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Creative Ecosystems in Science and Technology Parks and in Cities

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Citizens of the City of Clovis enjoy a high quality of life through the city's exemplary primary through grade 14 education system, healthy economic development programs, and shared values of citizens, businesses and a participatory government. It is socially, culturally and economically diverse, drawing people and businesses of differing backgrounds together in a unique and sustaining way.

As Clovis continues its growth, it works closely with local educational systems such as California State University, Fresno, and State Center Community College District to promote "intelligent" economic development. As a means of encouraging knowledge-based entrepreneurs, it disseminates information through printed information and seminars such as financing options for local entrepreneurs.

By building on its strengths, analyzing the positives and negatives of its ecosystem, planning for cure of outdated ideas and infrastructure, and working daily toward a common goal, Clovis is set to emerge as a viable, exemplary technopolis.



The City of Clovis has developed over many years into an environment that accepts and attracts innovation, making it an ideal candidate to become a technopolis in the agricultural heart of California's Central Valley. This creative ecosystem depends upon several key attributes, including: an exceptional education system, healthy economic development programs, a participatory government, and a dedication to providing a balanced environment of shared values between citizens, businesses and government. The composite of these attributes make up what is known as "The Clovis Way of Life," which has become synonymous with its quality of life. What have evolved in Clovis are essential elements that contribute to an ecosystem poised to evolve as a citizen-driven science and technology hub.

▪ ***Exemplary Primary-Grade 14 Education System***

The City of Clovis is recognized as having one of the finest primary through grade 14 education systems in the United States, a system that also enjoys international acclaim. In 1991 the Clovis Unified School District built the innovative Buchanan Educational Complex, a two-mile square 160 acre campus that includes an elementary, junior high, and senior high school with ancillary athletic facilities. Close proximity of the schools eases student transitions as the students advance in education. The basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic are taught in all Clovis schools; the dress code is strict to prevent the wearing of gang colors or signs; emphasis is placed on and rewards are given for student achievement; and music and sports play a large part in keeping parents involved in student activities.

The State Center Community College District (SCCCD) is currently building a brand new community college center, Willow International, on 110 acres across the street from the new high school and middle school complex in the Clovis Unified School District, named Clovis North. Both these facilities are scheduled to open in fall 2007 and the administrations from both the middle school/high school and the college meet regularly to look at opportunities for partnership. Both educational facilities feature state of the art technology for instruction and training in a variety of areas including information systems, multimedia graphics and foreign language instruction.

The Center for Advanced Research and Technology (CART) is a Charter High School of both Clovis Unified and Fresno Unified School Districts. Juniors and seniors spend one half-day at CART taking coursework that is conducted in a career focused lab. Students work in teams on project based integrated curriculum that features community involvement through partnerships and the use of technology. The school's curriculum is based on positively influencing the future of all students by exposing them to knowledge necessary for the rapidly expanding economic area of high tech business.



Willow International Community College Center,
State Center Community College District

▪ ***Healthy economic development programs***

Businesses that locate in Clovis are assisted by programs initiated and administered by the City, creating a thriving business environment within incorporated city limits. Programs include: a best in the state quality retention and expansion program, redevelopment, fast track permitting, startup business assistance, and business networking. Additionally, the City partners with the Central Valley Business Incubator (CVBI) a program for startup enterprises providing an opportunity to test their entrepreneurial operations, and assist them in obtaining necessary financing.

▪ ***Participatory government***

City of Clovis government is comprised of ordinary citizens; this government is very accessible to all residents who have questions, complaints or problems to solve. Clovis looks to its citizens for guidance through advisory committees to help plan the “quality of life” that Clovis residents now enjoy.



Government officials provide information and capital to help instead of hinder, actively work to sustain the quality of life that has been achieved over the past decade, and strive to keep current with advancements in every area such as new processes and equipment. Technology is the newest area for the City of Clovis to recognize and advance its efforts to achieve success for the future of a technopolis.

▪ ***Shared values of citizens, business, and government***

Understanding how government affects the livelihood of the population, Clovis City government solicits and listens to its citizens as it makes its decisions. It also educates its citizens on the need for regulations but keeps its actions fair and equitable.

Realizing that technology was already present and operating in a limited but efficient manner, a group of Clovis citizens, the Technopolis Clovis Core Committee (TC³), decided to create a plan to improve all aspects of technology infrastructure and support, with the goal of evolving into a knowledge-based and revenue-producing community, or technopolis. With the critical support of this volunteer group, the city stands on the brink of becoming an end destination of quality living standards and income production. An analytical approach by the city has already resulted in the acknowledgement of many technological successes, and there are conceptual plans for more technology advances in the future.

The citizens of Clovis, California have formed a community-wide alliance at the grass roots level to market and develop a technology environment. It is the opinion of the authors of this paper that our city will further develop an economic environment that attracts research and technology industries.

- ***Description of the City of Clovis***

To understand the economic environment leading to the development of a Clovis technopolis, it is first necessary to describe the City of Clovis. What attributes contribute to its reputation as a “great place to live?” The city is situated in the state of California, midway between Los Angeles and San Francisco in the agriculturally rich San Joaquin Valley. It borders the city of Fresno (population 461,116), and lies at the foot of the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range. In 2006 Clovis’s population was estimated to exceed 96,000 people.

Clovis originated as a freight stop along the San Joaquin Valley Railroad. Development was aided by a burgeoning lumber industry from the rich timber resources of the Sierra Nevada Mountain range and boosted by the growing prominence of grain and livestock production. Incorporated as a city in 1912, Clovis took shape as a distinctly western town and has maintained a small town community flavor. Today the economic base consists chiefly of retail sales and services, light manufacturing and a few small farming enterprises.



In 1957, a group of self-appointed Clovis residents began some very intentional changes in educational support by hiring Dr. Floyd Buchanan as the superintendent of Clovis District High School. He was then made the first superintendent when the district unified in 1960. He instituted key reforms based on excellence in Mind, Body and Spirit, and since then the Clovis Unified School District (CUSD) has become one of the outstanding districts in the State of California. As a result CUSD students have higher testing scores and are accepted into the California public university system at a higher rate than anywhere else in the San Joaquin Valley of Central California.

However, the community recognized that many of its students who left to attend colleges and universities did not return to Clovis because of the lack of local technical and good paying jobs. Thus, through its public participation and citizen driven efforts, the community began to broaden its educational system, including the formation of technical schools in an effort to re-attract students who left the area for better jobs. As time passes and more technical jobs are available in the Clovis area, we may see an increase in returning students employed in Clovis. As will be discussed later in this paper, education is a key factor in establishing and sustaining a creative ecosystem.

The key elements in building this technopolis include providing physical, logistical and knowledge based infrastructure that creates and nurtures an ecosystem encompassing community, government, and commercial entities. It is possible for any city to emerge as a viable technopolis by analyzing the positives and negatives of their ecosystem, planning for the cure of outdated ideas and infrastructure, and building daily toward a common goal.

- ***Connection between companies promoting “clusterization”***

The transformation of the City of Clovis into a technopolis will require encouraging new and old businesses to partner for their mutual benefit. Clusters of creative groups are developed to incorporate the necessary components into a framework that permits the emergence of a technopolis. To that end, Clovis and the Technopolis Clovis Core Committee (TC³), a group of private citizens, are bringing together clusters of businesses to generate synergy for development of new ideas. Through the efforts of TC³ local entrepreneurs are nurtured and encouraged to form clusters of mutually beneficial groupings. The role of the technopolis is to nurture and encourage incubators, develop their ideas, and facilitate productivity of the startup by helping to link and partner these new entities to one another. Clovis aspires to be a community in which people can develop their ideas into a knowledge and revenue-producing enterprise.

The City of Clovis has acquired land for a technology park and zoned it to promote the attraction of sustainable clean industry. Even within a thriving technopolis, there is the need for an area where there are clusters of high technology businesses in proximity to each other where partnering will keep costs down while still operating in the worldwide arena.



These businesses, while enjoying a lower operating cost as a result of this partnering, can and often do pay much more than the minimum wage to attract better-qualified workers. The higher wage base serves to minimize the job transfer from the region. When the business economy can support a higher wage base, the result of that higher wage base is to attract other higher paying businesses in an almost endless cycle that results in the betterment of the economical position of the technopolis itself. Youth do not flee to the larger cities in search of mind expansion and challenge, but consider those businesses close to home that employ technologically advanced methodologies and can provide employees with an interesting and higher standard of living.

Understanding technology and how it affects all areas of life is a beginning step in the process that moves a city toward acceptance of more technology and thus creates further advancement toward that goal. When businesses cluster to partner within a specific area, each business benefits by the proximity of the others and can maximize profits and grow substantially while helping the area thrive.

It is very possible that with a structured plan and clear goals, any city or community can create a technopolis. It requires staying the course and setting goals and objectives that direct the activities on a daily basis toward the formulation of a true technopolis, principally a knowledge driven, revenue producing community, a better quality of life, and excellent educational opportunities for young and old.

▪ ***Development of markets***

Science and technology communities have a history of providing logistical and knowledge based infrastructures to nurture innovative technology and growth for the development of incubators, entrepreneurs, startups and established companies. However, marketing support often lags for these enterprises. As a result, new technologies often fail to navigate the chasm between the early visionary consumer market niche and entry into the more mainstream or conservative consumer niche. The chasm can become a barrier because technology hopefuls in the early market cannot bridge the divide separating the early market from the mainstream market. This happens because a consumer's motivation for buying a product differs radically between market niches. Marketing requires research, new product development, product life cycle management, pricing and promotion.

An excellent example of market development in Clovis is the area of water technology and management. Because the area receives relatively little rainfall, the agriculture-based businesses of the San Joaquin Valley rely heavily on groundwater and run-off from the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The Valley's recent population surge has created a strain on the region's water resources, creating a need for innovation in the use and management of water. This has resulted in the creation of over 100 water-related businesses within the surrounding area. The valley will continue to need to use and move water more efficiently. The new Water and Energy Technology Incubator provides new avenues for capital and financing. We believe that Clovis and the Central Valley are poised to become world leaders in the water technology field.

The International Center for Water Technology (ICWT) is a further example of the science and technology community's participation in the development of a creative and stimulating atmosphere for entrepreneurial and established companies. The ICWT, located on the campus of California State

University, Fresno (CSUF) was formed April 2001 as part of a collaborative effort between the University and manufacturers of water technology and related equipment. One of the goals of ICWT, working with the Water Technology Cluster, is to identify and export water from region to region within the state. The development and joint marketing activities in the manufacturing and deployment of technology that enables water reuse, conservation, energy efficiency, lower cost innovations, for improved water quality (e.g. salt to fresh) and water exploration is all a part of the mission of ICWT. To reach this goal, ICWT provides cluster members with international business training, one-on-one international consulting, and organizes international trade missions and in-bound trade missions.

The ICWT and the CSUF are partners with the Central Valley Business Incubator, a private/public partnership that nurtures the development of entrepreneurial companies through a variety of services such



as management consulting, business planning, accountability and help in obtaining financing. CVBI focuses on business incubation services, expertise and funding opportunities for the development of early stage companies and the commercialization of products that will improve the use of water and energy resources. Together ICWT and the Incubator will be the center of activity for entrepreneurs, having access to industry, the professionals to build a sustainable business model, and the technical expertise and research capability of the University in Fresno.

In addition to the success in water technology based endeavors, many businesses in the medical field have relocated to the Central Valley as well, bringing with them heart and lung specialists, dermatologists, ophthalmologists and respiratory therapists to join the many established specialists already thriving in the area. There is a great possibility that within the medical clusters, businesses focusing on research and development in the fields of nanotechnology, cancer and stem cell research will find a fertile environment in which to expand their medical horizons, bringing critical discoveries to the health care field for the benefit of all people.

▪ ***Financing innovation and creativity to promote growth***

The City of Clovis has co-hosted seminars on securing financing options for local entrepreneurs and startup businesses. City economic planners are playing an important role in coordinating and communicating information on resource programs. Prior to 2005 there was little work being done to promote the image of entrepreneurs or “lone eagles” (i.e., entrepreneurs working on their own). Since the time Clovis first began the process of becoming a technopolis much has been accomplished. It is anticipated that both private and public sectors will join partnerships to attract funding from private investors.

One of the entities working with startup companies is the Central Valley Business Incubator, located in Clovis since its beginning ten years ago. The City of Clovis has been a funding partner throughout that time period. CVBI works with early stage and startup companies to help ensure a greater opportunity for success. Classes are offered to the community for a nominal fee, which includes an introduction to entrepreneurship, a course designed to help participants plan an actual startup business, as well as classes to assist existing businesses with under-developed or missing components from their operations.

In the last ten years the CVBI has worked with over 3,000 businesses, which in turn have hired over 1,900 employees, raising more than \$12 million in capital and financing. Although California is noted for access to capital, the Central Valley of California has traditionally had limited success in accessing those funds. In the past year, however, three new venture funds have opened within the Central Valley; this new

development could dramatically increase the number of technology related businesses in Clovis. Business attracts capital, and capital attracts business.

The Central Valley Business Incubator is also opening a Water and Energy Technology Incubator on the California State University, Fresno campus, which borders the City of Clovis. This specialty incubator will host five startup water or alternative energy related businesses.

▪ ***Promotion of global connection through integrated networks***

The main economic base of Clovis consists chiefly of retail sales, services, light manufacturing and diminishing agriculture. There are pockets of lone eagles living in Clovis because of its reputation as a city with strong K-14 education, a small town community flavor, and policies to encourage entrepreneurs. The City has strong foundational attributes, or core strengths, such as good quality of life, healthy economic development programs, participatory government and the City's dedication to providing a balanced environment between citizens, business and government resulting in shared values.



Despite the many assets which make Clovis a model city of its size, there are areas that need development and improvement to position Clovis as a strong participant in the global economy. They include: access to international-caliber transportation, world class and leading edge technology, additional venues for arts and entertainment, a research-focused university, and an environment of social, cultural and economic diversity.

- **Access to international-caliber transportation:** Clovis is more likely to seek and attract a knowledge-based economy such as research and intellectual property developments, rather than agriculture, large scale manufacturing and heavy distribution. Efficient domestic and international air transportation will become vitally important for expert workers and lone eagles to travel for business.
- **World class and leading edge technology:** Exposure to and utilization of leading edge technology creates excitement and fuels creativity, which is the norm for international cities such as San Francisco, New York City, Washington D.C., London, Tokyo, Kuala Lumpur, and, of course, Barcelona.
- **Arts and Entertainment:** High-quality amenities for leisure relaxation allow the cycles of self-rejuvenation to occur so the population can continue to grow creatively and intellectually.
- **Environment of social, cultural and economic diversity:** Most modern cities, such as those mentioned above, have a diverse social, cultural and economic environment. It is part of what draws together people and businesses of different backgrounds.

▪ ***Promotion of global connection is important***

Economic diversification strengthens long-term and balanced developments. Cities must strive to be strong and self-sustaining within the domestic market, yet should capitalize on further growth by extending their reach far beyond geographic borders, particularly in the global arena where the commercial network extends and is sustained. As 1960s educator and media theorist Marshall McLuhan admonished us, we live in a global village and hence, globalization is inevitable and inescapable and needs to be made to work. Joseph Stiglitz, the 2001 Nobel Prize winner in economics states: “With full global economic integration, the world will become like a single country,” linked and interdependent.ⁱ

Another important asset for any city should lie in the size and depth of its “integrated networks,” which include networks of business, educational and governmental associations, information technology access and infrastructure, connections to other U.S. cities, and to international economies.

Clovis has begun to develop strong and integrated linkages with associations that promote methodologies for transforming a city into a technopolis. In addition, Clovis is working to develop further links with the University of California Medical Education Program in Fresno, the University of California in Merced only 90 kilometers north of Clovis, and several private universities such as Stanford, University of Southern California, and others both in and out of state. The purpose is to create strong linkages and partnering associations to take advantage of research, graduate, post-graduate, and post doctoral education.

Clovis’s partnerships with international business oriented entities such as the Center for International Trade and Development (CITD); California Asia Business Council; U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Commercial Services (Fresno office); and the US-ASEAN Business Council will continue to provide exposure to global markets.

Information technology access and infrastructure such as the information super-highway, integrated software applications, and global standard practices and certification draw firms and industry to cities having such strong infrastructures. Clovis is seeking to expand its current citywide Wi-Fi based wireless connection, which serves government agencies by courting partner/vendors to develop comprehensive free broadband-based internet access also to serve residents, businesses and visitors. Development of a technology data center can also enhance the City’s technology infrastructure.

