

# BUSINESS WALK

## POST-EVALUATION SUMMARY

Placerville Area — June 18, 2010



In partnership with:



Supported by:

**El Dorado County, Office of Economic Development, El Dorado County Chamber of Commerce, City of Placerville, Broadway Village Association, Placerville Drive Business Association, Placerville Downtown Association and the Sacramento Metro Chamber launched the first annual Placerville area business walk on June 18, 2010.**

A business walk allows business and civic leaders to gain important insight into a local community's business climate. On a business walk, leaders learn firsthand the major needs the community has and are able to act quickly to provide information and/or support to businesses in the area. The county, city, chamber and various other business organizations work on behalf of local business to identify overall needs and successes of the community. These leaders are then able to act on their behalf to ensure a prosperous business climate.

Participants ask three basic questions of local business:

- How is business?
- What do you like about doing business in the area?
- What needs to be done to make business even better?

During the Placerville area's first business walk, 32 business and civic leaders visited 201 businesses within Placerville, Diamond Springs, Missouri Flat and the town of El Dorado—198 of those businesses were available to respond. The results concluded that the business climate in the Placerville area as a whole is positive. A number of businesses stated that business remains steady and that they are holding their own, hopeful for a turn-around in the local economy. When asked how business is, 70 percent said that business is at least steady or fair.

When asked what they like most about doing business in the area, the community/people, the location and the clientele were top of mind. When asked what needed to be done to improve business in the community, most frequently cited were improving the economy, government relations and cost of doing business. Of the rest, the most often reported challenges were associated with marketing, signage and the need for more events. Despite these challenges, very few said they had a pessimistic view of doing business in the Placerville area or of the business community.

The following report provides detail on the responses to each of the interview questions, as well as steps being taken to improve the local business climate.

## 2010 BUSINESS WALK INSIGHTS AND OBSERVATIONS

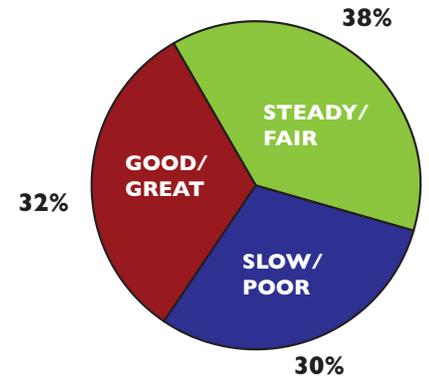
- Out of 198 businesses interviewed in the Placerville area, 70 percent reported steady business
- Of those interviewed:
  - Community/People ranked highest (66%) as something respondents liked about doing business in the Placerville area
  - Current Economic Climate ranked highest (32%) as something respondents wanted to improve in the Placerville area
- Respondents want to know in what ways could El Dorado County and the City of Placerville can help them remain viable and prosper
- Respondents love the Placerville area because of the great people they interact with each day and the local quality of life
- Many were looking for more creative/cost effective ways to promote their business to the local, as well as tourist marketplace

## How is business?

Overall, the Placerville area business community reported business as stable to good. A little less than one third (32 percent) said business was either good or great, while 38 percent cited that they are at least steady or fair (Figure 1). Although many companies acknowledged that sales numbers have been fluctuating depending on the month, the business community is looking forward to more growth.

Thirty percent reported that their business was slow or poor. The negative response was attributed to shifts in consumer spending, competition and a need to downsize due to a lack of customers. With a drop in spending, retail, and restaurants have been hit hard over the past few years. Surviving companies rely upon loyal customers, a unique product mix, and/or a product/service that shines in a tough economy.

