

Corey Costelloe's Work in Revitalizing Oldest Commercial Building & Masonry has Lasting Effect in Tehachapi

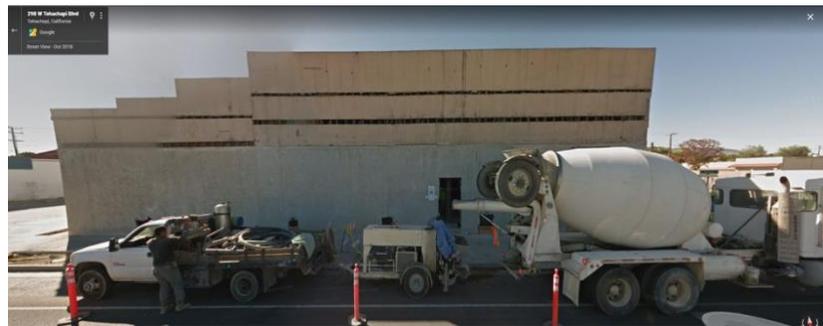
Decade-2010-2019

Why did you get involved in economic development?

As a member of a growing community and a legacy in Tehachapi, I got involved in economic development to help build the future specifically by partnering the right business and industries to fit who we are as a community. With two young children, I moved back to Tehachapi so they could experience a great childhood like I had with the hope that 30 years from now, I have helped better this community and point it in a direction that they will be proud of and can benefit from.

Describe the project/program that you were a lead on (list multiple phases if any)

This project saw the transformation of the City's oldest commercial building and one of the few masonry structures to survive the 1952 White Wolf Earthquake. It had a long history in our community as a variety, most recently it was an Ace Hardware store until its closing about a decade ago.



Tehachapi local business owners Buddy and Nikki Cummings of World Wind and Solar purchased the building in early 2018. Despite the high cost of renovation, much of which dealt with reinforcing the masonry structure, the Cummings, through the assistance of the City, insisted on renovating the building to preserve a piece of Tehachapi's history.



I was involved with this project from the purchase of the property by the Cummings, sat through their idea stages, which usage varied, and partnered them with a developer/ business analyst who helped them

with metrics of the project. Along with our Development Services team I was there to help with permitting, approvals and inspection issues as the project progressed.

The building opened in April of 2018 as the new headquarters for World Wind and Solar which is training workers in renewable energy and managing projects across the United States.

What was challenging and/or rewarding working on this project/program?

This project started out as a potential restaurant space, thus, we partnered the Cummings with Russ Johnson, a developer and also owner of Firehouse Restaurant in Bakersfield. I had known Russ through a previous job. Russ was able to not only run the metrics for a potential restaurant, but delivered the news about a potentially low profit margin.

While disappointing, we continued to work with the Cummings' to make the building their World Wind & Solar headquarters. The end result was an amazing renovation of a building that had been vacant for nearly a decade and the addition of a major employer to our Downtown area during the daytime which benefits surrounding business.

It's rewarding to see both the history of Tehachapi, this building with cracks remaining in walls from the 1952 earthquake, be the training center and headquarters of a renewable-energy maintenance company that services a new and thriving industry in our area. It's taking two worlds and bringing them together in an amazing setting.

Briefly explain the impact the project/program has had or will have on employment, expansion of local tax base & diversification of the area's economy?

This downtown Tehachapi location centralizes over 50 employees, brings in hundreds of trainees a year and other partners. By bringing an operation like this downtown, we have increased daytime traffic, as a result, restaurants, stores and others are busier. We have also increased the occupancy rate of nearby hotels who house many of the new hires and other contractors doing business with World Wind and Solar. We expect an increase in sales tax revenues from Downtown businesses, transient occupancy taxes and more opportunities for locals to gain employment in Tehachapi, a community that heavily commuter-driven.

As a maintenance company for renewable energy projects, this company's growth potential in Tehachapi is aided by the expanding wind energy at the Tehachapi pass and the large solar installation projects in the nearby Antelope Valley.

What advice would you give to other economic development professionals when working on a similar project/program?

First, always think reuse above demolition, this is tricky as costs play a factor, but the right investor with the right intentions can make it happen. Second, don't be discouraged if the first plans don't work out. The restaurant and entertainment space initially proposed is desperately needed in our community, but, the profit margin was far too slim and it wasn't our place to push for something that wasn't going to be profitable for the client or potentially not be

successful. The overall impact of having a corporate headquarters, a training center and a large employer Downtown is far more beneficial to the economy.

Please list any social media usernames and website addresses so that other members can connect with you.

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