

IN PROGRESS

A Quarterly Review of Economic Development Activity in Placer County

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First Quarter 2010 County of Placer

Economic Development Board Spotlight: Dave Baker

Starting as a grinder trainee in 1974, David Baker worked his way into becoming president and chairman of the board of RobbJack Corp., a company that manufactures rotary cutting tools sold throughout the U.S. and overseas. Baker held several positions in the company before returning to school in 1986. He received his MBA from Pepperdine University in 1988 and became president of RobbJack in 1992.

RobbJack is a 100 percent employee-owned ESOP (employee stock ownership plan) company, with facilities in Santa Clara and Lincoln, that employs about a hundred people.

"RobbJack has earned a reputation as a premier supplier of high-performance, consistently high-quality rotary cutting tools," Baker said. "Our single greatest asset is probably the consistency of the products."

Baker came to the Economic Development Board after receiving a letter about the need for a representative from the manufacturing sector. "I thought it might be a good way to learn about politics at the local level, where I thought I might be able to help," Baker said. "If I can bring a little of the efficiencies that are required in running a manufacturing facility to Placer's Economic Development Board, I would feel I'd contributed."

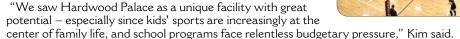
Baker and his wife Robin live in Auburn and have two grown daughters and three grandsons. "My wife and I like to travel, and I like almost anything outdoors," Baker said. "Bicycling, fly fishing, golf, hiking, mountain climbing and rock climbing. I take my grandsons with me on the last two as often as I can."

Baker is the past president of the United States Cutting Tool Institute (2000-2002) and currently sits on the Board of Directors for Tesco Controls, Inc., an ESOP company in Sacramento.



This Sports Center is a Palace

Hardwood Palace LLC, in Rocklin, was an entrepreneurial investment that grew out of the owners' family ties in the area. Daniel Johnson, an attorney, and his wife, Kim, a communications consultant, established the company when they acquired the facility in 2007.



The 70,000-square-foot facility now houses eight high-quality hardwood courts, an observation level for spectators, a café, a pro shop, and private party room. The business has shown continuous growth, even through the current economic downturn.



Early on, the couple had partners in Hardwood Palace, but are now sole owners of both the business and the "unit" at 1091 Tinker Rd. "Our core strength in the early days was a popular, established youth basketball league, Hot Shots, that continues to be a valued Hardwood Palace customer," said Kim. "Adult leagues, too, have been fans of Hardwood Palace from the beginning because of our great facilities and ready access to challenging competition."

Over the last couple of years, the Johnsons have worked hard to put a talented management team in place to develop other aspects of the business, Kim said. "We run very successful and popular basketball and volleyball tournaments that draw players from all of Northern California and Nevada, and beyond. Having so much court space allows families to relax and enjoy a weekend of high-caliber competition without driving all over the map to multiple venues." Hardwood Palace also hosts futsal (indoor soccer) events, and have even had local football teams working out in the facility during bad weather.

"In the first year we built a rock climbing wall to add a challenging vertical dimension to our team-building offerings," Kim noted, "and we converted some office space into birthday party rooms and a hospitality suite for coaches to meet and relax between games. This past year we upgraded our pro shop and Cafe Parque, and we significantly increased the number of sports camps and clinics offered.

"Basketball star Harold Pressley has been a tremendous addition to our team," Kim continued, "and a great draw to Hardwood Palace, offering private and group training sessions for children and adults."

Kim said the owners were also lucky to partner with Elite Fitness and well-known trainer Greg Howard to offer state-of-the-art endurance and plyometric exercise training on site for professional athletes, high potential student athletes, and committed amateurs. "With this package of services and amenities, we are uniquely positioned to offer people of all ages great experiences in sports, fitness, teamwork and leadership."

