Chico Business Summit

The 2014 Business Summit and State of the City Address was held Thursday, January 31st. The event took place at the CARD Center in Chico and included the annual State of the City address by Chico Mayor Scott Gruendl, with a question and answer session, an update on the state of the economy, progress on business climate issues, and information on business services provided by “Team Chico.” Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. along with Golden Valley Bank were sponsors of the event. Over 200 community members and business owners attended the event in eager anticipation of pertinent news that would impact their lives and businesses. Local service agencies and educational entities including Butte College The Training Place, 3CORE, Chabin Concepts as well as AFWD were available to provide information about the resources they have available to local businesses.

Chico Mayor, Scott Gruendl, discussed plans and goals for public safety and economic development, followed by Katie Simmons, the CEO of the Chico Chamber, who ended with a Team Chico update. Team Chico is a collaboration of the Chico Chamber, 3CORE, AFWD, Inc., the City of Chico, and the Downtown Chico Business Association. This update included: business walks, business inquiries, and the importance of collaboration and communication between local businesses.
Butte County Alliance for Workforce Development has been participating in the “Probation and Community” (P.A.C) meetings launched by the Butte County Probation Department. Each month a new group of individuals who have been recently placed on probation or post-release community supervision gather to obtain information on services that will help transition them to become productive members of the community. The meetings are intended to provide offenders with community resources. They also provide local law enforcement officers the opportunity to observe and make contact with newly released offenders while gaining knowledge of who is residing within the area.

Approximately 27 representatives from organizations and agencies such as Butte County Behavioral Health, Veterans Affairs, Orchard Church, Culture Center and AFWD set up tables at the Salvation Army’s community center in Chico to provide housing, treatment, health, education and employment information.

PAC is meant to be an overall benefit to everyone involved including offenders, organizations, the Probation Department as well as the community. Attending the monthly meetings is an opportunity for AFWD to network with a variety of service providers as well as provide employment and job seeker information to individuals in need.

AFWD Inc. values their partnerships – with other service agencies, job seekers, employers and the communities they serve.
Dollar General requested the assistance of the Oroville AFWD team the month of March. The Dollar General District Manager called wanting interview space in Oroville and requested to have pre-screened applicants every fifteen minutes for five hours. It took staff a couple of days to secure an appropriate room which gave them five days to post recruitment notices and start the pre-screening process. Resource staff diligently helped in the detailed screening process in order to schedule the closest fit to what the employer was seeking. Staff drew from AFWD’s WIA enrolled participants, the Skills Training Employment Program (S.T.E.P.) pool and public job postings. By that Friday there were thirty-four applicants confirmed for interviews on March 3.

Later that day a call came in from the Dollar General Store manager who reported that they had to cancel the completed recruitment event for March 3 due to “an emergency situation.” Staff immediately called all applicants to cancel the scheduled interviews.

The following Monday, The Dollar General was ready to secure interview space for time later in the week. With all rooms reserved until Thursday of the following week, staff called upon their partners at the EDD office in Oroville to secure a room. Luckily space was available for the requested day. At the end of the busy interviewing day, the District Manager stated “this is the best interviewing day we’ve had.” He followed that statement by asking staff to repeat all services the following week for their new Gridley store. AFWD staff were delighted to fulfill the request and provide their services.

30 New jobs created!

Employment offered to:
* 14 AFWD referred applicants
* 7 Pre-screened walk in’s
* 9 Dollar General referrals
Shanon Essex

Shanon came to AFWD after a layoff from Shasta College in July 2013. He initially visited our center to inquire about why his unemployment had stopped. It turns out; he had exhausted his 26 weeks and was not aware that the Federal Extension program had ended. Resource staff directed him to a Career Center Advisor for an intake so that he could get some additional assistance in his job search. During the intake, it was revealed that Shanon had been involved in the solar industry performing various functions for different employers as well as formerly owning his own design consultant business. Since Shanon’s work experience is more suited to a larger urban environment, he was searching for work spanning from Sacramento to Redding. AFWD was able to assist him with purchasing tires so he could continue his out of town job search. In addition, AFWD had the opportunity to host a Skype interview for Shanon with a solar company while he eagerly awaited hearing back from two other companies he had interviewed with.

During this time, AFWD Business Service team was approached by Digital Path for assistance in hiring for a marketing position and Shanon’s resume was submitted for consideration. To his surprise, an interview was scheduled and the employer was impressed by his work history. Digital Path.net is an internet service provider that is dedicated to making a difference in underserved markets by bringing high-speed internet and phone alternatives to clients. Due to the fact that he had no experience with the internet service provider industry, in order to entice the employer to hire Shanon an On-the-Job Training (OJT) was explained. Digital Path was intrigued with the opportunity and a training plan was set in motion. Shanon recently shared that he is learning a great deal about the Internet Service Provider industry through his (OJT) and is excited about this growing industry.

Providing pathways to success........
The California Association for Local Economic Development (CALED) will be presenting Team Chico the Grand Prize Award of Excellence in the category of Economic Development Programs at the 34th Annual Training Conference Luncheon in Sacramento on April 9th. Team Chico is a collaborative partnership between the Alliance for Workforce Development, the City of Chico, 3CORE, the Chico Chamber of Commerce, and the Downtown Chico Business Association. Representatives from all of Team Chico’s partner organizations will be attending the luncheon including Butte County’s Business Services Team.

This award highlights Team Chico’s innovative and creative approach to economic development during a critical time for the City of Chico and is a model that can be replicated in other communities. Key to Team Chico’s collaboration is the integration of all the service providers with the City of Chico in delivering multiple resources needed by business to overcome their needs and challenges.

Team Chico’s coordinated outreach approach included conducting business walks in major employment centers connecting with over 500 businesses and personally delivering 2000 Smart Business Links resource guides. Along with personal outreach to employment centers, Team Chico began addressing industry sectors and holding CEO Roundtables. Team Chico also supported 3CORE’s Business Vitality Seed Fund and assisted in identifying and evaluating emerging businesses for growth opportunity. Forums and policy sessions were also held on permitting and business climate issues. In response, Team Chico initiated business lunches with city management and elected officials for open discussions with businesses.

Team Chico’s impact during fiscal year 2012-2013 on employment, expansion of the local tax base, and the diversification of the area’s economy include:

- 380 jobs created through 10 business expansions and 3 new locations.
- 880 jobs placed as part of the business outreach.
- 4 emerging businesses receiving seed funding.
- $2.35 million in grants and loans to local businesses - 55 jobs.
- $400,000 grant for Brownfield Remediation.
- Sector initiatives have resulted in:
  * New sustainability programs, GHG reduction and energy efficiency
  * Downtown experiencing a major turn-around with a strategy for retail and job center expansion, including emerging technology businesses.
  * Manufacturing collaborative to increase business to business opportunities.
- Overall economic impact of more than $31 million.

Team Chico is honored to be recognized by CALED for their noteworthy contributions to economic development and continue to be committed to the priorities of the City of Chico.
The AFWD, Inc. Butte County Youth program is busy providing services to students of many Butte County high schools. Graduating seniors are often unsure about what path to take after graduation. The youth Career Center Advisors are inviting students to participate in various workshops and presentations that address potential options after high school such as post-secondary education, vocational training and/or employment. The Youth Program Manager and a Business Services Representative have also been involved with the Butte County Office of Education’s STEM activities.

Youth Career Center Advisor, Raechelle Villarreal works with Chico area high schools in providing support to seniors, assisting in creating a plan for life after high school and making sure the students stay on track for graduation. Raechelle also works closely with Fairview High School’s Young Parent Program (YPP). The students enrolled in YPP are teen parents who are focused on academic achievement while gaining skills to provide quality parenting. Raechelle leads workshops twice a month to educate the YPP students on how to balance their education, parenting and work lives. Jessica Ellis, Fairview High YPP Alumnus, graduated with her high school diploma in February. Since then, Jessica has enrolled at Oroville Adult Education, where she will be receiving her CNA certificate in April 2014.

Youth Career Center Advisor Noah Strong takes part in the Student Attendance and Achievement Review Team meetings with Oroville Unified School District. The focus of these meetings is on youth who are in danger of failing to graduate. School administrators, the director of the Boys and Girls Club, other community members, and AFWD, Inc. are there to offer resources that may provide additional support for student success.

Youth Career Center Advisor, Marta Henry is currently working with thirteen seniors from Biggs and Esperanza High Schools, holding workshops every other week on the high school campuses. All of these youth are on track to graduate and Marta is working with the Business Services team to arrange job interviews for those who are going into the workforce. Several of the youth are gang affiliated students who are trying to make positive changes in their lives. School personnel, probation officers, and Marta all work together in providing services to these youth so they can achieve their goals.
Butte County Visitors
53,505

AFWD Business Services

Business Served 1,693
Service Provided 8,778
Positions Filled 2,407
Training Assistance 370

Program Services

Total enrollments P/Y 2013-2014
Adult 392
Dislocated Worker 374
Youth 178
Employed 643

Unemployment

Butte 10.0%  Plumas 14.3%
Lassen 12.5%  Sierra 13.6%
Modoc 13.2%