



## **The Greenhouse Project**

A Ron Wood Family Resource Center Program

*A community greenhouse and garden  
growing a healthier and greener Carson City.*

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## **Business Plan**

**March 8, 2010**

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## **Executive Summary**

The Greenhouse Project is a Nevada non-profit corporation whose mission is to establish and sustainably operate a community-based greenhouse and garden in Carson City. The project operates under the auspices of the Carson City Cultural Commission and its Special Citizen Action Group, and is a nonprofit program operating under the Ron Wood Family Resource Center, a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

The Greenhouse Project will provide educational and vocational opportunities for students, youth groups and special needs individuals in a garden setting and serve as a year-round source of locally-grown agricultural and horticultural products for the Carson City community. The greenhouse operations will rely on renewable energy sources for power and use ecologically sustainable growing methods to cultivate vegetables, flowers, and bedding plants.

The greenhouse will serve as a teaching facility for hands-on training programs that emphasize environmental stewardship, civic engagement and academic achievement. Through these programs, students will cultivate and distribute vegetables for school culinary classes and local food banks and will produce flower baskets for the downtown Carson City corridor.

In addition to providing youth educational and vocational opportunities, The Greenhouse Project will also serve the needs of Carson's low-income community by increasing access to fresher, more nutritious food supplies. The project also promotes revitalization of Carson City's downtown commercial corridor by enhancing its appearance through horticultural arts.

The Greenhouse Project will support these programs from sales of cut flowers via a community supported agriculture program, local business sponsorships of the flower baskets, and annual fundraising events that include a benefit concert, silent auction, and a celebrity-chef dinner and art show. Grants from a variety of government and private sources are also being sought.

The greenhouse and garden will be located on a one-acre site on the Carson High School campus. Estimated start-up costs are \$125,000, and include construction of a 2,160 square-foot greenhouse, site improvements, utility hookups, mechanical and plumbing systems, and installation of alternative energy systems for wind, solar and geothermal power.

To date, fundraising efforts have raised \$17,000 in cash donations and an additional single pledge of up to \$50,000 in matching funds. Volunteer labor has also been pledged for the construction of the greenhouse and related site work.

Local professionals have donated the legal, accounting, engineering, construction management, and real estate services needed to incorporate as a nonprofit entity, request 501(c)(3) status, evaluate sites, negotiate a lease with the Carson School District, apply for special use and building permits, and compile grant applications. Agriculture and government professionals in

the Carson community have also contributed their expertise in creating a viable business plan for the project's operations. Similar in-kind contributions are pledged for the development of the alternative energy systems, educational programs, and on-site recreational activities.

The Greenhouse Project has the potential to grow and distribute 4,500 pounds of produce annually. With local food banks and low-income individuals receiving 90% of the production, the project will provide nutritious, locally grown vegetables to approximately 3,000 people a month. The remaining produce will be donated to the Carson High culinary program to ensure that the culinary students have a steady source of seasonal vegetables year-round.

And, at least 200 students are expected to participate in The Greenhouse Project's educational and vocational programs. The grade schools, middle schools and high school as well as Western Nevada College will be involved, as will youth enrolled in after school programs. Community outreach programs will extend the educational opportunities to interested adults, involving them in activities such as master and junior master gardener classes.

Finally, the Greenhouse Special Citizen Action Group organized the production and care of 90 hanging flower baskets in 2009 and anticipates the same production level in 2010. The Greenhouse Project will assume responsibility for these flower baskets, continuing this vital contribution to the revitalization of Carson City's downtown corridor each summer.

## **The Organization**

The Greenhouse Project is a nonprofit Nevada corporation operating under the Ron Wood Family Resource Center, a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. A Special Citizen Action Group of the Carson City Cultural Commission supports the project as a broad-based advisory council.

The corporation's Board of Directors and the Citizen Action Group are professionals in the fields of horticulture, agriculture, law, arts, marketing, accounting, construction, youth and business development, grants administration, and parks and recreation. Action Group members also represent the Carson City School Board, Cultural Commission, and Planning and Business Development Departments, as well as local nurseries, organic farmers, UNR Cooperative Extension Service, local professionals, downtown businesses, and the Downtown Carson City Farmer's Market.

