

Economic Development Council

Meeting Minutes

December 7, 2017 • 10:00 AM • Little America • 2515 E. Butler Ave • Flagstaff, AZ

Presiding Officer – Jodie Filardo, Chairman

Attendees	Present/Absent	Number of Absences in 2017
Jodie Filardo, Chairman	Present	1
Paul Watson, Vice-Chairman	Present	0
Rich Bowen, Chair-At-Large	Present	1
Jesse Thompson, Executive	Present	0
Sharon Adams	Present	0
Art Babbott	Present	0
Wendy Bridges	Present	1
Becki Christensen	Present	0
Michelle Conway	Present	0
Carol Curtis	Present	0
Eric Duthie	Present	0
Coral Evans	Present	2
Paul Ferris	Present	0
Bruce Greco	Present	0
Linda Hatch	Present	0
Richard Heath	Present	1
Kimberly Johnson	Present	1
Steve North	Present	1
Lora Lee Nye	Present	0
Julie Pastrick	Present	1
Kelly Patton	Present	2
Norman Perry	Present	1
Paul Ramsey	Present	3
Casey Rooney	Present	1
Ed Steinback	Present	1
Steven West	Present	4
Matthew Williams	Present	1
Jim Wurgler	Present	0

*Excused Absence

Guests: Keith Johnson, Town Manager, Pinetop-Lakeside
Jeff Hays, USDA Community Projects Director
Stephen Puhr, Executive Director Hopi Tribe Economic Development Corporation
Sara Wagner, Grant Writer
Chris Fetzer, NACOG Executive Director
Michele Ralston, Staff Assistant to Supervisor Art Babbott, Coconino County

Staff: Teri Drew, NACOG Regional Director
Leah Cickavage, Operations Manager

I. Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Jodie Filardo called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM. She asked everyone to introduce themselves. There was not a quorum present at the Call to Order. Chairman Filardo acknowledged that Leah Cickavage was filling in for Julia Sawyer in scribing the meeting, and reminded members to be sure to note their names for her assistance.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Filardo asked Matthew Williams to lead everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Approval of Minutes – August 3, 2017

Chairman Filardo passed on this agenda item until late arrivals could be present to make a quorum.

IV. Chairman's Report

Chairman Filardo thanked all of the members of the Economic Development Council (EDC), Teri Drew and staff for being leaders in civil discourse. She noted that it has been an interesting and full year for the EDC, and that there are great projects that are planned, and expressed appreciation for the supportive posture of the Council.

Chairman Filardo then turned the meeting over to Regional Director Teri Drew for the Director's Report.

V. Director's Report

➤ **Program Update**

Ms. Drew began by noting that she has several discussion points to cover since there was not an October meeting of the EDC. She paused to thank Chairman Filardo for her leadership of the Council for the past several years. She also expressed her holiday best wishes and Merry Christmas to everyone.

Ms. Drew then began to discuss the annual Economic Development District (EDD) application process, noting that EDA has now extended the contract to 3 years as opposed to 1 year. The funding allocations are still distributed one (1) year at a time, however. Ms. Drew noted that there has also been a change in reporting requirements from twice a year to quarterly. In addition, a fiscal officer had to be identified, which for NACOG is Scott Wolford, Finance Director. Mr. Wolford is responsible for reporting financials on a quarterly basis through a designated federal website. Julia Sawyer is designated as the Program representative, and logs onto the same website to submit program activity reports quarterly, in addition to the bi-annual reporting normally done.

Ms. Drew reported that the EDD maintains a “distressed district” designation, which means that our match requirement for projects is lower, 40% as opposed to 50-60%. This designation also keeps us at our \$75,000 annual allotment for funding from the Economic Development Administration (EDA).

