On November 21, 2015 Pena’s Mexican Grill celebrated their Grand Opening with a festive food filled Open House and colorful ribbon cutting ceremony. The restaurant was packed with over 50 people in attendance.

Owner, Cynthia Peña grew up in Alturas in a large family of eleven children. Opening Peña’s Mexican Grill has been a family affair with Cynthia’s siblings and assorted nieces and nephews pitching in to help. Cynthia’s dream in opening the restaurant was multi-faceted. She wanted to keep her parent’s name alive, offer authentic Mexican food and provide jobs in the Alturas community. In addition to traditional Mexican food, Peña’s offers a Vegetarian menu, Carne Asada Fries and Garbage Nachos, a meat lover’s delight which includes four different meats.

Cynthia currently lives and works in Marysville, CA where she is the owner/operator of Peña’s Insurance and Tax Service. She is presently making plans to move back to Alturas. She has more business ideas in the works for Alturas in the future and is excited about bringing additional jobs to Modoc County.

The Modoc Business and Career Network assisted Cynthia by advertising jobs, collecting applications, screening candidates and providing Human Resource information.
SANTIAGO MENDOZA

Santiago began participating in the Youth Program on August 24th, 2015. He had recently moved to Alturas and was homeless at the time and looking to obtain full-time employment to support himself.

The Modoc Business and Career Network was able to assist him with workshops and job search. Santiago met regularly with a Youth Career Center Advisor and successfully completed all his workshops. He also applied for low income housing and qualified.

On November 4th, 2015 Santiago began an On the Job Training (OJT) with Carstens Motors as a full-time Customer Service Representative.

This OJT will give Santiago a variety of skills and knowledge including Customer Service experience, which will open many doors for him in the future.

The position of Customer Service Representative is responsible for several duties in different departments. These duties include greeting all customers in person and handling incoming calls, learning sales and promotions, becoming knowledgeable about policies regarding payments and exchanges, as well as security practices. Santiago will also be responsible for checking in all received parts accurately and organizing them, and learning to use machinery for detailing vehicles. Santiago’s supervisor Corey Wild was very impressed with his work ethic, leadership ability and overall work performance and said, “Santiago is everything I hoped he would be”.

Congratulations Santiago on a job well done!
In the fall, Shyla obtained full-time employment with The Niles Coffee Shop – Starbucks. She also applied for low income housing and qualified. Shortly after she took her driving test and passed. She is now a California licensed driver!

Shyla has shown great commitment to making this a successful work experience and her co-workers are all very pleased with her progress, willingness to learn, and reliability.

Shyla Montgomery came into the Modoc Business and Career Center office in August 2015 and was enrolled in the Youth Program. Shyla was homeless at the time and eager to obtain full-time employment. She had dropped out of high school during her senior year to start working, but had not been able to build consistent work history. Shyla had just moved to Alturas and had no family in the area to turn to for help. She did not have a driver’s license and did not know where to start or what path to take.

Shyla began meeting regularly with her Youth Career Center Advisor and faithfully attended her appointments. She created and completed a resume and did several workshops that helped her sharpen her interview skills. The workshops also helped her learn to be more self-sufficient, confident and independent.

Shyla said, “It’s so exciting to look back and see how far I have come. I couldn’t have done it without you guys. It amazes me how people can just come into your life and help you so much. Thank you!!”

Congratulations Shyla, keep up the good work and don’t forget you are absolutely amazing!!
Christina was assessed and enrolled as a Dislocated Worker (DW) that had been actively looking for work in Modoc County, while utilizing career services at the Modoc Business and Career Network. She stated in an interview that it has always been her dream to work in law enforcement as a Correctional Officer. To make her dream a reality, she had taken online courses in Justice Studies and had also participated in ride along opportunities with local law enforcement.

Christina applied for a Correctional Officer position with the Modoc County Sheriff’s Department. Though she had taken classes in Justice Studies, she did not have any hands on work experience in Law Enforcement. The Modoc County Sheriff’s Office expressed interest in hiring Christina, but recognized that she did not have the necessary skills to perform the duties of the position. The Sheriff’s Office was aware of the Modoc Business & Career Networks On The Job Training (OJT) program and inquired about Christina as a possible OJT candidate. Christina was interviewed and assessed and the results indicated that she was a good match for a Correctional Officer career and an OJT.

Christina started her training on October 12, 2015 and will continue through March 26, 2016. At every follow-up conversation since training began, Christina has enthusiastically stated, “I love my job!”

Congratulations on living your dream, Christina!
Garth’s has performed many drought related duties during his assignment with the BLM. He inspected and repaired fencing that protected sensitive water areas, monitored water levels in troughs and inspected water lines on developed spring systems measuring their flow. He also compiled detailed field reports with photos for site files and drought assessment.

This work extension will allow Garth to learn new skills related to sage grouse monitoring. Wildfire and drought have impacted sage grouse habitat and the BLM management plan is calling for increased monitoring of the sage grouse and their habitat.

Garth will also begin training on ArcMap software, learning to take the GPS waypoint information that he collects in the field and import it using this software to create maps for field use and analysis.

Other winter duties he will be performing include winterizing water troughs and draining them, opening gates for wild horse migration, checking rain gauges and recording rainfall totals.

The Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. was awarded federal/state emergency funds to help provide public and non-profit entities temporary workers for drought related projects. AFWD recruited eligible temporary workers to assist these entities with their drought related projects. Eligibility requirements include layoffs, hours reduced due to drought conditions or having been unemployed 15 out of the last 26 weeks and living in a drought affected area.

In Modoc County, one TJC eligible worker, Garth Jeffers was placed with the Bureau of Land Management as a Range Technician. He began working on drought related projects in August of 2015. In October, the Bureau of Land Management requested a contract extension for Garth. They stated that the field and reporting work that Garth had accomplished was, “invaluable” in meeting their targeted goals related to drought and that they had other drought related work available. An extension was granted and Garth will continue to work for the BLM until he reaches the maximum TJC allocation in early 2016. This is an exciting opportunity for Garth to continue to learn new skills while earning income.
Approximately 80 people attended the recent Modoc Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Summit in Alturas on November 19th. Attendees included representatives from the Modoc County Board of Supervisors, Sheriff’s Office, Alturas Police, CHP, Alturas Chamber of Commerce, Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc., Pit River and Fort Bidwell Indian Councils, California Tribal TANF Partnership, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-Modoc Refuge, U.S. Forest Service-Modoc Forest, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service-Lava Beds and other organizations, agencies, local businesses and the general public from both California and Oregon.

The Event Coordinator was Lorissa Soriano, Director of the non-profit organization Modoc Outdoor Recreation and Tourism (MORT) Interagency Group. Lorissa created the organization five years ago in response to the sobering reality that businesses were closing in Modoc County and people were moving away because of the weak economy.

Since approximately 90% of the land in Modoc County consists of beautiful national forests and wilderness areas, Lorissa saw the opportunity to strengthen the Modoc economy by encouraging the growth of the outdoor recreation and tourism industry. Lorissa credited brainstorming with members of the Modoc Economic Vitality Group, which met monthly at the Modoc Business and Career Network for helping her to realize her vision.

Guest speakers at the Summit shared examples of how their organizations were increasing tourism both locally and nationally. Presentations were given by Lava Beds National Monument, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Shasta Cascade Wonderland Association, Discover Klamath and Sierra Nevada Conservancy/Geotourism Project.

Outdoor programs for children and families, mobile apps and social media were all mentioned as tools for drawing recreation and tourism to Modoc County. The Discover Nature App was also showcased and will be featuring a link to the Modoc National Wildlife Refuge in the Spring of 2016. The app aims to replace expensive signs and brochures with fun, interactive information and games that the whole family can enjoy while recreating outdoors. The app will also allow tourists to search for outdoor opportunities when making plans or visiting an area.
Modoc County Visitors
1,210

AFWD Business Services
Business Served  731
Service Provided  3,383
Positions Filled  797
Training Assistance  88

Program Services
Total enrollments
Adult  127
Dislocated Worker  100
Youth  40
Employed  136

Unemployment Rate
Butte  6.7%  Nevada  5.2%
Lassen  6.9%  Plumas  9.9%
Modoc  8.1%  Sierra  6.6%