### *Project History*

The Greenhouse Project concept started in November 2008 with the Carson City Cultural Commission, an advisory board to the Carson City Board of Supervisors, whose mission is to forward civic and economic benefit for Carson City and the State of Nevada. Cultural Commission member Karen Abowd proposed that the Commission undertake a project to increase agricultural and horticultural arts in Carson City. To this end, a Special Citizen Action

Group of over 35 members was formed and, in February of 2009, the group presented the project to the Board of Supervisors. The project won the Board's approval together with its commitment of staff resources to aid in establishing a community greenhouse.

Karen Abowd's original concept was to build a greenhouse to produce hanging flower baskets for Carson City's downtown business district. The Action Group, however, envisioned the greenhouse as a community facility that would serve a broader purpose and also provide a hub for people of all ages to engage in cooperative, healthy activity. Thus, the project was expanded beyond the production of flower baskets to include educational and vocational programs that will ultimately serve as a source of fresh produce for local food banks and school programs.

### *Site Selection*

For the past year, the organization's primary focus has been on locating a suitable site for the greenhouse. A total of seven sites were reviewed, with Carson High School offering the best overall location.

Three members of the Action Group – Karen Abowd, Kathy Halbardier and Jennifer Pruitt – explored site options based on criteria such as the site's proximity to schools and public transportation, site improvement and utility hook-up costs, suitability for solar panel arrays and wind turbines, security, visibility, expansion potential, and neighborhood and city support. The group examined properties offered by Carson Tahoe Hospital (CTH), Boys and Girls Club, Eagle Valley Middle School and two private landowners.

Of these initial sites, Eagle Valley Middle School was recommended as the most promising. At a town hall meeting in July of 2009, the School District presented its plan to develop the school's grounds and included the greenhouse as a component of the overall project. The neighboring residents, however, strongly objected to a bus barn proposed for the site and, as a result, the school district delayed the development plans indefinitely.

Following this set-back, the Colard Family generously offered Anderson Ranch property west of the Mountain Street Trailhead, and included the greenhouse in its master plan. The proposed location of the greenhouse, however, was altered during Carson City's major plan review of the Anderson Ranch project in October 2009. The revised location was deemed unsuitable by all involved and the greenhouse was ultimately dropped from the project.

Shortly afterwards, Carson School District representatives requested that The Greenhouse Project Board consider property located on the Carson High campus as a location for the greenhouse. The offered location met virtually all site criteria and, in December of 2009, the Carson City School Board signed a Letter of Intent to lease a one-acre parcel to The Greenhouse Project.

The one-acre parcel initially offered was located within a 10-acre plot zoned as agricultural land. Upon further review, however, school district officials determined that a greenhouse in that location did not comport with the long-term plans for Carson High and thus offered an alternative site closer to school facilities. Several Greenhouse Board members inspected the alternative site with school district officials together with professional engineer Mark Rotter of Manhard Consulting and decided that it offered advantages over the initial site. Although the alternative site is not zoned for agricultural use, and therefore requires a special use permit for the greenhouse, significant cost savings would be realized due to its proximity to utility hookups and an existing access road. And, an existing fence already secures the site.

The process to secure a special use permit was started in early February of 2010. The Carson City Planning Department conducted a completeness review on February 23 and the special use permit application was submitted on February 26. If the permit is approved at the March 31<sup>st</sup> hearing, The Greenhouse Project will negotiate the final terms of the lease with the School Board. It is anticipated that the greenhouse and garden will have a home by May.

### *Fundraising*

The Greenhouse Project has been actively raising funds for construction of the greenhouse since July of 2009. A generous \$10,000 donation in July prompted the incorporation of The Greenhouse Project as a Nevada nonprofit organization. The project then partnered with the Brewery Arts Center and the Ron Woods Family Resource Center for a benefit concert and silent auction in early September. Plans for a celebrity chef dinner and art show for the spring of 2010 are underway as is the groundwork for the second benefit concert.

The Ron Woods Family Resource Center is one of The Greenhouse Project's major partners. The partnership was formalized on August 31, 2009, when the two entities signed a Memorandum of Understanding in which the Ron Woods Center officially adopted The Greenhouse Project as a program under their federal tax identification number, thereby conferring 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status to the project's operations. The Greenhouse Project's application for exemption under 501(c)(3) is in progress and will be filed with the IRS before July of 2010.

