

To: GOED Board Members

From: Director Thomas J. Burns

Date: November 14, 2024

Subject: Director's Report

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## **Business Development**

- We've seen a surge in new project inquiries and progress on existing projects. Current leads include a hyperscale data center as well as four others. Additionally, the division is in negotiations with two major warehousing and distribution centers, six manufacturing companies, a military defense project and three recycling and clean energy projects. They have conducted three site visits with our RDA partners since the previous board meeting and have been shortlisted for six new facilities.
- In October, a top German polymer manufacturing company working with Alex Bacchus visited a site in Fernley to conduct late-stage negotiations for its North American entry. The potential job creation for these projects is 1,785 new jobs and a capex of over \$3.7 billion.

## **International Business Development**

- During the last week of October, I had the privilege of joining the Energy Transition Delegation to Denmark, where I engaged with companies at the forefront of innovative solutions in hydrogen, renewable fuels, and energy efficiency. Denmark has long been a global leader in sustainable and resilient energy practices, and we have an exciting chance to bring Nevada into these conversations. By leveraging Denmark's expertise and fostering these partnerships, our state can position itself to capitalize on advancements in clean energy.

## **Innovation-Based Economic Development**

- On Oct. 4, the SBA announced that it selected Nevada and UNLV as one of six new states to win a Federal and State Technology Partnership Program (FAST) grant. FAST provides funding to organizations to execute state/regional programs that increase the number of Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer awards to technology intensive small businesses.

GOED's Karsten Heise, senior director strategic programs & innovation, architected the FAST grant application, which builds upon the Sierra Accelerator for Growth and

Entrepreneurship, a Knowledge Fund-supported program housed at UNR and UNLV. This is the first time that Nevada has won a FAST grant since 2019 and only the third time since GOED's inception.

- On Oct. 24, the National Science Foundation (NSF) announced that it advanced 71 teams to the proposal stage for the second-ever Regional Innovation Engines. Nevada's project, the "Recharge Nevada Initiative, A Coalition for Energy Innovation" led by UNR, will now be competing for \$160M in seed funding over a 10-year period. It had been one of only 44 recipients of an NSF Engines Development Award in 2023, and the team is now preparing for a full application submission by Feb. 11, 2025.

GOED has been an integral part in the Recharge Nevada Initiative and Karstén Heise is a co-principal investigator in the NSF Engines project. The inclusion of Nevada among the 71 teams is essential progress towards building an innovation-based circular lithium economy in our state.

Strengthening the sustainability and new energy tech sector further, Nevada has already been part of the 10 first-ever awarded Engines with UNLV and DRI as main partners and SouthWest Sustainability Innovation Engines led by Arizona State University. Nevada's DRI is also part of the FutureFood Engines proposal led by UC Davis which was among the 71 selected projects.

- The Individual Career Mapping (ICM) Program, developed by GOED and led by Senior Workforce Librarian in Residence Tammy Westergard, is expanding career services across Nevada, focused initially on the North Las Vegas Library District 3-branch system and the Carson City Library as GOED's featured 'residency' libraries. This initiative is guided by the ICM External Advisory Board, which evaluates program impact through reviewing virtual reality simulation feedback, research instruments, and providing guidance based on frameworks like Experiential Learning Theory. The advisory board will meet quarterly, starting on Dec. 31, 2024, to assess progress on trainer preparedness, participant satisfaction, and overall program impact.
- The Workforce Librarian-in-Residence role, supporting VR-based career mapping, collaborates with an extensive network of partners: UNLV College of Education, Domestic Violence Resource Center, College of Southern Nevada, Elko County School District, Western Nevada College, Truckee Meadows Community College, Great Basin College, and Middle Tennessee State University, among others.

Additionally, GOED is coordinating with Friends in Service Helping and the Veterans Hospital in Washoe County to foster career readiness through integrated VR tools and practical learning experiences across various libraries. Through these efforts,

the ICM program aims to expand VR career services statewide by mid-2026, with structured reporting to GOED and the Attorney General's Office.

### **Nevada APEX Accelerator**

- The Nevada APEX Accelerator and the Governor's Office hosted a "Doing Business with the Navy and Marine Corps" event on Oct. 18, at the Clark County Government Center. There were over 40 attendees, most being small business owners or employees.
- The Nevada APEX Accelerator director and team members attended the National APEX Accelerator Alliance conference in Washington, D.C. from Oct. 28 – 31.

For the period from Sept. 1, 2023 – Sept. 1, 2024, about 210 businesses registered to receive Nevada APEX Accelerator services for the first time.

