

ESMERALDA COUNTY  
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY  
2001-2002

SUBMITTED TO:

U.S. Department of Commerce  
Economic Development Administration  
304 North 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 441  
Boise, Idaho 83701

SUBMITTED BY:

Board of Esmeralda County Commissioners  
P.O. Box 517  
Goldfield, Nevada 89013

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RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE ESMERALDA COUNTY  
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2001 – 2002

WHEREAS, an annual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan (CEDS) is useful tool to plot Esmeralda County’s progress in meeting objectives and setting priorities for economic development activities to stimulate new private and public investments to provide employment and growth opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the Esmeralda County Commission - appointed Esmeralda County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Program Committee has developed and adopted an Esmeralda County CEDS 2001; and

WHEREAS, the Esmeralda County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee has recommended adoption of the CEDS by the Board of County Commissioners of Esmeralda County, now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Esmeralda County Commissioners accepts and adopts the proposed CEDS Plan and authorizers it submittal to the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration.

The foregoing resolution was duly passed and adopted by the Board of the Esmeralda County commissioners, State of Nevada, at regular meeting of the Board, held on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2001.

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Benjamin Viljoen, Chairman  
Board of Esmeralda County Commissioners

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE ESMERALDA COUNTY  
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2001 – 2002

WHEREAS, the Esmeralda County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee is responsible for planning and coordination of economic development activities to stimulate new private and public investments to provide employment and growth opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the Committee is organized in accordance with Federal requirements of the Economic Development Administration to broadly represent the area including representation of local government, business, and other community interests, and

WHEREAS, the Committee has prepared an Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan (CEDs) as a guide for economic development activities; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Esmeralda County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee does hereby adopt the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan (CEDs) for the County of Esmeralda, State of Nevada.

ADOPTED this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2001

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Silver Peak Town Board

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE ESMERALDA COUNTY  
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2001 – 2002

WHEREAS, the Esmeralda County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee is responsible for planning and coordination of economic development activities to stimulate new private and public investments to provide employment and growth opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the Committee is organized in accordance with Federal requirements of the Economic Development Administration to broadly represent the area including representation of local government, business, and other community interests, and

WHEREAS, the Committee has prepared an Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan (CEDS) as a guide for economic development activities; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Esmeralda County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee does hereby adopt the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan (CEDS) for the County of Esmeralda, State of Nevada.

ADOPTED this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2001

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Goldfield Chamber of Commerce

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RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE ESMERALDA COUNTY  
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2001 – 2002

WHEREAS, the Esmeralda County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee is responsible for planning and coordination of economic development activities to stimulate new private and public investments to provide employment and growth opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the Committee is organized in accordance with Federal requirements of the Economic Development Administration to broadly represent the area including representation of local government, business, and other community interests, and

WHEREAS, the Committee has prepared an Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan (CEDS) as a guide for economic development activities; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Esmeralda County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee does hereby adopt the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan (CEDS) for the County of Esmeralda, State of Nevada.

ADOPTED this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2001

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fish Lake Valley Community Action Group

## I. THE CEDS PREPARATION PROCESS

Over a period of approximately one-year, Esmeralda County and its unincorporated subdivisions have conducted an update of a previously prepared Overall Economic Development Plan (ODEP) prepared by Economic Development of Esmeralda and Nye County (EDEN). This current update was conducted primarily to include a more recent series of individualized public hearings in all communities of Esmeralda County in order to provide the following:

- Offer all citizens a chance to participate in the review of previously developed strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, goals and plan implementation for their communities.
- Offer all Esmeralda County citizens the chance to participate in developing new goals and strategies for the communities, and
- To address drastic changes in the County's economic conditions resulting from a downturn in gold mining since 1997 that were not included in the first version.

A number of Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) public hearings were conducted in the towns of Goldfield, Silver Peak and Dyer. These meetings were coordinated with designated CEDS appointed members.

The Esmeralda County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee was appointed by the Board of County Commissioners of Esmeralda County. The Esmeralda County CEDS Committee was responsible for developing and recommending to the Board of Esmeralda County Commissioners for adoption the Esmeralda County CEDS to be submitted to the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration.

The overall economic development goals of the Esmeralda County CEDS are:

- To enhance and diversify the economic base and comparative advantages while maintaining the atmosphere and environment of Esmeralda County.
- To improve the economic well-being of the residents of Esmeralda County
- To decrease unemployment and underemployment in Esmeralda County

THE 2001 COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Silver Peak Town Board

Ann Martino, Lead  
Dennis Gaddy II, Chairman  
Ben Viljoen, County Commission Chairman  
Linda Toner  
Deb Rohlman  
De Winsor

Goldfield Chamber of Commerce Delegation

John Spence, Lead  
Sandy Harmon, Chamber President  
Harriet Ealey, County Commissioner  
Mary Lawrence  
Allen Metscher  
Bob Plock  
Patty Cafferata  
Carl Schrider  
Ed Rannells  
Richard Ketchum

Fish Lake Valley Community Action Group

Lavonne Edwards, Lead  
Lynn Lawton, County Commissioner  
Vera Pringle  
Patti Magruder  
Betty Harris  
Don Anderson  
Linda Deymonaz  
Terri Langton  
John Deymonaz  
Randy Langton  
Jeannie Amick  
Norm Williams  
Dick Tremaine  
Donna Pringle  
George Worden  
Leona Van Winkle

COMMUNITY AND STAFF MEETINGS HELD IN THE 2001 – 2002 CEDS PROCESS:

1. Silver Peak Town Board Meeting  
April 9, 2001  
Silver Peak Community Center  
Silver Peak, Nevada
  
2. Goldfield Chamber of Commerce Meeting  
April 10, 2001  
Goldfield Community Center  
Goldfield, Nevada
  
3. Fish Lake Valley Community Meeting  
April 11, 2001  
Fish Lake Valley Community Center  
Fish Lake Valley Nevada

## II. HISTORICAL ASSESSMENT OF PAST EFFORTS

Esmeralda County, Nevada, was one of the original nine counties formed as part of the Territory of Nevada on November 25, 1861. At first, Esmeralda was also the largest county in the newly formed territory, encompassing virtually the entire southern and eastern portion of the newly formed Nevada Territory. The various county seats of Esmeralda County included the mining town of Aurora, by an Act of November 25, 1861, Hawthorne (presently located in Mineral County), by an Act of July 1, 1883, and finally Goldfield, established May 1, 1907.

Esmeralda County holds the distinction of creating, either directly or indirectly, an additional eight of Nevada's seventeen counties. Specifically, Lander (1862), Nye (1864), and Mineral (1911) counties were created directly from the original Esmeralda County. In addition, Elko (1869), White Pine (1869), and Eureka (1873) counties were created out of Lander County, Lincoln County (1866) was created out of Nye County, and finally, Clark County (1909) was created out of the southern portion of Lincoln County.

The history of Esmeralda County is closely linked with its mineral wealth, particularly gold. Gold ore was discovered in Goldfield in December, 1902, causing the area to boom furiously from 1903 to 1918. The mining camp (Goldfield) began as a tent town, but by 1903, Goldfield Mining District boomed and the cycle of prosperity so great that carpenters worked twenty-four hours a day to provide housing to between 25,000 and 30,000 people. By resolution on October 20, 1903, the mining camp was officially named Goldfield. Goldfield was at one time the largest city in Nevada. Goldfield had a railroad that connected into Las Vegas. Between 1903 and 1940, a total of \$86,765,044 in metals was produced in and around the Goldfield mining district. Almost as quickly as this boomtown began, the Goldfield mining boom began its inevitable downward spiral. Mines were closed and abandoned as quickly as they had opened. As the work disappeared, so did the miners and with them the business owners. Today, the once thriving population Goldfield is reduced to some 574 residents, with only 1,500 people living in all of Esmeralda County. The United States Census designates the entire County as rural.

Other mining towns in present day Esmeralda County that existed before the discovery of gold in Goldfield in the early 1900's included Columbus (1865), Silver Peak (1865), Palmetto (1866), Lida (1867), and Gold Point (1868). Esmeralda's mineral production, primarily gold, reached a peak of \$40.62 million in 1983 and comprised 6.9 percent of Nevada's total gross proceeds from mining at that time. In 1997, however, production had fallen to \$17.1 million, comprising just over 0.5 percent of the state's total mineral production as the state's gold production had now become concentrated along the Carlin Trend in the counties of Elko, Eureka, Lander and Humboldt.

The Esmeralda County economy has historically been supported by mining, agriculture, tourism and operations of local government. During the past years mining has rapidly declined to the point where today it represents an unstable influence on Esmeralda County's economy. Agricultural production has faced ever-widening gaps between rising costs of production and stable produce prices. Growing restrictions in the availability and conditions of use for grazing resources administered by the federal government has been a factor of agriculture in Esmeralda County.

The erosion of Esmeralda County's economic base has been gradual over the past fifteen years. However, increased rates of retiree immigration and out migration of young people in recent years have raised concerns among community leaders about the survivability of the County's economic centers. As the County's economic base narrows, its growing elderly population requires greater levels of public services on which an ever-shrinking revenue base must be depended.

Leaders of the County have expressed continuing concern over the need to diversify and expand the regional economy. Chambers of Commerce or similar organizations have been established in principal communities within the County. In the late 1980's Esmeralda County became a member of the economic development authority now known as Economic Development Authority of Esmeralda/Nye Counties (EDEN). EDEN has recently suffered staffing and financial difficulties.

Over the past several years community leaders in Esmeralda County have become particularly aggressive in efforts to expand local economies. Esmeralda County Commissioners have entered into a Regional Development Corporation with Nevada Test Site Development Corporation (NTSDC), and serve as a partner on Nevada Science and Technology Corridor project. Silver Peak has formed a Town Board, with members elected by the public in late 1998.

Presently Esmeralda County is striving to regain a focused and effective program of job creation within the County. Recent establishment by the Esmeralda County Commission of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee and preparation of this plan are seen as critical first steps in focusing the direction of the County's current economic development efforts.

### III. ESMERALDA COUNTY AND ITS ECONOMY

#### Location

Esmeralda County is located in west-central Nevada situated astride the diagonal portion of the Nevada-California line. The County encompasses nearly 3,570 square miles or 2,284,800 acres of land. It shares common borders with Mineral County on the northwest, Nye County on two sides to the northeast and east, with Mono and Inyo counties in neighboring California to the southwest. The County also borders and contains part of Death Valley National Monument. Esmeralda County, once the largest county in the new Territory, is now the fifth smallest county in Nevada (ahead of Lyon, Douglas, and Storey counties and Carson City) and accounts for 3.2 percent of Nevada's total surface area of 110,540 square miles

Of Esmeralda County's 2,284,800 acres of surface areas, 2,247,863 acres or ninety-eight (98.79%) percent of the County's total area, are controlled and managed by the federal government. Of these federally-managed public lands, approximately 2,183,146 acres of Esmeralda County are managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 61,520 acres are managed by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and 3,197 acres are managed by the National Park Service (NPS). The acreage managed by the U.S. Forest Service includes primarily lands of the Inyo National Forest located within the White Mountain Range. National Park Service lands consist of the extreme northeast corner of Death Valley National Monument. Relative to Nevada's seventeen counties, Esmeralda County ranks as the highest in terms of its percentage of federally owned land.

Esmeralda County is traversed by U.S. 95, a major north/south link between Las Vegas, Nevada to the south and Reno, Nevada to the north. The corridor is utilized in the movement of goods by truck. The corridor is also utilized by vacationers traveling north and south, seasonally in nature and direction.

Esmeralda County's largest population center, with a current population estimated by the Nevada State Demographer of 574 persons, is Goldfield. Geographically, Goldfield is located in east central Esmeralda County at an elevation of 5,700 feet. Las Vegas is approximately 180 miles to the south and Reno is approximately 250 miles to the north. Esmeralda County's other main population centers are Silver Peak, approximately 26 miles west of Goldfield, and Dyer, approximately 100 west of Goldfield. Smaller population centers in Esmeralda County include Gold Point and Lida. Portions of Esmeralda County are within the Town of Tonopah, Nevada and west of Tonopah. Tonopah is approximately 26 miles north of Goldfield in Nye County.

## Demographics

The Nevada State Demographer estimates the current population of Esmeralda County to be 1513 persons, with 38% living in Goldfield. In terms of socioeconomic characteristics, more than one-half of Esmeralda County's 1997 total population of 1,460 persons resided in either Goldfield (1997 estimated population of 550 persons) or Silver Peak (1977 population estimated of 210 persons). These two communities accounted for over 52 percent of the county's 1997 total population. Between 1990 and 1997, the county's population growth averaged 1.1 percent per year. (See Table 1.) During the entire 1950 - 1997 time period, Esmeralda County's population has averaged a rate of growth of 1.9 percent per years as compared to 5.2 percent for the entire state.

Silver Peak is an unincorporated town located in Esmeralda County at the southern end of State Route 265. It was established as a mining town in 1863 and remains a mining town. The town currently supports a population of 250 with the primary income coming from two mining operations.

Fish Lake Valley (Dyer) is a community of approximately 300 residents with the primary income coming from agriculture.

In addition to the three Commissioners Districts, Goldfield, Silver Peak and Dyer, Esmeralda County has residents in the small communities of Gold Point, Lida and portions of Esmeralda County situate in the Town of Tonopah. Tonopah, of course, is the County Seat for Nye County.

The relatively slower and more erratic rate of population growth in Esmeralda County, particularly during the 1950's, 1960's, and 1970's, was due to the county's economic concentration in mining activities and little available economic diversification and alternative employment opportunities. In recent years, growth in the County has stagnated. Factors influencing population numbers in the County are believed to include a severe decline in mining, with extensive out-migration, along with immigration by semi-retired and retired persons.

Based on projections prepared by the Nevada State Demographer's office, the population of Esmeralda County is expected to continue to grow slowly at the rate of .8 percent per year until 2010 (Table 2). The 1990 U.S. Census shows a state population of 84 percent white, 7 percent black and 9 percent of other races. Esmeralda County, in 1990 was home to 87 percent white, .5 percent black and 12.5 percent of other racial background. Since 1990, the black population has remained consistent, and white has increased, while the percentages of other races have decreased slightly. (Table 3).

In 1997, Esmeralda County's average age of its population was estimated at 38.9 years, significantly higher than the 35.6 years for Nevada's overall population's average age, making Esmeralda County the second "oldest" of Nevada's seventeen counties. Based on 1997 population estimates, Esmeralda County's population density was approximately 0.4 persons per square mile, the third least dense of any county in Nevada. This figure compared to an average population density of 16.1 persons per square mile for entire Sate of Nevada in 1997.

TABLE 1.

POPULATION GROWTH  
ESMERALDA COUNTY 1950 - 2010

YEAR	HISTORIC POPULATION	ESTIMATED POPULATION	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
1950	611		
1960	634		3.8%
1970	623		1.7%
1975	700		12.4%
1980	1190		70%
1981	1320		10.92%
1982	1480		12.12%
1984	1680		13.51%
1985	1540		-8.33%
1986	1540		0%
1987	1540		0%
1988	1440		-6.5%
1989	1360		-5.6%
1990	1350		-.7%
1991	1390		3%
1992	1410		1.4%
1993	1320		-6.4%
1994	1390		5.3%
1995	1630		17.3%
1996	1490		-8.6%
1997	1460		-2%
1998	1420		-2.7%
1999	1520		7%
2000		1513	.8%
2001		1546	.8%
2002		1558	.8%
2003		1571	.8%
2004		1585	.8%
2005		1598	.8%
2006		1611	.8%
2007		1625	.8%
2008		1638	.8%
2009		1652	.8%
2010		1666	.8%

(Source: Office of the Nevada State Demographer 6/00; Harris et. al. UNR Economic and Demographic Profile, 1999)

TABLE 2.

PERCENT POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY AGE  
ESMERALDA COUNTY  
SELECTED YEARS WITH PROJECTED THROUGH 2006

AGE	1990	1996	2001	2006
<5	96	72	59	49
6-9	74	81	68	54
10-13	76	68	60	51
14-17	70	60	54	48
18-20	56	39	35	31
21-24	60	40	35	32
25-29	111	74	56	50
30-34	108	94	71	54
35-44	236	207	178	140
45-54	173	182	180	166
55-59	82	66	66	73
60-64	54	47	42	42
65-74	96	79	63	55
75-84	43	41	38	32
85 ABOVE	9	7	7	7

(Source: Business Analyst; Bureau of Business and Economic Research (UNR); Nevada State Demographer)

TABLE 3.

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY RACE  
ESMERALDA COUNTY

RACE	NUMBER		PERCENT OF	TOTAL POPULATION
	1990	1998	1990	1998
WHITE	1171	1315	87%	93%
BLACK	7	8	.5%	.5%
OTHER RACE	166	97	12.5%	6.5%
TOTAL	1344	1420		

(SOURCE: Office of the NEVADA STATE DEMOGRAPHER)

## Economy

Historically, mining and agriculture have been the two most constant economic activities in the Esmeralda County. They were its original source of income and continue as sources of income today. Their relative importance as a source of income has, however, changed in recent years. During the past one hundred years mining, at times, has dominated the local economy. However, mining has significantly declined over the years in significance. Still earnings in the mining sector serve to stimulate local demand for goods and services provided through other sectors of the economy. Government and retail trade remain sources of jobs in Esmeralda County. Services and manufacturing plays a role in the local economy.

The Esmeralda County workforce has fluctuated during the past few years. As shown in Table 4, the County's current workforce is comprised of 460 persons. Of these, approximately 420 were employed during 2000. Unemployment in Esmeralda County during this year ranged from 11 percent to 8 percent, averaging well above Nevada's statewide rate of 4.1 percent. From January 1999 to January 2000, unemployment ranged from 13 percent to 11 percent due to a dramatic reduction of mining activity in the County. As illustrated in Table 4, the opening and closing of mines in the County has led to fluctuations in the unemployment rate. The high unemployment rate has caused the economy of Esmeralda County to suffer and the population to decline.

Esmeralda County's ratio of its 1997 covered employment (i.e. workers covered under state and federal unemployment insurance programs) to its 1997 total population (a proxy measure of the county's labor force participation rate) stood at only 22.4 percent, the lowest of any county in Nevada. This compared to a stateside average labor force participation rate estimated of nearly 50 percent. One explanation of this low ranking is that a relatively large portion of Esmeralda County's population is involved in agricultural and mining employment and the county is dependent on only a few relatively large employers, which lend to volatile employment conditions.

Based on the Esmeralda County's 1997 estimate (Table 6 Source: Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation), total covered employment of 327 workers (excluding agriculture), 150 jobs, or 45.9 percent of Esmeralda County's total jobs were in the mining industry. Based on U.S. Department of Commerce job classifications (Table 5), agriculture was estimated to comprise just over 11 percent of all employment with Esmeralda County in 1995, virtually the same as its 11.4 percent share of Esmeralda County total employment in 1970.

In terms of shares of Esmeralda County's total covered payrolls, (Table 6), in 1997, 64.6% percent of the county's total covered payrolls were earned in the county's mining industry. Esmeralda County's average wage rate in 1997 was \$29,724 per worker. Of all jobs in the county, the mining industry commanded the highest annual wage at \$41,856 per worker in 1997. Relative to other Nevada counties, the average wage rate in Esmeralda County in 1997 was the sixth highest among all Nevada's seventeen counties, a figure dramatically affected by the relatively high wages in the county's mining industry sector and its dominance in terms of jobs (45.9 percent of county total employment and 64.6 percent of county total payrolls).

