

# BUSINESS WALK

## POST-EVALUATION SUMMARY

El Dorado Hills — April 7, 2010



In partnership with:



Supported by:



**The El Dorado Hills Chamber of Commerce, in cooperation with the El Dorado County Office of Economic Development, launched their third annual business walk on April 7, 2010, this year in partnership with the Sacramento Metro Chamber.**

The purpose of a business walk is to find out what is going on in the community and learn first-hand how the El Dorado Hills business and civic leaders can promote business and improve the local economy. The business walk shows the community that the county and chamber are working on their behalf to create a successful business environment. Business and civic leaders, through this interaction, are able to identify businesses that may be struggling or that are at risk of closing. In response, these leaders can provide the business with regional resources, whether a direct personal contact or access to specific information, to help them succeed.

During the third annual business walk, 52 business and civic leaders visited 245 businesses—236 of those businesses were available to respond to three basic questions:

- How is business?
- What do you like about doing business in the area?
- What needs to be done to make business even better?

The El Dorado Hills economic climate as a whole is strong; many respondents felt that their company is headed in the right direction. Overall there is a large number of companies doing well and very few who reported business as doing poorly. Many El Dorado Hills businesses that were visited hold an optimistic view of the El Dorado Hills business climate. When asked how business is, well over three-fourths (82 percent) said that business is at least steady or fair. Close to half (49 percent) indicated that business is either good or great.

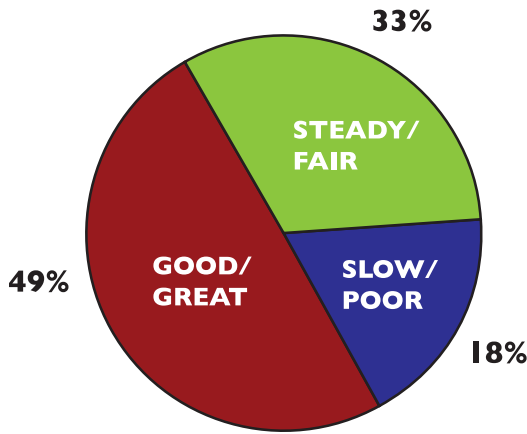
The El Dorado Hills business community made it clear that they are holding strong and are committed to their business community. When asked what they like most about doing business in the area, three things rose to the top for the vast majority of those interviewed: 1) community/people, 2) location and 3) clientele. When asked what needed to be improved in the business community, most frequently cited were 1) marketing/events, 2) economic climate and 3) business development programs. Of the rest, commonly-cited challenges were associated with infrastructure and permitting/fees/taxes. Despite the documented challenges very few said they are planning to leave the area.

The following report provides detail on the responses to each of the interview questions, as well as steps being taken to improve the local business climate.

## 2010 BUSINESS WALK INSIGHTS AND OBSERVATIONS

- Out of 236 businesses interviewed in El Dorado Hills, 82 percent are holding strong
- Of those interviewed:
  - Community/People ranked highest (53%) as something respondents liked about doing business in El Dorado Hills
  - Marketing/Events ranked highest (32%) as something respondents wanted improved in El Dorado Hills
- Many were looking for ways to get involved in the community and promote their business
- The residents of El Dorado Hills enjoy living in their community and are planning on staying for awhile
- Respondents are interested in hearing ideas of how everyone can help make the El Dorado Hills area an economic success

**FIGURE 1: HOW IS BUSINESS?**



### How is business?

The overall reaction from the business walk is very positive; many respondents felt that they are in a uniquely strong business community. Over three-fourths (82 percent) indicated that business is at least steady or fair. Almost half (49 percent) stated that business was either good or great (Figure 1), with many of the respondents saying their business is surviving these economic times. The positive response shows that the El Dorado Hills community is a success and many businesses are on track for growth and prosperity.

Although the country is faced with economic challenges the business walk once again proved that the El Dorado Hills community is in a good state because of their economic diversification and local demographics.

The decline of some businesses, represented by the response of slow/poor (18 percent), was attributed to a change in consumer spending habits, business location, employee cuts and overall economic climate. We also heard of the differences between business-to-business and business-to-consumer spending. With that said, a majority of businesses are holding strong and are now looking forward not backward.

