



# Economic Development Summit of the Redwood Forest Coast Region



## Elemental economy

DEL NORTE | HUMBOLDT |  
LAKE | MENDOCINO |  
ADJACENT TRIBAL LANDS

SEPTEMBER 21-22, 2023  
UKIAH, CALIFORNIA

# CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

**Thursday, September 21st**

**THE ELEMENTS OF AN EQUITABLE ECONOMY**

Susan Seaman y Amanda Hickey,  
California Center for Rural Policy

State Highlights and Regional  
Impacts  
Senator Mike McGuire

The Attraction and Potential of  
Mendocino County  
Minal Shankar, Entrepreneur

Looking Forward: How to Weave  
Inclusion, Prosperity, and  
Community  
Dr. Manuel Pastor, USC Professor  
and Dr. Chris Benner, Director of the  
Institute for  
Social Transformation at UC Santa  
Cruz

Panel: Climate and Disaster  
Resilience Intertwine

Panel: Tribal Economic Power  
Building

Breakout Sessions: Broadband and  
Housing

A networking event featuring local  
businesses and artists,  
sponsored by Vineyard  
Offshore and RWE

**Friday, September 22nd**

**EARTH, AIR, FIRE, WATER: ELEMENTS OF  
OUR REDWOOD COAST ECONOMY**

Thinking Blue versus Singing the Blues:  
The Economy and California's North Coast  
to 2030

Dr. Robert Eyler of Sonoma State  
University, followed by facilitated  
discussion

Leading through Disaster  
Nick Bown-Crawford, Executive Director,  
Humboldt Made

Transform Your Community's Vision into  
Project Pipelines  
Omar Tinajero of the Center for  
Community Investment

Panel: empowering the Region through  
Renewable Energy

Breakout Sessions: Workforce and  
Cannabis

**Presented by**



**RWE**



# Regional Summit Planning Committee

## *Event Chair*

Susan Seaman, Arcata Economic Development Corporation + Wild Rivers Community Foundation

## *Marketing Chair*

Melissa Blanford, Illuminated Marketing

## *Administrative Support*

Brandi Easter, Arcata Economic Development Corporation

Sara Barbour, Yurok Economic Development Corporation

Stacey Caico, Economic Development & Financing Corporation  
(Mendocino & Lake)

Susan Diehl McCarthy, City of Arcata Community Development

Gregg Foster, Redwood Region EDC (Humboldt)

Nicole Flora, Lake County Economic Development Corporation

Katrina Kessen, Greater Ukiah Business and Tourism Alliance

Laura McAndrews Sammel, Lake County Chamber of Commerce

Sean McLaughlin, Access Humboldt

Nancy Olson, Greater Eureka Chamber of Commerce

Paloma Patterson, West Business Development Center

Mary Anne Petrillo, West Business Development Center

Eric Riggs, Cal Poly Humboldt College of Natural Resources and Sciences

Dianna Rios, County of Humboldt Economic Development (GoHumCo)

Kaylee Simili-Aguilar, Greater Ukiah Business and Tourism Alliance



VINEYARD  
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# EDITORIAL

Brenda Pérez, Executive Director of Centro del Pueblo, attended the Economic Development Summit of the Redwood Forest Coast Region held on September 21 and 22, 2023, in Ukiah, California.

The purpose of this event was to discuss the relationships between the natural environment, the economy, and the tribal groups spanning the region, including Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, Mendocino counties, and the Adjacent Tribal Lands.

Speakers included Susan Seaman and Amanda Hickey from Redwood Regional RISE, Dr. Manuel Pastor, Dr. Chris Benner, and Nick Bown-Crawford. Meanwhile, Senator Mike McGuire discussed regional balance, inclusive decision-making, and called for a 60% reduction in pollution by 2045.

In the panels, each participant contributed insights about social equity, the importance of tribal knowledge, community leadership, and the solidarity economy.

Brenda's purpose was to translate and disseminate key points from this summit to bridge the linguistic and cultural gap within the community.