### **Workforce Development**

- Director of Workforce Development Elaine Silverstone continues to strengthen relationships with partners in the education and workforce ecosystem across our state. October was Manufacturing Month, a time to celebrate the manufacturing industry and inspire the next generation of workers. GOED's representation at events across Nevada System of Higher Education institutions and Nevada Department of Education workshops was notable.
- Similarly, our workforce development leadership presence was impactful at start-up events in partnership with colleagues from start-up and entrepreneurship teams.

### **Healthcare**

- GOED Healthcare Industry Specialist Vance Farrow hosted a full house event with representatives from the National Institutes of Health. We were fortunate to have executive leadership from the National Institute on Aging, National Institute of General Medical Services, National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, and the Office of Small Business Support for Innovative Technology. The presenters also shared insights on leveraging resources from each of the other 27 different institutes within NIH.

The half-day program included 16 one-on-one meetings for Nevada companies and researchers, with an additional 19 meetings scheduled throughout the HLTH Conference week, providing tailored guidance in addition to the community sessions on growing our state's bioscience infrastructure. There were many valuable ecosystem takeaways, such as how to incorporate 'best practices' from other communities, workforce development, internship opportunities, tech transfer

programs, utilizing conventions for economic development, participation in NIH ecosystem calls, engagement with Congressional representatives, grant writing and continued collaboration with NIH offices. We are optimistic about this opportunity and will continue to work with the NIH for mentorship and additional resources to grow our biosciences sector.

- GOED worked with the principals of the North East Medical Services, a federally qualified health center based in San Francisco to expand services to southern Nevada. The launch of the new clinical facility, Go East Medical Services, will focus on the monolingual Chinese population and create a medical home for this vulnerable population. With over 50 years of expertise in this field, we welcome their expertise to our community and will support their growth moving forward.
- GOED continues to work with the principals of Intermountain Health and celebrates the recent site unveiling of Nevada's first stand-alone children's hospital at UNLV Harry Reid Research and Technology Park. This effort will fortify our comprehensive subspecialty care for children in Nevada and greatly reduce the strain on families already burdened by emotionally and physically challenging health conditions.
- GOED partners with the Nevada Action Coalition to provide Certified Nursing Assistant training programs for Nevadans interested in a career in nursing, which is funded through AARP and the Robert Wood Foundation. Thus far in 2024, we graduated 69 certified nurse assistants, yielding 32 directly into employment, with another 17 pending their final clinical exams. Other graduates are currently undergoing interviews with clinical providers or have opted to continue pursuing their education towards their registered nursing degree.

### **Nevada Film Office**

- In October, the film office hosted a production resource fair to connect individuals and businesses who offer goods and services to the film and television industry. Over 100 crew members and vendors attended to network and connect with other professionals already established and working in the industry locally.
- The film office attended the American Film Market (AFM) during the first week of November at the Palms in Las Vegas. AFM is a business event for the independent film industry that brings together filmmakers, sales agents and distributors where more than \$1 billion in distribution and financing deals are closed. The NFO had a booth as part of AFM's LocationEXPO, which connects film commissions, government agencies and production services together with AFM's filmmaker community. As the first AFM event in Vegas, NFO capitalized on the captive audience that traveled into the region and had productive meetings.

## **Office of Entrepreneurship**

- GOED proudly sponsored three major events showcasing Nevada's growing entrepreneurial ecosystem. Reno Startup Week and Las Vegas Startup Week, where we engaged almost a thousand attendees through panels and workshops, and the fifth annual Launch Rural Nevada pitch competition hosted by Regional Development Authority NNRDA in Elko, where our own Alex Bacchus and Shaquille Cruz served as judges.

Next week, Nevada will enjoy statewide representation as part of Global Entrepreneurship Week, and will showcase the state to national tech entrepreneurs and investors at Pitch Mayhem.

- Nevada was named the next national destination for ecosystem builders, with the Office of Entrepreneurship to host the Startup Champions Network in May 2025.

## **Rural & Community Economic Development**

- The grant eligibility process for the 2025 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) cycle closed on October 18. The CDBG program received 26 proposed projects requesting \$13 million. CDBG staff reviewed the proposed projects and of the 26 proposed projects 15 will be moving forward to the application stage.

The 15 moving forward total \$7,550,996 in requested funds. CDBG is estimating receiving around \$3 million in CDBG funds. Applications for the 2025 Grant Cycle will be due February 2025.

- Conducted site visits with Nevada Main Street organizations that will be applying for national accreditation. Becoming nationally accredited with Main Street America is an honor, and shows the organizations are following best practices and have created sustainable and impactful organizations.