San Diego Regional EDC and 30 partners hosted the San Diego and Imperial Valley Regional Economic Development Forum on April 10, 2013. The forum brought together leaders from industry, government, the non-profit sector, and higher education to discuss economic challenges, present potential reforms, and exchange unique perspectives on the regional economy. Supported by San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E), with support from Morgan Family Foundation and Wells Fargo Bank, the forum featured a panel of business leaders with representatives from Northrup Grumman, Synthetic Genomics, ecoATM, Evolution Hospitality, Hydranautics and Aqua Lung International. These private sector executives told 300 forum participants about their experiences doing business in San Diego.

Participants were also given a number of potential opportunities to consider for statewide collaboration. An electronic voting system was used to immediately gather and tabulate priorities. A case study was presented by SDG&E President and COO Mike Niggli, highlighting the Sunrise Powerlink as an example of the economic impact of a major regional infrastructure project.

Sixteen regions across the state of California held regional forums similar to the San Diego and Imperial Valley Regional Economic Development Forum. These forums are intended to guide steering committees and action teams, culminating in the 2013 California Summit to be held on November 8, 2013 in Los Angeles. The Summit promotes prosperity and opportunity by developing a regions-driven shared agenda for state action. The 2013 California Summit will also use input from the regional forums to develop a statewide Prosperity Plan.
The Survey

Based on a set of problem statements and goals, attendees and online participants took part in an interactive survey and discussion designed to prioritize policy matters surrounding the five key areas of workforce, innovation, infrastructure, regulatory process and capital. Participants were also asked to engage in thoughtful conversation surrounding the topics and provide additional priorities. Following the event, an online poll was offered for those who were unable to participate. Results of the poll are intended to guide the California Prosperity Plan, which will be developed at the 2013 California Summit. The results below reflect responses from both the attendees who participated in the interactive forum survey and participants in the online follow-up poll.

The Results

WORKFORCE

Problem Statement: The San Diego region is facing a talent gap between its workforce and the needs of critical industry sectors.

Goal: Prepare a talented workforce to address critical industry needs.

Priority: Prepare students for STEM careers through industry partnerships.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Problem Statement: California lacks a comprehensive plan to address road, water and border infrastructure.

Goal: Ensure San Diego has the adequate infrastructure for 21st century needs of residents and businesses.

Priority: Help shape a comprehensive statewide infrastructure plan.
**REGULATION**

**Problem Statement:** The regulatory process in California is cumbersome and prohibitive to business growth and expansion.

**Goal:** Reform the regulatory process to remove unnecessary regulations and requirements.

**Priority:** Streamlining regulations such as permit processing times for office and industrial development.

**INNOVATION**

**Problem Statement:** While San Diego's innovation economy thrives, certain sectors and businesses lack adequate support for growth.

**Goal:** Support San Diego's entire innovation economy through regional initiatives and programs.

**Priority:** Create and support regional advanced manufacturing initiatives.

**CAPITAL**

**Problem Statement:** A shortage of capital for emerging or growing businesses stunts the growth potential of the San Diego regional economy.

**Goal:** Expand access to capital for businesses at varying stages of growth and create programs to address gaps.

**Priority:** Increase access to capital for emerging companies.

**OTHER**

**Problem Statement:** San Diego lacks the proper tools to address infrastructure needs.

**Goal:** Identify the best tools to address infrastructure priorities.

**Priority:** Adopt a simplified process to encourage and implement public-private partnerships.
Join Us

There is still time to get involved and influence the process. Use your interest in the five key areas of workforce, innovation, infrastructure, regulatory process and capital, and your concern for the future of economic innovation and growth, to engage in the California Economic Summit. Contact San Diego Regional EDC and we will connect you to the appropriate local organizations based on your area of interest. Plan to attend the Summit in Los Angeles this November. The California Stewardship Network believes that thriving regions lead to a thriving state. Help San Diego contribute to building a thriving California.


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