Since its formation in 1861, Esmeralda County has undergone the most dramatic changes in terms of its physical borders of any county in Nevada. However, one factor that has remained relatively constant has been its long-term reliance on mining. Even today, Esmeralda County's mining industry constitutes a crucial underpinning to the county's growth and economic well being, even though mining activity has declined by nearly 58 percent from 1983 to 1997 in terms of the value of gross proceeds of mines. Given the county's limited resources, it is difficult to say what if whether a new industry sector will arise to take the place of mining to promote continued economic growth in this region.

Table 5. suggests that diversification of Esmeralda County's economy would enhance employment in manufacturing and construction. The importance of mining to Esmeralda County is underscored in Table 6. As shown in this table, earnings per employee in the mining sector are nearly fifty percent greater than the next greatest earning category. Compared to the services and retail sector, mining earnings per employee are three times greater.

Agriculture, with the major commodities being alfalfa, grain, carrots and livestock, continues to be an economic factor in Esmeralda County as shown in Table 8. In 1995, the value of total farm marketing for Esmeralda County was \$6.590 million, up 6.9 percent over \$6163 million in farm marketing in 1990 and up 42.6 percent over \$4.620 million in farm marketing in 1985.

Tourism and recreation also play a key role in the local economy. Many of the tourist attraction in the area include historical mining sites, historical buildings and structures. Goldfield, Nevada is a National Historical Site. Several of its buildings, including the Goldfield Courthouse have National Historic Status. Esmeralda County also has vast outdoor recreational resources available. Tourism and recreation as well as all other employment support the retail services.

TABLE 4.

COMPARISON OF LABOR FORCE AND UNEMPLOYMENT  
ESMERALDA COUNTY AND NEVADA

MONTH/ YEAR	LABOR FORCE		TOTAL EMPLOYMENT		TOTAL UNEMPLOYED		PERCENT UNEMPLOYMENT	
	NEVADA	ES CO.	NEVADA	ES CO.	NEVADA	ES CO.	NEVADA	ES CO.
1/95	780,000	730	731,900	700	48,100	30	6.2	4.1
1/96	809,300	520	760,000	480	48,900	40	6.0	7.7
5/96	827,400	550	782,900	490	44,500	60	5.4	10.9
6/96	844,800	540	792,700	480	52,100	60	6.2	11.1
1/97	855,000	510	812,600	490	42,400	20	5	3.9
6/97	888,400	630	849,300	580	39,100	50	4.4	7.9
1/98	892,900	570	846,700	520	42,200	50	5.2	8.8
6/98	928,500	560	880,000	510	48,500	50	5.2	8.9
1/99		660		570		90		13.5
1/00		610		540		70		11
6/00		570		520		50		9.8
12/00		460		420		40		8

(SOURCE: HARRIS et. al., UNR ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE – 1999  
ESMERALDA COUNTY P.34; STATE OF NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING)

TABLE 5.

**INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT DISTRIBUTED BY MAJOR INDUSTRY  
ESMERALDA COUNTY  
1988 - 1993**

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
Total Employment	620	577	551	571	567	554
BY TYPE						
Wage and Salary	508	470	420	447	441	426
Proprietors	112	107	131	124	136	128
Farm	24	23	23	23	23	22
Non Farm	88	84	108	101	103	106
BY INDUSTRY						
Farm	72	69	72	59	60	62
Nonfarm	548	508	479	512	507	492
Private	433	401	368	399	393	377
Ag. Services, Forestry Fisheries and Other	11	11	11	(D)	11	11
Mining	231	174	139	185	165	150
Construction	36	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
Manufacturing	10	12	(D)	13	15	16
Transportation & Pubic Utilities	(L)	(L)	(L)	(L)	(L)	(L)
Wholesale Trade	0	(L)	(L)	(L)	(L)	(L)
Retail Trade	88	86	104	81	70	65
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	(L)	0	0	0	0	0
Service	53	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
Government & Government Enterprises	115	107	111	113	114	115
Federal Civilian	(L)	(L)	(L)	(L)	(L)	(L)
Military	(L)	(L)	(L)	(L)	(L)	(L)
State and Local	108	101	103	102	104	105

(SOURCE: REGIONAL ECONOMIC INFORMATION SYSTEM, BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS)

(D) Denotes values not shown to avoid disclosure of confidential information

(L) Denotes less than 10 jobs. Estimates are included in totals.

TABLE 5 (CONTINUED)

INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT DISTRIBUTED BY MAJOR INDUSTRY  
ESMERALDA COUNTY  
1994- 1998

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Total Employment	579	471	444	485	452
BY TYPE					
Wage and Salary	466	355	333	376	340
Proprietors	113	116	111	109	112
Farm	22	21	20	17	18
Non Farm	91	95	91	92	94
BY INDUSTRY					
Farm	59	49	54	61	59
Nonfarm	520	422	390	424	393
Private	410	310	284	314	278
Ag. Services, Forestry Fisheries and Other	L	11	D	14	D
Mining	194	165	135	160	138
Construction	D	D	D	13	D
Manufacturing	L	L	10	10	10
Transportation & Pubic Utilities	L	L	L	L	D
Wholesale Trade	L	L	L	L	L
Retail Trade	59	D	47	52	45
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	L	L	L	L	L
Service	D	50	60	55	D
Government & Government Enterprises	110	112	106	110	115
Federal Civilian	L	L	L	L	L
Military	L	L	L	L	L
State and Local	101	103	97	101	106

(SOURCE: REGIONAL ECONOMIC INFORMATION SYSTEM, BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS)

(D) Denotes values not shown to avoid disclosure of confidential information

(L) Denotes less than 10 jobs. Estimates are included in totals.

TABLE 6.

**ESMERALDA COUNTY PERCENTAGE EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY and PAYROLLS  
– 1997 Covered Employment, Payrolls and Average Annual Salaries**

Industry Category	Annual Average Employment	Percentage of Total Employment	Payrolls (millions of Dollars)	Percent of Total Payrolls	Annual Average Salaries (Dollars)	Salary as a Percentage of the County Average
Total County	327	Na	\$9.72	Na	\$29,724	100.00%
Mining	150	45.9%	6.28	64.6%	41,856	140.8%
All other*	16	4.9%	0.21	2.1%	14,754	49.63%
Total Trade	23	7.0%	0.16	1.6%	6,749	22.7%
Service Industries	32	9.8%	0.90	9.3%	28,192	94.8%
Total Government	106	32.4%	2.17	22.3%	20,471	68.9%

(Source: Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR), Research and Analysis Bureau)

**ESMERALDA COUNTY PERCENTAGE EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY and PAYROLLS  
– 1998 Covered Employment, Payrolls and Average Annual Salaries**

Industry Category	Annual Average Employment	Percentage of Total Employment	Payrolls (millions of Dollars)	Percent of Total Payrolls	Annual Average Salaries (Dollars)	Salary as a Percentage of the County Average
Total County	339	NA	\$11.9	Na	\$35,211	100%
Mining	159	46.9%	\$7.7	64.7%	\$46,798	138.58%
All other*	31	11.2%	\$.767	6.3%	\$24,759	70.3%
Total Trade	20	5.8%	\$.224	1.8%	\$11,209	31.8%
Service Industries	27	7.9%	\$.913	7.6%	\$33,850	96.13%
Total Government	103	30.3%	\$2.2	19.0%	\$22,058	62.61%

(Source: Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR), Research and Analysis Bureau)

**ESMERALDA COUNTY PERCENTAGE EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY and PAYROLLS  
– 1999 Covered Employment, Payrolls and Average Annual Salaries**

Industry Category	Annual Average Employment	Percentage of Total Employment	Payrolls (millions of Dollars)	Percent of Total Payrolls	Annual Average Salaries (Dollars)	Salary as a Percentage of the County Average
Total County	292	NA	\$8.8	NA	\$30,335	100%
Mining	128	43.8%	\$5.5	62.5%	\$43,113	142.13%
All other*	8	2.7%	\$.72	8.18%	\$9,086	29.95%
Total Trade	17	5.8%	\$.131	1.48%	\$7,711	25.41%
Service Industries	29	9.9%	\$.767	8.7%	\$26,457	87.21%
Total Government	110	37.6%	\$2.3	26.1%	\$21,525	70.95%

(Source: Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR), Research and Analysis Bureau)

\* Construction and manufacturing

TABLE 7.

**EARNINGS PER EMPLOYEE BY SECTOR  
YEARS 1994 – 1998  
ESMERALDA COUNTY**

Personal Income by Major Source and Earnings by Industry (Thousands of Dollars)

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
<b>PERSONAL INCOME</b>	19214	18239	18053	18922	19820
Non-Farm Income	18336	17611	17913	18573	19468
Farm Income	878	628	140	349	352
<b>Population</b>	1143	1196	1167	1140	1150
Per capita personal income (dollars)	16810	15250	15470	16598	17235
<b>EARNING BY INDUSTRY</b>					
Farm earnings	828	628	140	349	352
Non Farm earnings	12923	11017	11006	12146	11547
Private earnings	10195	8209	8262	9275	8428
Agriculture Services	72	131	D	160	D
Mining	6797	6380	6252	7120	6522
Construction	D	D	D	277	D
Manufacturing	L	123	189	221	222
Transportation	50	57	157	214	D
Retail Trade	360	D	366	407	385
Service	D	520	911	876	D
Government	2728	2808	2744	2871	3119

(Source: BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS REPORT CA05 PERSONAL INCOME BY MAJOR SOURCE AND EARNING BY INDUSTRY)

(D) Denotes values not shown to avoid disclosure of confidential information

(L) Denotes less than 10 jobs. Estimates are included in totals.