Initial linkages with markets and businesses outside the region of the Central Valley have been established, especially with New Zealand, Italy, Finland, the UK and France, and soon other international connections will be established.

The development of these integrated networks has strong links to successful economic growth and expansion. Along with its core strengths, Clovis plans to leverage its integrated network assets by promoting and participating in the global cultural, social and economic connection that will bring balance between domestic success and international opportunities.

▪ ***University/companies connection***

California State University, Fresno and State Center Community College District are working closely with the city to help promote economic development as well. Community colleges are agile institutions that can quickly add new curricula for emerging technology training needs. The university has used its expertise in education, research, analysis and building community partnerships to enhance the area’s strengths and find long lasting solutions to its problems.

CSUF and SCCC are active members of the Regional Jobs Initiative (RJI, a local consortium of education, business and industries formed to develop a “short- and long-term comprehensive strategy aimed at creating 25,000 to 30,000 new jobs in a five year period with an average salary of \$29,500. It is estimated that these additional new jobs will create an economic impact of over \$885 million in the region.”ⁱⁱ The RJI has eight industry clusters made up of related industries and educational institutions. These clusters include Advanced Manufacturing, Construction, Food Processing, Health Care, Information Processing, Innovative Energy, Logistics and Distribution, Software Development, Tourism, and Water Technology. The partnership relies on the educational institutions developing



customized training programs, physical infrastructure requirements, and specialized research programs through CSUF.

An example of a university/company connection is the development of the Claude Laval Water and Energy Technology Incubator that will be housed on the CSUF campus and will assist five startup or early-stage businesses specializing in water or energy technology. The university will also be hosting an international water conference in spring 2007 focusing on water technology and scientific innovation to ensure the world's future water supply. In addition, the community colleges are involved in a number of partnerships with businesses, including the development of an advanced manufacturing technology training programs through a grant from the US Department of Labor.

The Center for International Trade and Development (CITD) initiated by the State Center Community College District is another partnership with the business community. The mission of the Center for International Trade Development Initiative (CITD) is:

To advance the State's economic development and global competitiveness by providing quality training and assistance to small- and medium-sized enterprises, in order to export and import products and services from and to California.

Objectives of CITD are:

- To enhance the competitive strength of California business in the international marketplace.
- To support international trade development in local communities by collaborating with and leveraging college and partner resources.
- To empower businesses to include international trade as a strategy for increasing profits and jobs.

Progress in Implementing the Mission and Objectives:

- Program funds are matched dollar-for-dollar and leveraged to almost twice the amount funded by the State, through federal grants, sponsorships and program revenues (\$4.1 million vs. \$2.4 million).
- CITD developed more than 200 partnership and collaboration agreements statewide, including federal, state and local agencies, as well as NGOs and private sector entities.
- An average of 2,200-3,000 businesses served each year, with over 10,000 hours of training provided.
- Client companies assisted report \$200-300 million in international trade transactions per year.
- Overall, CITD activities have assisted in the support of over 25,000 new jobs since the program began.

▪ **Public policies**

The development of a technopolis requires appropriate public policies. It is mandatory for public policies that address new technology and improvements to be written in a clear and concise manner, stating the mission, goals and objectives of each undertaking. For example, policies of accessibility, communication, and transfer of information using technology must promote business expansion to a global level while guarding sensitive information. Accessibility policies must provide the ability for any individual to access available technology from any point or place in the technopolis whether wired or wireless, from the home or business, or any public building or private enterprise regardless of site. Safeguard policies must be put in place that will prevent unlawful collecting of information or access without permission.

To promote communication within and outside the technopolis, the old infrastructure must be addressed with new policies and procedures for allowing installation of updated technology equipment that cures

obsolescence and easily promotes worldwide communication. City policies that encourage lone eagle enterprise startups and research, and encourage collaborative working relationships between government agencies and business foster the development of a technopolis.

Starting with a small financial base but having big ideas and dreams many times has resulted in high productivity for lone eagle enterprises. These fledgling business ventures need policy protection that will encourage them to expand and grow, further enhancing the financial strength of the technopolis.



