

2000 Annual Report Executive Summary

Imperial County Enterprise Community

In December of 1994 Imperial County was fortunate to receive a designation as a Federal Rural Enterprise Community and awarded \$2.95 million in Social Services Block Grant dollars for economic and community development. For the past years the Enterprise Community (EC) Program has facilitated the formation of partnerships to work together to improve the quality of life by empowering people to develop strategies and solutions to physical, social, economic and environmental barriers.

The EC projects continue to be successful and reach out to a large part of the community. Major accomplishments have been achieved in a majority of the EC benchmarks in large part due to the creation of partnerships at the federal, state and local level to address and find imaginative solutions to unique issues, problems and constraint. Another significant accomplishment has been that EC funds have been a catalyst for community and economic development organizations to receive funding through federal and state agencies.

EC BENCHMARK # 4 – NEW RIVER

The New River, the dirtiest and most polluted river in the United States, continues to be a problem of major concern for both Mexico and the United States. The river starts in Mexicali, Baja California, flows across the U.S. - Mexican border at Calexico, California and empties into the Salton Sea.

Benchmark no. 4 allocated EC funds to provide workshops to increase awareness of the New River pollution and to identify and secure financial resources to help reduce the level of pollution in the New River.

In February, 2001, Senator Dianne Feinstein contacted the new Secretary of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to request that the administration not overlook the "severely polluted" New River. In addition, EPA was informed that a water-treatment plant is under construction across the border in Mexicali, Mexico. Mexicali is a major source of New River pollution, and population growth in the burgeoning industrial city threatens to outstrip the plant's capacity soon. Senator Feinstein has urged EPA to plan for additional sewage-treatment facilities that would deal with what she called an "impending crisis".

EC BENCHMARK # 5 – SALTON SEA

The Salton Sea Authority held its third New River/Salton Sea Symposium January 13-14, 2000. The event was well attended by different community residents, interest groups and local officials. The symposium consisted of a two-day conference. The first day's theme was "Restoration planning, policy and politics." The topics consisted of a discussion on the restoration plan presented by Congress; balancing agricultural, environmental, recreational and economic interests; governmental roles and responsibilities, the sea in context: California water issues, the Pacific Flyway and Mexico; and the politics of restoring the sea. The second day's theme was "New scientific information and discoveries." The topics consisted of biological environment of the sea; the physical environment of the sea; fish, wildlife and vegetation; and the next scientific steps.

EC BENCHMARK # 5 - TUBERCULOSIS

The Tuberculosis Control Program request was not funded but remains on the Enterprise Community

list for reporting.

To promote Tuberculosis awareness in the medical community a Binational Symposium was held in Mexicali, Mexico. The speakers were from both sides of the border. The audience was made up of physicians, nurses, laboratory personnel, promoters and others. There was standing room only. We feel the symposium was a success and will be held again this year on the United States side of the border. Tuberculosis continues to be a major topic of discussion for our border community. The lack of funding limits the chances to attack the problem directly.

EC BENCHMARK # 6 – SMALL BUSINESS CENTER

The Imperial Valley Small Business Development Center (SBDC) received EC funds to establish access to technical services to businesses located in the EC boundary. The SBDC is a valuable asset for the small business community. The SBDC program provides small businesses with access to business counseling, intensive training and access to financing.

The SBDC, under the new management of Ben Solomon, continues to be active in community affairs and reach a lot of potential clients to serve. According to Mr. Solomon, "By next month, the SBDC will already have helped obtain \$7 million in loans and grants to local businesses since it first open its doors five years ago in the Imperial Valley. The SBDC has been instrumental in providing technical assistance to start-up and existing businesses. In the last year, the SBDC has helped create 130 jobs in the Imperial Valley and expects the number to grow before the year's end.

The SBDC also successfully participated in the annual Business Showcase and the NAFTA SHO held in Mexicali, Mexico this year. These trade shows feature various businesses from both sides of the US/Mexico border and the main focus is to foster economic growth and international trade throughout the region.

