University of Nevada
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Fact Sheet-12-14

A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy: Assessing Current Conditions in Lander, Eureka and White Pine Counties

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According to the International Economic Development Council (IEDC, 2006), "Strategic planning is a process in which a community can look at its current situation and compare that situation to where it would like to be in a certain matter of time." As part of this process, economic development strategic planning involves:

- A realistic appraisal of available resources, constraints, and opportunities.
- The development of achievable goals.
- The formulation and implementation of project action plans to reach those goals.

This fact sheet assesses the current income and employment conditions in Lander County, Eureka County, and White Pine County. These conditions are compared with the eligibility requirements established by the U.S. Department of Commerce and the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 13 Part 303, as part of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

The CEDS, according to CFR Title 13 Part 303 Section 303.7, should "…analyze the regional economy and serve as a guide for establishing regional goals and objectives, developing and implementing a regional plan of action, and identifying investment priorities and funding sources."

In 2011, the Nevada State Legislature passed Assembly Bill (AB) 449. According to the Nevada Governor's Office of Economic Development (2012), in addition to establishing several economic development funds, authorizing the creation of the Nevada Governor's Office of Economic Development, and requiring the development of a statewide economic development plan, AB 449 also established several economic development regions and governing regional economic development authorities across the state, eventually including the Great Basin Regional Development Authority that includes the counties of Lander, Eureka and White Pine.

Since passage of AB 449, as part of its implementation, these regions have been developing their own CEDS in order to qualify for various state and federal economic development grants. Using the eligibility requirements in CFR Title 13 Part 301 Section 301.7 as a guide, this fact sheet examines current per capita income and employment conditions in Lander, Eureka and White Pine counties. To meet the definition of a "distressed community" and be eligible for federal economic development assistance, communities or regions, in their CEDS, must meet the following per capita income and employment eligibility requirements:

- An unemployment rate that is, for the most recent 24-month period for which data is available, at least one 1 percentage point greater than the national average unemployment rate.
- Per capita income that is, for the most recent period for which data is available, 80.0 percent or less of the national average per capita income.
- A Special Need, as determined by the U.S. EDA. A Special Need is not explicitly defined in the CFR and is usually negotiated between the jurisdiction submitting the CEDS and the U.S. EDA. Because of this, only the Per Capita Income and Employment eligibilities for Lander, Eureka, and White Pine counties are discussed in further detail.

In a February 2012 fact sheet, the U.S. EDA recommends that U.S. Census Bureau data be used to estimate 24-month unemployment and per capita income levels using 2010 American Community Survey (ACS) one-year estimates, 2011 ACS three-year estimates, 2010 ACS five-year estimates, and 2009 one-year estimates. According to the U.S. EDA (2012), if the target area has a population of less than 20,000, the 2010 ACS five-year estimates, for 2006 to 2010, will be used. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the combined residential population of Lander, Eureka, and White Pine counties was 17,792. In this case, 2010 ACS five-year estimates will be used to assess the per capita income and employment CEDS eligibility.

Per Capita Income Eligibility

Using 2010 ACS five-year estimates, Table 1 presents per capita income levels for Lander, Eureka and White Pine counties, the State of Nevada, and the United States.

Table 1
Per Capita Income – Lander County, Eureka County, White Pine County, State of Nevada, United States
2006-2010 Five-Year Estimates

Jurisdiction	Per Capita Income	Percentage of State-Wide Per Capita Income	Percentage of National Per Capita Income
Lander County	$25,287	91.7%	92.5%
Eureka County	$30,306	109.8%	110.9%
White Pine County	$21,615	78.3%	79.1%
State of Nevada	$27,589	100.0%	-
United States	$27,335	-	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey (ACS) Five-Year Estimates

In the Great Basin Regional Development Authority region, only White Pine County met the U.S. EDA per capita income eligibility requirements, being 78.3 percent of statewide per capita income and 79.1 percent of nationwide per capita income. Between 2006 and 2010, per capita income in Lander County was 91.7 percent of statewide per capita income and 92.5 percent of nationwide per capita income. Eureka County was 109.8 percent of statewide per capita income and 110.9 percent of nationwide per capita income.