Ms. Drew then brought an update on the EDA Assistance to Coal Communities (ACC) funding opportunity that was opened in the summer. She reported that Navajo County and REAL AZ partners, led by Vice-Chairman Paul Watson, received funding for assessment recovery strategy in the amount of \$104,265; the Hopi Tribe received \$137,000 for an economic diversification study; and the Hopi Economic Development Corporation received \$128,805 to support the development of an incubator program; Navajo Nation Window Rock received \$154,016; Northern Arizona University (NAU) received a grant in partnership with Arizona State University (ASU) for \$99,999. Ms. Drew reported that the Seattle Region received less than \$1 million, and our District received \$624,085 of that allotment, noting that this is a big win for our area, which has several coal communities that will benefit. Ms. Drew commented that Coconino County also applied for ACC funds, but did not receive the funding in this round. She congratulated Carol Curtis and Coconino County for the outstanding job in presenting their application which focused on actual job development. Ms. Drew commented that the focus of this funding opportunity seemed to be toward assessments and studies for coal communities. She reported that she placed a call to the Seattle EDA Regional Director on behalf of Coconino County, who suggested Coconino County re-submit their application under Economic Adjustment funding opportunities. Ms. Drew turned the floor over to Carol Curtis to further comment. Ms. Curtis noted that there are several other grants that Coconino County is bringing in to address the Navajo Generating Station (NGS) closure, scheduled for 2019. Ms. Curtis expressed gratitude to Ms. Drew for the advocacy on behalf of Coconino County.

Ms. Drew continued reporting on other news from EDA. She noted that EDA has funds available for “ready” projects. Ms. Drew noted a few projects in the District that are underway or being developed and encouraged applications as soon as possible.

Ms. Drew then reported that in late November she received communication from our Seattle EDA representative regarding a request to update the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) with a section on “disaster resiliency”. Ms. Drew noted that we responded to the sections in our current CEDS that highlight plans for economic resiliency, noting that our CEDS was accepted by the EDA in 2014. Mr. Macias responded that all of the active CEDS are being reviewed by a team in Washington DC for publication nationally, finding that our CEDS lacks a specific section dedicated to disaster resiliency. Ms. Drew then proposed that staff draft that section, utilizing some examples of other District CEDS, to bring back to the Executive Committee for approval, and then to Regional Council for approval at their first scheduled meeting for 2018. There was no opposition.

➤ **2018 Goals and Priorities**

Ms. Drew asked Leah Cickavage to pass around the draft list of 2018 Goals and Priorities for members to review. Ms. Drew reminded the Council that the Goals and Priorities List identifies projects that are going to be applied for within a calendar year. She requested the Council to take time today to update the list with new projects, take out old projects no longer relevant and make any adjustments necessary to the priority ratings for their projects. Ms. Drew noted that the list will also be sent out to Regional Council and town/city managers for review as well. She requested the lists be sent back to NACOG staff by the end of this month, and acknowledged that some Council members need to consult with their town officials and Regional Council members before making changes to the list. Ms. Drew reminded the Council that the Goals and Priorities List is an annual requirement, and potential EDA projects must be put on the list in order to be considered for approval. A question was asked as to who receives this list, to which Ms. Drew replied that it is sent out to town and city managers, county managers, Regional Council members, and economic development folks. It was noted that this list was not meant to be a “wish list”, but a priority list, and Ms. Drew affirmed that the list should contain projects that are intended to be applied for this calendar year. She noted these will be due back to staff at the end of December.

Chairman Filardo noted that Ms. Sawyer is ill, and passed around a get-well card for everyone to sign for her.

Ms. Drew noted that the 2018 meeting schedule is available and has been sent out. She noted that scheduling is done as far out as possible, and the only meetings still pending are the August and December meetings for 2018. Ms. Drew expressed appreciation to Ms. Sawyer for making this available for everyone timely.

