



At a glance (June 2007)

- **EDA grant award to MCECO and invite for CCEDC**
- **Small business partnership with SBDC**
- **EZ update (provide link)**
- **RCDI outreach hits Dos Palos, Le Grand and Livingston**
- **Manufacturing outreach contract renewed.**
- **Twenty project leads were generated in March and two site tours were completed.**

For details refer below

The federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) continues to look favorably on the San Joaquin Valley and Merced County. MCEDCO received official notice of a \$60,000 grant award to prepare a comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDDS) for the cities and county of Merced as a precursor to EDA support for infrastructure and job development projects prioritized in each community. During the application process, EDA requested the Central California Economic Development Corporation (CCEDC) to consider undertaking a "valley wide" CEDDS and seek designation as a regional EDA district. MCEDCO is the lead organization preparing the CCEDC application.

MCEDCO has negotiated an agreement with the Alliance Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC) and UC Merced as the regional SBDC director to expand small business and entrepreneurial (SBE) counseling services in Merced County. The arrangement adds consulting and technical training for SBE's to augment the MCEDCO contract with Los Banos and provides more staff to help small business on a daily basis. MCEDCO and Alliance SBDC are also formulating workshops in Gustine to assist downtown merchants.

The State of California Housing and Community Development (HCD) Department responded to the draft mapping of a modified enterprise zone for Merced County. Although nearly the entire county was eligible for designation, HCD stipulated the actual area for designation was the industrial and commercial zoned parcels within each city, and for manufacturing operations located in the county but legally

operating under a conditional use permit. More importantly, the draft EIR has been circulated and comments have been incorporated by consultant Quad Knopf.

Technical training and economic development capacity building for rural communities in Merced County continues to be promoted under the auspices of the USDA funded Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI). The RCDI program has reached Dos Palos, Livingston, and Le Grand as preliminary presentations have been completed and follow up meetings and workshops commenced.

The Corporation for Manufacturing Excellence (Manex) agreed to renew its service agreement with MCEDCO facilitating direct contact with the region's manufacturing businesses. The Manex program also supports MCEDCO's activities to coordinate the Merced Manufacturing General Manager's quarterly meetings undertaken in tandem with the Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce. In the past year the program has identified a dozen investment projects and referred several firms for employment training services offered by Manex.

In the past quarter 31 new project files were opened by MCEDCO staff and three site tours were completed. MCEDCO initiated and followed up with 40 business contacts during the month.