

**MINUTES OF THE NORTHERN NEVADA ENTREPRENEURSHIP TASK FORCE  
February 1, 2017**

The Lieutenant Governor's Northern Nevada Entrepreneurship Task Force was called to order by Lieutenant Governor Mark Hutchison at 11:05 a.m. on Wednesday, February 1, 2017, in the Summit Conference Room of the InNEVation Center, 450 Sinclair Street, Reno, Nevada. Copies of the minutes and meeting materials are available on the Lieutenant Governor's website: [www. http://ltgov.nv.gov/Resources/Entrepreneurship/](http://ltgov.nv.gov/Resources/Entrepreneurship/)

**1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL AND ESTABLISH QUORUM**

**TASK FORCE MEMBERS PRESENT**

Douglas Erwin  
Mridul Gautam, Ph.D.  
Rob Hooper  
Chris Howard  
Ashley Jennings  
Scott Levy  
Kevin Lyons  
Dusty Wunderlich

**TASK FORCE MEMBERS ABSENT**

Kathie Priebe

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT**

Mark Hutchison, Lieutenant Governor  
Ryan Cherry, Chief of Staff  
Cathy Erskine, Policy Analyst

**GUESTS PRESENT**

Leith Martin, Southern Entrepreneurship Task Force members  
Zach Miles, Southern Entrepreneurship Task Force members  
Kerem Ozmen, Ozmen Ventures  
Eugene Wong, Southern Entrepreneurship Task Force members

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

### **3. OPENING REMARKS**

Lieutenant Governor Hutchison noted that he gave a speech at "Directions 2017" an event hosted by the Chamber of Commerce earlier that morning. He made brief comments about the entrepreneurial task forces role and the work that they are accomplishing.

Ms. Erskine noted that there is a tentative hearing date for SB 32 in the Senate Judiciary committee on February 14, 2017 at 1:30pm. She will confirm the date and time with the group once the committee confirms. She asked if there were any task force members interested in meeting with her and committee members prior to the hearing.

Rob Hooper, Kevin Lyons, Dusty Wunderlich, and Ashley Jennings indicated interest in meeting with committee members.

Ms. Erskine stated that SB 69 is the Governor's bill relating to occupational licensing. She will send a copy of the bill to task force members.

### **4. APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 7, 2016 TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY ROB HOOPER TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 7, 2016 MEETING MINUTES; THIS MOTION WAS SECONDED BY KEVIN LYONS; THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **5. TASK FORCE MEMBER COMMENTS**

Lieutenant Governor Hutchison recognized members from the Southern Entrepreneurship Task Force that flew up for the meeting. He asked them to introduce themselves to the group.

Mr. Martin introduced himself as head of the Center for Entrepreneurship at UNLV. He indicated that he has been with the university for about a year, but has a background in private industry. His purpose for attending the meeting was to make himself available to members to facilitate or help in the statewide effort.

Mr. Miles introduced himself as the Associate Vice President for Economic Development at UNLV. He echoed Mr. Martin's sentiments and added that he is interested in learning and engaging with folks in the north.

Mr. Wong said that he has been making trips to Reno for the past five years in an effort to develop relationships with folks at UNR and EDawn. He noted that he has been

working on statewide collaborations personally and sees the collaborative effort as a benefit.

Lieutenant Governor Hutchison asked the northern members to briefly introduced themselves to the southern members.

Each northern task force member gave a brief introduction.

## **6. DISCUSSION ON MISSION STATEMENT**

Ms. Erskine noted that the group discussed adding goals to the mission statement at the last task force meeting and that the purpose of this agenda item was to continue that conversation.

Mr. Erskine said that she presented the vision statement and mission statement to the southern task force. Southern task force members were receptive to what was presented. Camille McCue suggested adding to the mission statement "cultivating educational experiences at the K-12 and collegiate level that fosters entrepreneurship."

