

**Workforce Investment Board
Economic Development Ad Hoc Committee
1880 W. Wardrobe Ave
February 20, 2008, 3:00-4:00 p.m.
Meeting Minutes**



<http://web.co.merced.ca.us/wi/wib/wib.html>

Members Present: John Fowler, Albert Montejano (Chair)

Others Present: Brian Cutler, Douglas Kain (Merced College), Dee Knight, Joanne Presnell

1. Call to Order: The Chair, Mr. Albert Montejano, called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. The Chair noted there was no need for introductions since everyone knew each other.

2. Biotech Presentation/Q & A: Mr. Douglas Kain, professor of the Biotech Program at Merced College that Specifically trains technicians for the biotech industry, gave the following PowerPoint presentation on biotechnology:

- a. Defined biotechnology
- b. History of biotechnology
- c. Genetic engineering
- d. Molecular biology
- e. Modern biology
- f. Biotechnology companies
- g. Sector that employs biotechnicians

Staff noted Mr. Kain is part of the Biotech Industry/Valley Bio and Science Coalition that is a three-county collaborative of San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Merced. The focus of the coalition is to support any biotech already in the valley, and to attract more biotech into the valley by having a supply of trained biotechnicians.

Q: What are the biotech needs from the workforce? Mr. Kain noted he had a skill-set list that he would e-mail to staff.

Q: After students receive their Associate's degree, can they go on to UC Merced? Mr. Kain said his program does not transfer to any university because universities do not teach hands-on lab skill sets. Universities emphasize theoretical.

Q: Once the course is finished, can any of the students go into clinical lab work? No, because clinical labs are very regulatory, and he does not have the background to teach that process.

Q: What options do the students have in the biotech industry? They can leave the valley, and go to Bay Area, Los Angeles or San Diego.

Q: Due to the fact that there are no biotech jobs available in the valley, will this curriculum continue at Merced College? As long as they have the students, it will continue.

Q: Is there any local businesses looking for biotechnicians? Yes, Certified Labs, Gallo and Hilmar Cheese.

Q: What would attract the biotech industry into the valley? Space, inexpensive land and a skilled workforce.

Mr. Kain noted he attended a conference on “How to Get a Biotech Company Started in Your Community”. To get a biotech company started, you must have a university that does biotech research with a professor who starts a business, and then the university must be willing to transfer it to the private sector.

3. What Committee Members Expect From This Committee:

a. **In What Activities do Members Want to participate?** It was noted that every local organization in existence has an Economic Development Committee, and they have their own definition of economic development. It was noted that this committee should search for things that could be brought to the Executive Committee and the Workforce Investment Board to influence job creation and development in the local area.

b. **What Types of Presentations Do Members Want/From Whom Do Members Want to Hear:** It would be good to have some experts; i.e., Pacific Gas & Electric, Merced Irrigation District and Dr. Winston of UC Merced, give a presentation on Solar Power/Renewable Energy/Fossil Fuel because the community will have to tap into these energy sources within the next 4-5 years.

Staff will contact representatives from the above-named groups to give a presentation.

It was suggested that the committee look at the list of industry clusters, and bring it up to date. It was also suggested to have Mr. Lee Andersen give a presentation on the success of the Regional Occupational Program Career and Technical Education, and if Merced County Office of Education is training the people the community needs in the workforce.

4. Next Meeting: TBA, Dept of Workforce Investment, Small Conf Rm., 1880 W. Wardrobe Ave, Merced.

5. Adjourn: Meeting was adjourned at 4:13 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Devilla D. Knight