

**COUNTY OF SONOMA
AGENDA ITEM
SUMMARY REPORT**

Clerk of the Board Use Only
Meeting Date **Held Until**
 / / / /
Agenda Item No: **Agenda Item No:**
 _____ _____

Department: Economic Development

() **4/5 Vote Required**

Contact:
Ben Stone

Phone:
(707) 565-7170

Board Date:
10/20/09

Deadline for Board Action:

AGENDA SHORT TITLE: 2009 BEA Best Practices Report.

REQUESTED BOARD ACTION: None (Informational).

CURRENT FISCAL YEAR FINANCIAL IMPACT

EXPENDITURES

ADD'L FUNDS REQUIRING BOARD

Estimated Cost \$ 0

Contingencies \$ 0
(Fund Name:)

Amount Budgeted \$ 0

Unanticipated Revenue \$ 0
(Source:)

Other Avail Approp. \$ 0
(Explain below)

Other Transfer(s) \$ 0
(Source:)

Additional Requested: \$ 0

Add'l Funds Requested: \$ 0

Explanation (if required):

Prior Board Action(s): Board authorized the formation of the BEA in 1996 and accepted the Best Practices Report in 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006, and 2007.

Alternatives - Results of Non-Approval: Not Applicable.

Background:

In 1997 the Board of Supervisors authorized the creation of the Business Environmental Alliance (BEA), a public-private partnership dedicated to helping businesses recognize and obtain the financial advantages of voluntary environmental responsibility. The Economic Development Board (EDB) provides staff support to this group of business owners and managers from throughout Sonoma County.

Consistent with the 2009 Innovation Council Report, the BEA has become increasingly concerned with the new limitations on natural resources over the last few years. Hence, the BEA continues to be dedicated to promoting the voluntary adoption of responsible environmental practices.

The BEA’s Best Practices Project documents and publicizes the voluntary environmental policies and practices adopted by Sonoma County businesses. One aspect of this project, the annually updated Best Practices Report, acts as a local benchmark—gauging changing environmental practices in the business community over time.

About the 2009 Report: Surveyed 250 Sonoma County companies both via mail and online with a 33% response rate. Includes 16 case studies of local businesses that have taken steps to improve their bottom line by adopting responsible environmental practices. The *Report Summary and Analysis* section of the attached Best Practices Report analyzes the results from the survey and provides recommendations for the continuation and expansion of the BEA’s efforts.

Insights from the Best Practices Report include:

- A majority of responding Sonoma County businesses do pursue voluntary environmental practices, due to a desire to contribute to a healthy community as well as take advantage of energy, water, and waste management cost savings. The extent of these poses a huge opportunity for our community.
- The most popular conservation programs are waste reduction and energy conservation; water conservation is not practiced to quite the same extent, despite the growing threat of water shortages in the region.
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions has become a greater concern for businesses, with 60% of respondents taking steps to reduce their emissions.
- Only 33% of businesses have an environmental policy statement. An environmental policy statement can help businesses to create a concrete basis for environmental decisions.

Attachments: 2009 BEA Best Practices Report

On File With Clerk: None.

CLERK OF THE BOARD USE ONLY

Board Action (If other than "Requested")

Vote: