



The BDC Times

A Quarterly Update from the Mesa Grande Business
Development Corporation

BDC Plan for Development of Tribal Food Supply Gets Another Boost

The Mesa Grande BDC has received another grant for creation of a 10-acre garden on the Golden Eagle Farm to advance the development of a sovereign tribal food supply and related tribal business. In January 2021, the BDC received a grant of \$10,000 from the First Nations Development Institute (FDNI) COVID Resiliency Program. This will pay for the purchase and installation of a 20x24' production high tunnel structure to grow foods that require extra protection from the elements.



The FDNI grant is the second awarded to the BDC for the Tekamuk Tribal Gardens project. As reported in September 2020, the BDC received a \$53,000 grant from the Native American Agriculture Fund (NAAF) to launch Tekamuk Tribal Gardens with the help of consulting experts on organic farming and traditional Native ethnobotanics. Grant funds have now been received and work has begun on garden planning. A cultural assessment is being conducted before any soil is disturbed on the site.

With grant funds, the BDC will hire a half-time (hourly) garden employee. Additional funding is being sought to enable the BDC to hire more hourly workers as needed. The job application is available in the News section of the BDC website.

The NAAF grant includes a small budget for individual grants to tribal members who wish to grow their own gardens in their backyards. The BDC will announce more information on that program as details are finalized.

The grant funding will also pay for the purchase of equipment and supplies for a pop-up Farmers Market stand to be operated on a limited (weekend) schedule when the garden starts producing fruits, vegetables and herbs for sale later this spring.



Examples of a typical garden and one type of production high tunnel structure.

Hourly employees will receive training in growing, planting, harvesting, and garden maintenance as well as in Farmers Market stand set-up and operations.

Second Golden Eagle Lease Awaits Construction Plans, Approvals

The BDC plan to lease the Peppertree House and approximately 100 acres of pasture to a non-profit organization for thoroughbred rehabilitation and rehoming ran into an unforeseen snag when contractors estimating repair costs on the residence discovered that it is structurally unsound and cannot be cost-effectively repaired. They recommended demolition and replacement of the dwelling.

At a January 10 General Council meeting, the tribe adopted a policy of requiring detailed plans before any new construction on the Golden Eagle is approved. Once the tenant has provided all plans

involving the proposed construction of any new dwellings or other facilities on the farm, the BDC will submit them to the General Council for review.

Discussions are underway to identify interim measures that could provide the temporary meeting and living space the non-profit requires until a final decision is made on construction of the new residence and any other desired facilities.

Under the proposed lease, the tenants will pay for all new construction, but the new structures will remain the property of the tribe, since non-tribal entities may not own property on tribal lands.

BDC Seeks Grant for EV Chargers

The BDC has applied for a State of California grant that covers 100 percent of purchase and installation costs of up to four DC Fast Charging Stations at the tribe's planned C-store. Although the C-store plan has not yet been approved by the General Council, the window of opportunity to submit the application required that we do so by October 2020 with the option of cancelling the request if the C-store project does not move forward.

Because the costs are 100 percent covered, the BDC earns any revenue generated, including charging fees and potential advertising revenues from digital screens on the charging stations. The stations are automatically included in a special GPS-based mobile app that lets the drivers of electric vehicles know where the nearest electric charging stations are located.

If funded, the grant requires that the tribe keep the stations in operation for 5 years, after which the BDC may choose to keep them operating at a nominal fee or replacing them with newer ones if more grant funds are available.



DC Fast Chargers like these are the highest-powered EV chargers on the market. They often are used as range extenders along major travel corridors for long-distance trips and in urban environments to support drivers without home charging or very high mileage drivers. Most DC fast chargers on the market charge at rates of 25-50 kW. At current charging speeds, they are ideal for places where a person would spend 30 minutes to an hour, such as restaurants, recreational areas and shopping centers.

Currently available DC Fast Chargers require inputs of 480+ volts and 100+ amps (50-60 kW) and can produce a full charge for an EV with a 100-mile range battery in slightly more than 30 minutes (178 miles of electric drive per hour of charging).