TABLE 8.  
AGRICULTURE - ESMERALDA COUNTY

	FARM/RANCH ACREAGE	CATTLE AND CALF INVENTORY	CASH RECEIPTS FROM MARKETING CROPS AND LIVESTOCK (IN THOUSAND DOLLARS)	INCOME (IN THOUSANDS)
1990		10,000	3306	
1991		9,000	4227	4912
1992		8,000	3993	4306
1993		8,000	6698	4674
1994		8,000	7271	5520
1995		8,000	7024	6590
1996		7,000	6895	8590
1997	27,454	7,000		9085
1998		6,000		
1999		6,000		

(Source: Nevada State Statistical Abstract – 1999)

## Local Government

Esmeralda County utilizes a commissioner form of government, with three elected Commissioners serving four-year terms. The three member Board of County Commissioners are elected as follows, one by residents of Goldfield, one by residents of Silver Peak and several mail in precincts, and one by residents of Fish Lake Valley and several mail in precincts. In addition, the County has the following elected officials: Assessor, Auditor – Recorder, Clerk-Treasurer, District Attorney, two District Judges, Justice of the Peace, and Sheriff. The County administers many services and properties including, roads, recreational facilities, three libraries, airstrips, social service programs, fire protection, emergency services and solid waste management program. The County also administers public works including water and sewer facilities throughout the county. The water and sewer services are operated as Enterprise Funds. The Enterprise Funds are used to account for operations that are financed and operated in a manner similar to private business enterprises.

The majority of the population in Esmeralda County is amassed in three community areas located approximately 100 miles apart. In addition to the three primary areas, Esmeralda County residents live in three other locations within the County. The wide distribution of County population renders the cost of providing public services relatively expensive, on a per capita basis.

Esmeralda County's government is primarily supported by sales and property tax revenues. As shown in Table 9 and 10, Esmeralda County derives the majority of its revenues from intergovernmental sources. Chief among these are sales tax distributions. Since 1994, an average of 44 percent of the County's revenues are intergovernmental revenues. Esmeralda County relies on sales taxes which are distributed to counties as intergovernmental revenues. Supplemental City/County Relief Tax (SCCRT) revenue distributions are derived from sales in other counties and so are "imported" into Esmeralda County. The dependence upon intergovernmental revenues by Esmeralda County poses a risk to the provision of government services. The Nevada Legislature has threatened to redistribute SCCRT funds to their source counties. Currently Esmeralda County only receives .15 percent of Nevada's SCCRT fund. The lack of significant in-county sales tax revenues is believed to be caused by economic/retail leakage and a narrow commercial/industrial economic base in Esmeralda County.

Esmeralda County's tax rate is \$2.81 per \$100 of assessed value, compared to the maximum tax rate in the State of Nevada of \$3.64, which is set by State Statute. Esmeralda County's assessed valuation is \$48,530,025. The County's total assessed valuation includes centrally assessed and mining assessed valuations determined by the State of Nevada. Total valuation of Esmeralda County's centrally assessed properties is \$19,333,038 and assessed valuation of mining property is \$14,289,950, leaving an assessed valuation for real property at \$14,907,037. This determination could adversely impact the county total assessed valuation. With Esmeralda County's small population and limited amount of taxable land (only 3.2 percent of the total surface area privately held), a tax increase to the maximum would not be a significant contribution to support the County government. Furthermore, low income levels would not support an increase in property tax rate.

In the past seven years, property taxes have accounted for an average 35.8 percent of total revenues. As shown in Table 9 and 10, public safety, general government and public works are the largest governmental expenditures incurred by Esmeralda County.

One way to reduce the burden of local government expenditures upon existing residents in Esmeralda County is to ensure that future development is self-supporting. Local government in Esmeralda County can not afford to subsidize future developments. As a result future development should be carefully evaluated to ensure the developers incur their fair share of development costs for public infrastructure and other services provided by local governments and other public services providers in the County.

TABLE 9  
ESMERALDA COUNTY GENERAL FUND REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES

	<u>JUNE 30, 1994</u>	<u>JUNE 30, 1995</u>	<u>JUNE 30, 1996</u>	<u>JUNE 30, 1997</u>	<u>JUNE 30, 1998</u>	<u>June 30, 1999</u>	<u>June 30, 2000</u>
REVENUES	<u>ACTUAL</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>
Property Taxes	579,197	736,152	876,301	963,365	904,647	842,823	797,558
Other Taxes	0	0	0	0	0		
Licenses and Permits	9,513	6,766	7,873	7,232	8,688	7,919	8,999
Intergovernmental Resources	904,696	885,343	998,709	1,067,343	1,053,294	1,078,867	1,090,330
Charges for Services	0	0	45,385	45,761	55,394	39,323	54,582
Fines and Forfeits	272,004	241,444	214,788	193,764	333,818	441,967	328,713
Miscellaneous	78,172	139,609	103,961	117,934	100,129	101,422	159,967
Total Revenues	1,843,582	2,009,314	2,247,017	2,395,399	2,455,970	2,512,321	2,440,149
EXPENDITURES							
General Government	828,219	855,219	936,309	966,318	941,128	1,044,354	966,529
Public Safety	622,256	648,671	700,407	708,573	710,732	742,898	725,690
Judicial	215,768	239,087	276,996	253,762	259,408	267,544	280,529
Public Works	0	0	0	0	0		
Health							
Welfare							
Cultural and Recreations	42,119	32,797	42,716	39,278	43,159	40,891	37,486
Community Support							10,294
Total Expenditures	1,708,362	1,775,774	1,956,428	1,967,931	1,954,427	2,095,687	2,020,528
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues over Expenditures	135,220	233,540	290,589	427,468	501,543	416,634	419,621
OTHER FINANCING SOURCES							
Operating Transfers In						23,852	73,151
Operating transfers Out	(132,000)	(114,000)	(146,000)	(409,500)	(187,522)	(419,800)	(484,476)

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
TOTAL OTHER FINANCING SOURCES	(132,000)	(114,000)	(146,000)	(409,500)	(187,522)	(395,948)	(411,325)
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues and other Sources Over Expenditures and other items	3,220	119,540	144,589	17,968	314,021	20,686	8,296
FUND BALANCES JULY 1	382,809	386,029	505,569	650,158	668,126	983,195	1,003,881
Residual Equity Transfer In					1,048		
FUND BALANCES, JUNE 30	386,029	505,569	650,158	668,126	983,195	1,003,881	1,012,177

(SOURCE: ESMERALDA COUNTY AUDIT REPORTS – DAN MC ARTHUR, LTD.)



	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
<b>OTHER FINANCING SOURCES</b>							
Operating Transfers In	112,000	104,000	116,000	336,000	221,222	184,300	246,600
Operating transfers Out					(68,300)	(14,625)	(26,592)
<b>TOTAL OTHER FINANCING SOURCES</b>	112,000	104,000	116,000	336,000	152,922	169,675	220,008
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues and other Sources Over Expenditures and other items	(111,137)	(113,674)	(50,225)	127,461	(39,581)	48,042	182,210
<b>FUND BALANCES JULY 1</b>	948,194	837,057	730,383	680,158	807,619	595,804	643,846
Residual Equity Transfer In					(1,048)		
<b>FUND BALANCES, JUNE 30</b>	837,057	730,383	680,158	807,619	766,990	643,846	826,056

(SOURCE: ESMERALDA COUNTY AUDIT REPORTS – DAN MC ARTHUR, LTD.)

TABLE 11.

## ESMERALDA COUNTY TAXABLE SALES

FISCAL YEAR	TAXABLE SALES	PERCENT CHANGE
1996	\$14,362,243	
1997	\$11,303,117	<21.3%>
1998	\$11,411,806	.96%
1999	\$10,808,478	<5.3%>
2000	\$9,400,653	<13.5%>

(SOURCE: NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION)

## Infrastructure and Public Services

This section contains a summary overview of key public services provided throughout Esmeralda County. Such services include electrical, sewer, water, waste collection fire protection and emergency services

### Electrical Services

Current primary providers of electrical service in Esmeralda County are Sierra Pacific Power Company and Valley Electric Power. Sierra Pacific Power Company serves the majority of the county with most of the customer served by Valley Electric Power living in Fish Lake Valley.

### Sewer Service

There is only one sewer collection or wastewater treatment facility in the County.

Goldfield Utilities operates a sewer collection system and wastewater treatment facility for the residents of Goldfield. The original construction of the Goldfield sewer collection system began in 1903. The sewer system is simple and functional. It operates entirely by gravity, there are no stations or force mains. The present wastewater treatment plant was constructed in 1988. Construction in 1988 included additional lines to tie into the existing collection system. The entire collection system consists of approximately 71,000 linear feet of main, approximately 75% of which are deteriorating. Small sections of the system are repaired as they fail, which increases operation and maintenance costs.

In February 1999, the Board of County Commissioners approved a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER), which was conducted for both the water and sewer systems. CDBG helped fund the costs of the PER. The PER identified deficiencies with both systems and recommended approaches to correct them. The Commissioners decided to separate the water and sewer projects and would deal with the water system immediately, as it was identified as having eminent health risks. Since that decision, the County has successfully funded the \$1.6 million dollar water project, with funds coming from AB 198 Grant Program and USDA – Rural Development. The Commissioners have also increased water rates from \$2.50 per month plus usage to \$23.00 per month plus usage. In addition, a special assessment of \$36.00 per year was assessed on every parcel located on the water system.

The PER identified the sewer system to be out of compliance in a number of areas, such as minimum main size, depth which main is placed, manhole locations and inflow of water around manholes lids. The line sizes in the Goldfield collection system range from 4” to 8” pipe and according to all guidelines and requirements the minimum size should be 8”. The 8” pipe in the system is limited; it is primarily vitrified clay pipe and shows no signs of needing replacement. The 6” pipe which does not meet minimum pipe size requirements is primarily dipped and wrapped steel pipe that has been in service since the development of the system. It has outlived its useful life and needs to be replaced. Some of this pipe is visible at the ground surface and shows signs of excessive corrosion. The 4” pipe is primarily constructed of Orangeburg material that is essentially a tarpaper product that was used in the 1940’s and 1950’s. Orangeburg has a tendency to collapse over time and will eventually plug. The only repair for Orangeburg is replacement. The current manhole spacing exceeds the standard of 400 feet between manholes. Also, there are places where

there is no manhole at the end of a line or at points where lines change direction, also a compliance requirement. A significant number of manholes have deteriorated to the point where they are no longer waterproof. The PER also identified a number of improvements needed to the sewage treatment plant.