The number of people employed at Hardwood Palace varies greatly depending on the kinds of sporting events taking place. On a busy tournament weekend, the facility may employ, directly and indirectly, over 50 people – including scorekeepers, referees, parking lot attendants, facility staff, and cafe staff, among others. When hosting birthday parties, basketball training camps, or ropes course events, the team may be limited to just a handful of key staff and management, led by "our rock star" general manager Royce Browning.

Hardwood Palace finds itself in a unique market niche. There are no other facilities like Hardwood Palace within 350 miles, and only four or five in the nation, Kim explained. "We serve several different markets – families, adult athletes, corporate teams, and others – so our competition in each segment varies. What makes Hardwood Palace unique is that it is a well-run, upscale facility that provides a diverse range of athletic experiences and learning opportunities all under one roof."

The Johnsons run the business on the core values of safety, sportsmanship, team spirit, achievement, respect, and responsibility. "We go to work everyday knowing that by nurturing these values on the court, we are helping to strengthen our community," Kim said. "We believe in continuously striving to make Hardwood Palace a safe and engaging place to work, and a great place for athletes and families to visit."



Film Review

Winter Brings Commercial Shoots to Placer County

Winter usually means filming in Tahoe picks up, and this season was no exception. Placer County locations appeared in the Late Fall and Holiday 2009 Orvis women's catalogs. Known for its stylish, high-quality women's clothing, Orvis photographed its models in ten different locations, from the shores of North Lake Tahoe to the Cisco Grove area on Historic US Hwy. 40. Vintage red cabins, stunning Tahoe piers and lake views, and contemporary lakefront homes provided appealing backdrops for the four-day shoot. Also, a Goodyear Tire commercial was shot in the Serene Lakes area near Donner Summit. Though the number of film permits issued was understandably down somewhat in 2009 (about 25 percent), business was steady, with return visits from such film companies as Tim Damon Productions, which brought the Goodyear project here – about the tenth time Tim Damon has shot in Placer

-Beverly Lewis, Director, Placer-Lake Tahoe Film Office

www.placer.ca.gov/films

Connections Center Moves to Bigger Facility

Auburn's Connections one-stop career center has a new office. The Golden Sierra Job Training Agency and its job-search component completed the move to a new location in December. The facility is now located on Hwy. 49, about two miles from the former DeWitt Center location. The new building provides about 1,000 square feet of additional space and more parking.

"There's actually more space for job seekers and there are interview rooms for businesses and employers," said Golden Sierra director Jason Buckingham. The new office also houses a computer lab, space for classes, a conference room, and a boardroom.

"We have increased hours of some staff and hired additional staff, with the help of stimulus funds," Buckingham said.

The expanded operation comes at a time when unemployment is more than I percent, up nearly seven percent from three years ago. "We're certainly seeing an increase in the numbers of people coming through our doors looking for work, and we have increased services available," Buckingham said.

Besides support provided to job seekers, Golden Sierra works with businesses on employee-retention programs, such as Placer County's 80/20 program for residents on public assistance. The program funds up to 80 percent of an employee's wages. A similar program for those not on public assistance funds up to 50 percent.

"Because of funding cuts over the past 10 years, it hasn't been a real popular program," Buckingham said. "But now more businesses are looking for financial assistance. For us, it is win-win. We're training an individual, helping an employer, or helping someone upgrade their skills. It's helping retain businesses."

Employers interested in finding out more about the programs can contact SEDCorp, the Placer County Office of Economic Development, the City of Roseville, or Golden Sierra program manager Jeff Coyle at (530) 823-4635.

from the Auburn Journal

Union Pacific RR Opens Donner Pass Tunnel to Double-Stack Intermodal Container Freight Traffic



Railroad opened its Donner Pass route to domestic double-stack intermodal container freight traffic

Union Pacific

in November 2009, marking the completion of a 12-month project designed to move customer products over a shorter, faster, and more efficient route.

"The Donner Tunnel project is a great example of how Union Pacific capital investments continue to support our customers' ability to grow, drive increased operating efficiencies for our railroad, and improve America's transportation infrastructure," said Jim Young, Union Pacific chairman and chief executive officer. "Union Pacific has invested nearly \$17 billion in our rail network since 2004 and remains committed to running the railroad as efficiently as possible while providing customers with the highest levels of service."

