

WNDD LAUNCHES NEVADA SPEED TEST FOR IMPROVED INTERNET ACCESS



INSIDE:

- ▶ Lovelock Industrial Park to Benefit from EPA Tech Assistance Grant
- ▶ Board Discusses Affordable and Workforce Housing
- ▶ Action Teams Engage In Recovery And Resiliency Plan



UPDATES, GRANTS AND INFORMATION YOU NEED TO KNOW

WELCOME

Happy New Year and welcome to the Winter 2021/2022 edition of the Economic Recovery and Resiliency Update from the Western Nevada Development District (WNDD)!

This newsletter is part of WNDD's effort to build a more resilient economy in our region. The activities and progress of WNDD and the Action Teams will be reported to help WNDD members and other businesses and organizations plan and implement their recovery and resiliency efforts.

This publication is part of a Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) Supplemental Award for the United States. It intends to help troubled areas attract industry, retain and develop businesses, and create long-term sustainable private-sector jobs and investments.

4 Key Takeaways

- 1 The Economic Recovery and Resiliency (ERR) Action Teams have begun implementing the **Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan** (ERRP).
- 2 WNDD awarded a US Environmental Agency **Technical Assistance Grant** to conduct a market positioning study for the Lovelock Industrial Park.
- 3 The Western Nevada Broadband Initiative launched a **broadband access connectivity mapping project** to help improve internet access in the region.
- 4 There are **four grant opportunities** available for agencies and organizations supporting economic development, youth, veterans, and more.



EPA Tech Assistance Grant To Reveal Opportunities At Lovelock Industrial Park

WNDD won a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Technical Assistance Grant to conduct a market positioning study for the Lovelock Industrial Park.

The market report will help the Pershing-Lovelock Brownfields Coalition Assessment Grant Team, which the WNDD manages with members Pershing County and the City of Lovelock.

The study will:

- Find potential industrial park development partners
- Identify important economic and labor market variables
- Identify the site's strengths and shortcomings
- Provide a framework for marketing materials

The market study is planned to conclude in March 2022.

The Nevada 95-80 Regional Development

Authority (RDA) will benefit significantly from a comprehensive market study and tactical marketing materials, especially with the proposed construction of the largest lithium mine in North America and the Nevada West Coast Salmon Project near Cosgrave in Pershing County. The study will determine if and how the industrial park can serve suppliers and vendors for these upcoming projects, which are set to break ground within the year.

Technical Assistance grants are awarded on a regional basis. The funding can range from \$10,000 to \$50,000 and is awarded to and conducted by an EPA-approved contractor. EPA Region 9 managers issued the assistance beginning in October. They brought on EPA contractor Vito Nuevo to organize and facilitate data collection and interpretation of relevant economic and labor market indices, then assist with applying and presenting results in an easy-to-read format.

EPA Brownfields Program Bolstered By Infrastructure Bill

The [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#), signed into law in November 2021, will dedicate more than \$1.5 billion to the U.S. EPA Brownfields program. The Act includes hundreds of millions of dollars allocated to multipurpose grants, assessment grants, cleanup grants, revolving loan fund grants, and technical assistance and is intended to improve equity, stimulate redevelopment and reuse, create jobs, and mitigate environmental degradation.

The U.S. EPA released an outline of how it will distribute the funding, including key information about funding limits for multipurpose, assessment, cleanup, and revolving loan fund grants, plus upcoming grant timelines. Read the funding breakdown here: [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law: A Historic Investment in Brownfields \(mcusercontent.com\)](#)

WNDD Launches Speed Test to Support Reliable Internet Access

Affordable Access for Everyone Begins with Accurate and Timely Data.



Reliable, affordable internet connectivity should be available for everyone in Northern Nevada. High-speed internet is the great equalizer because it is required to access basic services and information. But not all communities are equally served by broadband. WNDD formed the Western Nevada Broadband Initiative with its government members to find out who is really missing out on broadband access.