The Greenhouse Project has several grant applications outstanding and a few more currently in the drafting stages. Final decisions are pending for grant applications submitted to the Nevada Agricultural Council, Community Development Block Grant Program, Fund for Healthy Nevada, Carson City Community Support Services Grant Program, and Carson City Community Youth Grant Program. Applications in progress include those for a Learn and Serve Grant, a Partnership Carson City Grant, and a Hoop House Grant. USDA grants are also being explored.

## *Operations*

Initial policies and procedures for the greenhouse operations are completed and job descriptions for projected staff are written. Ongoing research into successful educational models continues and actual design of the educational and vocational modules will commence by fall of 2010, with implementation of these programs planned for summer of 2011.

After consulting with area organic growers, a greenhouse kit was selected and related equipment for its operation has been identified. A small, auxiliary greenhouse was donated in mid-2009. Once an additional \$20,000 is raised, the greenhouse will be purchased and its construction commenced. The Builders Association of Western Nevada (BAWN) has pledged to donate the labor required to erect both greenhouses and improve the site. Planning for alternative energy sources is ongoing and volunteers have pledged professional services to assist in their acquisition.

The charitable and educational programs of The Greenhouse Project will be funded through a community-supported agriculture (CSA) program run by students and community volunteers. The CSA will produce cut flowers grown on the greenhouse grounds. Shares in the cut-flower program will be sold, with share-holders receiving cut flower bunches every week for the 16-week growing season. Cultivation of the land for this portion of the project is planned to commence shortly after the lease for the Carson High site is finalized. Actual production of cut flowers is anticipated for the 2011 season.

The Greenhouse Project will assume responsibility for producing and maintaining the hanging flower baskets in December of 2010. This program, entering its second year, is supported by sponsorships from downtown Carson City businesses. The Carson City Parks and Recreation Department has agreed to hire laborers to water and maintain the baskets during the summer, with The Greenhouse Project providing the necessary funds. The greenhouse will be used for growing the bedding plants and assembling the baskets.

## **Mission**

The Greenhouse Project is a non-profit Nevada Corporation whose mission is to establish and sustainably operate a community-based greenhouse.

## **Vision**

The Greenhouse Project provides educational and vocational opportunities for students, youth groups and special needs individuals in a garden setting and serves as a year-round source of locally-grown agricultural and horticultural products for the Carson City community. The greenhouse operations rely on renewable energy sources for power and use ecologically sustainable growing methods to cultivate vegetables and bedding plants.

## Objectives

### *Accomplishments*

- Selected greenhouse kit, purchased stamped, engineered plans for the greenhouse, and received pledge from BAWN to donate construction labor
- Identified equipment and staffing necessary for the greenhouse operations and alternative energy sources
- Secured letter of intent from the Carson City School Board for the lease of one-acre on the Carson High School campus
- Reviewed proposed site with a professional engineer, completed preliminary site plan, and submitted a special use permit application to Carson City for the greenhouse
- In 2009 installed 91 hanging flower baskets and raised \$16,000 through 60 flower basket sponsorships; sold 48 sponsorships to date for the 2010 season
- Established a web site and Facebook page and sponsored a contest to design a logo for The Greenhouse Project
- Held 2009 summer benefit concert and auction resulting in \$17,000 in cash donations and a pledge for \$50,000 in matching funds
- Preliminary plans for a 2010 spring celebrity chef dinner and art show and summer benefit concert and auction are underway
- Established nonprofit Nevada corporation and partnered with Ron Wood Family Resource Center to allow for tax-exempt operations pending application to IRS for 501(c)(3) status
- Awaiting decisions on grant applications submitted to the Nevada Agricultural Council, Community Development Block Grant Program, Fund for Healthy Nevada, Carson City Community Support Services Grant Program, and Carson City Community Youth Grant Program and are submitting applications for a Learn and Serve Grant, Partnership Carson City Grant, and Hoop House Grant