Mr. Lyons noted that Ms. McCue's suggestion sounded more like a goal of the mission statement.

Mr. Hooper asked if the idea behind Ms. McCue's suggestions was to add another bullet point under the mission statement. He questioned why it would not fit. He indicated that the purpose of the mission was to play out the mission, which is "To make Nevada the most entrepreneur-friendly state in the Nation." He noted that a part of that could be from contributions from K-12 and community colleges to support that statement.

Mr. Lyons indicated that it was more of an action.

Mr. Wong noted that Ms. McCue is the Director of Innovation for the Adelson Campus with extensive education and experience, including NASA. He noted that Adelson gave her \$5 million to build a maker-space. She has the most advanced maker-space in the entire state of Nevada. He noted that it may not apply up in the north and agreed that it does not belong in the mission statement.

Referring to the goals, Mr. Wunderlich questioned how to measure "make the entrepreneurial environment more attractive." He noted it would be valuable to move the needle within Kaufman's indexing because Nevada is ranked low. He reiterated the importance of tying that goal back to something tangible.

Mr. Erwin noted that is dependent on how the term "attractive" is defined. He suggested looking at relocations, funding, amount of capital that goes into the ecosystem, number

of startup jobs, and/or number of companies created as measures.

Mr. Wunderlich suggested creating an index that ties to potential metrics.

Mr. Gautam commented that the vision statement lacked "punch."

Mr. Wunderlich noted that "entrepreneur-friendly" is important because the task force is trying to influence policy. He noted that influencing policy is a tangible goal because there are things that the group can do from a policy perspective.

Mr. Hooper noted that at the last meeting the group did not discuss goals. He agreed that the goals need to be measurable and also noted its ties to the vision and mission statement need to be stronger.

Mr. Lyons asked how "compiling regional recommendations" will be measured.

Mr. Wunderlich noted that through meeting discussions and surveys holes within the ecosystem will become apparent.

Mr. Lyons suggested use an annual report on the holes and the progress towards filling them. He noted that the resource inventory can be used as a tool to help identify holes in the ecosystem.

Mr. Hooper added that the resource inventory is helpful, but there are also policy issues.

Mr. Wunderlich added that the economic metrics can be used as well, such as capital, small businesses density, etc.

Mr. Erwin suggested use of an annual report that detailed the state of the ecosystem across a set of categories concurrent with a set of policy recommendations.

Mr. Hooper suggested setting the framework for the annual report as a goal.

Mr. Wunderlich noted that annual report card would address everything in the mission statement. He noted taking inventory of the ecosystem and identifying problems will help drive recommendations as well as policy.

Lieutenant Governor Hutchison suggested the following bullet point for the mission statement: " compiling regional recommendations by completing an annual state of the ecosystem report."

There was consensus among members.

Mr. Erwin suggested synchronizing the annual report with enough time to take action on policy before the legislative session.

Lieutenant Governor Hutchison asked for feedback on the next mission statement bullet point: "creating statewide collaboration, prioritization, and awareness."

Mr. Lyons suggested adding "collaboration" as a category for the annual report.

Ms. Jennings asked how "collaboration" is being defined as it is rather subjective.

Mr. Howard noted that the real point of collaboration is information sharing. He noted that when information is shared, people are able to jump in where they think that they can help or where they can ask for help. He noted that focusing on information sharing would cover the whole process.

Mr. Hooper agreed with Mr. Howards statement and suggested having a goal to establish methodology for information sharing. He suggested a base camp site so that the north and south had access.

Mr. Erwin noted the importance of members traveling to the south and inviting southern members to the north and building those relationships. He suggested defining collaboration specifically to include policy amongst other things.

Mr. Lyons said that policy is statewide. He noted collaboration is information sharing and personal connections.

Ms. Jennings questioned how it would be measured.

Mr. Lyons stated that is could be measured by a survey. He noted that a node graph would be a valuable tool.