The initiative's first step is to create a comprehensive map of internet connectivity. To do so, it's asking everyone in the region to log on to nevadaspeedtest.org and complete a quick speed test. This will help the Initiative gather the needed data to close the gaps. The Nevada Speed Test takes less than a minute to complete on any device with internet or cellphone connectivity. People can take the test from home, work, or school.

Broadband mapping is a prerequisite for investing in inclusive, sustainable infrastructure. It can swiftly pinpoint service areas and assess broadband connectivity in real-time.

Speed test results will be overlaid on GIS data layers for the region to help identify places in need of dependable, affordable broadband connectivity. The program can also estimate project costs by assessing topography and fiber construction methods and materials.

With the unveiling of the American Rescue Plan, which includes money for broadband, this tool is critical now more than ever. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill adds another \$42.5 billion for broadband, bringing the total to \$300-400 million for Nevada, including some subsidies for individuals who cannot afford internet.

Through its partnership with the Western

Nevada Development District, the Initiative will write grants to capture state, federal, and other funding. The Nevada Speed Test will also assist grant administrators and internet service providers to verify the impact of their programs and intended targets in real-time without relying on out-of-date historical maps.

Western Nevada Broadband Initiative: Next Steps

- Regional outreach to urge residents to take the Speed Test, including attracting sponsors to fund paid media advertising and other costs
- Once speed test results have been gathered, training will begin for a regional team on using the map as a planning tool
- Assess regional broadband requirements and potential funding initiatives for 2022 with the WNDD Regional Broadband Action Team
- Collaboration with communities in the WNDD region on using the map to design and cost broadband projects, and to apply for project funding for improved connectivity
- Engagement with the federal NTIA and the state Office of Science and Technology (OSIT) on broadband grant procedures

**CLICK
HERE**

to take the Nevada Speed Test today.

SEEKING SOLUTIONS WNDD Board Discusses Affordable and Workforce Housing

Seeking Solutions is a new component of WNDD's board meetings where subject matter experts join a short roundtable discussion on regional solutions to pressing economic and community development challenges.

In the first roundtable held at the Dec. 13 meeting, WNDD board members and other panelists shared the latest strategies and tactics to address the region's multi-faceted housing challenges. Participants included:

- **Aaron West**, CEO of the Nevada Builders Alliance
- **Christine Hess**, Executive Director of the Nevada Housing Coalition
- **Stacey Sept**, Director of Community Development for the Nevada Rural Housing Authority

The group discussed a variety of strategies and tactics with the board, including how to:

- Address the misconceptions of NIMBY-ism as it relates to home values
- Adopt zoning policies that allow higher densities or Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)
- Continue to engage landlords with incentives to create more affordable workforce housing

- Develop more community land trusts
- Embrace regional perspectives and promote collaboration between cities, counties, the state, federal agencies, and the private sector
- Identify grant eligible infrastructure projects that promote in-fill
- Increase the supply of land and other resources from local government for the development of affordable housing
- Encourage state engagement that holds local jurisdictions accountable in developing the housing inventory
- Reduce the time it takes to go from planning to implementation of housing projects
- Reduce up-front development costs for developers, cities, and counties

The WNDD Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan (ERRP) framework includes housing as a critical target area for the region. The ERRP Action Teams will be seeking viable strategies and the most immediate and attainable actions that address the challenge of building affordable workforce housing in the WNDD region.

Action Teams Begin Recovery And Resiliency Plan Engagement

The Economic Recovery and Resiliency (ERR) Action Teams have begun the implementation of the Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan (ERRP). The ERR Plan can be found at wndd.org.

The plan's four Target Areas group the four Action Teams:

1. Economic Resiliency
2. Government and Organization Capacity
3. Infrastructure
4. Quality of Life

Within each of the Target Areas, three goals are supported by strategies and actions listed in the ERRP:



Members of the Action Teams are subject matter experts who are well networked and leaders in the area they represent.