➤ **Ratify Tourism Committee Officers**

Ms. Drew brought a recommendation to ratify the appointment of Michelle Conway as the new Chairman of the Tourism Committee. Ms. Drew acknowledged Dr. Susan Johnstad's work as the Chairman for the past year and a half, but needed to resign her position due to relocation. Chairman Filardo called for a motion to approve the appointment of Michelle Conway as Chairman of the Tourism Committee, **so moved by Linda Hatch and seconded by Paul Ferris. The motion carried unanimously.** Chairman Filardo congratulated Ms. Conway and a round of applause followed. Ms. Drew then noted that the Committee had also recommended Matthew Williams to assume the role of Vice-Chairman, and she turned the floor over to Mr. Williams. Mr. Williams announced that he has recently accepted a position as City Manager at Huachuca City, Arizona and will soon be moving out of the NACOG area. He noted that he has been in Pinetop-Lakeside for 2 years and has enjoyed his time there as Community Services Manager, but is looking forward to the next step in his career. He also stated that he has enjoyed his time serving on the EDC and the Tourism Committee. He noted that Keith Johnson, the Town Manager for Pinetop-Lakeside, is in attendance today and will be submitting an application for membership to the EDC to fill Mr. William's seat, with approval of the EDC. Ms. Drew acknowledged Mr. Williams for the contributions and progress made during his tenure, and thanked him for his hard work and friendship. She also told Mr. Johnson that she looks forward to receiving his application for membership and thanked him for the courtesy extended by the Town of Pinetop-Lakeside during the Tourism Forum. She asked Ms. Cickavage to play a video of the Tourism Forum, the video produced by Cable One as a donation of their time for the first day of the Forum. A round of applause followed the video, and Ms. Drew noted that the video would be posted on the NACOG website. Ms. Drew concluded her report.

Chairman Filardo noted that there is now a quorum present, and revisited Agenda Item III to approve the minutes of the August 3, 2017, and would entertain a motion. **Lora Lee Nye made the motion to approve the minutes of the August 3, 2017 meeting of the EDC, seconded by Rich Bowen.** Chairman Filardo called for discussion and a vote. **The motion carried unanimously.**

VI. Membership Committee Report

Chairman Filardo turned the meeting over to Carol Curtis to report on behalf of the Membership Committee. Ms. Curtis acknowledged the members of the Committee, to include herself as Chairman, Wendy Bridges, Paul Watson, Linda Hatch and Ed Steinback. Ms. Curtis reported that there was a meeting of the Committee on September 20, 2017 to discuss 2 candidates for membership. The Committee approved the application of Bruce Greco, and the other candidate required further research and no action was taken at the meeting. Ms. Curtis also noted that some application/evaluation form changes are pending further discussion. She asked for questions, there were none. Chairman Filardo and Ms. Drew welcomed Mr. Greco to the Council, and Ms. Drew remarked that Mr. Greco was approved at the Executive Committee meeting on October 11, 2017 at Pinetop-Lakeside. Chairman Filardo thanked Ms. Curtis for her report.

Chairman Filardo turned the meeting over to Michelle Conway for the Tourism Committee report.

VII. Tourism Committee Report

Ms. Conway began by focusing on a recap of the Tourism Forum, noting that it was a high-energy event with a lot of engagement. She noted appreciation as well for the speakers who came to the event, and good feedback from the attendees. She noted the venue and perfect weather of mid-October at the Pinetop Country Club. Ms. Conway

reported about 50 attendees, and commented about the networking and interaction with the presentations. She thanked the NACOG staff – Teri Drew, Leah Cickavage, Julia Sawyer and Jeannette Arntzen – for the work before, during and after the Forum. Ms. Conway also acknowledged Matthew Williams for his part in engaging the local government officials. She also noted the professionalism of the staff at Pinetop Country Club. She then acknowledged the speakers – Debbie Johnson with the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT), David Drennon with the Arizona Lodging and Tourism Association (AzLTA, and Ruth Ellen Elinski of Local First Arizona as the keynote speakers – the Tourism Committee members that moderated the Best Practice and Destination Panels, Casey Rooney’s presentation, and Dr. Wanda Costen of Northern Arizona University.

