



# Lake Elsinore

## Economist sees bright future for Lake Elsinore



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By **AARON BURGIN**  
The Press-Enterprise

The Inland area has the land, jobs and people to emerge as a premier player in the state's economy following the current housing market slump, economist John Husing said Thursday at the Chamber of Commerce and Economic Workforce Development Committee's annual luncheon.

Focusing on Lake Elsinore, Husing told the audience of 150 people that the city's declining crime rate, rising education levels and population growth has placed the city in a positive position.

People who attended the function agreed, and said they were excited about the region's potential.

"It was very positive, and very encouraging," said Claudia Rose, a local real estate agent. "We've been seeing the change, and it is encouraging to see that we're not alone."

Husing, an economic forecaster, said the region, which is traditionally blue-collar, is on the cusp of bringing a large influx of white-collar employers and professionals into its fold.

The chief reasons are more available land than in Los Angeles, Orange and San Diego counties; a large, rapidly growing population base that cannot be served from those counties; and a large share of the new-home market, Husing said.

About 79 percent of industrial construction and 33 percent of office space construction in Southern California is occurring in the Inland area, Husing said, quoting statistics from brokerage firm Grubb & Ellis Co.

In addition, the educated work force capable of securing those jobs is migrating inland. Between 2000 and 2006, there was a 41.4 percent increase in the number of Inland residents with either a bachelor's degree or higher, according to census statistics.

"We didn't graduate 129,000 new college students," Husing said. "They moved here for the affordable homes.

"What it says is that the conditions are now in place to emerge from the shadows of those

Currently, he said, new homes are priced 13 percent too high, and existing homes are priced to sell 20 percent higher than if the rapid period of speculation that occurred prior to the current slowdown never happened.

Husing, however, said he does not expect an all-out burst of the housing bubble as occurred in the early 1990s because other underlying economic factors are still positive.

"With the exception of the housing market, the economy is doing fine," Husing said. "The one other exception would be oil and gasoline prices."

Turning to Lake Elsinore, Husing cited the city's increased taxable sales, assessed property valuation, tourism and falling crime rates as reasons for residents to be excited about the city's prospects.

"It's got incredible potential, and it's getting new residents from both north and south," Husing said.

Dan Turner, a local developer, said the report validated what he has seen firsthand.

"We are starting to see these white-collar jobs here in Lake Elsinore," Turner said. "Better jobs, more growth and a higher standard of living. That is all positive."

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