The construction project included:

More than 18,000 lineal feet of notching to improve tunnel clearances in 15 restricted tunnels between Rocklin and Truckee;

Upgrading 30 miles of system signals to centralized traffic control standards, thus eliminating dark territory and allowing signal technology to control train movement, instead of radio communications between dispatchers and locomotive engineers:

Removing track, lowering the floor and reinstalling track in two tunnels; and Installing rock bolts for added stability in

five tunnels.

"This project will benefit our customers by improving our intermodel transit times compared to the current Feather River Canyon route," said John Kaiser, Union Pacific vice president and general manager - Intermodal. "Completing this project will help us better serve our customers while supporting economic growth in Northern California and at the Port of Oakland."

Union Pacific's Donner Pass route is as much as 73 miles shorter and up to three hours faster than the Feather River Canyon route, depending on the destination. The completed construction project gives Union Pacific the ability to operate up to 9,000-foot trains, a 58 percent increase over the 5,700-foot trains that run through Feather River Canyon.

A single Union Pacific intermodal train takes up to 300 over-the-road trucks off America's highways, reducing congestion and repair costs, particularly on the busy I-80 highway system. In addition, rails are at least four times more fuel-efficient than trucks, resulting in fewer greenhouse gas emissions.

Tom Lange, Union Pacific Media Contact

County Gets Grant to Assist At-Risk Businesses

The Placer County Office of Economic Development is implementing a program that offers rapid-response assistance to businesses in danger of shutting their doors permanently or laying off employees.

The office is funding the program with an \$82,600 American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009 grant from the Golden Sierra Job Training Agency and Golden Sierra Workforce Investment Board to provide business outreach and assistance.

Designed for at-risk businesses in Placer County, the program can act as a referral service to help employers get the help they need to avoid or reduce the impacts of layoffs and to strengthen their businesses. A variety of resources are available, including referrals for financial assistance, businessplan development, and government contract resources. Recruitment assistance is also offered.

For more information, contact Marcy Schmidt at (530) 889-406l or mschmidt@placer.ca.gov.



Denny's Restaurant has opened a new location at 4460 Rocklin Road in Rocklin. Call 916-624-4800 or visit www.dennys.com for more information, or stop by to welcome them, join Denny's Rewards Program and enter a drawing to win a free Grand Slam® every week for a year.

Hyatt Place opened at 220 Conference Center Drive in Roseville, adjacent to Westfield Galleria and the Fountains. Call 888-492-8847 to learn how the Hyatt is combining style and innovation to create a completely new hotel experience.

Oaxaca's Huatulco Grill is serving authentic Mexican cuisine at the Tahoe City Golf Course. Call 530-581-1890 for reservations or to place a "to go" order for fresh food from the Oaxaca Huatulco region.

ProfitSmart of Rocklin cut the ribbon on its new accounting services in January. You may be "business wise" but are you ProfitSmart? Call Jack Coates of 916-960-6820 for a free consultation.

Sake House is now serving at 1017 Galleria Boulevard, #160, in the Fountains shopping center, Roseville. The latest venture from restaurateur Gary Paragary, this Japanese food and ultra lounge experience also features the talents of nightclub connoisseur Bob Simpson and Billy Ngo of Kru in midtown Sacramento. Visit www.sakehouseroseville. com for more information.

Select Tax & Bookkeeping is now operating out of 5505 Whitney Boulevard, Suite 3G in Rocklin. Reach out to John and Tina Cecil at 916-630-1040 to receive a discount off the preparation of one complete income tax return.

SR Entertainment Group will launch a 16-screen movie theater at the former Mervyn's store in Rocklin. The Blue Oaks Cinema 16 site on LoneTree Boulevard will seat 3,000 and anticipates a September 2010 opening.