EC BENCHMARK # 7 – SKILLS BANK

ORIGINAL CONCEPT: Four offices, located throughout the county and operated within the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) "One Stop Center" vision for job seekers and employers. Centers were originally staffed by employees of Private Industry Council (PIC) and employees of the Employment Development Department (EDD). Offices linked electronically, with each other and with other major public benefit and training resources used by job seekers in Imperial County. The concept was to create One Stop Service Centers in preparation for the required centers under WIA.

TRANSITION OF SYSTEM: On July 1, 2000 the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) was implemented. The Centers created by the EC project were poised to transition into the role of the required One Stop Service Centers. Under the new law, replacing JTPA, the Private Industry Council was dissolved and replaced by a Workforce Investment Board (WIB). Under the new law, WIB staff cannot directly provide services to job seekers at the One Stops, so the the transition of the staffing has successfully transitioned from the WIB (formerly PIC) to a consortium of required One Stop partners. The site in Calexico has moved to "new digs" at the EDD's offices there. The local 5 Year Strategic WIA plan reflects these changes. The One Stop Operator Consortium has developed MOU's with virtually all the required partners at this point in time.

SERVICES: Services provided at each Center are parallel, and include:

CORE SERVICES: Computer Bank, Phone Bank, UI claims by phone, orientation, initial assessment,

Job Club, Job Search Assistance, links to job leads, assistance with resume development, interviewing techniques, development of initial employment plans, and support services. These services are provided universally and without cost to the participant regardless of eligibility for special funding, and are based on the needs of job seekers and employers.

INTENSIVE SERVICES: Comprehensive and specialized assessment, full development of an employment plan, counseling, case management, pre-vocational training, job readiness training and issuance of grants for occupational training for eligible job seekers.

The centers are designed to provide a "one-stop" link to virtually all related services, training and benefits through phone, electronic link or on site support. Employers can list job postings, utilize centers for interviewing, presentations and orientations.

TECHNOLOGY: Each center has phone banks and computer banks for use by job seekers. These are designed to link users to a variety of job seeking resources by inter-net and intra-net, including local, state and national job training and job search bulletin boards and web sites. Employers can list job postings and job seekers can search for openings and post resumes in some cases. The WIB and One Stop Employment Consortium have spent the year researching various technologies for integrated case management and client tracking, and project a purchase of an integrated software system by June 30, 2001.

SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS: The former Job Link centers have fully transitioned from JTPA to WIA, and are providing a full array of WIA required services through an Operator Consortium. A training grant policy has been established and many local training providers have submitted applications for the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). The WIB continues to provide overall outreach activities and marketing to educate the public about services offered.

EC BENCHMARK # 8 – HEALTHY START

The most significant accomplishment this fiscal year is the continued commitment and support exhibited by the school and general community for the Family Resource Centers (FRC) in Calexico and San Pasqual.

In Calexico, the Calexico Unified School District has assumed full support of the Calexico Family Resource Center. Calexico Neighborhood House, a local community based organization, under a contractual arrangement with the District provides administration of the Center. A local community collaborative of agencies and local organizations and private citizens provides strong support for and input into the services to be provided.

In San Pasqual, the Family Resource Center is fully sustained by San Pasqual Valley Unified School District through Medi-Cal reimbursement and other District resources. The San Pasqual Family Resource Center provides easy access to services to the citizens of this remote community. Services provided at the Center vary from medical to financial aid and social, emotional counseling.

Two countywide groups provide general oversight of the two Family Resource Centers. The Interagency Steering Committee (ISC) is the oversight group for the management of resources as they are developed or modified to help eliminate duplication and enhance all available resources. ISC provides a joint forum for countywide policy makers to discuss issues, streamline processes, and implement systemic change.

The other group, the Local Coordinating Committee (LCC) focuses on improvement of services and

program coordination. The LCC submits its recommendations for programmatic and systemic changes to the ISC for their consideration and action.

