

Weaver Mountains Economic Development Council Strategic Plan,

Mike Thomas, President Weaver Mountains Chamber of Commerce

In March, work on the Regional Economic Development Plan continued with Chamber Board review of the first draft prepared by Alexandria Wright, Director of the Regional Economic Development Center of Yavapai College and then presentation of the draft to community Members on March 20. While this first draft does represent a good beginning, it will not reach its full potential as a 'road map' for our area without review and input from as many of our area stakeholders as possible. To that end, the Chamber is scheduling **Focus Workshops** over the next two months to gain your input and prepare the final version of the Plan. Two workshops are on the calendar already: One on **April 13** and one on **April 20** both from 9am—11:30am. Seating is limited so please call 928 671 1894 to reserve your place at the table. As more people show interest, more workshops can be scheduled. If you would like to have a focus workshop just for your group or organization, please call and the Chamber will accommodate your group's availability.

This first draft of the Plan has 4 high level Objectives:

Marketing: *"To expand the reputation of the Weaver Mountains Region as a top tourism region with an enhanced quality of life";*

Business Retention, Expansion and Start-Up: *"To create entrepreneurial ecosystem that supports existing and new businesses through infrastructure, access to resources and workforce development";*

Community Development: *"To provide a foundation for prosperity through the development of infrastructure and advocacy at the County, State and Federal levels";*

Fiscal Sustainability: *"To foster a sustainable budget for marketing and economic development planning for the area."*

This draft plan, which will be available in had copy at the focus workshops, does have some detail of strategies, timeline targets for the next 3 years and performance indicators for each objective.

Already there are several strategies in the draft Plan being implemented. Of special value to our business owners and potential new business is **SBDC Business Technical Assistance** provide by Yavapai College Business Analyst Al Carlow. Al has office hours on Thursdays at 22555 S SR 89 in Yarnell. Please call 928 776 2008 or e-mail al.carlow@yc.edu to schedule your confidential appointment. This valuable service is already receiving very positive reviews and is being offered at no cost to you.

Another valuable offering are the **Weaver Mountains Small Business Series** of workshops beginning **April 10** with "**SEO—Search Engine Optimization**" and on **April 17** with "**Fair Wages and Healthy Family Act (Prop. 206)**". Workshops start at 8am and again seating is limited so please call Katherine Anderson, REDC/SBDC Yavapai College at 928 776 2008 or e-mail Katherine.Anderson@yc.edu to reserve your place.

So much great potential is already being reached with this Plan process and the Chamber invites all to participate. We've put together a list of things we know we need your help with. If something sparks your interest, please call me at 480-363-4920 and we get you connected with folks with similar interests:

- ◆ Staff the Visitor Center
- ◆ Build card rack for Visitor Center
- ◆ Create a Logo
- ◆ Graphic Design
- ◆ Build the Chamber sign
- ◆ Draft the Marketing Plan
- ◆ Draft the Finance Plan
- ◆ Finding Grants
- ◆ Writing Grant Requests
- ◆ Draft the Flora May Park Plan
- ◆ Help with events

- ◆ Outreach to Businesses, Organizations and Individuals in the Weaver Mountains Area
- ◆ Donate money or materials for: Flora May Park - Economic Development Projects - Other
- ◆ Gather information for handouts: Walking/Hiking Trails – Bicycling Trails – Geological Interests
– Ecological Interests – Investor Opportunities - ...
- ◆ Coordinating information gathering
- ◆ Social Media – Developing: Web Site – Facebook – Trip Advisor – Google Maps - Other
- ◆ Social Media –Maintaining/Updating: Web Site – Facebook – Trip Advisor – Google Maps - Other
- ◆ Communications – e-Newsletter – Calendar – Weaver Mountains Artists Guild