The PER suggested the need of a video inspection of the sewer system. With grant funds from CDBG, Esmeralda County completed the video/cleaning inspection in November 2000. Of the system's 71,000 linear feet of main, approximately 26,000 linear feet of main was previously identified as Orangeburg pipe needing replacement. Therefore, the contract for the inspection required that the remaining 45,000 linear feet of main be inspected. Because of the main's poor condition, only 27,641 linear feet could be inspected. The inspection report identified that over 75% of the total collection system would require replacement or restoration, existing manholes in poor condition should be replaced or renovated, and approximately thirty new manholes were needed.

### Water Services

Community areas served by community water systems include Goldfield and Silver Peak. The residents of Fish Lake Valley, Goldpoint and Lida rely on private wells to supply water.

#### Goldfield:

The municipal water system in Goldfield currently serves approximately 215 customers or approximately 550 residents. The water supply is from two wells, pumped 12 miles through transmission lines to the distribution system. The distribution system is a looped system constructed at the turn of the last century with 2-inch and 4-inch steel mains. These mains are undersized and have reached the end of their useful lives. About 46% of the water pumped from the supply wells leaves the system through leaks. A 200,000-gallon storage tank serves the system, which is not adequate to provide operating and emergency storage or fire protection. Esmeralda County is currently in the process of making improvements to the Goldfield Water System with funding from the State of Nevada AB 198 Grant Program and USDA – Rural Development loan and grant.

#### Silver Peak:

The Silver Peak water system currently serves approximately 80 customers or 250 residents. The system's supply of water is from the ground; water is diverted from one well about 2 miles south of Town to the distribution system. The distribution system was upgraded in 1982 with 6" PVC line and fairly well looped. Portion of the system are older lines and have a propensity to leak. The system does not have adequate storage capacity or fire protection storage and suffers from frequent outages. The system does not have the required second source of water supply. Esmeralda County is in the process of making system improvements with funding from the State of Nevada AB198 Grant Program and USDA- Rural Development loan.

### Solid Waste Disposal

New regulations from the Environmental Protection Agency have mandated municipalities to close existing landfills, create new landfills with liners and monitoring systems and/or transfer solid waste to facilities that can meet all of the new requirements. Esmeralda County complied with this unfunded mandate by creating a County landfill in Goldfield and transfer stations in Silver Peak and Fish Lake Valley. The costs of construction, operation and maintenance demanded a special assessment to be assessed on every parcel in Esmeralda County to fund this mandate.

### Fire Protection and Emergency Service

Fire Protection for private property in Esmeralda County is provided through volunteer fire departments in Goldfield, Silver Peak and Fish Lake Valley. The Bureau of Land Management and the Nevada Division of Forestry have primary responsibility for wildfire on the public lands. Each of the services has major pieces of fire fighting equipment sufficient to provide reasonably good fire protection. The volunteers are adequately trained.

Ambulance services are in each of Goldfield, Silver Peak and Fish Lake Valley. The services have two ambulances and the volunteers are adequately trained.

### Telecommunications

Citizens Telecom of Nevada is the primary telecommunications service provider in Esmeralda County. Improvements to countywide telecommunications services are desperately needed. Many of the areas in Esmeralda County have limited levels of service, while some areas are without service.

### Education

The Esmeralda County School District provides primary and secondary education for Esmeralda County students. There are three elementary schools (grades K – 8) located one each in the communities of Goldfield, Silver Peak and Fish Lake Valley. The students are bused to Tonopah for the grades (9-12). There are no private schools in Esmeralda County. The School District Office is located in Goldfield.

Post secondary education in Esmeralda County is provided via University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Southern Nevada Community College, and continuing education programs.

## IV. ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW

### Narrative Description of the Area

Esmeralda County is located in west-central Nevada situated along the diagonal portion of the Nevada-California line. The County encompasses nearly 3,570 square miles or 2,284,800 acres of land. It shares common borders with Mineral County on the northwest, Nye County on two sides to the northeast and east, with Mono and Inyo counties in neighboring California to the southwest. The County also borders and contains part of Death Valley National Monument. Esmeralda County, once the largest county in the new Territory, is now the fifth smallest county in Nevada (ahead of Lyon, Douglas, and Storey counties and Carson City) and accounts for 3.2 percent of Nevada's total surface area of 110,540 square miles. Esmeralda County is traversed by U.S. 95, a major north/south link between Las Vegas, Nevada to the south and Reno, Nevada to the north. The corridor is utilized in the movement of goods by truck. The corridor is also utilized by vacationers traveling north and south, seasonally in nature and direction.

Esmeralda County's largest population center, with a current population estimated by the Nevada State Demographer of 574 persons, is Goldfield. Geographically, Goldfield is located in east central Esmeralda County at an elevation of 5,700 feet. Las Vegas is approximately 180 miles to the south and Reno is approximately 250 miles to the north. The main population centers outside Goldfield are Silver Peak, approximately 26 miles west of Goldfield and Dyer, approximately 90 west of Goldfield. Smaller population centers in Esmeralda County include Gold Point and Lida. Portions of Esmeralda County are within the Town of Tonopah, Nevada and west of Tonopah. Tonopah is approximately 26 miles north of Goldfield in Nye County.

### Topography

The topography generally consists of alternating, linear mountains between broad flat valley characteristic of the Basin and Range Province. Similar to the balance of the State, mountain ranges and valleys in Esmeralda County have a north-south orientation. Esmeralda County does not contain any drainage basin of large regional streams; rather it consists of groups of mostly topographically closed valleys with internal drainage. Principal mountain ranges include the White Mountains in the northwest part of the County, and the Silver Peak Range and the Palmetto Mountain to the east.

### Precipitation

Precipitation in Esmeralda County is normally light at lower elevations year-round, and greater at higher elevations. Annual average precipitation is over 15 inches above the 7,500 foot altitude. The highest point in Nevada is Boundary Peak in the White Mountains. This peak has an elevation of 13,145 feet and an annual average precipitation of over 20 inches. The total average annual precipitation in the County is 5 inches. Fifty-five percent of the total rainfall usually falls between April and September. Snow accumulates to considerable depths at higher elevations. The average seasonal snowfall is 13 inches at Dyer (Soil Conservation Service, 1991).

## Hydrology

Esmeralda County stretches across two of Nevada's fourteen hydrographic regional or principal water basins (watersheds). Most of Esmeralda County is within the Central Region (Hydrographic Basin 10), while the extreme southern portion of the county lies within the Death Valley Basin (Hydrographic Basin 14). In addition to the two major hydrographic regions which cover Esmeralda County, the county contains, either wholly or partially, thirteen hydrographic areas and sub-areas. These areas are defined as hydrographic units within a major basin and typically consist of a single valley or discrete drainage area. The State of Nevada, Division of Water Planning, has estimated a principal area of snow accumulation of 32,500 acres, an area of lakes and reservoirs of 20 acres, and a length of streams and rivers of 37 miles in Esmeralda County. Springs are important surface water sources in the county. The sources of surface water for irrigation are Chiatovich, Indian, Leidy, Busher, Perry Aiken, and McAfee Creeks, which are perennial streams flowing from the White Mountains.

## Water Resources and Water Use

In 1995, when Esmeralda County's population was estimated to be 1,490 persons, it was estimated that the county's total water withdrawals were approximately 62,809 acre-feet, or 1.6 percent of estimated total water withdrawals within the State of Nevada, making Esmeralda County the fourth lowest water user among all Nevada's seventeen counties. This compared to estimated total withdrawals of 40,880 acre-feet in 1985 and 50,842 acre-feet in 1990. Total water withdrawals in 1995 were up 23.5 percent over water use in 1990 and also up 53.6 percent over 1985 withdrawals. The increases from prior periods were due primarily to increased irrigation water use (79.1 percent of total water withdrawals) and increased mining water use (20.1 percent of total water withdrawals). Of the total 1995 level of total water withdrawals, total public supplied water withdrawals was estimated at 302 acre-feet, or 0.5 percent of the county's total water withdrawn for all purposes.

From a 1995 survey (Nevada Division of Water Planning), it was estimated there were 11,286 irrigated acres in Esmeralda County (8,340 irrigated acres in 1985 and 7,900 irrigated acres in 1990). This amount of county irrigated acreage comprised approximately 1.6 percent of the State's total 1995 irrigated acreage of 715,329 acres (843,760 acres in 1985 and 728,650 acres in 1990). This 1995 level of irrigated acreage places Esmeralda County as the fifth lowest in terms of county irrigated acreage in Nevada at that time.

## Air Quality

Air quality standards, as enforced by the State of Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, are not to be exceeded in areas where the general public has access. Presently, Esmeralda County is in the attainment status and is qualified as "better than national standards" in emissions of total suspended particulates (TSP), and sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>).

### Wind Speed and Direction

According to the Soil Conservation Service, the average prevailing wind in Esmeralda County is from the southwest. Average wind speed peaks at 11 miles per hour in the Spring (USDA 1982).

### Flood Zones

Flood zones are determined by soils, slope, drainage area, and amount and intensity of precipitation. Several soils in Esmeralda County have a potential for flash floods. Neither the U.S. Geological Survey nor the National Insurance Program (through Federal Emergency Management Agency) have developed any flood hazard maps for Esmeralda County.

### Wetland Areas

There are seven predominate wetland areas in the County. (Source: U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service)

### Seismic Activity

Nevada lies within the Basin and Range Province, on of the most seismically active regions in the United States. Several earthquakes between Richter magnitude 4 and 6 have occurred in Esmeralda County. Richter magnitude above 5 or 5.5 are potentially destructive at the epicenter. The average frequency of earthquakes of magnitude 6 and greater in Nevada has been approximately on every ten years, while earthquakes of magnitude 7 and greater average one every 27 years. (Source: DeLeuw, Cather & Co., Yucca Mountain Rail Access Study Caliente Route, 1991.)

### Noise

Background noise in Esmeralda County is generally limited to activities on the highways, in existing towns, mining, milling, and military aircraft. Department of Defense aircraft training is associated with the County's proximity to the Tonopah Test Range and the Nellis Range. Air Force training routes avoid airports, specified safety or noise sensitive towns, populated areas, and some wildlife habitat areas. (Science Applications International Corp. 1990).

### View shed

The Bureau of Land Management Record of Decision for Tonopah Resource Management Plan, stipulates that visual quality is to be maintained at its present high scenic levels along State Highway 374 between Beatty and Death Valley National Monument; State Highway 267 between Scotty's Junction and Death Valley National Monument; State Highway 266 between Lida Junction and the California border; State Highway 265 between Blair Junction and Silver Peak; and State Highway 264 between U.S. 6 and the California border.

## Recreation Resources

Esmeralda County has a great deal to offer in the way of recreation, even though it is fairly isolated from any large population center. The County is filled with ghost towns and historical sites, many of which are old mining districts. Since many areas in the county are off the beaten track, tourism is not a large industry in this area as it is in other parts of Nevada. However, many locations are ideal for hobbies, such as rock and mineral collecting or sightseeing.

Areas for both fishing and hunting may be found in Esmeralda County. Hunter success has been rated as low to moderate because of low game population resulting from the arid wildlife habitat. Types of fish primarily found in creeks in the White Mountains include brook trout, rainbow trout, and bluegill. The wildlife includes bighorn sheep, mountain lion, mule deer, rabbit, sage grouse, partridge, quail and dove. Although most of the recreation sites in the County are undeveloped, there is an abundance of recreation opportunities in the county for those who enjoy the out-of-doors in its natural state.

Some of the Ghost Towns and Historic Sites in Esmeralda County include:

Alkali Springs	Klondyke
Blair	Lida
Coaldale	Lida Junction
Columbia	Millers
Columbus	Montezuma
Crow Springs	Nivloc
Cuprite	Oriental
Diamond Field	Palmetto
Divide	Pigeon Springs
Fisk Lake	Ralston
Gilbert Historic Site	Silver Peak
Goldfield	Sylvania
Gold Mountain	Tokop
Gold Point Historic Site	Tule Canyon
Goldreef	Weepah Historic Site

Some of the recreation sites in Esmeralda County include:

Big Moly	Kaleidoscope View	Valcada Springs
Lida Summit	Leidy Creek	Goldfield Bike Trail
Boundary Peak	Lone Mountain	Tule Canyon Spring
Cave Springs	Middle Creek	
Chiatovich Creek	Millers Rest Area	
Davis Creek	Mormon Wells	
Death Valley Overlook	Oatmeal Spring	
Dry Creek	Perry Aiken Creek	
Gilbert Spring	Rhyolite Spring	
Indian Creek	Stonewall	
Trail Canyon Creek		

## Thermal Energy Areas

The Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology has described Nevada's geothermal areas as follows: "Geothermal energy is the natural heat of the earth. The Basin and Range Physiographic Province, in which Nevada is located, is an area of high heat flow, believed to result from near melting conditions in the lower crust and upper mantle. The west-central and north-central areas of Nevada have higher hot-spring temperatures and are regions of greater than normal heat flow". Hot springs are often found around geologically young igneous rocks. Nevada is in the center of a large province of Cenozoic volcanic rocks.

There are three known locations of hot springs in central and eastern Esmeralda County. The importance of hot springs are illustrated in a Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology report "Hot Springs or other areas where temperatures increase more rapidly than normal with depth may indicate near surface sources of heat such as magma chambers, or hot, recently solidified rock. If water flows through such heated zones, it will in turn become heated. Therefore, it is in these areas where water can act as a transfer agent for the heat that exploration for geothermal energy will be concentrated." (Garside 1974).

Nevada's geothermal resources have much potential for use as a power source but only a few areas have been examined. It is only in the last decade that serious efforts have been undertaken to explore Nevada's geothermal resources. Part of the problem has been caused by the need to lease public land managed by the BLM. Possible geothermal energy sources have been identified by the U.S. Geological Survey within Esmeralda County.

## Political Geography

### Federal Land Administration

Of Esmeralda County's 2,284,800 acres of surface areas, 2,247,863 acres or ninety-eight (98.79%) percent of the County's total area, are controlled and managed by the federal government. Of these federally managed public lands, approximately 2,183,146 acres of Esmeralda County are managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 61,520 acres are managed by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and 3,197 acres are managed by the National Park Service (NPS). The acreage managed by the U.S. Forest Service includes primarily lands of the Inyo National Forest located within the White Mountain Range. National Park Service lands consist of the extreme northeast corner of Death Valley National Monument. Relative to Nevada's seventeen counties, Esmeralda County ranks as the highest in terms of its percentage of federal land ownership.

### Private Land Usage

A variety of uses occur throughout the privately owned land in Esmeralda County. Only 1.21 percent of the total area comprising the County is under private ownership. The major private holdings are land within the County located in Goldfield, Silver Peak, Dyer, Lida and sections of land within the Town of Tonopah. Beyond the population centers, other privately held lands use consists of rangeland, irrigated crop lands or pasture lands. Mineral productions are also important privately held land with the County. Within the mining districts, private holdings also include patented mining claims primarily around the towns of Silver Peak and Goldfield.

Esmeralda County has been working with the BLM regarding a land exchange, which would result in approximately 460 acres of land around Silver Peak becoming privately owned. In addition, Esmeralda County is also working with the BLM on trespass land issues in Gold Point, Silver Peak and North Goldfield. A critical trespass area in North Goldfield is the Goldfield Airstrip, which is the County is also working to resolve with the BLM. The County and the BLM are working together to have the identified trespass land conveyed to Esmeralda County through Federal Legislation. The Bureau of Land Management, in the Tonopah Resource Management Plan, October 1997, has identified 299,140 acres within Esmeralda for disposal.

### Grazing Allotments

Most of the public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management in Esmeralda County is divided into 15 grazing allotments, ranging in size from 1,482 acres to 625,015 acres each. Table 15 displays the names and acreages of grazing allotment in the County. Licenses are given for a period of three to five years.

### Herd Management Area Boundaries

The Bureau of Land Management's Tonopah Resource Management Plan lists thirteen wild horse and burro herds in the Esmeralda Southern Nye Planning Area. Several herd areas are in proximity to each other and movement between areas is common. Since there is no vegetation allocation to wild horses and burros, vegetative conditions within the 15-herd area varies. Competition for forage may occur between horses, burros and cattle, since their diets overlap considerably. Habitat

conflicts between horse, burros, cattle, and wildlife are related to the availability and distribution of water in specific areas. Table 16 lists wild horse and burro heard management areas in the County

### Wilderness Study Areas

In the Bureau of Land Management Tonopah Resource Management Plan, October 1997, four Wilderness Study (WSA) areas have been identified in Esmeralda County. Congress established The National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) on federal lands when it passed the 1964 Wilderness Act, which allows for the use and enjoyment of wilderness. WSA's are a process to add or release the lands being considered and eventually decided upon by Congress to the NWPS. Table 17 identifies the WSA's in Esmeralda County.

### Flora and Fauna

The extremes of climate, elevation, exposure and soil type combine to produce a diverse living environment for wide variety of plants and animals. Small springs, wet meadows, saline meadows, streams, and reservoirs provide habitats for wildlife. Livestock and wild horses place heavy demands upon certain riparian habitat associated with springs throughout these areas, especially in grazing allotment areas used year long. Table 12 identifies the type of vegetation within Esmeralda County. Table 13 identified they type of wildlife within Esmeralda County.

### Threatened and Endangered Species

There are no known occurrences of Threatened and Endangered (T&E) species in Esmeralda County. However, the Northern Nevada Native Plan Society maintains an annually revised list of candidate "watch" status and T&E species. Through a review of the Nevada Natural Heritage Program database, Table 14 identifies a Sensitive-List Taxa and a Watch-List Taxa.

TABLE 12  
VEGETATION TYPES  
IN ESMERALDA COUNTY

Salt Desert Shrub  
Black Greasewood  
Alkaline Meadows and Bottoms  
Hot Desert  
Sage Brush  
Pinyon Juniper Woodlands  
Mountain Mahogany  
Playas  
Riparian

(Source: Bureau of Land Management Tonopah Resource Management Plan, October, 1997)

TABLE 13  
WILDLIFE  
IN ESMERALDA COUNTY

Sage Grouse  
Mule Deer  
Antelope  
Big Horn Sheep

(Source: Bureau of Land Management Tonopah Resource Management Plan, October, 1997)

TABLE 14

## FLORA AND FAUNA IN ESMERALDA COUNTY

## SENSITIVE TAXA

SPECIES	NAME	
Plants	Arabis Pinzliae/Pinzl Rockcress	
	Asclepias Eastwoodiana/Eastwood milkweed	
	Astragalus Pseudodanthus/Tonopah milkvetch	
	Cordylanthus Tecopensis/Tecopa Birdsbeak	
	Cymopterus Cinerarius/Gray wavewing	
	Draba Californica/California draba	
	Draba Subumbellata/White Mountains cushion draba	
	Eriogonum Ampullaceum/Mono Buckwheat	
	Eriogonum Beatleyae/Beatley Buckwheat	
	Eriogonum Tiehmil/Tiehm Buckwheat	
	Lupinus Holmgrenianus/Holmgren lupine	
	Opuntia pulichella/Sand cholla	
	Penstemon Pahutensis/Pahute Mesa beardtongue	
	Polemonium Chartaceum/White Mountain skypilot	
	Scierocactus Nyensis/Tonopah Fishhook Cactus	
	Scierocactus Polyancistrus/Hermit cactus	
	Streptanthus Oliganthus/Masonic Mountain Jewelflower	
	Tonestus Graniticus/Lone Mountain Tonestus	
	Mollusk	Pyrgulopsis wongi/Wong's springsnail
	Insects	Hesperia miramae longaevicols/White Mountains skipper
Icaricia icariooides albihalos/White Mountain icariooides blue		
Lycaena rubidus incanus/White Mountain ruddy copper		
Polites sabuleti albamontana/White Mountains sandhill skipper		
Fishes	Gila bicolor ssp/Fish Lake Valley tui chub	
Birds	Athene cucularia hypugaea/Western Burrowing Owl	
	Buteo regalis/Ferruginous Hawk	
	Buteo swainsoni/Swainson's Hawk	
	Centrocercus urophasianus/Sage Grouse	
	Otus flammeolus/Falmmulated Owl	

## WATCH LIST TAXA

SPECIES	NAME
Plants	Astragalus serenoii var. sordescens/squalid milkvetch Eriogonum rubricaulum/Lahontan Basin buckwheat Linanthus arenicola/dune linanthus Metzella candelariae/Candelaria blazing-star
Reptiles	Sauromalus ater/common chuckwalla
Mammals	Antrozous pallidus/pallid bat Corynorhinus townsendii/townsend's big-eared bat Euderma maculatum/spotted bat Lasiurus cinereus/hoary bat Microdipodops pallidus/pale kangaroo mouse Myotis californicus/California myotis Myotis ciliolabrum/western small footed myotis Myotis evotis/long eared myotis Myotis lucifungus occultus/occult myotis Myotis thysanodes/fringed myotis Myotis volans/long legged myotis Myotis yumanensis/Yuma myotis Ochotona princeps/American pika Sorex merriami Leucogenys/Merriam's shrew Sorex tenellus/Inyo shrew Tadarida brasiliensis/Brazilian free tailed bat
Birds	Aquila chrysaetos/Golden Eagle Dendroica petechia/Yellow Warbler Geothlypis trichas/Common yellowthroat Numenius Americanus/Long billed curlew Oporornis tolmiei/Macgillivray's Warbler Vermivora celata/Orange crowned Warbler Vireo vicinior/Gray vireo

(Source: Nevada Natural Heritage Program, February 15, 2001)

TABLE 15

GRAZING ALLOTMENTS  
IN ESMERALDA COUNTY

GRAZING ALLOTMENT	ACRES	AMU'S
Unallotted		
Monte Cristo	496,018	9,352
Red Springs	137,267	2,641
Ice House	43,143	229
Silver Peak	283,907	5,699
White Wolf	59,310	697
White Sage	10,315	600
Silver King	8,969	150
Sheep Mountain	88,435	1,740
Montezuma	538,297	10,668
Yellow Hills	62,203	1,212
Magruder Mt.	625,015	12,348
Springdale	1,466	24
Razorback	72,880	959
Fish Lake Valley	1,482	52

(Source: Bureau of Land Management Tonopah Resource Management Plan, October, 1997)

TABLE 16.

HERD MANAGEMENT AREAS  
IN ESMERALDA COUNTY

Dunlap	
Fish Lake Valley	57 horses and burros
Silver Peak	82 horses
Paymaster/Lone Mt.	
Montezuma	13 horses
Goldfield	
Palmetto	76 horses
Gold Mt.	50 horses
Stonewall	
Bull Frog	53 horses

(Source: Bureau of Land Management Tonopah Resource Management Plan, October, 1997)

TABLE 17

WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS (WSA)  
IN ESMERALDA COUNTY

Silver Peak Range	33,900 Acres
Pigeon Spring	3,575 Acres
Queer Mountain	81,550 Acres
Grapevine Mountains	66,800 Acres.

## V. Opportunities and Constraints to Economic Development

Residents of Silver Peak, Fish Lake Valley and Goldfield held public workshops to devise an economic development strategy for Esmeralda County. The participants began the process by identifying opportunities and constraints to future economic development in their communities. This purpose of these discussions was to identify current economic conditions, areas of concern and marketable resources as a basis for planning future goals and strategies.

## Silver Peak

### Opportunities

#### Recreation and Tourism

- Desert sand dunes
- Three Petroglyphs sites
- Historically significant sites
  - Blair Mill
  - Weepah
  - Chiatovich Store
  - Cord Mill
  - Nivloc
  - Old Jail
- Historical data readily available
- Hunting
- Hiking
- Scenic vistas for photo-opportunities
- Remote, but accessible, community
- Mild climate
- Low crime rate
- Good public facilities (library, pool, park)

#### Residential and Business Development

- One of two power lines in Central Nevada
- Low water rates
- Undeveloped and soon to be available federal land
- Zoning and building regulations favorable to businesses
- Geothermal and wind renewable energy sources
- Isolated and controlled environment excellent for an emergency response training facility
- Remote, but accessible, community
- Mild climate
- Low crime rate
- Good public facilities (library, pool, park)

### Constraints

#### Recreation and Tourism

- Remote community
- Few family-oriented activities
- No grocery store
- No gas station

#### Residential and Business Development

- Remote community
- Few family-oriented activities
- Educational system needs improvement
- No grocery store
- No gas station
- Limited available labor
- Economically reliant on the mining industry
- Inadequate storage and poor distribution system for fire flow and drinking water
- Poor Communications
- No support for cellular communications
- Roads into town need improvement
- Lack of family housing
- Community is “landlocked” by public land; restricts town site expansion

## Goldfield

### Opportunities

#### Recreation and Tourism

- Centrally located along US 95
- Local history is significant and well-known
- Inexpensive and available real estate
- Water and sewer systems are undergoing major improvements
- Educational system is excellent
- Residents are friendly
- Historic setting draws filmmakers and photographers
- Loose building regulations
- Scenic bike trail
- Annual Goldfield Millennium event creates visibility and draws people to the community

#### Residential and Business Development

- Centrally located along US 95
- Low crime rate
- Low tax rate
- Inexpensive and available real estate
- Water and sewer systems are undergoing major improvements
- Local government is transparent and accessible
- Roads are well maintained
- Residents are friendly
- Loose building regulations
- Annual Goldfield Millennium event creates visibility and draws people to the community

### Constraints

#### Recreation and Tourism

- Lack of retail
- Few family activities
- Remote location
- Some residents are apathetic
- Not enough effort put into making the community look more attractive
- Few local hotels
- No rest/parking area
- No incentives to encourage passers-through to stop in town
- Not enough publicity generated for historical significance

## Goldfield (continued)

### Constraints

#### Residential and Business Development

- No local high school
- Low population
- Limited workforce
- Limited job opportunities
- Lack of retail
- Few family activities
- Remotely located
- Inadequate water and sewer systems
- County Courthouse telephone network is inadequate and outdated
- Community is “landlocked” by public land; restricts town site expansion
- No local bank contributes to financial depression
- High cost of water hook-ups
- No economic development organization
- Community apathy
- Community is unattractive
- Absentee ownership
- High percentage of residents are on fixed incomes and express concern over cost of living increases
- Lack of community planning
- No public transportation
- No young families
- Need more sidewalks
- No local newspaper

## Fish Lake Valley

### Opportunities

#### Recreation and Tourism

- Hot springs
- Chiatovich Creek
- Boundary Peak hiking
- Rural and secluded environment
- Fish Lake
- Annual rodeo event
- Potential for a hotel
- 4-H
- Community Center
- Community park
- 4<sup>th</sup> of July event is highly visible outside of the community

#### Residential and Business Development

- Rural and secluded environment
- Experimental greenhouse potential
- Lack of zoning/building regulations
- Potential for a hotel
- Community Center
- Community Park

### Constraints

#### Recreation and Tourism

- No lodging
- Recreational opportunities are under-publicized
- Declining population has hurt the local economy
- No senior recreation or nutrition programs
- No youth recreation programs

#### Residential and Business Development

- Poor Communications
- Availability of water rights
- No local medical facility
- Community is “landlocked” by public land; restricts town site expansion
- Cellular phone communication is not supported

## VI. Area Specific Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies for Esmeralda County and Unincorporated Communities

After careful analysis of current economic conditions, areas of concern and marketable resources, the participants identified long-term projects that can result in new jobs and quality of life improvements for community residents. The participants identified measurable steps or approaches that will be taken to achieve community project goals. Successful approaches will require ongoing community involvement and utilization of local economic strengths and resources.

## Silver Peak

The two operating mines in Silver Peak employ the vast majority of the community's residents and serve as the backbone for the local economy. The people of Silver Peak have experienced first-hand the instability of the mining industry through growth and reduction of employment opportunities, income levels and population. The community wishes to diversify the local economy by acquiring undeveloped land and marketing the community and its resources to new businesses and industry.

Goal 1: Expand the Silver Peak town site through acquisition, planning and development of surrounding public land

The community of Silver Peak is working to identify long-term strategies and opportunities to build community capacity and achieve long-term social, environmental and economic sustainability.

- Approach 1: Esmeralda County will work with the US Forest Service and other federal funding agencies to develop a town site expansion plan. The plan will identify long-term strategies and opportunities to build community capacity and provide recommendations to help the County identify marketable resources with which to target appropriate business and industry. The plan should also address land expansion for residential and recreational areas.
- Approach 2: Esmeralda County has entered into discussions with the Sunshine Mining Company to acquire the land on which its 16:1 mill once operated. The community plans to develop and market the former mill site for an industrial park. The mill site is in a remote location and is in close proximity to one of central Nevada's two power lines. The county will need to acquire water rights for the site and in to allow for industrial development.
- Approach 4: Work with the Bureau of Land Management and state and federal legislators to identify land in trespass and expedite its conveyance to private ownership.
- Approach 5: Research the potential for hosting a prison near the community as a resource for light manufacturing.
- Approach 6: Work with Nevada Department of Transportation and Congressional Delegation for the improvements needed to Alkali Road.

