

# Truckee on road to enhanced revitalization

By Linda Fine Conaboy

TRUCKEE – It's always better to deliver good tidings to an enthusiastic crowd, and judging from the attendance (standing room only) and the attitude of the recent Good Morning Truckee crowd, they were ready to hear what's new in Truckee.

Rick Holliday, owner of Holliday Development headquartered in Emeryville, easily captured the positive vibe as he delivered the inside scoop on his company's efforts to expand and streamline the historic downtown core with a project called the Truckee Railyard.

The Railyard will sit on the city's historic but long-vacant railyard, a 75-acre site just east of downtown's Commercial Row. It has been vacant since a lumber mill closed in the 1980s. In the works for a number of years, the project suffered a blow in 2010 when its redevelopment money became unavailable due Gov. Jerry Brown eliminating redevelopment agencies statewide.



Truckee is making a concerted effort to redevelop properties to enhance the experience for locals and visitor.

Photo/Linda Fine Conaboy

Holliday said the project is back on track with secure infrastructure funding, which will allow an immediate construction start.

"The most important thing people told me is don't leave the old town behind," Holliday said.

Working in partnership with the railroad, plans are to change the traffic pattern, add a new maintenance facility and move the balloon track, among several other things.

Amid the many amenities to be included in the first phase of the project is a grocery store; in fact, Holliday reported, they recently signed a letter of intent with upscale Nugget Markets, a family-owned and operated grocery based in Northern California and named one of Fortune magazine's top 100 companies to work for.

Additionally, there will be the Truckee Railhouse Theater, a mixed-development project to include a second-floor, six-screen movie theater, a performing arts space, 27 owner-occupied residential units and a ground floor retail area. The four-story building even calls for a dog wash.

"There won't be zillions of square feet of retail," Holliday said. "But enough to enhance downtown."

And the 700 new parking spaces will go a long way toward alleviating Truckee's parking woes. Holliday calls this "a huge reservoir of parking."

Also slated for the first phase is rented, affordable housing, a roof deck, courtyard and brew pub coming late in 2016-17. Buildout, according to the master plan, should occur by the end of 2018, with three districts on tap. They are: the Downtown Extension District, Industrial Heritage District and Trout Creek District.

Cassie Hebel, the executive director of Truckee's Downtown Merchants Association touted her organization's past achievements and gave a brief overview of things to come in 2016.

She said there's a big push now to increase the area's visibility via social media with the goal being more pedestrian visits.

"We want to bring people downtown; we like foot traffic," she said, citing a few of the special events that make Truckee a memorable experience for locals and tourists. Activities such as the Halloween Parade, Downtown Holiday Event and the Truckee Follies are must-attend, according to Hebel.



The railroad is an integral part of Truckee. Photo/Linda Fine Conaboy

In summer 2016, the goal is to lure at least 30,000 folks to Truckee Thursdays.

Like any downtown, a zesty and flourishing core is a goal worth aiming for. And with this in mind, the third and last presenter on Jan. 12, Becky Bucor, Truckee's engineering manager, discussed the work completed in the past as well as the ongoing efforts to make the west end of Truckee as vital as mid-town.

An all-out effort there, called Brickelltown, consumed many

engineering and construction hours in 2015, resulting in new sidewalks connecting both town segments and eliminating the previous sea of asphalt and winter mud that could make the west-end trek uncomfortable.

In addition, a new intersection at Spring Street and Donner Pass Road enhances visual appeal.

Bucor said the goal of Phase 2 is to extend Brickelltown even farther west to what is known as the McIver Roundabout. Bike lanes, guardrails and retaining walls are in the offing, all to be constructed with as little traffic disruption as possible, while increasing customer visits to the western outpost.

“So far, so good,” said Jessica Thompson, senior engineer. “Seems like there are a lot more people in the west end of town, especially at the new intersection. We want to make downtown Truckee a much more pedestrian-friendly area,” she told *Lake Tahoe News*.