

Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District

September 2023

Team Members

- Brad Johnson, Department Analyst
- Lauren Cartwright, Interim Deputy Director
- Ethan Brown, Executive Director

Event: Business Friendly Check Up Webinar (September 28th, 2023)

- Context: Business friendly communities are better able to attract and retain competitive and market leading businesses, providing quality jobs, robust tax revenues to fund critical community amenities and infrastructure, and an enhanced quality of life for residents and visitors. The Business-Friendly Check-up is a tool that establishes a baseline of key metrics that city and community leaders can reference to better understand their communities' strengths and weaknesses in this area. Such understanding is useful for crafting effective and relevant policies to support continuous improvement in community vitality.
- The Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District will host a webinar on how to use the Business-Friendly Community Check Up tool on Thursday September 28th, 2023, from 10:00 am to 11:00 am. City Managers and Economic Development Directors/Managers are encouraged to register and participate. [To register, please click here to visit the registration page on SMEDD's website.](#)

California Association of Local Economic Developers (CALED) Rural Exchange

- *September 14th, 2023:* Lauren and Brad represented the EDB and SMEDD at the annual rural exchange event hosted by CALED. This year's rural exchange was hosted in Ukiah CA. The purpose of the event is to share resources, successes, and obstacles that rural counties and regions experience when conducting economic development. The Sonoma County EDB provided insight on broadband connectivity plans and received a variety of resources/information on federal and state programs ranging from the Small Business Administration, United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Development Administration, California Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-BIZ), and University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Letters of Support:

- Context: One of the simplest and most effective ways SMEDD can be used is to provide letters of support to organizations applying for grant funds for a project that directly relates to the goals in the CEDS. Letters of support recently issued by SMEDD include:
 - *Sonoma County Meat Company, Santa Rosa CA, \$5 million Local Meat Capacity Grant through the USDA. (Awaiting award decision)*
 - *Regenerative Forest Solutions, private property owner forest/vegetation management grant. (Awarded!)*

Board Vacancy

- Currently, there is a vacant seat on the SMEDD Board. A prospective board candidate can be a representative from either Sonoma or Mendocino Counties and would be appointed by the SMEDD Board itself. If you are familiar with someone who is interested in learning more about the SMEDD, [direct them to the SMEDD website](#) to submit an email inquiry for the "at large" position.