

**Redwood Region Economic Development Commission Regular and Ex. Comm. Report
for October 2017. Sea Level Adaptation Planning**

The Redwood Region Economic Development Commission was created to mitigate job losses feared to be looming due to the expansion of Redwood National Park. Upon our creation in 1977 the Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) first granted us funds. We are self-supporting through revenue received by lending EDA funds and our retained profits from lending those funds as well as managing the lending of some of the Headwaters Fund. The goal of our lending is to increase employment.

We act as a lender to businesses and non-profits who are unable to access traditional financing and charge commensurate rates, currently in the 9% to 11% range as these are considered riskier loans. Much of our profits must be plowed back into our revolving loan fund but some are allowed to be used broadly towards economic development. We are using some those funds for a micro-loan program.

This month's program featured Rob Holmlund, city of Eureka's Director of Development Services, Economic & Community Development, and David Loya, City of Arcata's Community Development Director who reported on sea level rise adaptation planning. Many of the pastures and lower parts of Arcata and Eureka were bay 150 years ago. Years of diking and channeling have created the current shoreline and many old structures are almost topped during high tides. Rain water does not puddle behind current structures much nor does sea water infiltrate under them now but at some point with sea level rise pumps would need to be added. The presenters are opposed to any concept of retreat for any built up area or even development restrictions on lands projected to be impacted soon (though "soon" is an unknown quantity). Eureka's was most vociferous who pointed out that "Our economy is based on growth." (cancer anyone?). When I challenged the economics of extreme protection as a person who was aware of the risk of owning coastal property and chose to invest inland using the example of coastal mansions I was told that we all benefit from coastal development, not that there could be special property tax zones to bill the beneficiaries of the largess. The concept of "measured retreat" is OK on farm land.

The projections being used for anticipated sea level rise seemed less alarmist than others I have seen. At one point a presenter said an ice sheet collapse would moot all planning which implies to me that ice sheet collapse is outside their models. In general, they see planning 100 years into the future as unrealistic.

They noted that the estimates for sea level rise keep increasing and many areas are sinking on their own even without the sea rising. A salient point they emphasized was that their high rise estimate hit 1 foot in 50 years while the low estimate hit that point in 100 years so in some ways it is more a question of how fast will you need to work once you have your plan, not what is the plan. Different agencies use different base lines (FEMA seems to start at 15?) and my notes are imperfect since I am engaged as chair, but I think there are projections for AD 2300 that are from 3 to 20 feet of rise.

Speaking of FEMA, they set elevations under which there are flood insurance requirements for loans. They do not, however, certify "eco-levees" as offering protection, though that might be a bureaucratic issue not a scientific one. An Eco-levee is a very wide one (which takes up more wetland space), that is gently sloped on the seaward side so inter tidal communities can slowly migrate up them as the sea rises.

Arcata would like to use eco-levees to protect their waste water plant and the old logging related infill spit it and the south G street neighborhood occupy. Another (unliked) option would be to abandon everything south of Samoa blvd. and put a sea wall there. South G st encompasses \$145 million in public and private infrastructure. Protecting it is projected to cost \$14 million.

The California Coastal Commission will be very involved. Some say they need to be more flexible as sea level rise was not on most people's horizons when it was created. RREDC member John Wolley sat on the CCC when he was a county supervisor. He described them as "quasi-judicial" and said "Staff follows precedent."

RREDC is 40! we were created Nov 1st, 1977. We are managing about 4 times as much money as we were in 1999. Two loans remain 90 days in arrears as they have been for years. They keep staying 90 days behind and have certainly paid more than 3 payments worth of late fees. I may suggest a write down or refinancing at some point. We have a small office to rent, a couple hundred square feet for about \$300 a month. No, supervisor Bass can not rent it out for a campaign office because we count as a county building so can not house partisan electoral efforts. Harbor etc District, RREDC, and North Coast Railroad Authority member Richard Marks has had his Samoa Softball League office there for years but he (in theory) did nothing towards his Harbor Commission campaign there.

Both American and Alaska airlines say they would like to do Arcata to LA flights but have no pilots. Hours required for commercial certification has risen and an age limit of 60 was imposed (probably good things). Also the Air force has recalled (stop lossed) 1000(?) pilots for duty in Afghanistan (probably a bad thing).

Digital 299 is trying to get financing through RCRC (Rural Counties something or other that Supervisor Rex Bohn now chairs). I wish they would offer equity to the state seeing as we are already giving them over half of it. Someone (in a corporate sense) called 32capital Advisers would put up the cash (probably with a state guarantee) and we might service it.

The county has passed the EIR for the General Plan update, though are likely to be sued.

Humboldt Waste Management District director, Blue Lake's Summer Dougherty sits on RREDC too. Much of the plastic "recycled" has been burned in China and they don't want it anymore. A local-ish contractor they have been using has been acquired by an international one and there was some speculation that desire to get numbers up in anticipation of selling out drove some sort of recent-ish drama of some sort relating to waste management. HWMA would like to get recycling back in county.

The Arcata Bay trail has it's grand opening at 10am Nov. 19th and Blue Lake has received grant funds for the Annie and Mary Trail.

Eureka's 6000 odd residential sewer connections had been illegally subsidizing the commercial connections. Not any more! Coast Seafoods bill has gone up to \$100,000 (a month? A year?). Lost Coast Brewery was similarly surprised. Both are likely to make significant investments in pre-treatment.

Ferndale does not enforce posted parking time limits. Many jurisdictions are similarly lax. Some in Ferndale would like to change 2 hour limits to 3 hours so as not to scare off spenders who are in no danger anyway. Eureka might make parking lots downtown free but limit time or install kiosks for curb side parkersto encourage employees to park in lots and save prime curb space for shoppers. Cars, of course, are encouraged!

RREDC meets the 4th Monday of the month at the prosperity center, 520 E st, Eureka.
www.rredc.com

Submitted by Michael McKaskle