Mr. Gautam noted that there needs to be something more concrete when discussing personal connection where people come together. There needs to be something more tangible to see how the entrepreneurial system moved forward.

Mr. Lyons noted that information sharing metric is more difficult. He suggested looking at the number of events and looking at the number of attendees, but also utilizing website with materials, downloads, and website traffic that could be tracked.

Mr. Hooper posed the question, "who is collaborating and how broad is the collaboration?"

Mr. Gautam noted that participation in the task force is enabling communication.

Enabling communication is important because it is a commitment to interaction.

Mr. Ozmen (public member) note that a measurement of collaboration could be making an introduction of ventures and angels from Vegas to the Reno community, then measuring the deal flow between the two. He suggested measuring the number of deals being connected, the number of deals that are actually being invested in, as well as the number of syndicated deals.

Mr. Lyons added that a quality metrics survey could also be utilized to measure collaboration.

Lieutenant Governor Hutchison concluded from the discussion the measurement of collaboration would include examining personal connections, information sharing, co-investment and deal-making.

Mr. Ozmen noted that Sierra Nevada Corporation takes the similar approach and looks at the vision, goals, objectives, and strategies.

Ms. Erskine asked that members bring concrete goals and strategies to discuss at the next meeting.

Mr. Wunderlich reiterated that the goals should be dynamic and driven by the annual report.

Lieutenant Governor Hutchison called for final comments.

Mr. Lyons asked members if they agreed with the addition to the mission statement.

There was general consensus from the members.

Lieutenant Governor Hutchison directed Mr. Erskine to send the revised mission statement and goals to task force members for feedback.

Lieutenant Governor Hutchison asked Mr. Wunderlich if his comment earlier was to eliminate the goal portion of the mission statement.

Mr. Wunderlich stated that he felt the vision and mission statement need to be improved. He noted that the goals should be a part of the annual report.

Mr. Hooper reiterated that the importance of applying goals to the mission statement is to apply objectives, times, and dates. He stated that the goals the group came up with today are a good start, but they need expanded to align with the missions.

## **7. REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS (DOUG ERWIN)**

Mr. Erwin stated that the original purpose of the Rain Forest Scorecard was to stimulate conversation around the challenges in our ecosystem. He noted that the goal was for everyone to participate and then map the responses on a radar diagram to visually see the varying responses.

Several members indicated that they felt the survey was not applicable.

Mr. Erwin recognized member concerns and reiterated the purpose of the tool was to stimulate conversation. He noted the difference in rating in leadership and policy categories between himself and Mr. Wunderlich. Those differences could generate a conversation.

Mr. Erwin said that the survey was an attempt at having a structured discussion on the critical pillars of an ecosystem. He apologized for not properly providing background and purpose to the survey.

Mr. Lyons noted that the survey may have been beneficial if the survey were relevant to the ecosystem. Mr. Lyons said he liked the categories used in the survey and thought they would work well in organizing the annual report. He suggested creating a new survey.

Ms. Jennings commented that the questions in the survey were very discrete and therefore difficult to understand without the training of the book. She had trouble answering questions that she felt weren't relevant. She also noted that the questions needed a more qualitative explanation.

Mr. Erwin noted that there is typically a lot of set up and explanation prior to taking the survey.

Mr. Hooper noted that the survey was designed for an organization. He noted that from a task force point of view and assessing a region the data is not available.

Mr. Erwin said that the survey is broad-based enough to look at an ecosystem.

Mr. Gautam noted the members of the task force should know how the leaders and role models are and what the culture is. He said that if members of the task force do not know then it is likely more a communication issue.

Mr. Levy noted that the survey categories were relevant to the ecosystem, but format did not provide a contextual reference.

Mr. Lyons suggested creating a new survey with new questions for each category. He noted that the data collected could be plugged into the annual report.

Ms. Jennings agreed that the categories were well defined, but the survey need to be written in a difference manner.

Mr. Erwin agreed that task force members should be able to answer questions relative to the categories outlined in the survey.

Mr. Lyons volunteered to write the questions for the new survey. He noted that assessing the categories is a great tool that could be utilized every quarter to measure progress.

Mr. Erwin agreed to work with Mr. Lyons to create a new survey.

## **8. DISCUSSION ON INVENTORY OF NEVADA'S ENTREPRENEURIAL PIECES**

Ms. Erskine stated that she updated the resource inventory based on feedback from the last meeting. The new version includes identifying resources relevant to the different startup stages.

Mr. Lyons added that each resource is categorized, then different tool offered, such as programs and funding, are identified. Next, each resource identifies what stage it's serving. Mr. Lyons noted that there are different paths into the data; categories, startup stage, and resources tools offered.

Ms. Erskine noted that the categories came from the Southern Task Force inventory. She noted that south created a condensed one-page document, but plan on creating hyperlinks to each resource.

Mr. Hooper questioned is the inventory would be shared with larger employers interested in "interpreneurial" activities. Mr. Hooped stated that entrepreneurialism is not just about startup, but also the entrepreneurial spirit within existing companies who are looking to push out a new company or an new innovation. He noted that the resource inventory would be valuable to them as well. He noted that there are good-sized existing companies that remain entrepreneurial that should not be discounted. He noted that the inventory should not solely focus on startups.

Mr. Lyons noted that "small businesses" was included as startup stage. He suggested including entrepreneurial big business as a tag or category.

Lieutenant Governor Hutchison asked what work remains on the inventory.

Ms. Erskine stated that the inventory is a work in progress and will update as directed.

Mr. Hooper agreed that the inventory is a work and progress and suggested utilizing the task force as means to continually update. He also asked how this information will be available to the business community.

Mr. Lyons suggested including the inventory in the annual report.

Lieutenant Governor Hutchison mentioned that he had a meeting with the Deputy Director of the Department of Business and Industry. During the meeting it was mentioned that the Department has a Small Business Resource Center on their website. Lieutenant Governor Hutchison suggested posting the resource inventory on the Businesses and Industry website and directing all entrepreneurial inquires to that website.

Mr. Hooper agreed that was a good idea and offered to post information on NNDA's website directing users to the states website.

Lieutenant Governor Hutchison added that Business and Industry was more than willing to work with the task force to host, maintain, and update the inventory in the future.

Ms. Erskine noted that she emailed the resources inventory for the north and south task forces to Business and Industry. She indicated that the Small Business Resource Center has some entrepreneurial resources, but the task force has a more comprehensive list of resources.

Ms. Jennings stated that the updated inventory is much more robust and suggested changing the arrangement of resources.

Mr. Lyons asked for feedback on the breakdown of the revenue categories.

Mr. Erwin suggested categorizing revenues based an annual dollars rather than monthly.

Mr. Ozmen (public member) suggested using standard startup up categories such as bootstrapping, pre-seed, seed.

Mr. Lyons indicated that format was considered but no everyone knows how those categories are defined.

Mr. Erwin asked for clarification on "small business" as a revenue category.

Mr. Lyons indicated that most resources are cater to startups, but some resources are beneficial to small businesses (i.e. not scalable startups).

Mr. Hooper suggested removing the term "small business" and expand the revenue ranges.

Mr. Erwin agreed with Mr. Hooper's suggestion, noting that the current format is confusing. He suggested breaking small business down into two categories: small business below one million annual and small business above one million annually.

Mr. Lyons agreed.

Lieutenant Governor Hutchison commended Mr. Lyons for his work on the resource guide.

## **9. DISCUSSION AND IDENTIFICATION OF THE REGIONS STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

Ms. Erskine stated that she had hoped the Rainforest survey would help springboard this discussion. She stated that she is rethinking how to address this agenda item. She noted that the southern task force decided to catalogue various characteristics within their entrepreneurial ecosystem and then ask members to rank the various characteristics to see where the fell.

Lieutenant Governor Hutchison reiterated Ms. Erskine's comments and asked how the group would like to move forward.

Mr. Lyons noted that the resource guide can serve as an evaluating tool to discover holes in the ecosystem.

Mr. Erwin suggested using the revised survey and overlaying those results with the resource guide to stimulate a more fruitful discussion.

Ms. Erskine stated that she will work with Mr. Lyons and Mr. Erwin to develop the revised survey. She will edit and update the resource guide. She indicated that she will get the meeting materials out to everyone with enough time for members to take a closer look at where some of the holes in the ecosystem may be.

Mr. Hooper suggested members take a closer look at the resource guide and provide any resources that may be missing.

## **10. OUTLINE AND DISCUSS POTENTIAL REGIONAL FRAMEWORK**

Ms. Erskine provided task members an overview of the potential regional framework, noting that the framework would model the Governor's Strategic Plan structure. Ms. Erskine provided emphasis on what the information the regional framework would

provide including the strengths and weaknesses, inventory, and the future of the community.

Ms. Erskine presented the notion of breaking the regional framework document down by the preexisting categories in the inventory. Ms. Erskine explained that each inventory category would then be evaluated by assessing strengths and weaknesses, priorities for improvement, as well as outlining strategies.

Mr. Erwin like the consistency with other resources, but suggested looking at other characteristics such as culture. He noted that culture is a huge strength and critical component to the ecosystem and bares discussion. He stated that it is not always the number of resources available that matters so much as how they are used.

Ms. Erskine stated that the 6 categories from the Rainforest survey may fit nicely as headers and then sort the inventory categories under those headers.

Mr. Erwin noted that taking the high-level categories will help to drive the narrative.

Ms. Erskine outlined how the content of the framework will be divided. She explained that each task force member will head one framework category. Additionally, each task force member will serve as a an editor/subcommittee member on two framework categories.

Mr. Hooper asked for clarification on who the intended reader of the document would be.

Mr. Martin noted that he struggled with identifying what the deliverable was for the task force. Mr. Martin commented that members from the north and south as a group may not have ever collaborated if not for the leadership of the Lieutenant Governor. He suggested having quarterly meetings with a united task force to have discussions on a statewide level to decide what to do moving forward. He said the task force has great momentum and does not want to lose momentum when the task force dissolves. Mr. Martin suggested the group think about what the ecosystem will look like in the next couple of years. He noted without that consideration, the members are not getting what they want out of the task force. He noted that everyone is here because they want to facilitate an entrepreneurship ecosystem for the state.

Mr. Hooper noted that Mr. Martin's comments answered his question. He acknowledged that the whitepaper is an output from the group outlining the work of they've done.

Mr. Martin agreed and noted that it would be a shame if that were the only result.

Lieutenant Governor Hutchison added that the other deliverable is a website where

entrepreneur and startups resources can be hosted. He noted that the ecosystem mapping and providing access to resources for entrepreneurs and startup is an accomplishment.

Mr. Gautam commented that there are strong connections amongst members in the north. He noted that the basis of the framework is to look at what needs to be done. His hope is to establish a framework and mindset that can be used as a resources to move forward. Mr. Gautam stressed the importance of establishing that mindset and noted that it the being of long process.

Mr. Erwin noted the importance of establishing the same terminology and structure when comparing and assessing strengths and weaknesses.

Mr. Howard stated that in order to have continuity, there has to be awareness. He noted that the task force has to programmatically make the "state" aware of the its existence, in terms of what we are trying to do, how we are trying to do it, and offering the opportunity for participation to come up with ideas. He noted that those components will allow the task force to continue its work in some form. Mr. Howard stressed the importance of approaching the framework pragmatically and evoking publicity to promote the work being done.

