



# The BDC Times

A Quarterly Update from the  
Mesa Grande Business Development Corporation

## BDC Holds 2021 Strategic Planning Session

Members of the BDC Board of Directors gathered at the Golden Eagle on Friday and Saturday, July 16-17, to plan and prioritize a number of projects currently on the organization's radar screen.

The Saturday morning agenda included discussions with members of the Tribal Council and Housing Authority on how to improve internal procedures and handle transactions between the various entities to ensure proper accounting.

The BDC identified a number of priorities for the next 18 months, including:

- Hiring additional workers for Tekamuk Facility Services and Golden Eagle Gardens to handle the growing work load associated with gearing up vacation rentals and preparing to plant and harvest our first 10-acre organic garden.
- Securing financial assistance from the Tribe's American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding for working capital to fund operations until they are self-sustaining by 2024.
- Seeking continued grant support to reduce the short-term funding burden on the Tribe, while recognizing that grants are not a viable

source of working capital long-term for any business due to the lack of certainty that applications will ultimately receive funding.

- Continuing renovation/rehab work on the Golden Eagle residences (Mabee House and Costello Complex) for vacation rental/event use
- Completing landscaping and clean-up work on the Terebessy property for vacation rental use after the owners' lease-back period has ended.



•Continuing with the development of the first ten acres of Golden Eagle Gardens to maximize our harvest and the revenue to be generated from produce sales

•Continuing due diligence

on the proposed Horse Show Park concept and its potential costs and benefits

- Drafting the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) required by EDA in order to secure agency funding for future development projects on the Golden Eagle, including a master engineering design for the entire site.



*Thanks to the Native American Agriculture Fund (NAAF), the BDC was able to award 14 garden "mini-grants" of \$300 each to tribal members interested in planting their own gardens at home or on the Golden Eagle.*

*Grantees were invited to attend two training sessions, one via Zoom and one live session at the farm, to learn first-hand some basic gardening skills and ask questions of our two "green" consultants, organic farming expert Scott Murray and ethnobotanics expert Richard Bugbee.*

*The grant budget had originally allowed for 12 mini-grants, but interest was stronger than expected, so NAAF allowed us to make some adjustments within the approved budget to provide for two more awards. The BDC hopes to offer a similar program next year if funded again by NAAF.*



## First Nations Grant Brings Additional Funding

In January, the BDC received a \$10,000 grant from First Nations Development Institute (FNDI) for the purchase and installation of a greenhouse to enable year-round cultivation of weather-sensitive crops on the Golden Eagle Gardens organic farm.

The BDC has been able to leverage that award by using the FNDI grant to qualify for a program under the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) that subsidizes up to 75% of the cost of high-tunnel greenhouses for produce cultivation. This will enable us to install three greenhouses instead of one to maximize winter production.



In a letter of thanks to FirstNations, BDC President Keely Linton wrote, "This will make a huge difference in our ability to provide fresh organic produce year-round to tribal members and the surrounding area. This is not only important for improved Native diet and nutrition, but also very important to the economics of our farming operation, as it will enable us to offset seasonal fluctuations in production."

The initial First Nations grant was followed in July and August by two more awards totaling \$17,500 from FNDI's California Tribal Fund in recognition of the work being done on the Golden Eagle to build a 20-acre tribal farm from the ground up. The funds will be used to support further garden work, including the installation of the three greenhouses, or "high tunnels," on the Golden Eagle.

While the BDC completes the paperwork on the NRCS greenhouse subsidy, we've installed a temporary greenhouse to shelter the seedlings that are now ready for transplant into the rich soil of the Golden Eagle. Hot chiles, sweet peppers, tomatoes, watermelons and pumpkin seedlings will soon have their permanent home on our farm.

First Nations Development Institute is a non-profit organization that raises and disburses grant funds to help Native American communities throughout the United States develop and enhance their land, human, cultural and natural resources.