Government agencies must be trained and versed on new policies so they can assist in furthering the achievements of these new startup companies. Some of the new policies must address funding for research along with startup funding, and also interpret or redesign government regulations with an emphasis on the growth of new business within the technopolis. Easy access to government agencies with positive support will result in more small businesses being created and growing to successful maturity.

The principal driving element in the city of Clovis and the region is the Clovis Community and Economic Development Agency (CCEDA), a department of the City of Clovis headed by Mike Dozier. The agency's responsibilities include promotion of new businesses, support of existing businesses, coordination of programs and student studies that increase the potential marketability of the workforce, and facilitation of policies that assist in the growth of those enterprises. The connection between the city's CCEDA and the emerging technopolis is a critical element within the framework of a budding technopolis. Policies within this department have already been modified to encourage the appropriate agencies to meet with new businesses, to assist them with what Clovis can offer, and to facilitate the connection between new and established businesses. CCEDA plays a key role between the existing financial environment and the expansion and success of many future ventures, and has at its disposal many connections that can facilitate new or existing businesses.

A major effort of the CCEDA is to provide new or existing businesses with potential rental space for operation or expansion. Financial support through institutions willing to fund new enterprises, and grants written by qualified institutions under the guidance of this department are at the basis of the business community. Technology is just one more connection for government and business, but this connection is an economically powerful tool for the success of any business or technopolis. The power in technology lies in its ability to make frontiers accessible to all, providing both home and business with worldwide communication, research, and investigative tools and numerous other benefits while affording ease of use and economical cost. The worldwide web is a virtual gold mine of information, accessible at the touch of a button, and moldable into any format conceivable for presentation and archiving.



As the community continues evolving into a modern technopolis and public policies are written to encourage the transformation, several changes to the old style of development need to occur. The infrastructure within the city area needs to expand to the perimeter of that area to include older residential subdivisions, commercial and government buildings and structures, and retrofitting has to occur so that the entire city is updated with fiber optics and equipment necessary for wired and wireless access to the internet. Tangible improvements need to be put in place according to a plan that will realize the goals of the technopolis; it is the day-by-day accomplishments of those goals that will make it possible for any city to become a fully operational technopolis.

CONCLUSION

Clovis residents will recognize that the implementation of its technopolis has been achieved when they realize the improved quality of life, increased wages, more knowledgeable workers, and more satisfying careers. Opportunities will be greatly enhanced by the growth of local businesses, the startup of new businesses, and the relocation of other high quality enterprises that are drawn to the area because of the cooperative business environment. With continuing technological improvements in the city, the “return on investment” will be measured in the financial gain of the majority of its citizens.

Science and technology communities have a history of providing logistical and knowledge based infrastructures that nurture innovative technology and growth for the development of incubators, entrepreneurs, startups and established companies. Marketing requires research, new product development, product life cycle management, pricing and promotion.

City economic planners are playing an important role in coordinating and communicating information on resource programs. New venture funds have opened within the Central Valley, which could dramatically increase the number of technology related businesses in Clovis. Business attracts capital, and capital attracts business.

The development of integrated networks has strong links to successful economic growth and expansion. Along with its core strengths, Clovis plans to leverage its integrated network assets by promoting and participating in global cultural, social and economic connections, bringing balance between domestic success and international opportunities.

City policies that encourage lone eagle enterprise startups and research, and encourage collaborative working relationships between government agencies and business will foster the development of a technopolis. Individuals must be able to access available technology from any point or place in the technopolis whether wired or wireless, from the home or business, or any public building or private enterprise regardless of site. Policies of accessibility, communication, and transfer of information using technology will promote business expansion to a global level while guarding sensitive information.

With businesses working together and clustered around a technology base, as well as developing markets within the technology arena, extended global connections between businesses worldwide, collaboration between education and government, and appropriate public policies, it will be possible to transform the City of Clovis into a viable technopolis active on the global stage. By setting goals and striving to reach those goals on a daily basis, any city may become a powerful competitor in not only the local community and across the continent, but in the global economy as well.

Clovis is a work in progress. Clovis is a transformation happening daily. Clovis is willing to help others and to learn also from others. Clovis has an audacious program, an audacious citizen-driven program!

REFERENCES

ⁱ Stiglitz, Joseph E., Making Globalization Work, W.W. Norton & Company, N.Y., 2007, page 271.

ⁱⁱ <http://www.fresnorji.org/about/>