



## *At a glance (July 2008)*

- **USDA announces \$50,000 grant for strategic planning in Gustine and Los Banos**
- **CCEDC broker mission to east bay area generates interest in Merced County**
- **Draft CEDS completed and public input requested**
- **Regional economic development overview presented to MCAG.**
- **Atwater approves service agreements for 2008-09.**
- **Fourteen project leads identified in July.**

***Upcoming: Enterprise Zone Final EIR to be considered by Board of Supervisors September 2, 2008.***

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- The federal USDA awarded a \$50,000 Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG) to MCEDCO to advance technical assistance and economic development capacity in the cities of Gustine and Los Banos. The RBOG program will provide strategic planning resources to help the communities generate and capitalize on new opportunities. MCEDCO has convened meetings between the rural cities in Merced County and USDA staff in both Washington, DC (in tandem with One Voice) and the Merced office over the past several months to discuss local issues and concerns and available resources from the USDA.
- MCEDCO participated in the CCEDC broker mission to Walnut Creek and Oakland on July 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. The mission heighten awareness of the central valley and identify interest from the brokers on possible project that may consider the valley. The Colliers office in Walnut Creek expressed keen interest in the Atwater/Merced area and a Chinese corporation is interesting locating a site for a metal recycling facility. Other interest focused on commercial/retail projects.
- The draft Merced County Comprehensive economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is complete and available for public input. The document has been circulated to the staff of the cities and county for review. MCEDCO shall present the CEDS to the Board of Supervisors on August 19<sup>th</sup> and the CEDS Strategy Planning Committee will review the CEDS on August 20<sup>th</sup>. The CEDS will be considered by the Board in September as an action item prior to submission to the federal Economic Development Administration (EDA).
- MCEDCO staff provided an overview of regional economic development to the Board of the Merced County Association of Governments on July 17<sup>th</sup>. MCAG was requested to evaluate regional economic development by its member communities and invited MCEDCO to present a summary of the initiatives and activities underway to encourage wealth generation and community prosperity. A critical starting point is dispelling misconceptions of economic development and identifying more resources to help the cities and county of Merced to position to compete for new investment.
- MCEDCO and the City of Atwater approved a service agreement and supplemental enterprise zone management plan on July 14<sup>th</sup>. MCEDCO and the City are collaborating on several initiatives to improve infrastructure and create new business parks and continue to market existing sites for potential business.
- Staff vacations in July reduced the volume of outreach and activity. However, fourteen project leads were identified, including four from the State of California Department of Business Investment Services (CalBIS). CalBIS activity has significantly increased over the past quarter.