Mr. Lyons noted that the goal is not to perpetuate, but to succeed and move on.

Mr. Howard commented that it is reasonable to assume that others may not know about the task force and what is trying to be accomplish. He noted that other may certainly know more than those sitting around the table.

Ms. Jennings stated that she will be in Carson City for the legislative session. She noted that there will be other task force members with a presence in Carson City who have connections with media outlets to provide exposure of the task force. Ms. Jennings noted that she is willing to help engage and press for exposure.

Mr. Lyons noted that the task force is in the ideation phase of building the framework and that process will reveal where to get where experts involved. He put forward the idea of setting up a process on a go forward basis that seeks to include the input from the wisdom of the crowd.

Lieutenant Governor Hutchison asked if there was an appetite for agenizing a future processes, noting that the task force has an expiration date. He questioned how to increase exposure and publicity. Further, Lieutenant Governor Hutchison acknowledged that there is opportunity at the legislature to provide exposure as well as through other public and private channels.

Mr. Levy noted that creating and leading the conversation around entrepreneurship can be one of the goals. He noted that ultimately the task force has started a conversation and is building a framework around that conversation in hopes of keeping the conversation alive. Mr. Levy noted the value of having the Lt. Governor involved as a voice at the state level to build a conversation.

Mr. Cherry suggested staff prepare an outline for the regional plan and a media plan then bring to group for input. He noted in addition to the regional plan, staff could prepare an outline for the develop statewide plan and the a summit.

Mr. Howards indicated that he would like to see that plan.

Mr. Lyons agreed and stressed the importance of timing with regard to the media plan.

Mr. Cherry asked for further clarification with regard to the framework and how to combine the Rainforest categories with what is in the resource guide.

Mr. Erwin noted that what is not captured in the resource guide is culture and leadership. He suggested proposing a list for the breakdown of categories.

Mr. Cherry asked how culture fits into the framework.

Mr. Erwin noted that culture is a standalone category and it is vital to the success of creating and entrepreneurial ecosystem. He noted that the sharing of information in not a given in other environments.

Mr. Gautam noted the importance of culture, comradery, and the hunger to move forward.

Mr. Erwin added that it is easy for big organizations to point to things like workspaces, but the hard thing to work on is culture because it is the most important characteristic.

Mr. Jennings added to Mr. Erwin's point on culture, that connectivity and consistency it important. She noted that everyone plays a role in culture, but it takes people who are hungry.

Mr. Erwin noted that EDawn was very explicit about the rules of our culture when putting together the startup deck. He noted the importance of actively reinforcing that culture.

Mr. Lyons stated that there is value being in that culture as opposed to out of it. Mr. Lyons commented that you can create good culture and then let people join and weed out bad actors. He noted that more value is created by being a part of the ecosystem and

by adding to it, culture will self perpetuate on its own.

Mr. Erwin added that identifying culture as a critical component in the framework is very important. He noted that that recognition is a big step.

Ms. Jennings steered the conversation towards policy and noted that there are others outside of the group that have ideas for policy changes. He commented that she would like to reach out and involve those people.

Lieutenant Governor Hutchison commented that hosting a summit, properly timed and structured, may be the appropriate place to education legislators and expose them to challenges within the entrepreneurship ecosystem. He noted that legislators have 20 -30 bill draft requests each legislative session and they may be willing to dedicate bills to addressing challenges.

Mr. Ozmen (public member) suggested reaching out to Scott Bensing to invite to the next task force meeting to help solidify what that framework would look like to pass legislation.

Ms. Jennings like that idea.

Mr. Erwin noted that he is working on a large program called Blueprint which could maybe combined with the summit. He added that the goal would be to bring in thought-leaders, so that the conversation extends outside of the group.

## **11. CLOSING REMARKS**

Lieutenant Governor Hutchison thanked everyone for their participation and noted that he thinks we are making great progress.

## **12. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

## **13. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned.