

4-2010

Las Vegas as the American Milan: Economic growth in the world economy

Robert E. Lang

Brookings Mountain West, robert.lang@unlv.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/brookings_lectures_events



Part of the [Economic Policy Commons](#), [Growth and Development Commons](#), and the [Urban Studies Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Lang, R. E. (2010). Las Vegas as the American Milan: Economic growth in the world economy.

Available at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/brookings_lectures_events/15

This Presentation is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Scholarship@UNLV with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this Presentation in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself.

This Presentation has been accepted for inclusion in Brookings Scholar Lecture Series by an authorized administrator of Digital Scholarship@UNLV. For more information, please contact digitalscholarship@unlv.edu.



Las Vegas as the American Milan: Economic Growth in the World Economy

Robert Lang, UNLV Director Brookings Mountain West

Why Milan?



Milan as a Metaphor

- ▶ **Milan Makes Stuff and is a Tech City**
- ▶ **Milan's Specialty as a World City is Design and Trade**
- ▶ **Milan is Not a Museum—Unlike Some Other Italian Cities that have Inspired Las Vegas such as Venice and Florence**
- ▶ **Design Needs Flair—We Got Plenty of That and it Plays to a Key Strength**



Milan is as Also a Direction

- ▶ **Toward More Global Connectivity**
- ▶ **Toward a More Diversified Economy**
- ▶ **Toward Signature Styles for the City
Such as the Mid Century Modern that
Palm Springs Now Plays off of Just
Because Sinatra Once Lived There**
- ▶ **Toward a Host of Other Industries
that Play to Our Strengths**
- ▶ **Bottom Line: Think Milan**

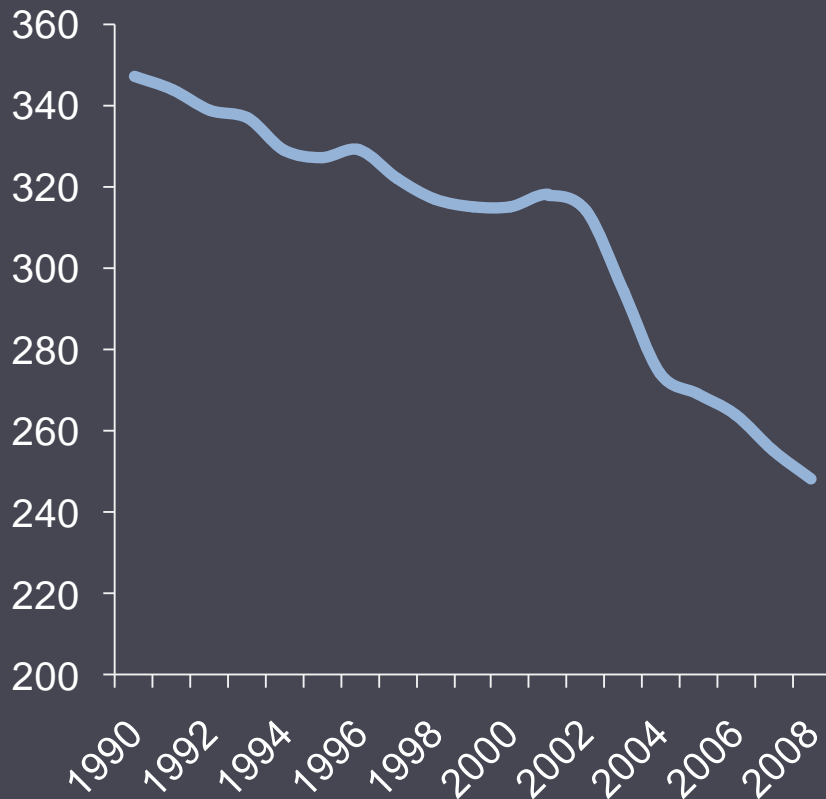


**First We Need Some Image Work:
Sustainable Las Vegas—Closer to
Reality Than You Might Think**



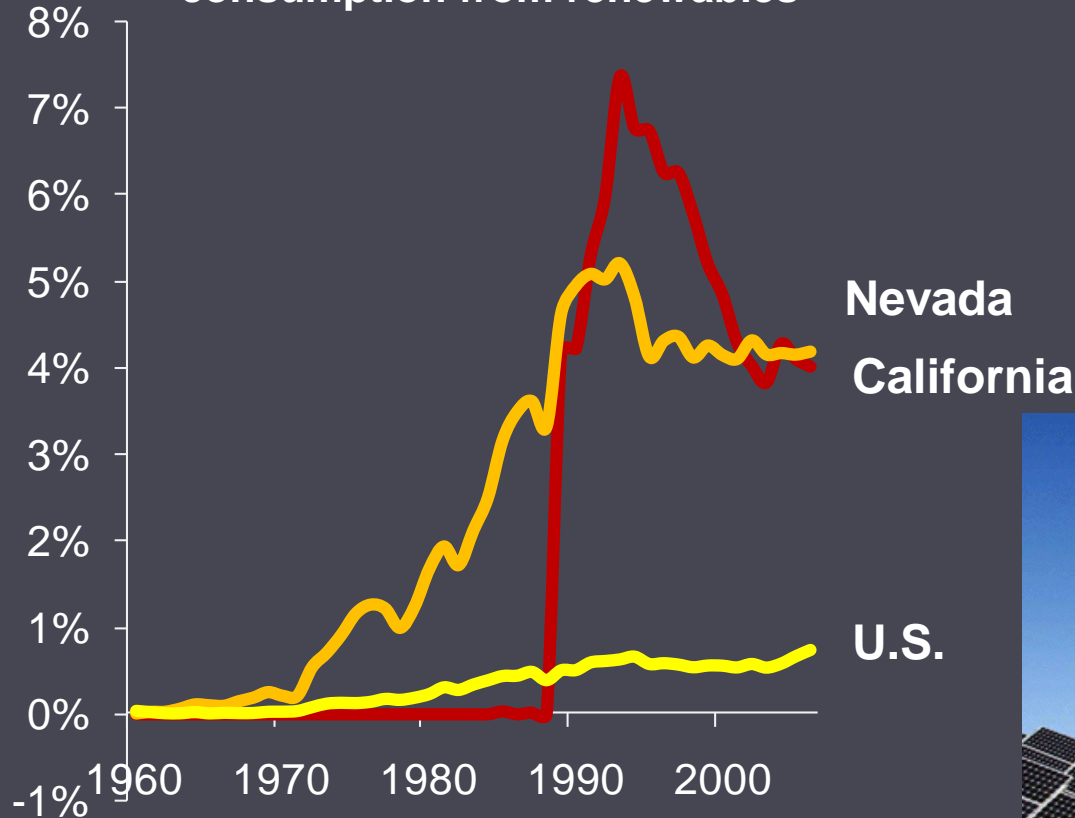
Water Use is Dropping!

Southern Nevada Water Authority per capita gallons of water use per day



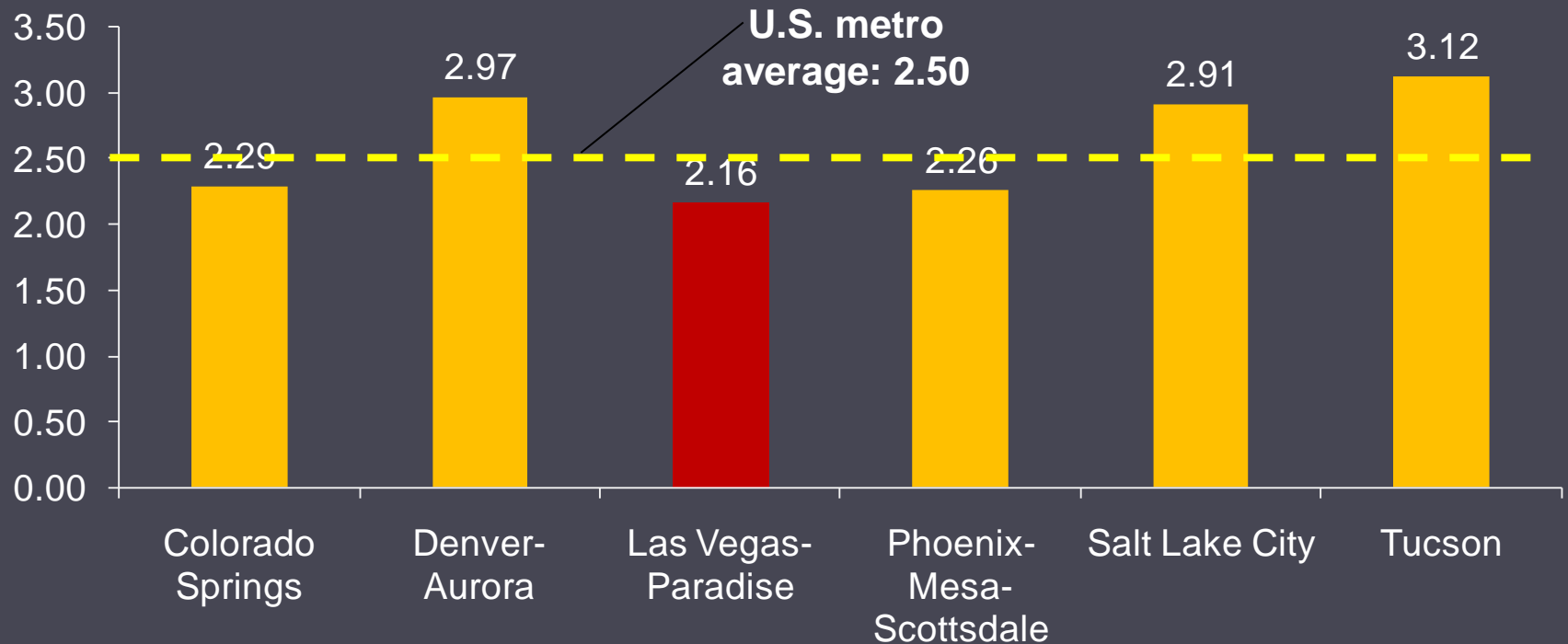
Nevada is Adopting Renewable Energy

Share of total energy consumption from renewables



Las Vegas has a Low Carbon Footprint

Million metric tons of carbon emitted per capita, 2005



Source: "Shrinking the Carbon Footprint of Metropolitan America" (Brookings, 2008)

It's Also Denser Built than the East



Las Vegas

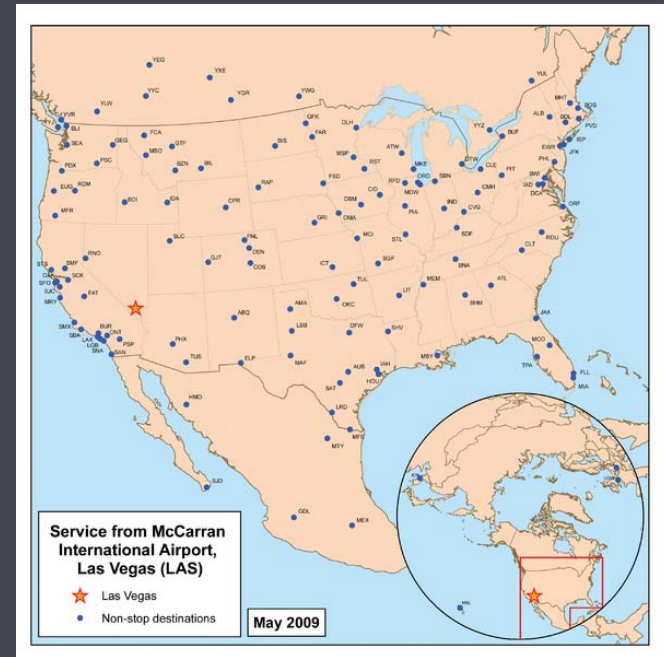
Atlanta



Also, Las Vegas is a “Bridge to Somewhere” and a “World Business Space”



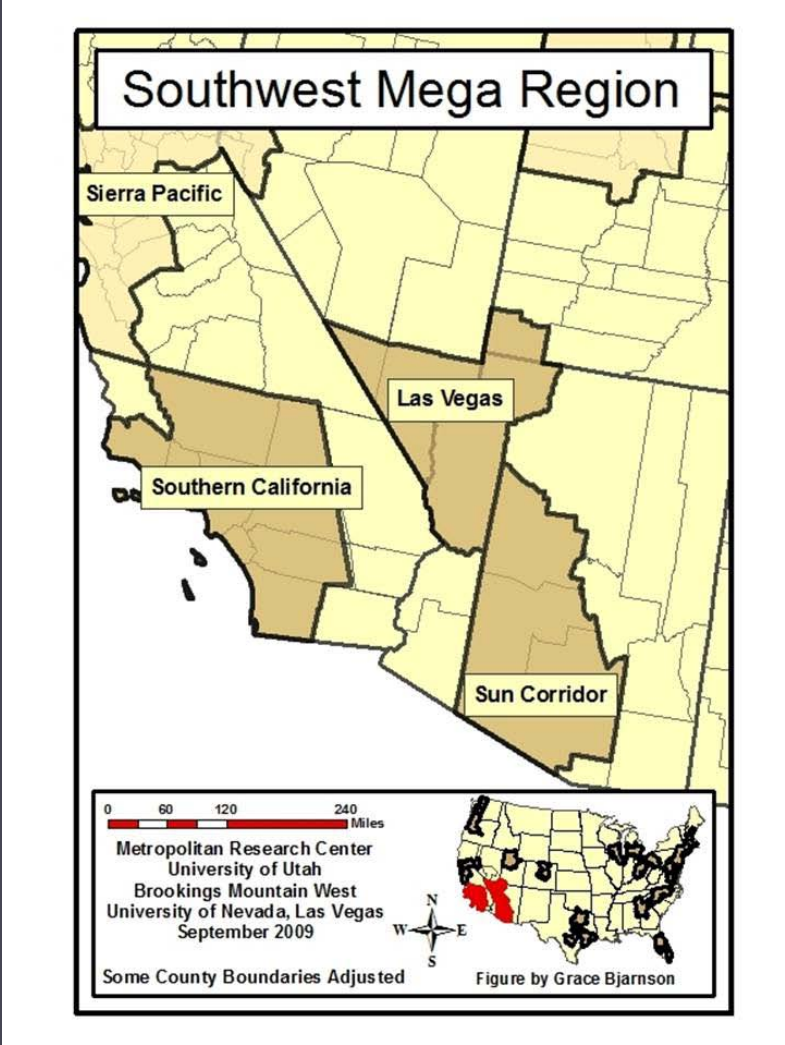
Las Vegas: The Convening City



ONLY
Vegas **VEGAS MEANS BUSINESS**



LA-Las Vegas-Phoenix Connections



Population Change, 1970-1940

Southwest Megaregion

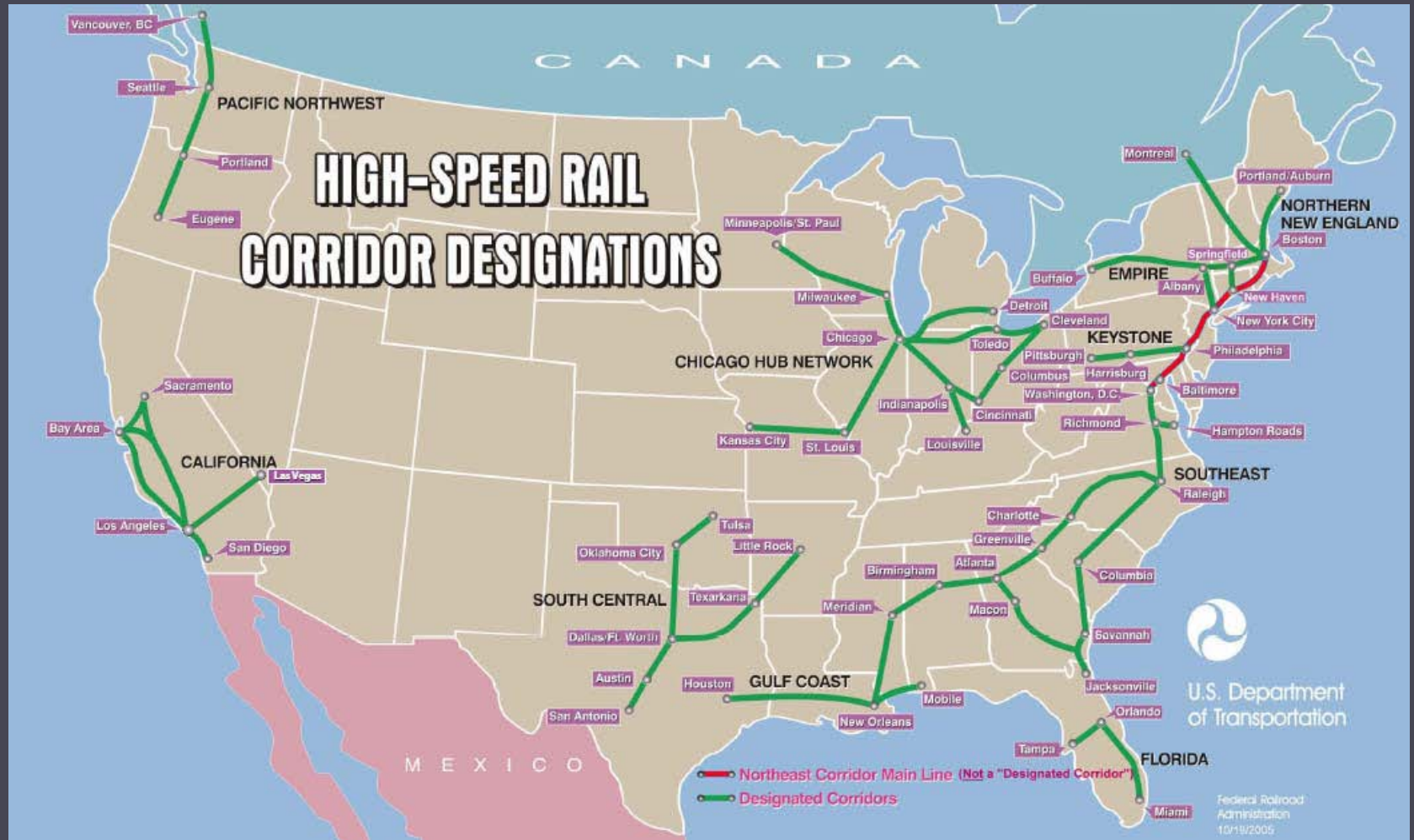
(Thousands)

