



# COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

## Executive Office

**DARCIE ANTLE**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Clerk of the Board

501 Low Gap Road, Room 1010  
Ukiah, CA 95482-3734

Email: [ceo@mendocinocounty.gov](mailto:ceo@mendocinocounty.gov)  
Website: [www.mendocinocounty.gov](http://www.mendocinocounty.gov)

Office: (707) 463-4441  
Facsimile: (707) 463-5649

### MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** May 21<sup>ST</sup>, 2024

**TO:** HONORABLE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

**FROM:** EXECUTIVE OFFICE

**SUBJECT:** ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATES

#### SUMMARY

This report is structured in three sections, the California and national economic climate, an economic overview of Mendocino County, and current work and project assignments by the Economic Development Division staff to support the economy in Mendocino County. Awareness of regional and economic conditions, along with local population demographics and economic indicators, will continually inform our decisions and direction in coordination with the County's Strategic Plan.

#### NATIONAL ECONOMY

##### Federal Reserve - Effective Federal Funds Rate – Prior Year Comparison

Date	Effective Federal Funds Rate
May 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2024	5.33%
May 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2023	4.83%

\* via <https://www.newyorkfed.org/markets/reference-rates/effr>

##### National Unemployment Rate – Prior Year Comparison

Date	National Unemployment Rate
April 2024	3.9%
April 2023	3.4%

\* via <https://www.bls.gov/cps/>

#### LOCAL ECONOMY

##### Aug 2023 – March 2024 Unemployment Rates

	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
California	5.1%	4.9%	4.8%	4.9%	5.1%	6.1%	5.6%	5.3%
Mendocino County	4.6%	4.6%	4.5%	4.8%	5.4%	5.7%	6.2%	5.7%

\*EDD

### Mendocino County Total Jobs as of December 2023

	March 2023	January 2024	Feb 2024	April 2024	% Change Month	% Change Year
Total Jobs	31,980	32,300	32,760	33,100	1.0%	3.5%
Total Farm	1,530	1,500	1,650	1,720	4.2%	12.4%
Total Goods Producing	3,990	3,860	4,000	4,020	0.5%	0.8%
Service-Providing (Gov't and Private)	26,460	26,950	27,120	27,360	0.9%	3.4%

\*EDD

2023 POPULATION – 91,486 Mendocino County Total Population 2023 (\*Lightcast)

2021 MEDIAN INCOME - \$56,378 (\*Lightcast – 2021 is the most current data available)

HOUSING PRICES – Median Price of Existing Home Sold Mendocino County

	March 2024	Feb 2024	March 2023	Price MTM % Change	Price YTY % Change
Median Price of Houses Sold	\$375,000	\$499,000	\$492,500	-24.8%	-23.9%

\*Association of Realtors

### OVERVIEW

	Population 2023	Labor Force (Sept 2023)	Jobs (2023)	Cost of Living	GRP	Imports	Exports
Mendocino County	91,486	37,072	37,639	130.6	\$4.48B	\$5.97B	\$4.77B
State	38,913,701	19,458,871	20,494,638	134.9	\$3.54T	\$1.80T	\$2.54T

\*Lightcast

### ECONOMIC SUMMARY

Interest rates remain high, which has slowed the housing market and is slowly curbing inflation. We have seen a rise in unemployment, but it is trending downward for Mendocino County. This may in part be due to an increase in total jobs in the County in the last month, and year. Housing prices are beginning to decrease, this can in part be due to seasonal and inventory fluctuations. High interest rates are deterring both sellers and buyers from entering the market. The median price of an existing house is still unaffordable to the median household (income) in Mendocino County.

## DIVISION UPDATES

Economic Development Division priorities are the creation of new housing, workforce development and business retention and attraction, infrastructure development and resiliency, all with the climate and equitable opportunities to all residents. The following are updates in each priority.

### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & BUSINESS LIAISON

The Economic Development Division is providing technical assistance to potential and current local business owners. Staff is assisting with the permitting process, access to funding, and business planning. From February to April, we provided 25 hours of technical assistance and business liaison services to four potential new businesses.

One of these is a proposed tan oak mill, which would utilize a once non-commercial and nuisance (fire hazard) timber, and create between 40-50 jobs at a base salary of 72k/year. We have been facilitating meetings with various departments, regulatory bodies, and researching land zoning to find an appropriate site.

### MICRO-ENTERPRISE BUSINESS ASSISTANCE

Since October of 2023, the Economic Development Division has been managing the CDBG grant contract with West Business Center for Micro-Enterprise Business Technical assistance.

Through this grant, they have provided the following to our local business community in 2023 and the first quarter of 2024:

- 300 Hours of 1:1 business consulting, serving 112 unique clients
- 77 Hours of first-time (ascertain readiness meetings), serving 60 unique clients
- Created 60 service plans for 58 unique clients

## CURRENT INITIATIVES

### SMEDD (Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development District):

Part of the role of the Administrative Analyst for Economic Development is to provide administrative support to SMEDD (Sonoma Mendocino Economic Development Division), our regional Joint Powers Authority with Sonoma County as designated by the EDA. SMEDD board members representing Mendocino County are Tim Karas, Mary Anne Petrillo, and Paul Garza. The primary objectives of SMEDD: support economic resilience in the region and become more responsive and nimbler in the face of an uncertain future.

The SMEDD team has completed the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy project updates for 2024. Staff interviewed project stakeholders and summarized project developments for the SMEDD CEDS Update Report to the EDA.

Over the last 3 months, division staff participated in the planning for the SMEDD Biomass Utilization Symposium which “brought together industry, academia, Tribes, government and community-based organizations to explore the opportunities and challenges of implementing forest biomass utilization projects for fire safety, forest health, renewable energy, and wood

products, and supporting the appropriate growth of sustainable, stewardship-based, rural economic development.”

The symposium took place May 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> with over 120 attendees, coming from as far as Canada. The first day comprised of field tours to project sites working with forest biomass. The second day was held at UC Extension Hopland’s Shippey Hall and comprised of speakers and panelists from all different areas within the biomass field. A copy of the agenda is attached to this report.

### **CA JOBS FIRST (formerly CERF):**

California Jobs First formerly CERF (Community Economic Resiliency Fund) is a state-wide initiative designed to promote sustainable and equitable recovery from the economic distress of COVID-19. Funding is allocated by region.

Mendocino County is part of Redwood Region RISE, comprised of Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, Mendocino Counties, and Tribal Lands.

Staff are part of the voting member block, which will participate in the selection of projects submitted for investment and development in our region. Also, division staff is a part of the Finance Working Group, whose goal is to bring forward other funding opportunities to project stakeholders.

In late April division staff attended the two day in-person gathering in Loleta, Humboldt County. This was the first in-person meeting with the other voting block members. The voting block members will be defining the scoring criteria for voting, as well as voting on projects to award funding. Division staff volunteered to join the Ad-Hoc Committee formed to create meeting and organizational structure for the voting block member group.

### **OTHER UPDATES**

#### **BROOKTRAILS/SHERWOOD SPECIAL ASSESSMENT**

Staff are facilitating the completion of a project started 2 years ago which has been on hold. The project assignment is to secure funding via a special assessment to allow for the maintenance of two emergency access routes, roughly parallel to Sherwood Road which will allow emergency personnel to access Brooktrails and upper Sherwood neighborhoods during a fire or other disaster.

A special district will be defined and the parcel/property owners within this district will vote on being charged an annual assessment to their parcel to fund the maintenance of these routes.