EC BENCHMARK # 9 – LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA

Description of Benchmark 9: Access, establish, implement and enhance literacy services within all the designated census tracts in the enterprise community allocation

Unit(s) of measurements (1) Number of sites opened to serve designated census tract; (2) Number of persons enrolled (3) English levels based on ESLOA (English as a Second Language Oral Assessment).

BASELINE QUANTITY: TARGET

1) 0 sites 1) 7 sites

2) 0 persons 2) 140 persons

3) 0 level ESLOA 3) Level 5 to Level 4 ESLOA

Literacy Volunteers of America/Imperial Valley (LVA/IV) has continued to address Adult Literacy in all (5) census-101, 104, 119, 120, 121 without Enterprise Community funds. The needs are still significantly great, but we have never been there utilizing other sources to accomplish similar benchmarks. LVA/IV have been very successful in Census Tract 104, the Eastside of Brawley. LVA/IV have inquiries about Census Tract 101- Salton Sea area, and hope to go there in the near future once again with the help of Enterprise Community funds.

The public is very aware of literacy problems, the target audience is not quite as cooperative as we would wish. Frequently education is not the top priority- and rightfully so, when one needs shelter, food, and safety for one's self and family.

Never before have the EC collaborative and cooperative networks worked as closely as we have the competition is very keen and who prospers is the big question. LVA/IV developed a 10 year plan, based on the designation. We will continue to provide for literacy in the audit community of EC Census Tracts.

Our Families for Literacy programs are stronger than ever before and all EC target groups are most welcome at any of the five sites. We continue articulation with Migrant Headstart, Neighborhood House, Volunteers of America, Kelley Center, Pregnant Minors, Computers in Your Future, Local School Districts, Imperial County Office of Education, and all the libraries in the County and Cities of Brawley, Calexico, El Centro, and Imperial.

EC BENCHMARK # 10 – HOUSING AUTHORITY

The goal of benchmark no. 10 was to increase housing opportunities for the low income residents of Imperial County. The Imperial Valley Housing Authority (IVHA) received \$197,500 in EC funds to develop and build 23 additional spaces at the Robert Noriega Mobile Home Estates mobile home park located in the City of Brawley. IVHA has occupied 19 of the 23 new spaces thus providing the needed low income housing assistance to community residents. Since the completion of the Mobile Home Park on November of 1998, the IVHA has attempted to develop projects with the City of Brawley using the Mobile Home park expansion as a model. The IVHA along with city representatives, are attempting to

develop affordable housing in other areas of Brawley utilizing public and private funding sources.

EC BENCHMARK # 11 - ARTS COUNCIL

The summer Youth Program has grown to serve approximately 200 children every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from June through the end of August. The Imperial County Arts Council offers violin lessons, drama, introduction to music, introduction to visual art and how to tell a story. The Friday Night at the Old Post Office Pavillion (OPOP) presentations now happen every Friday evening offering music, theater, reader's theater, lectures, dance, etc. The audience has grown more than 300% since its inception in the spring of 2000. The Arts Council now writes a weekly column for the local newspaper that publicizes art/cultural activities throughout the valley.

EC BENCHMARK # 14 – CALEXICO WATER

The City of Calexico through Enterprise Community funding addressed the correction of deficiencies at the water plant, capacity expansion and the construction of a 24-inch water line to the eastern portion of the city.

The project was undertaken in three (3) phases:

Phase I: Construction of additional filtration capacity of six million gallons per day (MGD) and additional distribution pumps at the filtration plant.

Phase II: The construction of a 24 inch diameter distribution water main from Highway 111 east along the south side of the All American Canal and north on Bowker Road.

Phase III: A six million gallon treated water storage reservoir and a satellite pump station in the vicinity of Bowker Road north of the All American Canal.

Funding received from Enterprise Community has been a catalyst for further funding received from EPA, EDA, NADBANK and a bond issue, issued by the city.

The funding received from Enterprise Community of \$250,000 provided for the engineering and design of the improvements. Engineering estimates determined the cost to provide the three phases of improvements at approximately \$7 million.

