

Opinion: Improving Tahoe-Reno's business image is key

By Chuck Alvey

Reno-Tahoe Can Do Business Starts Here, a local grass-roots campaign, is a way you can personally make a difference in diversifying our economy.

As the Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada and partners work to recruit and expand top companies and create jobs, there are obstacles. The one that Can Do addresses is our region's lack of image as a business location. Research shows some people in the U.S. have a negative impression of our communities, while others have positive images. Most have no impression of us.

Most importantly, decision makers do not think of Reno-Tahoe as a business location.

If we are to continue to diversify and rebuild our economy, changing that external impression begins with you. If we don't believe we live in a business place, no one else will either. In case you need some convincing, Bill Fruth, president of Policom Corp., an economics research firm, recently reported to EDawn members that the single largest economic impact in our region comes from the manufacturing sector – at 30 percent. State government, namely the University of Nevada, Reno and Desert Research Institute was next, with leisure and hospitality third. In 1990, 28 percent of the work force was in leisure and hospitality. By 2009, it was 18 percent. Manufacturing increased slightly from 5 percent to 6 percent versus declines elsewhere. Business and professional services went from 7 percent to 12 percent. Education and health services saw modest gains from 8 percent to 11 percent. We have diversified our economy, but not nearly enough.

Chuck Alvey is president and CEO of the Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada.

Read the whole story