TGH Aviation remodeled an airplane hangar into 5,000 square feet of office and laboratory space at the Auburn Airport Business Park. TGH repairs aircraft instruments for NATO and the U.S. military. The facility at 2389 Rickenbacker Way employs 35. Learn more about TGH at www.tghaviation.com

Vanguard Training & Development is open for business in Rocklin. Call 916-624-3947 or visit www.VanguardTrainers.com to learn how this strategic partner of 360Solutions can offer hundreds of corporate training topics tailored to solve your performance challenges, support organizational development, and meet specific business objectives.

Placer County Wineries Garner
19 Awards at 2010 SF Chronicle
Wine Competition

On January 8, 2010, the San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition concluded its annual week of judging at the Cloverdale Citrus Fairgrounds in Sonoma County. Over the course of five days, 63 professional wine experts tasted and evaluated a world-record-breaking 4,913 entries. Wines were awarded Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Double Gold (unanimous gold by the judges).

By the end of the competition, Placer County wineries had accumulated 19 awards.

- Le Casque, three Bronze
- Lone Buffalo Vineyard, one Gold & one Silver
- · Pescatore Vineyards & Winery, one Bronze
- Mt. Vernon Winery, one Gold, one Silver & two Bronze
- · Dono dal Cielo, one Silver
- Vina Castellano, three Silver & two Bronze
- · Fawnridge Winery, two Bronze
- · Duarte Family Vineyard, one Bronze

For details, contact Jocelyn Maddux at (530) 990-2505 or jocelynmaddux@hotmail.com or visit www.winejudging.com/medal_winners_2010/awards_by_winery.php

The Placer County Wine & Grape Association now includes 18 wineries working to foster the renaissance of vineyards and wineries in the Sierra Foothills. The group is re-embracing the county's heritage as a viable California wine-making region.

For a list of association members, visit www.placerwineandgrape.org/ or call Cathy Mickels, (530) 392-3649. (See the In Progress Calendar for information about the February Placer Hills Winery Tour.)

Placer County Offers Local Businesses Hiring Incentive

A new county program will reimburse businesses for 80 percent of wages paid to newly hired Welfare to Work participants through September 2010, using federal economic-stimulus funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The continuing increase in unemployment has translated into many more Welfare to Work participants ready and able to get back to work.

The county has contracted with Golden Sierra Job Training Agency to place up to 150 participants in jobs with local government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and businesses. Businesses will not be obligated to retain employees hired through the program after it ends, but the hope is that employers will opt to keep the employees after they have received the work experience and training they need to be successful in the long term.

For more information, contact Business & Employment Services Representative Bobbi Park at (916) 784-6140 or park@goldensierra.com.

This Sports Center is a Palace

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Plans for growth include increasing use of the facility during workdays. The Johnsons are working with corporate clients and school groups to develop custom sports and fitness programs that will support groups' wellness initiatives and meet their other organizational needs during what would otherwise be quiet times on Hardwood Palace courts.

"We greatly appreciate the support of the county and the community as we have explored new ways to meet the needs of local families and businesses, and continue to be a thriving economic asset to the entire region."

COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE

COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Thomas M. Miller

Economic Development Director David C. Snyder dsnyder@placer.ca.gov

Economic Development Specialist Ron Yglesias ryglesia@placer.ca.gov

COUNTY OF PLACER OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

175 Fulweiler Avenue, Auburn, CA 95603 PHONE (530) 889-4016 FAX (530) 889-4095 www.placer.ca.gov/business

Calendar of Events

This calendar is a small sampling of the many events taking place throughout Placer County. Check with our office or a local newspaper for additional listings. We make every effort to ensure that information is correct, but last-minute changes can occur. PLEASE CALL AHEAD TO VERIFY TIMES, DATES, AND LOCATIONS. To receive our next quarterly Calendar of Events, please send a self-addressed stamped envelope to California Welcome Center, 13411 Lincoln Way, Auburn, CA 95603.