Ms. Conway noted the take-aways from the Forum were to strengthen relationships with AOT, and that the Forum was a success, noting the surveys that were completed by attendees typically demonstrated positive “strongly agree” and “agree” on the feedback. She noted some feedback was to provide more “how to” information, as well as having more time to experience the host community moving forward. Ms. Conway asked Ms. Drew for her input as well.

Ms. Drew noted that one of the goals of the Tourism Committee was to generate enough dollars to have mini-grants, as had been done in the past, an opportunity to assist District tourism projects, but there was not quite enough revenue to pursue that, reporting approximately \$4,900 in revenue from the Forum. The Committee will have discussions on growing those funds for better opportunities, citing some examples of promotions to showcase our tourism areas, such as a drone video recently released by the Prescott Valley Economic Development Foundation. Ms. Drew commented that the Committee will work over the next year as they set their goals and priorities for developing tourism awareness in the District, including workshops throughout the year to allow more access to technical assistance for some areas that don’t have opportunities for marketing and tourism development.

Ms. Conway concluded that the Forum was overall successful and the Committee looks forward to continued future support for future endeavors.

VIII. USDA Presentation

Chairman Filardo introduced Jeff Hays, the Community Programs Director for USDA Northern Arizona Region. She commented on grant projects Mr. Hays has assisted the District with, and turned the meeting over to Mr. Hays for his presentation.

Mr. Hays thanked Chairman Filardo and shared a report about an opportunity to meet a couple of years ago with Gary Rideout of the Vetraplex in the Verde Valley, and this year USDA was able to assist them in opening up their Patriot House, a homeless shelter for veterans.

Due to technical difficulties, Mr. Hays did not share his power point presentation, so he shared some highlights of the funding opportunities. He reported that last year USDA supported over \$453 million in housing loans, \$828,000 in home repair grants, \$22 million for infrastructure/water/wastewater projects, almost \$16 million in business programs, many of which were in Page, and \$7.3 million for community facilities. He noted that, for fiscal year 2017, \$71 million was invested in NACOG counties alone. Apache County has received \$44 million over the past 10 years, Coconino was \$91 million, Navajo received \$170 million and Yavapai was \$109 million.

Mr. Hays reported great opportunities this year for Apache and Navajo counties, because they are designated as “persistent poverty”. This designation opens up funding for those counties that doesn’t compete against state funds. It’s a first-come, first-served pool of money at the national office, and Mr. Hays encourages groups to get project applications in as soon as possible.

Mr. Hays noted that he uses the NACOG CEDS frequently. The National Association of Governments push to have the Farm Bill changed to recognized CEDS plans as a priority, so projects are being re-worded to be a part of the regional plan. He shared a brief example of such projects.

Mr. Hays reported on public safety projects from the past year, including a fire truck loan/grant in the amount of \$300,000 for Springerville; Yarnell Fire District received \$128,000 for the expansion of their fire house and generators; and many others.

Mr. Hays then highlighted 12 business development projects that USDA was able to fund last year, in the amount of \$700,000 for small business development. Some of the projects included were the Jerome Hotel Artisan Center roof, Clarkdale, Cottonwood Business Assistance Center BAC, Prescott Farmer's Market, 2 for Prescott Valley, 3 for Tribal, and more. He noted that there are not many solar programs in the NACOG District, and encouraged more, offering a dollar-for-dollar match in funding for any kind of feasibility study for solar projects, up to \$250,000 and up to \$500,000 for matching grants for solar development.

Mr. Hays also spoke about other water/wastewater projects in the area. He also mentioned more about Star Schools, and a technical assistance grant for water treatment trainings for the area. In addition, he reported about projects in wildfire devastated areas that are prone to flooding with no available funds from FEMA. USDA was able to fund the restoration of the water systems that had been depleted because of the fires. These grants were made possible through the Community Disaster Grant. With that, Mr. Hays called for questions. Some discussion followed in response to the projects that were funded. Casey Rooney mentioned the success of the Cottonwood BAC and the revolving loan fund. Ms. Drew encouraged Council members to meet with Mr. Hays to discuss projects, as he is very knowledgeable and offers great technical assistance. She also noted that NACOG received a grant from USDA on behalf of a local manufacturer in the Prescott Area that assisted them to stay in the area, train and retain staff, doubling in size of staff, and was recognized by the Governor's Workforce Arizona Council last week. Mr. Hays noted that USDA grants help fill gaps in funding. On the note of tourism, he reported USDA assistance in building 3 new hotels in Page this year for \$22 million, as well as others. More discussion followed regarding tribal project funding opportunities. With that, Mr. Hays concluded his presentation.

IX. Hopi Tribe EDA Incubator Grant Update

Chairman Filardo then turned the meeting over to Stephen Puhr, Manager of Development Strategy for the Hopi Tribe Economic Development Corporation. Mr. Puhr spoke briefly about the Corporation, which primarily runs business for the Hopi Tribe and looks for new economic opportunities. He thanked NACOG and Teri Drew for their support of the EDA grant application for the Incubator. He introduced Sara Wagner, formerly of Coconino County, who was present at the meeting, was the grant writer for this project. He noted that it was Ms. Wagner who encouraged him to reach out to NACOG to gain support for their application, and he thanked her for her work.

Mr. Puhr reported that the grant will be used to build an incubator and turn it into a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). The CDFI will accomplish 2 things: 1) Provide opportunities for the Hopi members to start businesses, to include business strategies, planning, back and front office support; 2) Access other funding through the CDFI and Community Development Entity (CDE) status, including loan guarantees and new market tax credits. He noted that they are developing a utility-sized solar plant feasibility study, focused around multiple properties to see which ones are economically competitive to build solar plants on. The goal is to be able to offer power solutions to neighboring areas and states by using new market tax credits to be competitive in the market. Mr. Puhr noted that the Hopi Tribe possesses a lot of land outside of the reservation which can be developed for solar projects. He encouraged the Council to consider the opportunity to work with local municipalities to develop solar projects. With that, he asked for questions. Questions and comments followed about the location of the incubator. Ms. Drew commented on the association with the Hopi Tribe and the Economic Development Corporation, and asked Mr. Puhr to elaborate on the 2 awards received from the EDA ACC grant opportunity. Mr.

Puhr explained that the Hopi Tribe Economic Development Corporation historically has not been very active in development, and this is the first grant they've applied for. The Tribe received a grant for \$137,000 through a collaboration with NAU, to focus on helping the villages regarding civic and educational matters regarding business building. Mr. Puhr reported that the Corporation worked closely with the Tribe in regards to the focuses of the grants. Other discussion followed regarding collaboration of villages within the tribe. Chairman Filardo thanked Mr. Puhr for his presentation.

X. 4-Corners Forum Update

Chairman Filardo deferred this agenda item briefly. Upon his arrival, NACOG Executive Director Chris Fetzer began to share his update on the 4-Corners Futures Forum, which took place about a month ago in Farmington, New Mexico. This forum was an outgrowth of the Partnership for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER) grant study that was done, and the news of the sooner-than-anticipated closure of the Navajo Generating Station (NGS). The planning regions that make up the 4-corner states began a conversation regarding how to collaborate research, planning and information across the area, to try to leverage the impact of EDA investments. Mr. Fetzer reported about 120 participants in attendance, with the majority being from New Mexico, with an initial focus on the San Juan Basin. He noted there were about 10 in attendance from Northern Arizona.

Mr. Fetzer noted that some of the break-out sessions included how to develop action plans and strategies going forward, including tourism, agriculture, renewable energy, etc. Mr. Fetzer acknowledged the opportunity to take these conversations and grow them into future conversations regarding impact to EDA and coordination of planning efforts. He noted there may be state-level meetings in the future, and other multi-state events. Mr. Fetzer thanked the Council for the opportunity to share. Chairman Filardo thanked him for bringing the report and noted that the Council will look forward to supporting next stages in this effort.

XI. Member Comments

Chairman Filardo called for Member Comments. Paul Ferris reported that the City of Winslow is selling city-owned land to various new business ventures. He also reported that they are streamlining their sign code to comply with recent Supreme Court decisions on content neutrality, etc. He noted that they are approving several special development overlay districts for uses that aren't anticipated in the zoning code, such as an off-road race park.

Kim Johnson reported that the City of Page has been building new hotels, and is updating the zoning code. She noted they just received proposals for a housing study, to be paid for by Salt River Project (SRP), and once the study is done they will develop a housing plan.

Casey Rooney picked up on Kim Johnson's report, noting that Cottonwood's Chief Administrative Officer from the Medical Center came to the Cottonwood Economic Development Council meeting, stating that the biggest issues faced by the Medical Center is education and housing. Mr. Rooney also reported a new 30-room boutique hotel in Old Town Cottonwood. Old Town is 100% occupied now. He also noted that State Route 260 expansion is a large project in the Verde Valley at this time.

Michele Ralston reported on behalf of Supervisor Art Babbott, who could not be here today. She reported that Supervisor Babbott recently attended a housing study report, very comprehensive for the Flagstaff area. She also noted that the Flagstaff construction industry is stressed at this time with the amount of building that's taking place. She wished everyone happy holidays on behalf of Supervisor Babbott.

Lora Lee Nye reported that Chick-Fil-A is almost finished in Prescott Valley, and ground has been broken downtown in the Entertainment District for apartment housing. She noted that while this had been controversial, the understanding is there that there is a generation that does not want to own homes now, and this will help meet the

demand. She also reported that the Event Center is now out of bankruptcy and fully town-owned. She also noted that the master-plan communities are running out of approved parcels, and also that, with the recent tax increase they have been able to hire 11 new police officers/employees. She noted that Yavapai College has been expanding in Prescott Valley as well. Vice-Mayor Nye closed her report with news that Prescott Valley is celebrating 40 years of their incorporation, and beginning New Year's Eve they will host a party every month. Mr. Hays commented that the race track in Prescott Valley should be sold by the end of this month.

Supervisor Jesse Thompson reported that the County had a meeting in Winslow with the Army Corp of Engineers and city officials to continue to push for the Winslow levees completed after 3 or 4 years of working on it. He anticipates construction to begin around 2022. He also noted an organization called the Little Colorado Indian Economic Development Corporation, which has plans for several community commercial development projects. He noted that they will be at the February 1, 2018 EDC meeting to share their presentation.

Paul Watson reported that Navajo County was successful in getting the ACC grant they applied for, and has hired Highland Economics to do their feasibility study. He noted that Navajo and Apache Counties have 3 power plants, Cholla, Springerville and Coronado. Site visits are planned at these plants as well as some of the forestry-related industries in the area. The plan is to do an economic impact study and develop a plan for additional industry to target for regional attraction. Mr. Watson also reported that the Summit Regional Hospital in Show Low just broke ground on \$75-\$80 million in improvements, expanding outpatient services, an imaging medical office building, and outpatient surgery center and other facilities.

At this point, Chairman Filardo returned to Agenda Item X and turned the meeting over to Chris Fetzer for his report. Following Mr. Fetzer's report, she returned to Member Comments.

Chairman Filardo shared that the Town of Clarkdale now has a new Project Manager in the Community and Economic Development Department, who will be tasked with developing the next 5-year plan for Community Sustainability and Economic Development, his name is Mike Gray. Mr. Gray will be including information from the USDA feasibility study on the Bitter Creek Industrial Area. Chairman Filardo also noted a new RV resort which will have at least 71 spaces, due to open in spring 2018.