On average, the three counties that comprise the Great Basin Regional Development Authority area were 93.3 percent of statewide per capita income and

94.2 percent of nationwide per capita income. Using the 80 percent or less per capita income eligibility requirement, the Great Basin Regional Development Authority region would not qualify as a "distressed community" under CFR Title 13 Part 301 Section 301.7.

Employment Eligibility

Using 2010 ACS five-year estimates, Table 2 presents unemployment rates for Lander, Eureka and White Pine counties, the State of Nevada, and the United States.

Table 2
Unemployment Rate – Lander County, Eureka County, White Pine County, State of Nevada, United States
2006-2010 Five-Year Estimates

Jurisdiction	Unemployment Rate	Difference Between County and State Unemployment	Difference Between County and National Unemployment
Lander County	7.4%	-1.6%	-0.5%
Eureka County	3.7%	-5.3%	-4.2%
White Pine County	6.5%	-2.5%	-1.4%
State of Nevada	9.0%	-	-
United States	7.0%	-	-

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey (ACS) Five-Year Estimates

In the Great Basin Regional Development Authority region, none of the member counties met the U.S. EDA employment eligibility requirements. Between 2006 and 2010, the unemployment rate in Lander County was 7.4 percent, 1.6 percent less than the statewide unemployment rate of 9.0 percent and 0.5 percent less than the national unemployment rate. In Eureka County, the five-year estimated unemployment rate was 3.7 percent, 5.3 percent less than the statewide unemployment rate and 4.2 percent less than the national unemployment rate. In White Pine County, the five-year estimated unemployment rate was 6.5 percent, 2.5 percent less than the statewide rate and 1.4 percent less than the national rate.

On average, the three counties that comprise the Great Basin Regional Development Authority area had an average five-year estimated unemployment rate of 5.9 percent, which was 3.1 percent less than the statewide unemployment rate of 9.0 percent and 2.0 percent less than the nationwide unemployment rate of 7.0 percent. Using the employment eligibility standard set by the U.S. EDA, that the unemployment rate of the target study area be at least 1 percentage point greater than the national average unemployment rate, the Great Basin Regional Development Authority region would not qualify as a "distressed community" under CFR Title 13 Part 301 Section 301.7.

Conclusion

Although the three counties of Lander, Eureka and White Pine would not qualify as a "distressed community" under the U.S. EDA guidelines set out in CFR Title 13 Part 301 Section 301.7 using the employment and per capita income standards, the designation of a "distressed community" for the Great Basin Regional Development Authority region can be achieved if a "Special Need" is granted by the U.S. EDA. Past community needs assessments of each individual county, conducted by other University of Nevada Cooperative Extension (UNCE) Extension Educators and staff, can be used to help develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the region, including Lander, Eureka, and White Pine counties, which focus on the special needs of each county within a larger region.

For example, in UNCE Fact Sheet 08-33 (Sendall, Harris, McCuin and Singletary), data on incommuting rates for Eureka County showed that, "Eureka County has a strong localized competitive advantage in providing jobs, especially in mining, but a severe shortage in housing and a developed commercial sector." This lack of housing and commercial activity places a strain on the regional economy interms of maintaining infrastructure that supports high frequencies of between-county commuting across the region.

In UNCE Fact Sheet 09-42 (McCuin, Smith, and Shultz (a)), eight separate primary issues were identified for Eureka County, including the need for an adequate and reliable supply of water for residents and industries, underage drinking, medical care, elder care, use of illegal drugs, retention of the rural atmosphere and quality of life, keeping incidences of juvenile crime low, and noxious weed invasion. In UNCE Special Publication 11-03 (McCuin, Smith, and Shultz (b)), 10 top youth issues in Eureka County were discovered, ranging from the use of illegal drugs and underage drinking to the teaching of agriculture-related issues in the classroom and the need to develop a skilled trades curriculum in Eureka.

In moving forward with a CEDS for the Great Basin Regional Development Authority region, including the counties of Lander, Eureka and White Pine, this past work by other faculty and staff of UNCE will be critical in assessing the region's Special Need eligibility in order to qualify for state economic development grants under AB 449 and through the Nevada Governor's Office of Economic Development. This "Special Needs" designation from the U.S. EDA will also be needed in order to secure federal economic development assistance grants that can be used, as part of the regional CEDS plan of action, to begin to address the economic and community development concerns of each county and the region as a whole.

References

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