Foothills Farmers Markets

At 16 locations around the county. For addresses and times, call (530) 823-6183 or visit www.foothillfarmersmarket.com/

February

- February 13, 14, & 15: Placer Hills Winery Tour, a collaborative open-house style winery tour hosted by twelve Placer County boutique wineries. Visitors on the tour can meet winemakers, wine grape growers, and other wine enthusiasts while tasting award-winning artisan wines. For details and a map of the wineries, visit www.placerhillswinetour.com or call Cathy Mickels at (530) 392-3649.
- February 20: KinderKonzert: Peter and the Wolf by Sergui Prokofiev, music to enchant both children and adults, presented by the Auburn Symphony. At 11 a.m., Placer High Auditorium, Auburn. General admission \$7 each. For details, call (530) 823-6683.

March

- March 5 7: Celebrity Winterfest Benefiting Special Olympics. The Celebrity Winterfest is a high-profile, event-packed weekend taking place at the luxurious Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe Resort and Diamond Peak Resort. The festivities begin on Friday evening with the "Let the Games Begin" Reception. For more information please go to www.sonc.org/celebritywintertest.
- March 5 14: SnowFest, of North Lake Tahoe & Truckee. On-mountain competitions, parties, live music, parades, contests, the "Great Ski Race," dog pull, special dinners and nights out at local

- restaurants. For details, call (530) 583-7167 or visit www.tahoesnowfestival.com
- March 7: The Great Ski Race Tahoe
 City to Truckee. The Race covers
 30 km beginning at the Tahoe Cross
 Country Center in Tahoe City to
 the Cottonwood Restaurant in
 Truckee. For details please contact
 www.thegreatskirace.com.
- March 12: 3rd Annual Joe King Poker Tournament, Kings Beach. The North Tahoe Business Association's 3rd Annual Joe King Poker Tournament is slated for Saturday, March 13 at 7:00 p.m., at the Tahoe Biltmore in Crystal Bay. All proceeds benefit the North Tahoe Business Association. Please contact www.NorthTahoeBusiness.org or call 530-546-9000.
- March 13: Foresthill Sled Dog Winter Classic. Qualifying sled dog races for the Alaskan Iditarod Race; a variety of teams on groomed trails. For details, call the Foresthill Chamber of Commerce at (916) 599-0141.
- March 13 21: 3rd Annual Ultimate Boarder Championship. The board sport triathlon is a one-week competition focused on showcasing the talent of athletes who can conquer the arts of snowboarding, surfing and skateboarding. At Northstar-at-Tahoe Resort. For details, call 1-800-GO-NORTH.
- March 20 & 21: Auburn Symphony presents "Tchaikovsky," including the "Pathetique Symphony" and soloist Michelle You playing Tchaikovsky's violin concerto.

- At Placer High School Theatre, Auburn. For details and tickets, call (530) 823-6683.
- March 26 28: Women's Ski & Snowboard Camp. Three all-inclusive days of courses focused on skiing, snowboarding, health and wellness, beginner through expert. At Northstar at Tahoe. Lodging discounts available for registered participants. For details, call (530) 562-2267.

April

- April 4: Coldstream Terrain Park
 Competition. The Competition is for
 youth ages 13-17. This series is dedicated
 to creating fun and competitive terrain
 competitions, while promoting and
 educating children and parents on
 smart style terrain park etiquette.
 For more information please go to
 www.sugarbowl.com.
- April 23: RSVP Vocal Ensemble, sings classical choral music, madrigals, freedom songs, folk tunes, and jazz arrangements. The group performs at 7:30 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, 515 Sunrise Ave., Roseville. All proceeds are donated to charitable organizations. For details, call (916) 624-9419.
- April 24 May 30: Lincoln's Annual Feats of Clay XXII, an international clay exhibit of world-class contemporary ceramic art, displayed in the historic Gladding McBean terra cotta factory in Lincoln. For details, call Lincoln Arts at (916) 645-9713.

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