WNDD ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND RESILIENCY COUNCIL UPDATE

Action Team members will be ranking the actions needed to achieve goal outcomes using the following criteria:

- Achievability and affordability
- Addresses equity
- Advances skilled workforce pipeline
- Creates or develops resiliency
- Creates sustains quality jobs
- Length of time needed to implement the actions
- Meets ERRP/CEDS goals in a direct and/or robust manner
- Promotes economic prosperity and puts dollars in people's pockets
- Provides business resources and/or tools
- Resources or action partners are available to begin development, engage or implement
- Strengthens WNDD region to be "business ready"



Economic Recovery By the Numbers

\$1 BILLION Nevada's casino industry surpassed \$1 billion in gaming revenue for the eighth month in a row in October, tying a 14-year high and putting the state on track to break the single-year \$12 billion mark for only the fourth time. (thenevadaindependent.com)

101.9% In October 2021, Reno-Tahoe International Airport (RNO) served more than 350,000 passengers, up 101.9 percent from October 2020 and down 7.9 percent from October 2019. Compared to October 2020, total seat capacity grew by 79.9%, while flight capacity increased by 68.6%. (renoairport.com)

1 of 6 According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Nevada added 84,000 jobs in September compared to 2020, bringing total employment to just under 1.35 million. With a year-over-year gain of 6.6 percent, Nevada is now the second-fastest growing state in the US, trailing only Hawaii. Nevada was one of only six states to see job growth of at least 5% over the previous year. (rgj.com)

\$3.35 million The Nevada Interim Finance Committee approved \$3.35 million for the Nevada Department of Education's job development programs to "support student workforce pathways, give literary resources, and build additional programs supporting the State's COVID-19 recovery efforts in education." (nbnw.com)

595,000 Since July, Nevada families have received more than \$750 million in expanded child tax credit direct payments. According to IRS and Treasury data, the credits benefited more than 595,000 Nevada children in November. (nevadacurrent.com)



GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

The Western Nevada Development District offers technical assistance, management, research, and consultation in the federal, state, and private grants/loans ecosystem.

These funding programs can be crucial in economic recovery and resiliency throughout the state and region and address the WNDD Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy goals.

U.S. Department of Agriculture: Rural Broadband

The USDA has begun accepting applications for up to \$1.15 billion in loans and grants to help people in rural areas access high-speed internet. This announcement comes on the heels of the recently enacted Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) which provides another nearly \$2 billion in additional funding for the ReConnect program. USDA anticipates issuing a new Notice of Funding Opportunity to make the additional funds in the IIJA available in 2022.

More information: usda.gov/reconnect

YOUTHBUILD

YOUTHBUILD offers grants to organizations providing pre-apprenticeship services that support education, occupational skills training, and employment services for at-risk youth ages 16-24 while performing meaningful work and service to their communities.

Application Deadline: Jan. 21, 2022

More information: grants.gov and in the search box enter "YouthBuild"

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs offers grants to private, nonprofit organizations and consumer cooperatives that provide support services for very low-income veterans and their families residing in or transitioning to permanent housing. Supportive services grants will be equitably distributed across geographic regions, including rural communities and tribal lands.

Application Deadline: Feb. 7, 2022

More information: va.gov/homeless/

Economic Development Administration: Good Jobs Challenge

The Good Jobs Challenge allocates \$500 million toward industry-led training programs to help get Americans—particularly women, people of color, and those in underserved communities—back to work in good-paying jobs. EDA will fund proposals within the following three phases as applicable to regional needs: System Development, Program Design, and Program Implementation.

Application Deadline: February 10, 2022

More information: eda.gov/arpa/good-jobs-challenge

SEND US YOUR UPDATES AND STORIES

We want to highlight your success stories or opportunities with other WNDD members. To get in touch with us about what you're doing to rebuild a vibrant, resilient, sustainable economy, email Sheryl Gonzales, Executive Director, at sgonzales@wndd.org

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