### *Short Term*

- Secure the Carson High School site including finalizing a workable lease and site plan providing access, water and utilities using renewable energy sources
- Finalize the bid for the greenhouse structure through Growers Supply, construct and outfit the greenhouse to house this project
- Implement a staffing program using the High School teacher resources and supplementing with part time staff and volunteers including student and disabled workers
- Establish a CSA for cut flowers in order to support the greenhouse operations
- Secure sponsorship funding for 100% of the hanging baskets in the downtown core

### *Long Term*

- Develop programs for the K-12 system, the Boys and Girls Club, and for the volunteer community such as entrepreneurial training, nutrition, physical fitness, mentoring with UNR and WNC students
- Access additional technical expertise from the WNC and UNR agricultural programs
- Develop a sustainable model based on income generation supplemented by community support including donations, grants and volunteers

## **Management and Personnel**

Development of this project is by a Citizens Action Group of the Carson City Cultural Commission. The Action Group serves as an advisory council to The Greenhouse Project, a nonprofit Nevada corporation. The President of this corporation serves as the Project Manager. The Greenhouse will be staffed by a full-time Greenhouse Manager and a part-time Assistant Manager. Both positions will be paid.

Volunteers, students enrolled in education/vocational programs, and youth involved in after-school programs will provide additional labor for the greenhouse and gardens. Students pre-qualified as LMI (low to middle income) will be eligible for 20 paid, work study positions. Pre-qualified students are those qualifying for the free/reduced lunch program.

## **Partnerships:**

- Ron Woods Family Resource Center
- Builders Association of Western Nevada
- NV - Nevada Energy
- Carson City Board of Supervisors
- Carson City School Board
- Carson City Economic Development Department
- Carson City Licensing and Permits
- Carson City Cultural Commission
- Nevada Small Business Development Center
- Nevada Cooperative Extension Service
- Brewery Arts Center
- Carson City Downtown Consortium
- Nevada Agriculture in the Classroom (future)
- Specialty Crop Institute of Western Nevada College (future)

## **Market Analysis**

TGP targets three distinct market segments, downtown businesses and disadvantaged residents of Carson City with two distinct products – flower baskets and produce. Nevada Department of Taxation 2004 report shows that there are currently 64 businesses in the downtown core and are included in the Carson City’s Redevelopment District. The demand for flower baskets is seasonal as dictated by the climate of Carson City.

The second segment of LMI (low to middle income) residents comprises 49% of Carson City’s population as of the 2000 census. The demand for produce is year round and increasing with the decline in the local and national economy.

Cut flowers produced target a third market segment. They will be sold through a CSA available to the general public.

## **Competition**

The business of the non-profit GHP is designed to supplement, and not compete with, the for-profit sector in the Carson City area.

Competition for farm-grown cut flowers is very minimal and is found in local Farmer's Markets which sell a limited amount of cut flowers as do select florists.

Also, some supermarkets provide fresh produce to those in need, but demand outstrips the supply and supply is also limited to surplus on hand.

Farmer's Markets also offer an opportunity for the GHP to sell surplus produce and cut flowers.

## **Marketing Strategy**

TGP will be aggressively recruiting sponsors for the downtown hanging flower baskets and will work in partnership with the Carson City Downtown Consortium. In order to identify and reach recipients of the produce, TGP will partner with Partnership Carson City, Friends in Service Helping, Kids in Transition, Carson City School District, and the Ron Wood Center.

The Greenhouse Project sales strategy will be based on visibility, consistency, and strategic relationships.

- **Visibility** – TGP will need to generate visibility in order to inform the community of the availability of basket sponsorships and free produce and the CSA cut flower program.
- **Consistency** – In addition to product consistency, TGP will market its products year round.
- **Strategic Relationships** – Relationships will be key to the development of a sustainable project by allowing TGP to position itself as integral to the success of downtown businesses and as a valuable contributor to the community's underserved populations. Forming mutually beneficial, strategic partnerships will be a necessity to create an ongoing stream of financial support.

## **Operations of the Greenhouse Project**

TGP will grow and distribute hanging flower baskets for Carson City's downtown corridor. These baskets will include a mixture of annuals and perennials. These baskets are designed for hanging from light poles during the summer months.

TGP will grow and distribute vegetables year-round at no cost to residents of Carson City who are low-income, or otherwise disadvantaged. The vegetables will include items like lettuce year-round and other crops that which are indigenous to the changing seasons.