Below you will find the highlighted content. We hope that in the future, these events have a greater representation of diverse communities.



We trust this gazette will drive discussion and decision-making among the migrant, Latine, indigenous, and populations of color in the regional economy, in which we are main agents of change.

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## Education

Greater investment is needed in Northern California to ensure that the middle class has equal opportunities to thrive and guarantee the optimal performance of future professionals, with special attention to the child sector.

*"We need ambitious, cultivated, intellectually prepared people who seek a more prosperous and better society"*

Forecasts for the next decade in the number of higher education students are negative if there are no changes in social infrastructure. There are concerns regarding the quality and quantity of the workforce, and in the retention of higher education teachers, which affects the quality of life and the level of education in our community.

Economic opportunity must match the growth of funds, resources, and highly trained individuals.

## Energy

The demand for green energy from 25% of the region and the projection of 60% less pollution for the next two decades will be possible through harmonious negotiations at the local, state, and federal levels.



The creation of transmission lines that provide the necessary energy for local coverage, with funds for the Port of Humboldt, will help stabilize the situation of the most vulnerable, starting with the Indigenous Peoples.

*"It's time for the transition to a future of clean energy."*

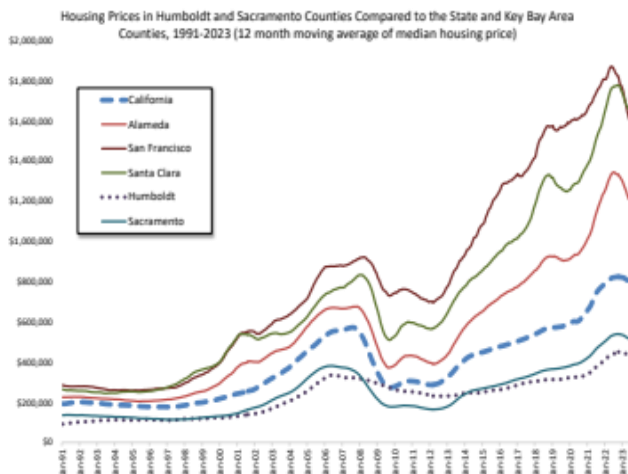
# Housing

Addressing the homeless crisis is key, and currently, \$415 million has been invested in the housing crisis. A reform in the insurance rate regulation system and practices is necessary so that the average Californian is not affected by high costs.

*There are indiscriminate eviction practices, like those faced by some survivors of natural disasters, as for some landlords it's more profitable to collect insurance for repairs than to collect rents*

These components of the crisis add to the rising housing prices in the region, which increased exponentially between 2020 and 2022, violating our rights and forcing displacement or relocation according to possibilities.

## AND YET ANOTHER GAP



Source: California Association of Realtors

## Population

It's essential to focus economic analyses on equity and study demographic transformations, because both physical and social infrastructure are equally important. To achieve equity, we need to change the rules about who leads, who speaks, and question which voices need to be heard and which ones should be brought to the forefront in economic decision-making.

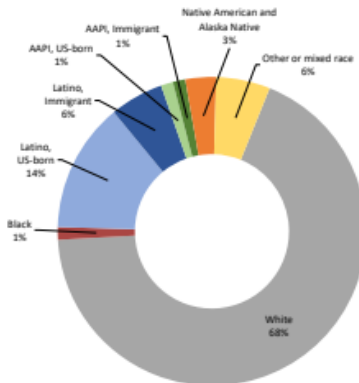
Leaders should increase their outreach to the people, address social and economic differences, and call for collective action with regional strategies that address inequalities.

It is of utmost importance that the various sectors of the population: the political, business, and the community at large actively participate in the development of the region.

We need to include various business forces with new approaches, even though this means facing resistance from members resistant to change, even within the chambers of commerce.

*Having an organized economy reflects the value and power of our society; we must take responsibility for the management of the territory.*

Race/Ethnicity by Nativity, Humboldt, Lake, & Mendocino Counties, 2021



## Health

COVID-19 was the disease that not only exposed our physical deficiencies, but also shook the political system and revealed economic inequalities in access to quality medical services.

*The aftermath of the health crisis was exacerbated by the loss of homes, jobs, and loved ones, leading to conditions such as trauma, PTSD, anxiety, and depression*

The current health system is focused on treatment rather than prevention. To change this, it's essential to review and invest in the socioeconomic factors that impact health. This would have a direct effect on the regional and national economy.





## Economy

Inflation and the pandemic have inflicted severe damages on the regional economy due to forced migration and the exodus of the workforce.

In California, we are still in a recovery period from the pandemic. Forecasts for the next five years in the Northern region indicate that opportunities to enter the job market are dwindling.

Economic analyses in the region will remain incomplete until certain essential factors are reflected, such as the productive activities of cannabis and undocumented workers.

Currently, in the regional economy, the best jobs are those related science: Engineers, oceanographers, geologists, etc., and Cal Poly is making a difference with its academic offerings in this regard.

*The only challenge has been ensuring the retention of these professionals in the region*

**Wage growth in the region (2023):**

**Average salary in the state of California: \$24.75**

**Northern CA: \$21.15**

**Napa: \$29**

**San Francisco: \$37**

*“Elemental Economics is a synthesis of our innate connection with the environment and the countless opportunities it presents”*

We recognize the unique dynamics of the region, from the land that nourishes our agricultural industry, the wind that powers our renewable energy sources, to the real threats of climate change, such as wildfires and rising sea levels.

“For 200 years, Tribes were prohibited from continuing their conservation practices regarding the environment. As a result, we have problems and imbalances. We need to approach indigenous knowledge since the dominant culture does not have all the answers.”

Our region has suffered countless natural disasters, not only from fires but also from earthquakes. We have all been affected by these acts of nature, and it is necessary that we transform these experiences into preventive actions.

To discuss disaster preparedness, we must talk about job opportunities, with the opening of markets specialized in reconstruction products.

It is necessary to attract the intellectual, business, and governmental sectors, as the latter does not participate in recovery processes unless it is catastrophic.

It is essential to have a vision of protection and prevention, and think about increasing the number of full-time firefighters, transitioning to technological resources, especially in vulnerable populations.

*"Let's start by awakening empathy and compassion for those who have no choice but public shelter. Let's be transformative instead of transactional."*

We live in a relatively small territory, which allows us to understand the needs of the most vulnerable groups. With this information, we can plan immediate response programs and create sustainable housing models.

The lack of an immediate response from the government has necessitated the creation of non-profit organizations that were of great help in recovering from the damages, especially in Rio Dell, caused by the Earthquake on December 20, 2022, in Humboldt.

In disaster preparedness, it is urgent to reflect on the region's food sovereignty. One of the main challenges we face after natural disasters is the lack of access to food and materials.

*The backbone of recovery is the connection between community groups, businesses, institutions, and the community.*



## Looking towards the future

### *Which voices need to be heard?*

There is an absence of people of color at these events; the panelists invite us to find out which collaborations will solve this problem. It is crucial to integrate the youth, tribal leaders, and marginalized groups into discussions about the direction of the regional economy.

There is a pending reflection on how to solve problems of innovation, technology development, training, and professionalization in different productive sectors of the region, from government functions and public policies, industry, agriculture, and education.

Speakers agree on highlighting three elements to successfully carry out economic projects: Investment, public policy, and community participation. These are linked to processes of empowering vulnerable populations and the creation of renewable energies. During the conference, it was acknowledged that "in the region, we have world-class wind that will benefit the coast and also the rest of the state."

However, how can we ensure that we do not repeat the mistakes of the past regarding the use of technology that has had negative effects on communities? How can we improve aspects of reach and prosperity based on equity?

*Together, we can forge a path towards a  
fairer and more prosperous future.  
We can all drive our collective  
economy forward*

# STATE OF THE REDWOOD COAST REGION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT

Presented by:



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Redwood Region Economic Development Commission



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