

**The Delta North Education Center
A New Vision for Delta's Leadership in Jobs Development
And Fueling Regional Economic Growth**

The Vision

Futurists the world over are convinced that successful new economies will emerge from cities and defined economic regions such as that encompassed by Delta College. Regions that can successfully place their products on the global stage will find a world of new customers and consumers. Creating value for and satisfying demand in markets around the world develops long-term economic stability.

Preparing and training tomorrow's workforce is of paramount importance to the economic success of Delta's region. What are the products that the world will demand that come from Delta's region? While there can and will be many, chief among them is food. Food has a never ending demand and food from Central California is of highest quality and is dependable in its consistent production. 350 edible food varieties grow in San Joaquin County alone! Agriculture in Delta's region has always been, is today, and will be in the future our largest industry. But who the customer is will change; more of them will be China, India, Mexico and Brazil, all around the Pacific Rim and around the world.

If one thinks of a "jobs chain" beginning with those needed to create food through modern day, technically advanced farming practices, then following the food into value-added processing facilities that tailor and customize raw commodity foods to foreign markets' tastes, concluding with the timely delivery of those products whether it be to a table in Stockton or Shanghai, the range of jobs in the chain is quite broad. It's *Farm to Fork* in theme and the "Forks" can be anywhere in the world.

Because the Delta region is known for great food production and great wine an Ag-tourism industry is now one of the fastest growing industries in the San Joaquin Valley and Sierra foothills. The Delta region is within a two-hour drive to 15 million consumers. The Locavore, Slow Foods, Farm to Fork, Fresh Foods, and sustainable agriculture movements are helping to develop our region into the place known for choice fruits, nuts, vegetables and wine. More "direct to consumer sales" will grow through small business owners, hospitality workers, people with culinary knowledge as well as those with farm experience and knowledge.

Although the Delta North Education Center could be themed or focused on these "Farm to Fork" jobs, it clearly will need to offer core curricular offerings. For instance, communication is more critical than ever in a global economy, as will also be the studies of different cultures and peoples. Whether the goal is a 2-year certificate in industrial mechanics or preparation for a 4-year degree in International Business Management aimed at managing multi-lingual work teams, core classes form the needed educational platform for personal success in any chosen field.

Via partnerships with local farm, manufacturing / processing, hospitality, logistics and many other business and community partners, Delta College can be perhaps the greatest contributor to a sustainable and economically viable local economy because of its education and preparation of an effective workforce.

Factors to Consider

In 2004, the communities served by San Joaquin Delta College approved the Measure L facilities bond. This bond provides \$250 million for improving the college's facilities, expanding existing centers and establishing new education centers in local communities in the Delta College service area. Construction projects funded by Measure L address critical needs supporting the college's mission preparing students for a skilled workforce and for transfer to 4-year colleges.

- Reviewing and updating of the college's agriculture educational master plan to incorporate emerging industry opportunities is essential for determining agricultural focus for the Delta North Education Center.
- The critical need for a new north area education center to serve students from communities in Calaveras County, Galt and Lodi identified in SJDC master planning documents remains unmet.
- New magnet college programs focusing on workforce development associated with new emerging agri-business, hospitality, and tourism jobs seen in Calaveras County, Galt and Lodi areas could be key long-term components of the new center.
- Initially, the education center could focus on general education courses requiring less capital-intensive infrastructure and employ existing faculty.
- Calaveras County, Galt and Lodi students attending Delta could access a northern education center with greater ease and less expense given San Joaquin County and Stockton traffic congestion now and in the future.
- An education center located along the Highway 99/Highway 12 corridors in Lodi could provide excellent access from north, south, east, and west. The city of Lodi can provide utilities infrastructure and services essential for a new education center.
- Lodi Unified School District represents an excellent long-term partner in facilities operation, administration, and innovative educational programming.
- Major employers in the north area stand ready to be strong community partners.
- Vacant commercial properties in the Lodi city limits potentially convertible to a new education center will never be more affordable than now.

Conclusion

The Delta North Education Center will provide a valuable service to the livelihood of students throughout the region and will benefit the area's economy. The development and construction of a north regional center with a focus on emerging agri-business enterprises would receive significant support in the form of partnerships from businesses, cities, and other public school systems. All of these partners share the common interest to prepare future workers for careers that are meaningful, rewarding, prevalent, and relevant to our geographical area.

Compiled by the Citizens for North Campus (CFNC)