Rich Bowen reported a regional effort in both the state and Northern Arizona in broadband. He noted that there will be an event in April 2018 related to broadband along the I-10 corridor. He noted some minimal commercial availability along I-40. Mr. Bowen reported the risk to NAU due to only one path along I-17 and a minor path from Ash Fork to Prescott. He stated that the reason for going to the federal government and others for this is that it affects Northern Arizona and the tribal areas, which have close to the least amount of broadband access in the country. Mr. Bowen noted that the coalition of the National Regional Optical Network Organizations, inter-tribal councils, tribal colleges, tribal villages, nations, state university systems in California, Arizona and New Mexico, will be participating in this event. Chairman Filardo asked if the EDC could be notified when this event is scheduled, and Mr. Bowen remarked that space would be limited but representatives from the EDC could attend. Ms. Drew asked if they will be working with Arizona Corporation Commissioner Andy Tobin and his broadband initiative of \$100 million earmarked for schools and libraries to get broadband, to which Mr. Bowen replied that they are working with Commissioner Tobin.

Michelle Conway reported that housing is also a big topic in Sedona. She noted that Sedona is involved in a sustainable tourism plan, looking to be finalized in a year. She reported that the community and residents are being consulted on their sense of tourism impacts to the city, quality of life and economy. Ms. Conway noted that Sedona is working with Arizona State University (ASU) Sustainability Center and Nichols Tourism Group. She also reported that a new event called Sedona Northern Lights has been developed for December 14-17, 2017, and is a 3-D mapping projection show that will be projected onto Camelhead Rock, 4 shows per night, and the shows are free.

She noted that they have contracted with an internationally renowned firm to present this event. It's being dubbed the largest light show on a natural canvas in the country.

Bruce Greco began by stating that he is honored and excited to join the ranks of the EDC. He noted that he is pleased to report on Apache County, having been associated with them for about a year with a focus on natural resources. He noted that he is a native Northern Arizonan, and well familiar with it. Mr. Greco highlighted the wood product industry in Apache County, which is a challenge and opportunity for the County in the development of wood products, biomass and all that entails. He spoke briefly about biomass energy exploration in Eagar. He noted looking forward to building relationships with neighboring counties.

Carol Curtis continued reporting about the EDA grants, noting again that the OEO had projected 2,000 jobs being lost prior to the closure of the NGS power plant. She reported that this year through the POWER grant funds they are developing economic models mainly for the Page area and region that will be directly impacted, testing the models that will not be impacted by NGS closure. She noted excitement at seeing so many hotels being built in Page, as one of the models being tested is a partnership with the National Apartment Maintenance Association and the community college in Page, to develop a certification for Apartment Technician Training. Ms. Curtis noted that many of the houseboats on Lake Powell are actually apartments as well, and remarked that this would be a promising trade to be investing in. Ms. Curtis then spoke about the multi-million dollar industry of astronomy, noting that the dark skies are an element that will not be disappearing with the closure of NGS. Launches are being planned across Northern Arizona for Grand Spiral, an astral-tourism attraction. Ms. Curtis then reported on work going on with Coconino County veterans.

Rich Heath began by acknowledging the Tourism Committee, noting that a year ago he and the Committee developed the game plan for the Tourism Forum, and although he could not attend, heard that it went really well. He then reported that NAU Yavapai County end of the semester is approaching, with graduations next Friday and Saturday. He reported his perception of the students graduating as being assets to the area. Mr. Heath noted that the campus is evolving with new programming and staffing in Prescott Valley to ensure they are meeting the needs of local employers and community.

Matthew Williams reported that Pinetop-Lakeside is purchasing a building for the Town office facilities. He also reported on a transitional veteran housing program. He closed by noting that he has enjoyed working with the EDC and wished everyone a Merry Christmas. Keith Johnson commented on Mr. Williams and other members of the EDC and a good relationship.

XII. Public Comments

Chairman Filardo opened the meeting for public comments, there were none.

XIII. Adjournment

Chairman Filardo called for a motion to adjourn, **so moved by Casey Rooney and seconded by Matthew Williams. The meeting was adjourned at 11:58 AM.**