

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Between July 29th and August 4th 2010 four focused group discussions were conducted by the Social Science Research Center (SSRC) at California State University, Fullerton, on behalf of the North Orange County Economic Development Partnership (NOCEDP).

The purpose of these discussions was to shed light on the unique economic issues facing the North Orange County region, its potential for growth, and to evaluate the possibility of a regional partnership. The North Orange County Region was defined as the cities of Brea, Buena Park, Fullerton, La Habra, Placentia and Yorba Linda.

The results of this study will also be used to generate a survey instrument to be administered to a larger sample of stakeholders via telephone in 2011.

The group discussions were audio-recorded with participants' permission and later transcribed. The content of these transcripts were subsequently analyzed to extract themes, which form the basis of the results presented here. While the discussions ranged in scope from the very specific to the very general and opinions often diverged, several themes emerged.

Three of the focused group discussions were conducted with a sample of key stakeholders, defined as professionals with expertise or a vested interest in the region's economic development.

The fourth group was conducted with a sample of "practitioners" representing city managers, economic and community developers.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

- ◆ **Discussions validated the assumption that North Orange County is, in fact, distinct from the rest of the county.**
- ◆ **The loss of the manufacturing industry was unanimously viewed as an economic weakness of the region as a whole and the need to strategically plan how these facilities should be utilized in the future.**
- ◆ **Development of a strategic plan to attract businesses to North Orange County and to prevent companies from leaving the region.**
- ◆ **The Fullerton Transportation Center (FTC) was identified as a major regional asset.**
- ◆ **Affordable housing for low-end wage-earners and young professionals are needed in North Orange County, both to keep workers close to home, and to keep young people in the area.**
- ◆ **Today's workforce is lacking hands-on training which the employer is being required to provide.**
- ◆ **Two of the largest outside obstacles to the region's economy are the general economic downturn and the prevalence of restrictive state regulations.**
- ◆ **Support for the development of a regional collaborative group to not only discuss strategies for economic development but also spearhead the implementation of proposed strategies.**

Prepared by:



Prepared for:

North Orange County Economic Development Partnership:
 Cities of Brea, Buena Park, Fullerton, La Habra, Placentia and Yorba Linda
 Fullerton Chamber of Commerce
 Orange County Workforce Investment Board
 California State University Fullerton
 Southern California Edison
 The Gas Company