### What do you like about doing business in the area?

Community/people was cited most frequently (53 percent) when asked “What do you like about doing business in El Dorado Hills?” (Figure 2). The respondents felt they had a strong supportive community, mentioning that their business was a staple of the community. Respondents mentioned they liked the sophistication of their community balanced by a small town, “family feel” that provides them a sense of security in the community. The businesses interviewed want to stay in El Dorado Hills because of the people; everyone knows each other and offer help if needed. Respondents cited that they enjoy being able to live and work in such a great community and want to see the area grow and succeed.

Location was the second most-mentioned response—47 percent of the businesses interviewed cited that they enjoy doing business because of the location/proximity that El Dorado Hills provides them to major highways and other regions. Their central location allows businesses to reach a larger client pool from around the region. Living in a small town and great location is ideal, but being able to travel to a bigger city is convenient. A reoccurring theme was that by living in El Dorado Hills, you are able to work in the foothills but play in the Sierras or Sacramento. The town provides them access to many different local businesses and restaurants; everything they need is either where they live or a short drive away.

Clientele was the third most-mentioned response. Twenty-two percent of the businesses interviewed cited that they enjoy doing business in the area because of the clientele they interact with every day. Consumer loyalty and commitment came to mind when respondents spoke about their clientele. Many described the clientele as willing to pay a little more to help support the local businesses, and the strong client base formed by word-of-mouth is what drives economic growth in the area. Business owners enjoy talking to a variety of people every day from the tourists to the residents who have been coming in for many years.

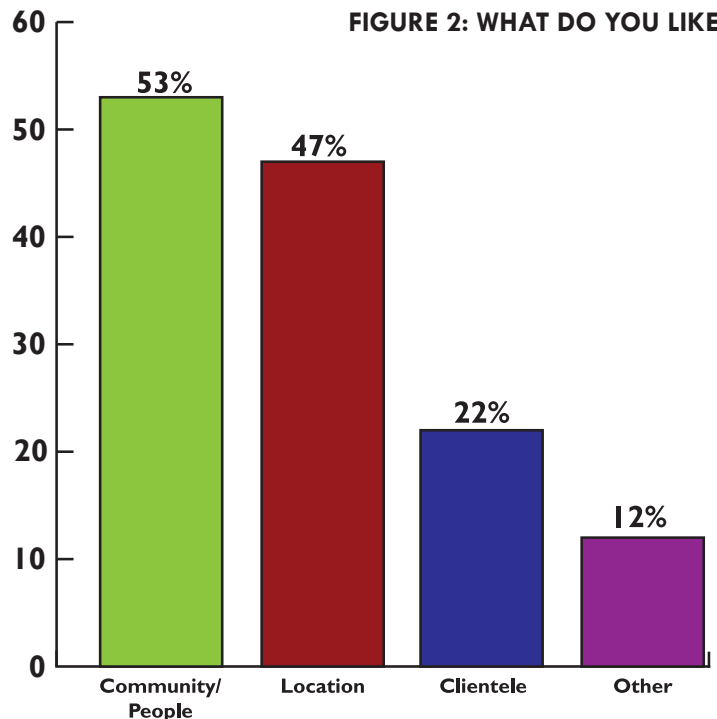
In addition, some respondents provided several “other” reasons for liking El Dorado Hills, including:

- Safe environment and a very clean area to live in
- Beautiful surroundings and great wildlife
- Town Center and local restaurants
- The idea that El Dorado Hills will be a good place to do business for a long time to come

### What improvements are needed in the area?

The overall business community in El Dorado Hills is viewed as a pleasant community in which to live and work, although there is a need to balance that with growth to enhance the business climate in the area. Close to one fifth (17 percent) of respondents in the 2010 El Dorado Hills Business Walk said, “Nothing needs improvement,” mentioning only minor improvements that could be made but they were satisfied overall. Of those businesses that felt there were specific improvements that could be made, marketing/events topped the list at 32 percent (Figure 3). The local business community wants to see more annual/series events (concerts, farmers markets, kids events) that would keep people shopping in the area and give their business more exposure; these events would allow for more foot traffic and better night life. People also mentioned signage and marketing. They feel that more visibility and flexibility in signage requirements is needed to make El Dorado Hills a more business-friendly environment. They also mentioned the need for directional signs and more “buy local, stay local” advertisements.

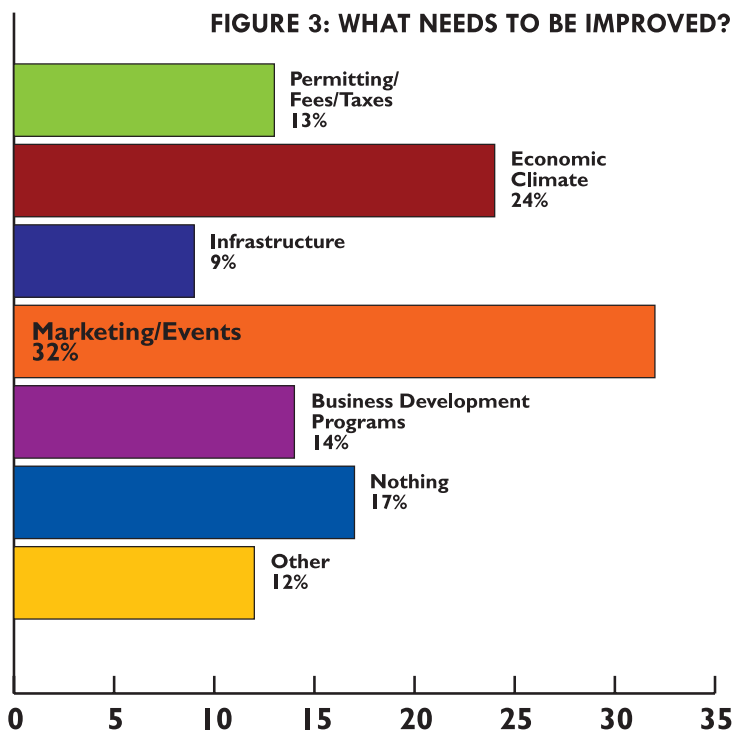
**FIGURE 2: WHAT DO YOU LIKE?**



The second most-frequent response (24 percent) was economic climate. The business community is looking for a turn around in the economic climate. Of the people interviewed, some cited that their business area would improve if the number of vacant stores would decrease. By filling up the stores, more economic growth would come to the whole community. Respondents also mentioned the lack of access to affordable capital; some companies are looking to expand and hire but can't due to limited lending options. Overall, people want to see more jobs in the area and the economy to bounce back so more spending is possible.

The third and fourth most-frequent responses were business development programs (14 percent) and permitting/fees/taxes (13 percent). Respondents feel there is a need to improve communication between businesses and the county. The business community is looking for more county departmental business development support. The community would like to see more chamber events and mixers that accommodate a variety of schedules and businesses. People that cited a need for improvements in permitting/fees/taxes, responding that fees and permit prices are too high and need to be lowered to stimulate economic activity. Others stated that in order to maintain and grow the business community, the following are necessary: lower rent rates and more flexibility with zoning restrictions.

**FIGURE 3: WHAT NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED?**



Nine percent of people also stated infrastructure as a concern, commenting that parking, highway traffic congestion (namely near White Rock and Highway 50) and many roads need improvement. Respondents feel that construction, poor roads and lack of parking at some locations could cause major problems in the future.

In addition some respondents provided several "other" responses for improvements needed in El Dorado Hills, including the need for:

- Increased business expansion opportunities
- Restaurants in business parks, auto part stores and parks
- Business community to work together
- Improved communication between the county, chamber and business communities

## RECENT ACTIVITIES

**The El Dorado Hills Chamber of Commerce and the El Dorado Hills Community Foundation, in cooperation with the County's Office of Economic Development and other stakeholders, have been instrumental in building local coalitions in support of the following business improvement initiatives:**