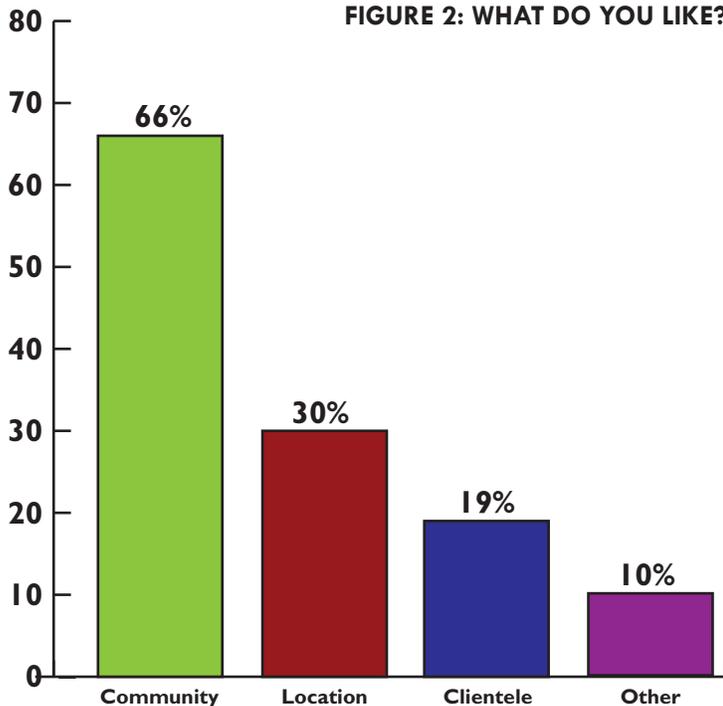
FIGURE 1: HOW IS BUSINESS?



## What do you like about doing business in the area?

When asked what they like best about doing business in the Placerville area, 66 percent of respondents cited the area's community and people (Figure 2). Most respondents tended to comment on the fact that they love the people in the community. A large number of respondents have lived in the area for a long time and have built their life around the community. Each community has a great small-town feel with a historical background. Respondents like the way of life that the Placerville area allows them. The tight-knit community and rural way of life allows everyone to know and care about each other, providing a great word-of-mouth referral system between local businesses. The neighborhood understands that if every individual business is strong, their business will positively impact the whole community's health and prosperity.

FIGURE 2: WHAT DO YOU LIKE?



Location was the second most-mentioned response (30 percent), citing the proximity to Highway 50 and the community's location in the Sierra Nevada foothills as a very positive attraction. The ability to work and live in the same community is what attracted most people to the area. Many respondents cited that they moved from the Bay Area to be in a less stressful location. Respondents stated that they enjoyed living a rural lifestyle but also have access to travel to San Francisco, Sacramento or Tahoe with ease. The Placerville area offers families many valuable amenities such as quality local schools, parks, unique restaurants and shops.

Clientele was the third most-mentioned response. Nineteen percent of businesses stated that customer loyalty had a positive influence on business. Several businesses acknowledge tourists who routinely visit on return trips. The businesses reported that their clients are more like family, feeling a close kinship and a strong ethical background, friendliness and trustworthiness. A mix of local customers and people from the greater Sacramento region travelling here allow for businesses to build long-term relationships with their clients.

Ten percent of respondents provided "other" responses. General comments included:

- Growing area with a high quality of life
- Less expensive rent than surrounding areas
- Low crime rate creating a sense of security

## What improvements are needed in the area?

The Placerville area business community is viewed, overall, as an enjoyable place to both live and work, although there is always the opportunity for growth and improvement in the community. Ten percent of respondents said, "Nothing needs improvement," mentioning only minor improvements that could be made, but they were satisfied overall (Figure 3).

Economic climate was cited most frequently by the respondents (32 percent). Businesses stated that jobs need to stay in the county; the idea is that if people work in the community, they are also able to spend money in the community. Through improvements in the local economy and more lending options, the business community would thrive. Many are waiting for an improvement in consumer-spending habits; businesses have noticed that customers are still coming in but are now spending half the amount. Many businesses report that vacant store fronts are affecting their business. Many think if vacant store fronts could be spruced-up, perhaps with event marketing, people would feel more comfortable and likely to stay longer in the area, thus spending money—this could help drive some economic activity within the whole community.

Government regulations came in second (27 percent). Many feel that local government agencies need to support the community and become more business-friendly. A lot of companies are looking for less nitpicking, better customer service and streamlined government processes. Overall a "pro-business" government is more desirable for the community. Many companies questioned the business planning commission, specifically not understanding why they keep bringing in gas stations and mini marts into the community. The community supports growth but

many are looking for more unique shops and restaurants.

Cost of doing business was stated third (25 percent), with many suggesting a decrease in the costs of permits, fees and taxes. Many reported the process is burdensome. Some stated that the cost of doing business in the area doesn't allow for growth, and in some cases, forces people out of the area. Some mentioned the need for more flexible fees to generate business expansion opportunities. Many felt that the "unnecessary" permits are barriers keeping people from working and businesses from hiring. An inconsistency of permits and fees, and a lack of understandable explanation as to their necessity, exposed businesses to troublesome situations, not knowing what steps to take next; many just want clear communication on what is expected.

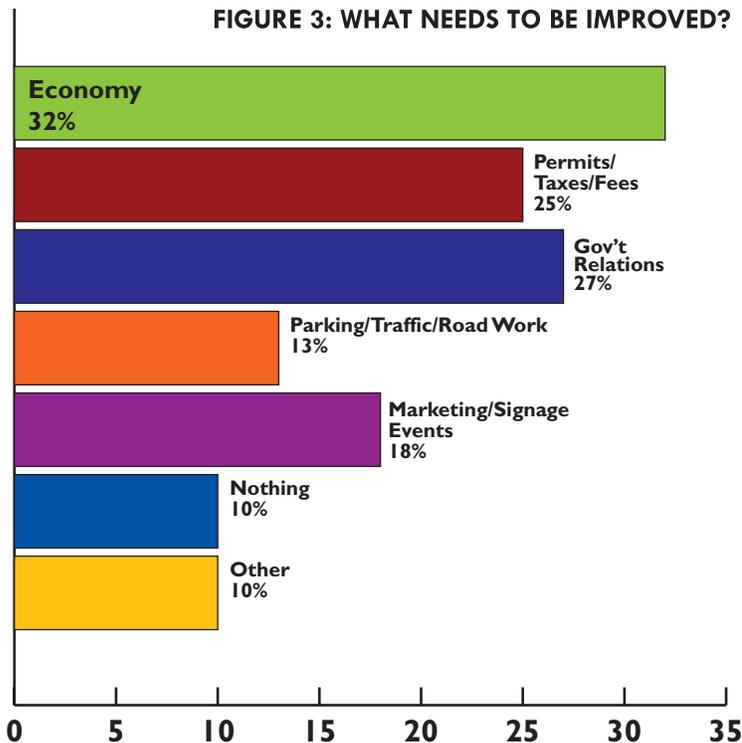
Marketing, signage and more community events came in fourth (18 percent). The community is looking for more exposure and a way to not only promote themselves but each community, especially Diamond Springs and the town of El Dorado. Due to the complexity of the permit process, many are unable to receive the necessary permits they need to promote themselves. The community is looking for more events and "Buy Local" awareness promotion.

Thirteen percent of businesses interviewed felt that parking and traffic were issues. Parking is especially difficult in downtown Placerville where cars can only park for two hours for free before getting a ticket, causing people to leave early and/or not come at all. There is also discussion about poor roads or constant roadwork. Residents have witnessed accidents and other problems due to these issues. A change in overall accessibility to main streets in each community is desired.

In addition, some respondents provided several "other" responses for improvement needed in the Placerville area, including:

- Repairs to and extended hours of operation of street lights to provide increased security
- Further attract diverse, complementary array of local eateries
- Improved communication and understanding between business community, county, city, EID and fire department

**FIGURE 3: WHAT NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED?**



## RECENT ACTIVITIES

**Annual Study Mission, presented by the El Dorado County Chamber of Commerce**, explores regional models that promote a sustainable future through influencing decisions related to purchasing, use of resources and waste and design of buildings, neighborhoods and communities. We explore best practices in education, redevelopment, outdoor recreation sustainability, transportation, waterfront development, revitalization and agriculture. This year was a productive sojourn to Spokane, Washington and Coeur d' Alene, Idaho in partnership with the Folsom Chamber of Commerce, Folsom Economic Development Corporation and the Economic Development Corporation of El Dorado, a sister organization of the El Dorado County Chamber of Commerce.

**Kicking off in 2010 is the El Dorado County Chamber Discount Card**, a win-win countywide program for business and non-profits. Free to all businesses in El Dorado County, the discount card is an online opportunity for merchants to offer special discounts to attract customers. Either by the recognized decal in the shop window or the convenient listing on the web site, shoppers can take advantage of saving money while shopping locally. The non-profits in the county also benefit by selling the discount cards as a fundraiser and a percentage of the sales are then returned to the non-profit.

**Placerville Area Convergence Team (PACT)** is an effort to bring together the three main business districts, Placerville Downtown Business Association, the Placerville Drive Business Association and the Broadway Village Association, to work together toward a common goal of rejuvenating Placerville to make it THE place to live, work, and play in the Sierras. One of PACT's core initiatives has been the establishment of a redevelopment agency to help facilitate this transformation.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Business Compliance Awareness Workshop** was sponsored by the El Dorado County, Office of Economic Development and the City of Placerville. It brought together upwards of 40 business owners/managers to learn compliance tactics. This was in response to complaints that businesses have been threatened with ADA noncompliance law suits. As a result, these businesses now have the information they need to become compliant with ADA regulations and avoid costly law suits, which may eventually force them to close.

**Buxton Consumer Analytics Workshop** brought together a local partnership (County, City and Marshall Medical) to unveil the Buxton customer analytical tool for use in their business retention, business expansion and future business attraction efforts county-wide. The primary function for both El Dorado County, Office of Economic Development and City of Placerville will be two-fold: to provide existing businesses with a better understanding of their market and when necessary, how best to realign product or service delivery to meet changing consumer buying patterns; and secondly, within market segments where local businesses do not exist, identify and attract complementary businesses to the area that add value and blend with our unique socio-economic lifestyle. The market intelligence provided by the Buxton tool shall enhance our overall effectiveness when assisting existing small businesses through the ongoing Business Visitation program, Metro Pulse.

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## Participating Businesses

The members of the Placerville Area Business Walk Outreach Team and the Sacramento Metro Chamber thank the following businesses for providing feedback during the Placerville Area business walk:

- AAA OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA, NEVADA AND UTAH
- AAMCO TRANSMISSIONS
- ADEPT MED INTERNATIONAL
- AFFORDABLE FURNITURE & BLINDS
- AIRGAS
- ALL STAR GYMNASTICS & CHEER
- ALL STAR RENTS
- ALLEZ!
- AMERICAN KITCHEN CABINET COMPANY
- ANNIEBERRIES
- AT&T MOBILITY
- AUTOTECH SMOG & REPAIR
- BAGEL WORKS
- BASICALLY BEADS
- BEST WESTERN PLACERVILLE INN
- BIG LOTS
- BLUE RIBBON PERSONNEL SERVICES
- BLUE SKIES
- BOLTON WELDING
- BOOKS 'N BEARS
- BORDGES TIMBER INC
- BUSY SPOT MARKET
- C & H MOTOR PARTS
- CALIFORNIA CHECK CASHING STORES
- CALIFORNIA CUSTOM TEES
- CALIFORNIA OVERHEAD DOOR, INC.
- CAN DO IT'S UNIQUE BOUTIQUE
- CANDY STRIKE
- CANINES ON MAIN
- CARBON COPY, INC
- CASA RAMOS
- CASPER'S MUFFLER AND HITCH SERVICE
- CINDY'S STYLIST HAIR SALON
- CLARICE'S CORNER
- CLASSIC CLEANERS
- CLEAN WATER USA
- CLIFTON & WARREN
- COLINA DE ORO MEXICAN RESTAURANT
- COTTMAN TRANSMISSION CENTER
- COUNTRY ELEGANCE
- COUNTRY LUBE EXPRESS, INC
- COZMIC CAFE
- CROSSROADS VETERINARY HOSPITAL
- CURVES
- DARR INSURANCE AGENCY
- DAVEY TREE SURGERY COMPANY
- DEB'S FROSTY
- DIAMOND PACIFIC
- DIAMOND SPRINGS MOBILITY
- DIAMOND SPRINGS PRINTING & GRAPHICS
- DIAMOND TV & SATELLITE
- DICK'S CARPET ONE
- DIGITAL INK CORP
- DOLLAR TREE
- DOUBLE DIAMOND TRACK & FEED
- DR. JOHN F. TAYLOR D.C.
- DYNAMIC IMAGES SALON & DAY SPA
- EDWARD JONES
- EDWARD'S A-1 APPLIANCE
- EL DORADO COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION
- EL DORADO GROCERY & DELI
- EL DORADO NORTHERN LUMBER CO.
- ELEVATION INNOVATION INC
- EMPIRE ANTIQUES
- ENTERPRISE RENT-A-CAR DIVISION
- EXTREME TOWING
- EZ SMOG
- FARMERS INSURANCE GROUP
- FASTENER DEPOT
- FEDEX KINKO'S
- FLOORS TO GO
- FLOWERS BY THE GATE
- FLOWERS ON MAIN
- FOUNTAIN PLAZA SALON
- FRANCIS DISTRIBUTING, INC
- FRESH CLEANERS
- FRESH MEX EXP MEXICAN GRILL
- GAME STOP
- GEORGE'S PIT STOP
- GLASS MAN AUTO GLASS
- GOLD KEY STORAGE
- GOLDEN SPOKE BIKE SHOP
- GOT BAIL
- GOULDS PRO-CYLINDER HEADS, INC
- GRAPHIX INK
- GREENHOUSE CAFE
- GROOMING GALLERIA
- GULARTE'S GREAT DIAMOND DELI & PIZZA
- HAIR AFFAIR
- HAIR HAVEN
- HANGTOWN DISCOUNT CIGARETTES
- HANGTOWN SHEET METAL AND FABRICATION
- HANGTOWN TATTOO AND BODY PIERCING
- HAPPY HOUR FOOD AND LIQUOR
- HEYDAY CAFÉ
- HODNETT INSURANCE SERVICES
- HOOSEGOW
- IMAGINA CORPORATION
- INVESTMENT PROPERTIES
- JACKSON CHIROPRACTIC, INC.
- JAMBA JUICE
- JEWELRY REPAIR
- JIFFY MART
- JIM GINNEY
- JOE VICINI, INC.
- JOE'S BARBER SHOP
- JOHN A. NERWINSKI, D.D.S
- JOHN R. HUGHES
- JS WEST
- KMART
- KAREN'S TAX & FINANCIAL SERVICES
- KNOBLAUCH INSURANCE AGENCY
- KOBY PEST CONTROL
- KRAGEN O'REILLY AUTO PARTS
- KYGAR ENGINEERING, INC
- LE FLEUR FLORIST
- LEFFERTS INTERIORS
- LIGHTFOOT AUTOMOTIVE
- LOOKING GOOD HAIR CARE
- MACKENDRICK COMPUTERS
- MAIN STREET MAIL
- MAIN STREET DENTAL
- MEAT MARKET
- MINUTEMAN PRESS/MAIL CALL
- MISSOURI STATION MARKET
- MOONTIGER TATTOOS
- MOSTLY NATURAL
- MOTHER LODGE REHABILITATION ENTERPRISES, INC.
- MOUNTAIN DEMOCRAT
- MOUNTAIN MAIL
- NATIONAL 9 INN
- NATIONWIDE LIFTS
- NOAH'S ARK
- NORTHSTAR SERVICES
- OFFICEMAX
- PACIFIC COAST BRICK OVENS INC
- PAPA MURPHY'S
- PAYLESS SHOES
- PIZZA PLUS
- PLACER TITLE CO.
- PLACERVILLE CHEVRON
- PLACERVILLE CLOTHING CO.
- PLACERVILLE FLOWER MARKET
- PLACERVILLE POLARIS & POWER TOOLS
- POOR REDS BAR-B-Q
- PRECISION EYECARE
- R.E.D. REAL ESTATE SERVICES
- RADIO SHACK
- RITE AID
- RIVER ROCK MOTORS
- ROCKY'S ART & FRAMING (2 LOCATIONS)
- SAFEWAY INC.
- SALON ROUGE
- SAVEMART
- SEARS HOMETOWN STORE
- SIERRA CARPET
- SIERRA FRAME WORKS
- SIERRA MUSIC CENTER
- SMITH MALONEY
- SNOWLINE HOSPICE
- STAMP IT RICH
- STARBUCKS
- STEPHEN A. TAPSON
- STEVE CRANDALL STUDIO-FINE ART
- STEVE WARDENS AUTO SERVICE
- STRAUSS FOODSERVICE
- STUDIO B HAIR SALON
- SUB SEA SYSTEMS
- SUBURBAN PROPANE
- SUGAR LILLIE
- SUSANA BANANAS GARDEN
- SWEETIE PIES
- TEACHING GARDEN
- TEAM COMMERCIAL
- TERRIE Y. PROD'HON
- THE BOOKERY
- THE BOOKWORM
- THE BUCK STOP
- THE CENTER FOR VIOLENCE-FREE RELATIONSHIPS
- THE LIL' GROOMING SHOP
- THE LOOK SALON
- THE TOOL DEPOT
- THOMPSONS AUTO & TRUCK CENTERS
- THRIFT N GIFT
- TIJUANA MARKET
- TIRES LES SCHWAB
- TJ MAXX
- TONY MATTHEWS
- UMPQUA BANK
- UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
- UPHOLSTERY PLUS
- VALERO
- VAROZZA 4X4 OUTFITTERS
- VAUGHT-WRIGHT AND BOND, INC.
- W F HAYWARD
- WAYNE'S LOCKSMITH SERVICE
- WELLS AUTO SALES
- WESTERN FOOTHILL MORTGAGE INC.
- WESTERN SIGN COMPANY, INC.
- WINDFALL CLASSIFIED, INC.

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The Sacramento Metro Chamber is the largest and oldest voice of business in the greater Sacramento area. Representing nearly 2,200 member businesses and business organizations in the six-county Sacramento region, the Metro Chamber serves as the region's leading proponent of regional cooperation and primary advocate on issues affecting business, strengthening the regional economy and quality of life. As a founding member of Partnership for Prosperity<sup>1</sup>, and in its role as managing partner of Metro Pulse<sup>2</sup>, the Metro Chamber executes the Business Walk Series in cooperation with its local chamber and public sector partners. The Metro Chamber has partnered with 15 other regional jurisdictions and economic development organizations to provide one-on-one support for county businesses and throughout the Sacramento metropolitan region. These organizations, through Metro Pulse, are meeting one-on-one with businesses throughout the six-county Sacramento region to identify and address individual business needs and ensure continued growth and economic prosperity. For additional information concerning Metro Pulse, visit [metropulse.org](http://metropulse.org).

<sup>1</sup> Partnership for Prosperity is the Sacramento region's economic development strategy, which focuses on developing people, place and business.

<sup>2</sup> Metro Pulse is a coalition of 16 public and private sector partners focused on ensuring that the Sacramento metropolitan region is the best place to do business in California.

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