

Economic development opportunities abound in Taylorsville



Councilmember Jerry Rechtenbach addressed business owners and residents of Taylorsville at the Economic Development Forum on Oct. 16 at the Salt Lake Community College Taylorsville Redwood campus.



Interested residents listened to 11 speakers who addressed the economic challenges, and hopes, for development in the city.

By Raili Jacquet

City leaders and local businesses convened on Oct. 16 at Salt Lake Community College to take the economic pulse of Taylorsville City. The Economic Development committee developed the forum to take the place of the Mayor's round table event, and it was the platform for creating relationships among business, nonprofit, education and government workers.

Taylorsville city's motto of "opportunity in every direction" was the theme for the forum.

We are pleased with the turn out from the community," said Ken Cook, chairperson of the committee. "This is a big event for the city."

The agenda for the breakfast meeting was ambitious, with 11 speakers. Among them were Mayor Russ Wall, Councilmember Jerry Rechtenbach and representatives from three large employers in the community: Sorenson Research Park, Developers Diversified Realty and the State of Utah Unified Laboratories. Several city leaders spoke about the current direction and projects happening within the city, as well as giving a transportation overview and a demonstration of the Taylorsville Prospector, a tool helping investors looking to purchase businesses within the city.

SLCC President Cynthia Bioteau spoke on behalf of the educational sector of the city. The college ranks sixth in the nation out of 1,200 community colleges in the number of Associate degrees given. "This really is a testament to education in the state of Utah," said Bioteau. Among other innovative programs offered, SLCC has opened a Women's Business Institute to support women business owners, and a Global Business Center to continually keep students abreast on the global economy.

Rechtenbach spoke about when he decided to move to Taylorsville and the subsequent decline of the community. "I noticed the neighborhoods were becoming increasingly deteriorated, the businesses were going dark, infrastructure was either outdated or failing or both, and I felt that what was happening was not the vision I had for the city of Taylorsville," said Rechtenbach. "I thought it was time that I became involved; to turn Taylorsville back into a destination and not just a pass-through city."

Reference to the uncertain economic future of the country was made by Don Adams, Taylorsville's past Economic Development Director and current representative of Developers Diversified Realty.

"My slides are three weeks old, and as you know the markets in

the last three weeks have changed dramatically," he said.

DDR owns the Family Center in Taylorsville. "Our intentions for Taylorsville are to continue to focus on the Family Center by improving the north end," said Adams. "Whatever we bring to the north side will only bring strength to south side. This is a core asset and we are committed to this project."

The redevelopment plans for the city were discussed by Jon Springmeyer, Vice President of Bonneville Research.

"We are working with the city to evaluate the potential of establishing urban renewal projects," said Springmeyer. Urban renewal, as Springmeyer explained it, is based on the assumption that revitalized areas will increase the property value, thus generating more property tax.

Mark McGrath, Community Development Director, listed the major projects in the pipeline. Even through the current economic calamity, Taylorsville has many irons in the fire. Seven projects were described: Sorenson Research Park office building, Nelson Laboratories, Great Harvest Bread Company, Vista Park baseball fields, Legacy Village Alzheimer and Rehabilitation Care, Silver Crest (Perry Homes) senior housing and Utah Nonprofit senior housing.

"We are glad to say there is very little evidence in our department of any sort of economic downturn," said McGrath. "In fact we expect by the end of October to have our number one month in the history of the city in building valuation."

Ted Andersen, the Geographical Information Systems Specialist for Taylorsville City, described the Taylorsville Prospector tool accessed from the city's website.

"City officials have used the GIS technology since 1999," said Andersen. "Last year the Economic Development department decided to use the power they had with GIS to help the citizens and the realtors, by allowing people to see what properties are available within the city."

Any prospective buyer will be able to search for properties within the city using the prospector tool and narrow the parameters for their specific needs. From the website, anyone can access commercial real estate, land use, zoning, property ownership, demographics, aerial information and parcel ID numbers.

The morning concluded with an informal question and answer period, with individuals speaking directly to city officials after the presentations ended.