Upon having the engineering estimates, City of Calexico Public Works Department pursued and received BECC certification to apply for funding through the NADBANK. Approximately \$3.4 million in transitional funding is being provided by the NADBANK over the next 6 years to repay a portion of the debt service provided from a \$4 million bond issue, issued by the City for Phase I and III of the project. An additional \$300,000 was received from EPA as a grant.

City Public Works Department received an additional \$2.5 million for the Phase II project funding for the 24-inch water distribution main line. Construction began December 4, 2000 and is approximately 98% completed.

The water filtration storage tank is currently at 99% completion and pending final inspections from EPA, NADBANK, the project engineer and public works department.

Enterprise Community funding of \$250,000 has leveraged approximately \$10.2 million in funds for the

water plant and distribution main line project.

EC BENCHMARK # 16 – C.N. PERRY COLONIA

City of Calexico received \$40,000 in Enterprise Community funding for the implementation of water and sewer engineering plans and specifications for the C. N. Perry Colonia. With the assistance of Enterprise Community funding, the City was able to apply and receive additional funding through the State of California-Colonia set a side grant.

With the original \$40,000 received from Enterprise Community funding, the City of Calexico has received a total of \$1.5 million in funding.

\$1.2 million provided water and sewer main lines, and street improvements of curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and drainage. The installation of infrastructure improvements were completed in September 1999, with a total of 47 laterals provided to the properties located in the Colonia. Of the \$1.2 million, approximately \$170,000 is being used to assist in housing rehabilitation.

\$300,000 was received from the State Department of Housing and Community Development to provide a housing rehabilitation program that will assist low and very low income families. The housing rehabilitation program will start in June 2000.

EC BENCHMARK # 5 - TUBERCULOSIS

A new computer software program planned for the Imperial County Public Health Department will allow tracking of Tuberculosis activities more precisely and generate accurate statistical reports.

EC BENCHMARK # 9 – LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA

Our plans for the future include supporting the Brawley Public Library with their mobile literacy laboratory. We will send a literacy technician to Census tracts 101, 104, and possibility 119, 120, 121. We plan to provide materials and fuel to these tracts to accomplish this. We expect to complete our benchmark of 100 or more persons reading or speaking at a minimum of ESLOA Level 2 by 2005.

EC BENCHMARK # 11 - ARTS COUNCIL

The Old Post Office Pavilion has a useable basement with more than 3000 square feet. We would like to install a ramp from the back parking lot to the basement entrance and then rehabilitate the basement space, bringing it up to code. The building itself is designated Arts/Cultural and is on the National Register of Historic Buildings. When the renovation is complete, the basement would be used by various local arts/cultural groups for music and dance studios, an art class area, a drama area, an artist's co-op where local art could be sold, etc. None of these activities are possible, however, until we have wheel chair access to the basement. We have been looking for funding and have several arts organizations that have agreed that, in lieu of the first year's rent, they will bring their specific space up to code.

EC BENCHMARK # 14 – CALEXICO WATER

Continue evaluating the needs of the community in terms of growth and services that are required to meet growth demands.

EC BENCHMARK # 16 – C.N. PERRY COLONIA

The City plans to continue assisting residents of the C. N. Perry Colonia by identifying needs in the area and seeking funding through State, Federal, and local sources.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Planning is challenging work. What matters is that we care about the community, we are willing to work with, talk with, listen to others, and have a vision. In order to continue developing strategies that improve the environment in which we live, grow and work it is vital for the people to speak up and work together.

The Enterprise Community process certainly revealed the importance of having a community, with the cooperation of their federal, state, and local government, develop strategic plans and implemented by alliances among private, public and nonprofit entities. This process has been successfully implemented in Imperial County and it will continue to be because the community realizes the importance of working together to build a plan that will take them toward a new beginning.

Imperial County with the cooperation of its federal, state and local officials will continue to adopt an integrated and coordinated approach to promoting sustainable development in its community. The input and ideas of the public will continue to be the guiding principle in creating a vision and plan for the future of Imperial County. As demonstrated in this report the community's involvement and participation is the best approach to enhance the quality of life and spur economic growth throughout the community.