- Sixteen California Welcome Centers (CWCs) serve to promote their immediate regions as well as the entire state of California. In 2009, a **California Welcome Center was awarded to El Dorado Hills**. All CWCs provide a concierge service for travelers while in California by providing destination, attraction, performing arts and accommodations brochures from throughout the state. CWCs also provide reservation services, Internet access, regional and California merchandise, attraction ticket sales and plasma-screen advertising.  
**DETAILS:** [www.eldoradohillschamber.org](http://www.eldoradohillschamber.org) (see news articles) and [www.visitcww.com/eldoradohills](http://www.visitcww.com/eldoradohills)
- The launching of an **economic base and cluster analysis of the El Dorado Hills business community** conducted by the Center for Strategic Economic Research (CSER). The analysis is designed to identify core business clusters and connect them with the necessary tools, resources and business climate to grow in El Dorado Hills.  
**DETAILS:** [www.strategieconomicresearch.org](http://www.strategieconomicresearch.org)
- Development of a **retail and health care business retention and attraction customer analytics tool** supplied by BUXTON. This cutting-edge demographics tool will assist local retailers in identifying consumer behaviors, realigning their business offerings, while identifying new and emerging trends in the local and regional marketplace.  
**DETAILS:** [www.buxtonco.com](http://www.buxtonco.com)
- The review and development of **regulatory and other public policy solutions affecting business activity** county-wide by members of the Economic Development Advisory Committee – Regulatory Reform subcommittee.
- The review and recommendation of the following business development incentives for El Dorado Hills Business Park:  
**Enterprise Zone, Recycling Market Development Zone and hotel/motel sales tax rebate program.**

## Participating Businesses

The El Dorado Hills Chamber of Commerce, El Dorado County Office of Economic Development and the Sacramento Metro Chamber would like to thank the following businesses for providing feedback during the El Dorado Hills Business Walk on April 7:

- A LAKEFOREST WINES COMPANY
- ACCESS SYSTEMS, INC.
- ACTION HOME NURSING SERVICES
- ADAMS CIGARS
- ADINA ROBINSON, L.A.C.
- AEROMETALS
- ALADINO FINANCIAL SERVICES, INC.
- ALEPH AMERICA CORP.
- ALLSTATE FINANCIAL SERVICES
- ALOHA FAMILY DENTAL
- ALPHA REASERCH AND TECHNOLOGY, INC. (ART)
- AMBROSE CHIROPRACTIC
- AMDOCS BCS, INC.
- AME INC.
- AMERICAN MEDIA AGENCY
- AMERICANO GRILL
- AMI MANUFACTURING, INC.
- ANSYS
- ARTISAN CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
- ASANTE SPA
- AVIZENT
- BAKERIE & LATTE CHATEAU ARME
- BANK OF AMERICA
- BANK OF THE WEST
- BARBER JON'S
- BARK AVENUE
- BEACH HUT DELI
- BELLA BRU
- BELLA TALLONI
- BI DESIGN STUDIO
- BLUE RIBBON PERSONNEL SERVICES
- BUREAU OF LAND MANAGMENT
- CAFE NOSTRA
- CAMEO CRAFTS
- CAPITAL VALLEY REALTY GROUP, INC.
- CARTRIDGE WORLD
- CECIL PHOTOGRAPHY
- CELLYNX
- CEMEX
- CEMO COMMERCIAL
- CENTRAL VALLEY FLOOR DESIGN
- CENTURY GRAPHICS
- CHARLES RIVER ASSOCIATES
- CHILI'S
- CLARITY AVL
- COLD STONE CREAMERY
- COLDWELL BANKER
- COLORADO FED SAVINGS BANK
- COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION INSURANCE SOLUTIONS
- COMSTOCK MORTGAGE
- CONSOLIDATED ELECTRICAL DISTRIBUTORS, INC.
- CVS PHARMACY
- DANIEL MCKENZIE
- DAVID LOPES, DDS
- DESIGNING DREAMS
- DIGITAL DOG AUTO RECOVERY
- DOLCE DONNA
- DOMENICHELLI & ASSOCIATES CIVIL ENGINEERING
- DREAMBUILDERS HOME REMODELING
- DUNN ENVIRONMENTAL INC
- EDWARD JONES (2 LOCATIONS)
- EL DORADO ENDODONTICS
- EL DORADO HILLS 76
- EL DORADO HILLS COSMETIC & IMPLANT DENTISTRY
- EL DORADO HILLS CUSTOM TAILORING & ALTERATIONS
- EL DORADO HILLS DENTAL
- EL DORADO HILLS EYECARE
- EL DORADO HILLS PSYCHOLOGICAL CENTER
- EL DORADO HILLS SALON
- EL DORADO HILLS SPORTS CLUB
- EL DORADO HILLS SUN SPA
- EL DORADO HILLS VALERO
- EL DORADO PHYSICAL THERAPY
- ERA REALTY CENTER
- EWING
- FIRESIDE BURGERS
- FIRESTONE
- FITZPATRICK PHYSICAL THERAPY
- FOOTHILL PHYSICAL THERAPY
- GENESIS MICROWAVE
- GINNY'S DOG GROOMING
- GLASER VISION OPTOMETRY
- GNC
- GOLDEN 1 CREDIT UNION
- GRAPEVINE APPAREL
- GREEN VALLEY ANIMAL HOSPITAL
- GREEN VALLEY DENTAL GROUP
- GREEN VALLEY FOOD & FUEL
- GREEN VALLEY KENNELS
- GREENROCK HOLDINGS, LLC
- GUIDING HANDS SCHOOL
- HARBOR ELECTRONICS, INC.
- HELM TECHNICAL SERVICES
- HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS
- HORIZON ENVIRONMENTAL, INC.
- HUBBELL WIRING
- ILLUMINARE COSMETICS
- IMPAX WORLD
- INTER-COUNTY TITLE CO.
- J HANSEN DDS
- JACK IN THE BOX
- JDA ARCHITECTURE
- JDS PRODUCTS, INC.
- JENNINGS & JULIAN CONSTRUCTION
- JIVA VIBRANT LIVING STUDIO
- JUICE IT UP
- KATARZYNA PELIKS & RADOSLAW PELIKS
- LAKE FOREST PET HOSPITAL
- LAKEFOREST NAILS
- LANIUS & ASSOCIATES
- LEARNING WORKS, INC.
- LESLIE'S SWIMMING POOL SUPPLIES
- LINEAR CABLING SOLUTIONS
- LITTLE ANGEL ADOPTIONS
- LOGOSOL, INC.
- LOWREY CHIROPRACTIC
- LPL FINANCIAL
- LUXURY HOME MAGAZINE
- LUXURY NAILS
- MACKIE INSURANCE BROKERAGE
- MAGIC SMILES
- MAMA ANNS DELI & BAKERY
- MANSOUR COMPANY
- MARBLE VALLEY SCHOOL
- MARK RADEMACHER, DDS, INC. (FAMILY & COSMETIC DENTISTRY)
- MARKETPLACE VETERINARY HOSPITAL
- MARTIN CHIROPRACTIC AND INJURY CENTER
- MASON WEST, INC.
- MASSAGE ENVY
- MECHANICS BANK
- MEIG'S CARPET & INTERIORS
- MERCEDES-BENZ OF EL DORADO HILLS
- MIA SORELLA
- MLA STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS, INC.
- MON BIJOU JEWELERS
- MONICA'S NAIL TECH SPECIALIST
- MONTESSORI MANOR
- MORGAN TAYLOR SALON
- MY EXECUTIVE OFFICES & FIND JOHN DOES
- NATIONWIDE INVESTMENT ADVISORS, LLC
- NEWTONE SIGN & PRINTING
- NORCAL DIRECT MARKETING
- NUGGET MARKET
- ONE 2 ONE DENTAL
- ONE STOP CLEANERS
- OUR HOUSE GALLERY AND FRAMING
