



Community Development Department
675 Wildwood Avenue
Rio Dell, CA 95562
(707) 764-3532

For the Meeting of January 7, 2025

☒ Consent Item; ☐ Public Hearing Item

To: City Council

From: Kevin Caldwell, Community Development Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "K Caldwell", enclosed in a circular blue ink mark.

Through: Kyle Knopp, City Manager

Date: December 23, 2024

Subject: Redwood Region Rising Grant Opportunity
Resolution No. 1628-2025

Recommendation:

That the City Council:

1. Review the Staff Report; and
2. If pulled from the Consent Calendar, open public comment and receive comments from the public; and
3. Close public comment and deliberate; and
4. If in favor of making an application for the grant, adopt Resolution No. 1628-2025

Discussion

Redwood Region Rising (RRRISE) recently announced grant opportunities through their Catalyst Grant Program. Redwood Region Rise (Resilient Inclusive Sustainable Economy) is part of the California Jobs First initiative, aiming to boost economic development in the Redwood Region of California. The program is administered by the California Center for Rural Policy through Cal Poly Humboldt.

Redwood Region RISE is a coalition of 150+ members engaging over a thousand residents across Tribal Lands, Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, and Mendocino Counties. Together, we've created and are now implementing our 10-year Regional Roadmap: a community- and data-driven plan to bring sustainable, quality jobs to our region while advancing environmental stewardship and social equity through the statewide *California Jobs First* initiative.

As the Council likely knows the regions only USDA approved meat processing facility (Redwood Meats) closed down recently. Our ranchers are now forced to truck their cattle to Modesto for processing.

The City of Rio Dell is planning to submit an application with Redwood Region Rise (<https://ccrp.humboldt.edu/redwood-rise>) for a grant to study the need and feasibility of a Regional Food Collaborative at the former Eel River Sawmill site in Rio Dell. In 2010 the City retained Planwest Partners to prepare a Business and Development Plan for a potential Eel River Valley Regional Food Collaborative (ERVRFC). A copy is attached as Attachment 1.

With the recent closing of Redwood Meats, based on local reports (Times-Standard and Lost Cost Outpost), and discussions with the Humboldt County Farm Bureau and local beef producers, the City believes there is a need for a USDA certified slaughterhouse. In addition, based on the 2010 Planwest report it appears ***there may be a need and opportunity*** to capitalize, expand, market and distribute other Humboldt agricultural products, including:

- Row Crops: including fresh vegetables, emphasizing unusual varieties of heirloom tomatoes, cucumbers, squashes, peppers, root vegetables, fresh herbs, greens, and mushrooms.
- Tree Fruits: including peaches, apples, plums, pears and Asian pears.

- Non-tree Fruits: including berries, local blueberries, huckleberries, strawberries, and raspberries.
- Specialty Items, from wild harvested mushrooms, seeds and nuts, to distinctive condiments and dried herbs.

Building on market demands for these well-established food products, the ERVRFC product line could then expand to include artisanal processed foods such as cheeses, preserves, and sausages. Future product lines will be largely driven by the in-depth knowledge of the ERVRFC distribution partners who will guide sales efforts.

One of the issues to be addressed related to meat processing is the use of an Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) or commonly known as a septic system. The Health Department has expressed concerns regarding BOD (Biological Oxygen Demand) and TSS (Total Suspended Solids). "BOD" refers to **the amount of oxygen microorganisms must consume in order to oxidize** (that is, break down) all the organic compounds in a liter of wastewater. "TSS" refers to the measurement of the amount of solid particles suspended in wastewater, including both organic and inorganic matter, that can potentially clog the drain field if levels are too high; essentially, it's a way to gauge how much solid waste is present in the effluent leaving the septic tank.

We have been told by industry insiders that blood and offal (intestines) are the major contributors to both BOD and TSS levels. Apparently, a common method to mitigate those impacts is to eliminate both from the waste stream entering the OWTS. As such, the blood and offal would be separated from the waste stream and shipped off to a vendor for digesting and composting.

Staff has discussed the lack of meat processing in the area with the Farm Bureau, the Humboldt Cattleman's Association and Humboldt Grass Fed Beef and all are in support of finding a local meat processing facility.

The Redwood Region Rise Catalyst program provides grants to fund the pre-development phase of projects. This crucial stage often involves activities like feasibility and technical studies,

construction drawings, and securing necessary permits and approvals. If feasible these studies, plans and specifications will lead to a “Shovel-Ready” project.

The California Jobs First Multi-Agency Team oversees the grant program and works with local partners to ensure a successful project implementation.

At this time, staff is requesting the Council to support making the grant application. Applications are due by January 15, 2025.

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Planwest’s 2010 Business and Development Plan for a potential Eel River Valley Regional Food Collaborative (ERVRFC),

Attachment 2: Resolution No. 1628-2025 authorizing the preparation and submittal of the Grant Application.