Megapolitan Area	1970	2000	2010	2025	2040	Growth '70-'40	Percent Change
So Cal	11,976	20,237	22,635	26,386	30,273	18,297	153%
Las Vegas	323	1,674	2,407	3,416	4,442	4,119	1275%
Sun Corridor	1,447	4,297	5,699	7,447	9,233	7,786	538%
Total	13,746	26,208	30,741	37,249	43,948	30,202	220%

Source: Woods & Poole, 2009



Official 2009 High-Speed Rail Map



We Will See High-Speed Rail



And Interstate 11 to Phoenix



Business Travel Network, 2005

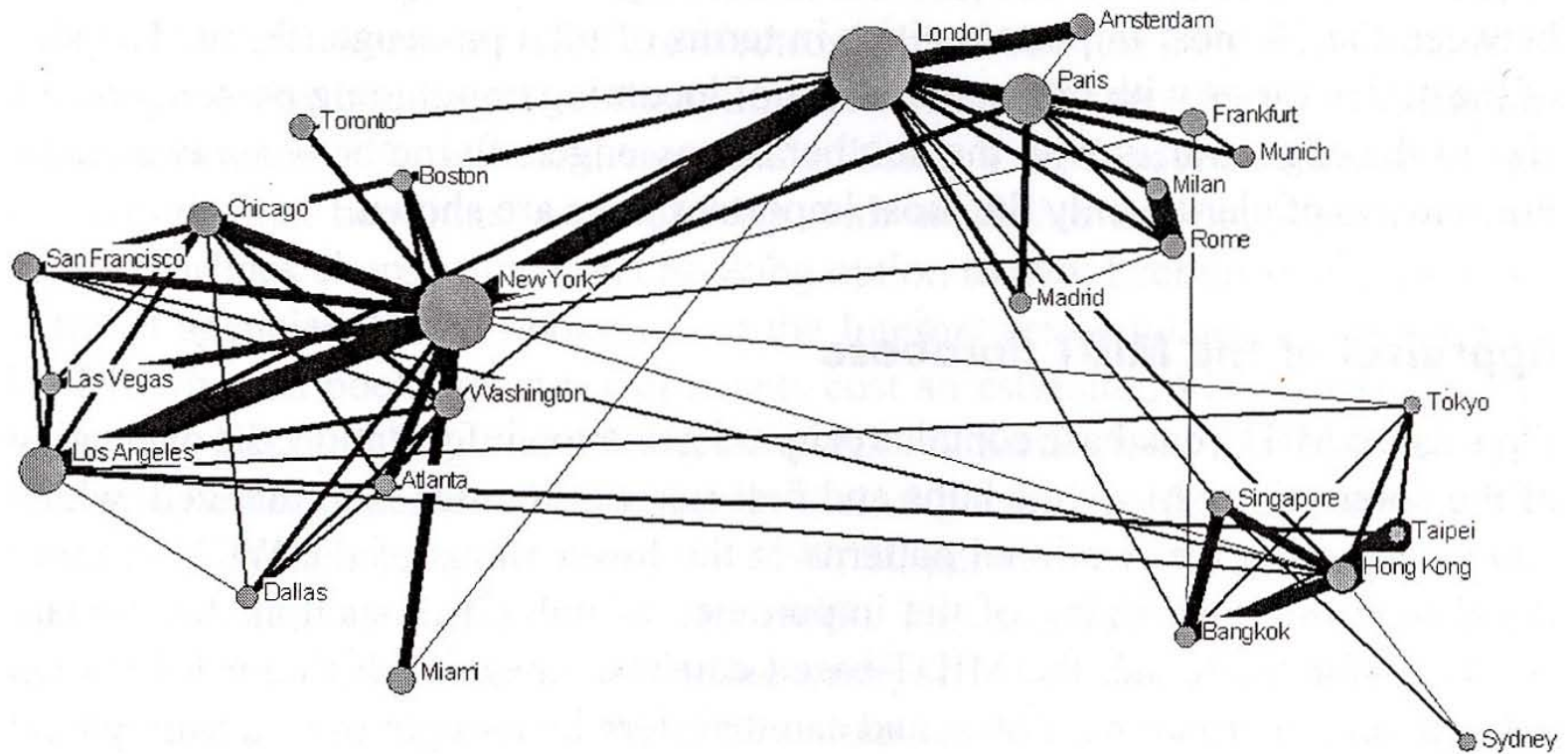
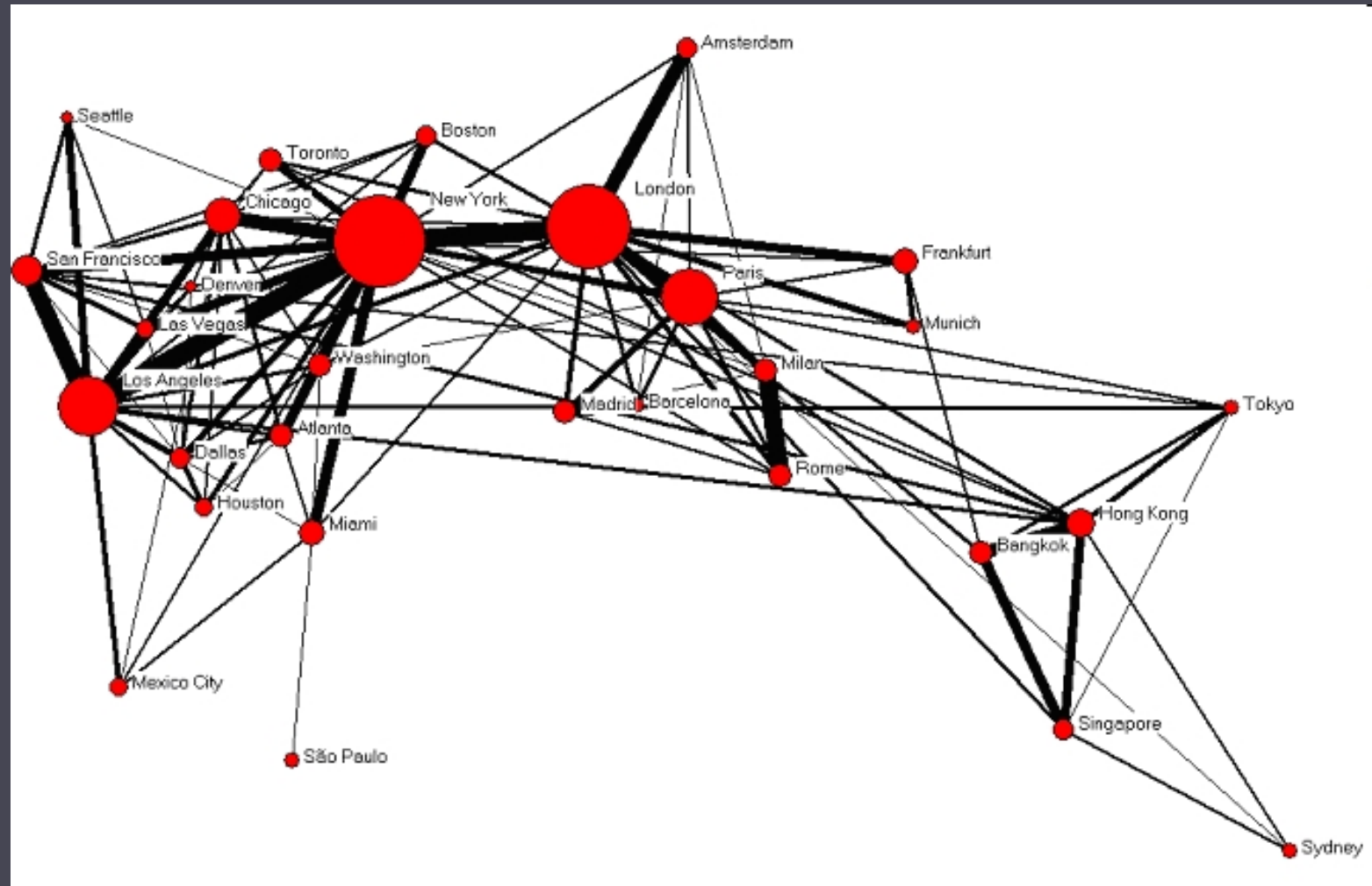