- PACIFIC STATES DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
- PAK MAIL
- PAK N POST
- PARAGON
- PAT ALAN TURNER
- PATRICK K. WILLIS COMPANY, INC.
- PATRICK MCNAMARA
- PEAK HEALTH & FITNESS
- PEDIATRIC DENTAL SPECIALISTS
- PEET'S COFFEE & TEA
- PETES RESTAURANT & BREWHOUSE
- PLACER TITLE CO.
- PMC
- POSH PUNKINS
- POWER STATION, LLC
- PR NEWSWIRE
- PREMIER POWER RENEWABLE ENERGY, INC.
- PROFESSIONAL NUTRITION
- PROFILE BY DESIGN
- PUEBLO CHICO CANTINA
- Q TECH SMALL BUSINESS SERVICES
- R SYSTEMS
- RADIO SHACK
- RBC WEALTH MANAGEMENT
- REGAL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP
- REGIONAL BUILDERS, INC.
- REVIX MEDIA
- RFGEN SOFTWARE THE DATAMAX SOFTWARE GROUP, INC.
- ROEBBELEN CONTRACTING, INC.
- ROMO & ASSOCIATES, INC.
- ROUND TABLE PIZZA
- SAFEWAY
- SALON ETCETERA
- SANDRA D'S
- SAVAS BEATIE, LLC
- SCHAEDLER INSURANCE & FINANCIAL SERVICES
- SHELL
- SHELLIE EDWARDS, DDS
- SIENNA
- SIERRA MANUFACTURING SOLUTIONS, INC.
- SIERRA TESTING LABORATORIES, INC.
- SIMMS CHIROPRACTIC
- SIMPLE SERENITY SPA AND WELLNESS, LLC
- SMOG KING
- SNAP FITNESS
- SPENCE ENTERPRISES INCORPORATED
- STARBUCKS COFFEE COMPANY
- STELLER & STELLER ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT & INSURANCE CONSULTING
- STOCKDALE LAW FIRM
- STORAGE CENTERS
- STRATEGY FIRST MORTGAGE
- SUBWAY (2 LOCATIONS)
- SUPER CUTS
- SWANSONS CLEANERS
- SYNVASIVE TECHNOLOGY, INC.
- TACO BELL
- TAN CENTRAL
- TARGET
- TAX WISE
- TERENCE DEGAN, M.D.
- THE ALMONTE CENTER
- THE FLOWER SHOP
- THE PHOENIX SCHOOLS
- THE PURPLE PLACE
- THE SPA AT LA BORGATA
- THE UPS STORE
- THE VILLAGE DENTIST
- THE VILLAGE SQUIRE
- TIMOTHY T. HUBER
- TOGO'S
- TOWN CENTER FAMILY CHIROPRACTIC
- TRI SIGNAL INTEGRATION, INC.
- TUBETAPE.COM
- TUTTLE INTERIOR SYSTEMS
- UMPQUA BANK
- VANELI'S COFFEE
- VERIZON WIRELESS
- VISION COALITION OF EL DORADO HILLS
- WE OLIVE
- WEALTH STRATEGIES
- WECKWORTH ELECTRIC COMPANY
- WELLS FARGO BANK
- WESTERN WATER FEATURES, INC.
- WINDPLAY DELI
- WYNDGATE TECHNOLOGIES
- YAMAS ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS, INC.
- YELLOW BOOK
- ZI MACHINE MANUFACTURING

The Sacramento Metro Chamber is the largest and oldest voice of business in the greater Sacramento area. Representing nearly 2,200 member businesses and business organizations in the six-county Sacramento region, the Metro Chamber serves as the region's leading proponent of regional cooperation and primary advocate on issues affecting business, strengthening the regional economy and quality of life. As a founding member of Partnership for Prosperity<sup>1</sup>, and in its role as managing partner of Metro Pulse<sup>2</sup>, the Metro Chamber executes the Business Walk Series in cooperation with its local chamber and public sector partners. The Metro Chamber has partnered with 15 other regional jurisdictions and economic development organizations to provide one-on-one support for county businesses and throughout the Sacramento metropolitan region. These organizations, through Metro Pulse, are meeting one-on-one with businesses throughout the six-county Sacramento region to identify and address individual business needs and ensure continued growth and economic prosperity. For additional information concerning Metro Pulse, visit [metropulse.org](http://metropulse.org).

<sup>1</sup> Partnership for Prosperity is the Sacramento region's economic development strategy, which focuses on developing people, place and business.

<sup>2</sup> Metro Pulse is a coalition of 16 public and private sector partners focused on ensuring that the Sacramento metropolitan region is the best place to do business in California.