

It is already starting! I have been asked by some in the community to stop, or at least slow down doing our job here at EDAWN; the job of bringing quality companies to the region. Yes, Reno – Sparks is growing, and it is growing at an unprecedented rate. More than 18 months ago, when EDAWN announced we would be adding over 50,000 new jobs to the region in five years, there was mostly skepticism and a let's wait and see attitude. That is understandable given the magnitude and speed of the projected growth. But now that we are continuing to announce new companies, more than 100 in the past four years, seeing the Tesla building grow, and feeling the increased traffic and activity in nearly every industry - there is **fear**. The growth that we projected is happening. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for our community and there are several reasons we should consider the blessings of this long sought after economic revitalization, rather than fear the coming changes.

**With Growth comes opportunity.** Have you ever heard of any community change or improve without growth? With growth comes outside investments, public-private partnerships and increased tax revenue to address the challenges we face. The fuel and energy associated with growth can be harnessed and managed to a large degree to revitalize or reinvent a community. Hundreds of communities throughout the U.S are struggling to survive, just like we were a few short years ago. These communities envy the opportunity we have. Let's embrace this growth and use it to shape our future, not fear it.

**With Growth comes action.** We should appreciate that there are challenges associated with this extraordinary growth, and in most cases we are making the necessary accommodations to mitigate the challenges. We have started to shift from a wait and see mode, *to a let's get this done attitude*. The motivation of a deadline is impressive when it comes to actually getting things done. With this motivation we are making real progress on issues like affordable (workforce) housing, school infrastructure funding, downtown revitalization and workforce development, to name just a few. So the specter of growth has already spurred us to make our community better in many ways.

**With Growth comes a better quality of life.** If we can look past the challenges and focus on the opportunities, we can appreciate the quality of life improvements we will gain with this growth. These real quality of life factors transcend the petty complaints associated with more traffic or longer lines at your favorite restaurant. Quality of life improvements like job security, a quality job, a pay raise, home value increases, having your kids close to home because they can now find a job, more activity at your business, and more revenue for local governments, just to name a few.

**With Growth comes vitality.** The excitement and energy associated with growth is what makes a community great. Growth brings talent to the region, more diversity in our job market, and even more events and entertainment to the area. Growth brings more exciting and diverse restaurants and long sought after retail stores. Growth gives our youth hope and motivation with the promise of a quality job as they sharpen their skills through the education system. Growth gives generations of our sons and daughters the opportunity to come home, as many were forced to flee the region to get the jobs they were qualified for; jobs that did not exist in Reno-Sparks before.

So NO, EDAWN will not stop doing our job of attracting, retaining and growing quality jobs because economic development is not a water faucet, something that can just be turned on or off. As many communities have learned, once the flow of growth is turned off, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to turn it back on. EDAWN, however, has modified our attraction efforts with a focus on higher paying jobs and company headquarters, adapted our retention efforts to highlight workforce development, and renewed our emphasis on advancing, to the next level, the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

As a community we have worked very hard to reinvent our economy. Let's enjoy and embrace the many blessings associated with this growth. The glass of growth may be 20% empty, but let's remember it is also 80% full. The only thing we should really fear is that without continued economic development efforts, community support and business friendly government - the growth, with all its blessings, will end.