

**Planning, Policy Development, and Legislation Committee**  
**Merced County Department of Business Economic Opportunities**  
**2000 M Street, Merced, CA**  
**August 28, 2002, 3:00 P.M.**  
**Meeting Minutes**



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**Members Present:** Andrea Baker, Nick Benjamin, Harry Dull, Peter Fluetsch (Chair), John Fowler  
**Members Absent:** George Brown, Ernie Flores, Carol Greenberg, Brian Griffin  
**PITD Staff Present:** Debby Hoban, Ed McLaughlin, Chuck Purcell

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**1. Call to Order and Roll Call** – The Chair called the meeting to order. A sign-in sheet was used in lieu of roll call.

**2. Agenda** –The agenda was approved with addition of two information agenda items 7a, Merced County Business Outreach Program, and 7b, Connecting Merced County: Buy Merced County.

**3. Approval of Minutes** – It was *M/S/C Dull/Fowler* to approve the July 24, 2002 minutes.

**4. Public Opportunity to Speak** – None present.

**5. Update – Meet the WIB Contest** – None

**6. Action Agenda:**

- a. Affordable Housing in Merced County** –Mr. Nick Benjamin presented the Affordable/ Workforce Housing Policy. Mr. Harry Dull announced a new position established by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), California Guaranteed Rural Rental Housing (GRRH) Program Coordinator and provided copies of a vacancy announcement. An addition, “and maintain contact with USDA and other sources” was made to the fourth bullet“.

It was *M/S/C Fowler/Dull* to approve the Affordable/Workforce Housing Policy as amended and to recommend to the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) to adopt the policy regarding the development of affordable/workforce housing within Merced County.

- b. First Source Agreement/Language** – Document was amended to read Merced County Department of Workforce Investment in lieu of Private Industry Training Department.

It was *M/S/C Fowler/Dull* to recommend to the Workforce Investment Board to approve the “First Source” language for incorporation into agreements entered into by economic development agencies within Merced County.

**7. Information Agenda:**

- a. Merced County Business Outreach Program** – Mr. John Fowler, Action Business Center, gave an overview of the program. The Action Business Center, following WIA guidelines, was directed by the State to generate a program for job creation and expansion activities in the county. The task force was formed from public, private and educational organizations. The

plan was approved by the State and they were granted \$71,230 in funding. The money was used to develop a retention program. Its primary effort was to be both informational and ears for businesses in our community; focusing on business retention and business expansion. Through Action Business Center, they applied to the Human Services Agency (HSA) for funding to do this program.

The contract will run out on September 1, 2002 and they may have to terminate the business retention program. Over the past 2 1/2 years they were able to document some interesting facts. They built a database of 240 of the county's largest companies, what their needs are, who their contacts are and have given them liaison to contact in case of issues. They documented a retention of 181 jobs, which amounts to several businesses staying in the area, and generated 251 jobs by convincing a number of businesses to do their expansions. The value of the program is \$7.3 million per year. It is important the policy group knows this program is in a position to go away.

The Action Business Center is preparing an application to the WIB for support of the next year and three-quarters (approximately \$158,062). The staff will forward the application directly to the Executive Committee so it can get on the agenda for the full WIB meeting in September. Mr. Fowler asked for support of this group when this item comes before the WIB.

- b. Connecting Merced County: Buy Merced County**– Mr. Harry Dull provided information copies on the Buy Merced County project. The general presentation meeting was held on August 21, 2002. The Steering Committee would like representation from the Action Business Center and business members on the WIB. They own a website [www.buymerced.net](http://www.buymerced.net) that will establish a business portal for small businesses in Merced County. Mr. Dull noted this is part of the Connecting Merced initiative. The next meeting will be in September and will be announced on the website.

**8. Chair Comments** – The Chair noted a report was given at Mercy Hospital that 12 out of the 13 RN graduating students from Merced Junior College were hired in the local area.

**9. Next Meeting/Date/Time** – The next meeting will be Wednesday, September 25, 2002, at the Merced County Department of Business Economic Opportunities, 2000 M Street, Merced, at 3:00 p.m.

**10. Adjourn** – Meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Debby Hoban