with the remainder in a contingency fund.

Disaster recovery area time limits are drastically shorter than for other projects.

- 10 years to implement programs and conduct activities (versus 30 years)
- 10 years to incur debt (versus 20 years)
- 30 years to repay debt (versus 45 years)

County departments working in conjunction are as follows:

- Special Districts for road and water design and improvements, maintenance and operations
- Building and Safety for extension of building fee waivers
- Planning for lot merger requirement
- Tax Collector for tax-defaulted property sale
- California Department of Housing (CDH) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) \$3 million grant from State

Three housing programs are available:

- Housing Rehabilitation Grant
- Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program
- Land Use Services Grant

FINDINGS

1. Commercial programs and mandatory debris clean-up are in development.
2. There is a ten-year time limit for completion of the Cedar Glen Disaster Recovery Project Area because it is a Federal disaster area.

3. Only five years remain to complete the project as a result of delays due to problems and finances with water rights.
4. Some residents feel they are not informed by Redevelopment about plans, progress, and meetings, even though Redevelopment stated that notices have been posted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 09-23 All agencies involved take into consideration these time restraints and complete the project within the time limit or get an extension. (Findings 2 and 3)
- 09-24 Provide direct mailings to residents regarding plans, progress, and meetings to ensure that everyone residing in the project area is informed on a regular basis. (Finding 4)