## Goal 2: Market the community and its resources to attract new businesses and industry

The residents of Silver Peak recognize that to successfully expand the town site, deliberate steps must be taken to develop marketing strategies and target potential buyers before and throughout the land acquisition process. Acquired land will need to be conveyed immediately to investors to ensure the financial responsibility does not fall on the County.

- Approach 1: Esmeralda County will develop a land use and marketing plan for the Silver Peak town site. The plan will identify available marketable resources and provide recommendations for the community to target and attract appropriate business and industry.
- Approach 2: Silver Peak offers a host of incentives to attract new businesses. The County will research tax incentives and additional data that can be gathered into a report and distributed to potential business and industry developers.
- Approach 3: Research costs and benefits for hiring a professional advertising firm to promote the community's business development incentives and target appropriate businesses.
- Approach 4: Design a Web site to advertise county and community resources.
- Approach 5: Develop the recreational facilities in and around Silver Peak, i.e. Silver Lake and historical sites.

## Goal 3: Develop a Centralized Emergency Response Training Facility

Silver Peak's centralized location and its proximity to the Nevada Test Site make the community an excellent candidate to host a Central Nevada Emergency Response Training Facility. Several counties affected by the nuclear waste disposal program have already addressed the need for the Department of Energy to fund response-training facilities. A single, central facility serving multiple counties would be far more cost effective than constructing smaller training centers in several counties. This would also allow the Department of Energy, State of Nevada and local governments to focus training resources on one site, thereby improving the quality of training programs and easing the burden of program coordination and scheduling.

- Approach 1: Work with the Department of Energy Environmental Management Office to discuss the feasibility of constructing a centralized emergency response-training center in Silver Peak with low-level waste mitigation dollars.
- Approach 2: Determine where to construct the facility.

## Goldfield

Goldfield's primary objectives are to expand existing businesses, attract new businesses, which would result in new employment opportunities, and encourage tourism. The community is centrally located along US 95 and its wealth of history has national recognition. The community will use these important resources to achieve its economic goals.

Goal 1: Market historical significance to increase tourism, encourage new businesses, which would result in new jobs, and encourage people to move to the town.

One of the most attractive aspects of living or traveling to Goldfield is its genuine historical environment. Many of the buildings in Goldfield were constructed during the mining boom and serve to remind residents of the early pioneer days. Goldfield's 112 historical sites were placed on the national register in 1985.

- Approach 1: Esmeralda County has established a Regional Development Corporation to help market the Goldfield community to new businesses, expedite the sale of land and preserve historic structures.
- Approach 2: Esmeralda County plans to work with Lt. Governor Hunt, the University of Nevada Center for Economic Development, the State of Nevada and the Commission on Economic Development to help Goldfield identify strategies and resources to market the community's historic significance.
- Approach 3: Contact the State and National Historic Preservation Offices to gather information on placing interpretive signs on all historic sites in the community.
- Approach 4: Distribute Goldfield visitor brochures and walking tour maps of the national historic district from County offices, businesses and rest areas all along US 95, commerce chambers statewide, and through Nevada recreation web sites.
- Approach 5: The Citizens for Preservation of Historic Buildings are looking at ways to market Goldfield's unique cultural setting to tourists and potential residents.

**Goal 2:** Preserve community culture and history by protecting and utilizing historic buildings and sites.

The National Historic Preservation Office has identified and categorized 112 historic sites in Goldfield. The residents of Goldfield and Esmeralda County have put a high priority on the preservation and restoration of the County Courthouse, the Firehouse, the old High School and the Goldfield Hotel. The residents of Esmeralda County recognize the significance of all the historic structures within Goldfield, but these four buildings are the most prominent and widely known. The restoration and eventual use of these buildings will be the first step in a preservation of all historic structures.

- Approach 1: Utilize historic buildings in the community for housing and displaying Goldfield historical artifacts. The County Board of Commissioners is pursuing funding for restoration of the County Courthouse. Plans are also being made to renovate the Goldfield Firehouse for a fireman's museum.
- Approach 2: The County is in the process of restoring a bottle house located at the edge of Goldfield along US highway 95. When restoration work is complete, the County plans to develop some of the surrounding land to accommodate a roadside rest area.

**Goal 3:** Make improvements to Goldfield's infrastructure to support growth.

Goldfield's water and sewer systems, landfills, and communications are not adequate to support the community now, let alone to accommodate future growth or attract businesses. Goldfield's infrastructure as a whole needs to be updated and expanded to allow the County to bring in new business and create new jobs.

- Approach 1: Esmeralda County has secured funding to make the necessary improvements to the water system to provide adequate, safe and continuous supply to its residents, while allowing for future growth of the community. Construction of the water system will begin soon.
- Approach 2: Preliminary Engineering Reports and a video inspection have identified that over 75% percent of the sewer system needs to be replaced. Esmeralda County is in the process of seeking funding to approach this project in phases.
- Approach 3: The recent EPA requirements have imposed a hardship on Esmeralda County residents and officials to maintain a solid waste management program. The county needs to seek innovative ideas to help cover the cost of this program, such as recycling programs. If successful, such approaches would create new businesses and jobs in the community.
- Approach 4: Esmeralda County anticipates working with the Attorney General's Office Department of Consumer Affairs and on recent activities concerning a

fiber optics line between Vegas and Reno to improve communications in the area. A better communications system would create business opportunities in the area and enhance education.

Goal 4: Develop innovative programs to enhance tourism in the Goldfield.

Goldfield's natural historic setting can only go so far. The community recognizes the need to build on the "historical significance" resource by developing innovative programs and approaches to draw more tourists to the community.

Approach 1: Initiate projects to revitalize downtown Goldfield's appearance. The Goldfield Chamber plans to apply to the forest service for "Tree City America" status.

Approach 2: Develop and publicize a walking tour of Goldfield's historic district.

Approach 3: Identify and develop a suitable site in the community for tour bus parking.

Approach 4: Work with the State of Nevada Film Bureau to research ways to bring more filmmakers to Goldfield.

Goal 5: Build community support of economic development initiatives by actively working to educate, respond to public inquiry and develop programs to instill pride in the community.

Approach 1: Hold public meetings to educate community residents on economic development initiatives. If outside sources of funding are to be used, the meeting agenda should contain a discussion item to address specific financial benefits and impacts to community residents.

Approach 2: Seek new and better ways to encourage and improve public meeting attendance. Assess the pros and cons of mass mailings and periodic newsletter.

Approach 3: Develop and implement programs to instill community pride. Possible initiatives would include contests and incentives for the "Cleanest yard in Goldfield", planting trees throughout the town, "Best Christmas decoration" contests, and recycling incentives.

## Fish Lake Valley

Fish Lake Valley borders the Sierra Nevada mountain range. This provides for many outdoor recreational opportunities, including hunting and fishing. Fish Lake Valley is also the agricultural center for the County and offers mainly seasonal and summer employment opportunities. In recent years, the valley has seen an influx of retirees who are attracted to the area because of its secluded environment and community atmosphere. The community wishes to take advantage of its recreational and land resources to provide more employment opportunities and develop programs to improve the quality of life for residents.

Goal 1: Improve local telecommunications by seeking out resources to enhance existing service and provide local service to all residents.

Improvements to telecommunications services in Fish Lake Valley are desperately needed. Local telephone service is not currently adequate and many residents cannot afford the high cost of obtaining service. The lack of adequate telephone service makes access to the Internet expensive and difficult and cellular service is nonexistent.

Approach 1: Research ways to improve local telephone service and make it affordable to all residents.

Approach 2: Enhance existing communications to allow for Internet service.

Approach 3: Enhance existing resources such as the Mustang repeater site to improve cellular communications.

Goal 2: Use the community's existing resources to develop new recreational and senior programs for residents.

The Fish Lake Valley Community Event Center is used for a variety of public events and meetings. As the population continues to grow, the event center will play increasingly important role for seniors and families. The residents wish to expand the capacity of the existing building to accommodate a broader range of functions, including senior programs.

Approach 1: Develop preliminary engineering reports for the community center and the Fish Lake Valley library to identify structural problems and expansion potential.

Approach 2: Research implementation of senior nutrition and recreational programs.

Goal 3: Generate wider publicity for recreational opportunities.

Fish Lake Valley's proximity to the Sierra Nevada mountain range provides a number of outdoor recreational activities such as hunting, fishing and hiking. The community also hosts a popular rodeo event during its July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration each year. The community wishes to publicize these resources to encourage tourism.

Approach 1: Generate wider publicity for the Fish Lake Rodeo through news releases, promote featured articles Nevada Magazine and other travel and tourism publications and on-line community event calendars.

Approach 2: Build a rapport with Lt. Governor Hunt and Nevada Economic Development Commission staff to generate visibility for Fish Lake Valley's outdoor recreational resources.

Approach 3: Design a Web site to advertise community events and recreational opportunities.

Approach 4: Contact the State and National Historic Preservation Offices to gather information on placing interpretive signs on all historic sites in the community.

Approach 5: Distribute visitor brochures from County offices, businesses and rest areas along US 95, commerce chambers statewide, and through Nevada recreation web sites.

Approach 6: Place signs at the US 95 and CA 266/NV 264 junction, the Grefco junction and at the north end of Fish Lake Valley near the Coaldale junction to promote community services and recreational opportunities.

Goal 4: Preserve community culture and history of mining and agriculture in Fish Lake Valley by establishing an Interpretive Center at the Original Community Center site.

Approach 1: Research historic significance of buildings in the community and work with the National Historic Preservation Office to register the Old Community Center as an historic site.