*Facility:*

The Greenhouse Project (TGP) is a 2,160 s.f. facility located on the grounds of the Carson City High School. The facility will be staffed by one full time Greenhouse Manager and one part time position and more than 30 student volunteers. The greenhouse has the capacity to grow 4500 lbs. of produce annually as well as bedding plants for the flower baskets.

*Education:*

The greenhouse will serve as a teaching facility for hands-on training programs that emphasize environmental stewardship, civic engagement and academic achievement. Through these programs students will cultivate and distribute vegetables for school culinary classes and local food banks and will produce flower baskets to be used for the downtown Carson City corridor. The students will also gain experience operating a CSA for cut flowers grown on the greenhouse site and earn a wage while doing so.

*Supply:*

The Greenhouse Project serves the needs of Carson City's low-income population by increasing access to fresher, more nutritious food supplies. The project also promotes revitalization of Carson City's downtown commercial corridor by enhancing its appearance through horticultural arts.

*Start-up Summary*

TGP start-up costs include the greenhouse itself, the construction of the greenhouse and all the necessary equipment and other essentials for growing, and site development work.

The greenhouse itself will be the largest start-up expense. This includes structure, interior workings, fencing, utilities, permits, liability insurance, ground source heat pump, solar pump, wind turbine, solar panel array, and monitoring system.

The greenhouse will need the following equipment: a 30' x 72' greenhouse structure made out of polycarbonate, a ventilation system, a heater, a mister system, supplemental lighting, fertilizer injector, pruners, pots, trays, soil, seeds and assorted chemicals.

All parts of the project infrastructure will be owned by TGP. Depreciation will be determined by the Carson City Comptroller in accordance with US and State of Nevada requirements.

## **Potential Funding Sources**

- Nevada Works grants to fund wages for CSA student workers
- CREES grants (sustainable agriculture research grants)
- USDA grants
- WE CAN grants
- Various additional grant funds to be applied for have from related sources with an estimated value of \$2,000-\$200,000
- Flower Basket sponsorship program (raised \$14,000 in 2009 with 60 sponsors)
- Private donations--\$10,000 to date
- Fundraisers such as the annual summer concert and silent auction--\$7,500 to date
- Sales of cut flowers produced on the greenhouse grounds through a community supported agriculture program

## Financials

### Carson City Greenhouse Project Estimated One Year Operation Expenses

Revenues			
	Sales of Product	\$38,500.00	
	Grants	\$106,500.00	
	In-Kind Contributions	\$10,000.00	
	Other	\$5,000.00	
	Total Revenues		\$160,000.00
Expenses			
	Salaries		
	Facilities Manager	\$41,600.00	
	Facilities Assistant	\$14,820.00	
	Payroll Taxes	\$9,118.00	
	Payroll Benefits - Medical, Insurance	\$12,000.00	
	Student Stipends	\$10,000.00	
			\$87,538.00
	Operations		
	Utilities	\$11,880.00	
	Insurance	\$5,500.00	
	Repair & Maintenance	\$2,400.00	
	Supplies & Plants	\$24,000.00	
	Transportation	\$1,200.00	
			\$44,980.00
	General & Administrative		
	Advertising & Web Site	\$9,600.00	
	Telephone & Cell Phone	\$2,500.00	
	Office Expenses	\$1,200.00	
	Taxes & Licenses	\$600.00	
	Legal & Accounting	\$2,400.00	
	Insurance	\$500.00	
	Other Expenses	\$6,000.00	
			\$22,800.00
	Total Expenses		\$155,318.00
	Excess Revenues over Expenses		\$4,682.00

**Carson City Greenhouse Project  
Sources & Uses Statement**

**Sources:**

Grants	\$192,884.00
In-Kind	\$10,000.00
Fund Raisers	\$7,500.00

**Total** **\$210,384.00**

**Uses:**

Personnel	\$48,090.00
Contractual/Consultant	\$17,000.00
Staff Travel/Per Diem	\$260.00
Equipment	\$114,254.00
Supplies	\$6,900.00
Occupancy	\$23,880.00
Communications	

**Total** **\$210,384.00**