



At a glance (January 2008)

- **West Pack Trade Show in Anaheim identifies export opportunities for local business**
- **PG&E donates \$5,000 to support the Innovation Place Network EDA grant application for expanding small business services in Los Banos and Merced**
- **City of Atwater proposed business park invited to apply for infrastructure planning grant from EDA**
- **Outreach to regional businesses encourages firms to capitalize on enterprise zone benefits and secure employment vouchers for the 2007 tax year**
- **Gustine and Los Banos City Councils reviewed and endorsed county wide CEDS and reviewed strategic planning opportunities for new business parks**

Upcoming: Regional Enterprise Zone of Merced County “kick off” forum and vouchering workshops

- The CCEDC continued its enhanced marketing program and attended the West Pack Trade Show in Anaheim January 28th through 31st. MCEDCO and a representative from Los Banos worked the show and visited other exhibitors promoting investment in the central valley. The expanded marketing program of CCEDC is funded in part by a grant from the California Partnership for San Joaquin Valley. Inevitably businesses outside of the State comment that they receive virtually no contact with other California economic developers.
- The Innovation Place Network is a joint project of Merced College, MCEDCO and the cities of Los Banos and Merced to expand the array of small business and entrepreneur services in the communities. The project has been invited to apply for funding from the Federal EDA. UC Merced and the Alliance SBDC network will also participate. Innovation Place evolved from Congressman Cardoza’s request during the 2007 One Voice campaign to develop a pilot program to address SBE services throughout the Merced region and specifically in Los Banos and the City. PG&E provided a \$5,000 donation to assist with matching fund requirements and both cities have allocated funds to develop the business model.
- The City of Atwater and MCEDCO have been working to facilitate the development of a proposed business park near Santa Fe and Shaffer Drive north of the City. Formulating a master utilities plan is an important first step in the process, and the proposed project has been invited to apply for an EDA planning grant. The proponents will work with local land owners and prospective end users leveraging private funds and to match the EDA contribution.
- Regional businesses are being encouraged to capitalize on the conditionally designated status of the county-wide enterprise zone and take advantage of employment vouchers for 2007 tax year. A series of workshops and seminars specifically focused on employee vouchering re being conducted by the Merced County department of Workforce Investment, while county staff and MCEDCO contact businesses directly to stimulate zone participation.
- In the past month MCEDCO continued to liaise with public agencies in the formulation of a new Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Presentations were made to the Gustine and Los Banos City Councils who reviewed priorities and opportunities as well as endorsed the CEDS.

The communities also reviewed strategic planning opportunities for new business parks and may seek additional funding for these activities.