

NEVADA ECONOMY

Growth, jobs likely despite downturn

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A survey of key industries targeted for growth in Northern Nevada shows more jobs and expansion in the next three years despite an uncertain economy, according to a report released Wednesday.

Respondents from advanced logistics, advanced manufacturing, clean energy and bio-agriculture businesses said they intend to add 808 jobs, occupy an additional 500,000 square feet of land and spend \$127 million on expansion.

"The survey is a positive indicator that these companies have confidence in the region and are continuing to invest in our communities long-term," said Tracey Buxton, Business Builders program manager for the Reno-based Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada.

The agency, along with the Carson City-based Northern Nevada Development Authority, conducted the survey from August to December 2007.

The sectors queried are among those singled out by EDawn and NNDA in their long-range initiatives for increasing commerce in Northern Nevada.

Chuck Alvey, chief executive officer of EDawn, said the results are encouraging

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given so much attention to the region's struggling economy in the past year.

"Talk to people, and there are challenges out there," he said, citing the housing slump. "But we keep saying look at these other sectors, and there's optimism for growth."

In the survey, 77 executives were interviewed, 39 of whom indicated plans to expand by 2011. Twenty-five respondents provided specific estimates totaling at least \$127 million planned in capital investment.

Among the sectors' findings:

■ **Advanced logistics.** This sector focuses on the technology and means behind the shipping of goods, and 75 percent of respondents said they see a growing demand for their products. They also expect to add 180 jobs and earmark \$5.8 million for capital expenses.

■ **Advanced manufacturing.** This sector focuses on computers, high-precision equipment and information technologies. Among respondents, 69 percent reported increased sales, one-third plan to expand with a total of 507 new jobs and \$115 million in capital investment.

■ **Clean energy/bio-agriculture.** Most respondents were Reno-Sparks companies in solar, geothermal and biodiesel endeavors. Altogether, they expect to create 121 new jobs and spend \$5.7 million on business expansion.

The bio-ag industry has "enormous" applications to rural Northern Nevada and is key to the NNDA's "Northern NVision" plan for business expansion, Executive Director Ron Weisinger said.

"It's one of our assets we can grow upon over the next 15 to 20 years," he said.