

The Future is Now-Chamber hosts Economic Summit

May 10, 2024





Under the theme, “The Future is Now,” the 2024 Del Norte Economic Summit welcomed 15 presenters, last Friday at the Elk Valley Rancheria.

Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Cindy Vosburg welcomed 169 attendees. A Tribal Greeting by Chairman Dale Miller followed.

- Chief Operating Officer Crista Stewart from the Elk Valley Rancheria kicked off the morning by touting the growth of the Rancheria, its new fuel station and convenience store, plans for the 92 room hotel, new pedestrian hiking trails, wildlife viewing platforms and the new project for South Beach access.
- Advanced Air principal Levi Stockton, via teleconference, expressed his excitement in his air carrier service from CEC to Oakland and Southern California (Hawthorne). Stockton also announced a new baggage transfer agreement with Alaska Air.
- Ryan Cooley, Director of the Border Coast Regional Airport Authority reported the Del Norte Regional Airport (CEC) “... is one of the largest economic engines in our community.” Total estimated annual economic output is \$22.6 million. Combined Airport and visitor-by-air economic activity supports 119 local Full-Time Equivalent jobs and produces \$7.5 million in annual labor income. Cooley acknowledged Joint Powers Authority members for contributing \$416,000 for upcoming taxi and Runway 18-36 rehabilitation to be completed this summer.
- Del Norte Transportation Executive Director Tamera Leighton accompanied by Deputy Director Richard Mullen District 1 Cal Trans and Projects manager Brandon Larsen updated the community on the Dr. Fine bridge demolition this Summer, STAA improvements along 199, a new left turn in front of the Smith River Dollar Tree on 101 and the selected choice soon to be announced on the route for Last Chance Grade.
- Emily Reed Chamber President and Tolowa Dee-ni’ Administrative Services shared with the public the impact of the Nation’s \$16 million annual employees’ salaries contribution, annual donations of \$44,000 and \$59,000 in community contributions from the Tolowa Dee-ni’ and Casino, respectively. Reed referenced the Tribe’s latest major ongoing projects: The Tribal Justice Center and the refurbishment of the Howonquet Resort and restaurant.

- Board of Supervisors Chairman Dean Wilson updated the community on the recently approved Organizational Strategic Plan.
- Harbor Commissioner Wes White, speaking independently from the Harbor Commission, presented a Wind Power update. White said, “ The Federal government, specifically the Dept. of the Interior is actively investigating the potential for offshore wind development off the coast of Del Norte County. As a community, regardless whether we are for or against this initiative, it is crucial we come together with one voice and engage in discussion to shape the future in a manner that maximizes the benefits to Del Norte County.”
- Lisa Howard, MTSS Coordinator showcased the Del Norte Unified School District Community School Partnership Program which connects students to social workers and mental health services at schools.
- Sutter Coast Health Danielle Preston shared updates on the Hospital’s In-Patient Dialysis and Hospice Care opening mid-year and the Family Medicine Residency Program which hopes to bring 2nd and 3rd year medical interns to Sutter Coast Hospital by Summer, 2027.
- City Manager Eric Wier spoke about three different housing projects coming to the City.
- Other presentations included Harbormaster Tim Petrick, who welcomed all input from the community, Andrea Lancot of the Food Council and Nick Rail of the Partnership for Performing Arts Center adjacent to Del Norte High School.

The Future is now!