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**PG&E Awards Center for Economic Development
\$15,000 Grant for On-Line Community**

On June 7, 2005, Pacific Gas & Electric's Mike Travis presented Dan Ripke, director of the CSU, Chico Research Foundation's Center for Economic Development (CED) and Paul Zingg CSU, Chico president, with a grant for \$15,000 to support CED's effort in creating an on-line community in California. The project, developed by Ripke, will be a Web site providing economic developers throughout California with access to a large, well-developed, user-created on-line community of information, resources, and expertise.

California is unique with its large and diverse population. Despite the state's numerous economic development and other workforce professionals, many are geographically isolated creating obstacles in gaining access to the resources they need to solve local problems. Many organizations within the state lack the resources such as funding and time to meet with colleagues and discuss solutions. California's immense geography creates physical barriers that prevent collaboration and the development of solutions across the state. The on-line community will fill this need and will bridge these physical barriers by making communication easier and more efficient.

The on-line community site will allow the target population of economic and community development professionals assist their colleagues by providing a venue for peer-to-peer development. The purpose of the on-line community will be to implement innovative strategies that will improve the economic vitality of the communities. Overall, the benefits of this project will be an increased number of clients served, increased outreach capabilities, and a potential increase in economic vitality. The project will be lead under the coordination of Dan Ripke and his staff at the CED.

The Center for Economic Development is a community outreach and technical assistance organization of the California State University, Chico Research Foundation. As an agent of the university, the center supports, expands, and reemphasizes the University's role in the regional economic development process. CED's mission is to educate and build the knowledge and capacity of California economic development professionals and enhance the well being of the regions' citizens by facilitating sustained, long term, and coordinated economic development strategies.

For more information contact Dan Ripke, director of CED, by calling 530-898-4598.

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