Figure 3.1 Most important cities and their links in the world city network (source: Derudder and Witlox 2005b)

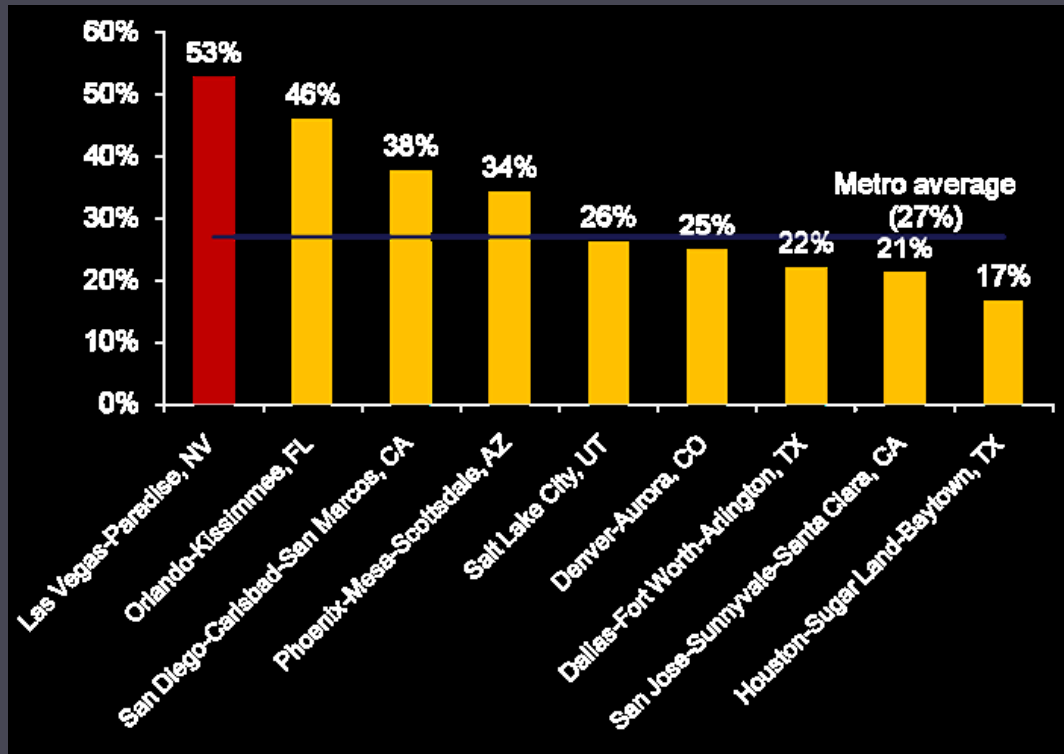
World City Air Network, 2009



Economic Diversification—The Next Frontier



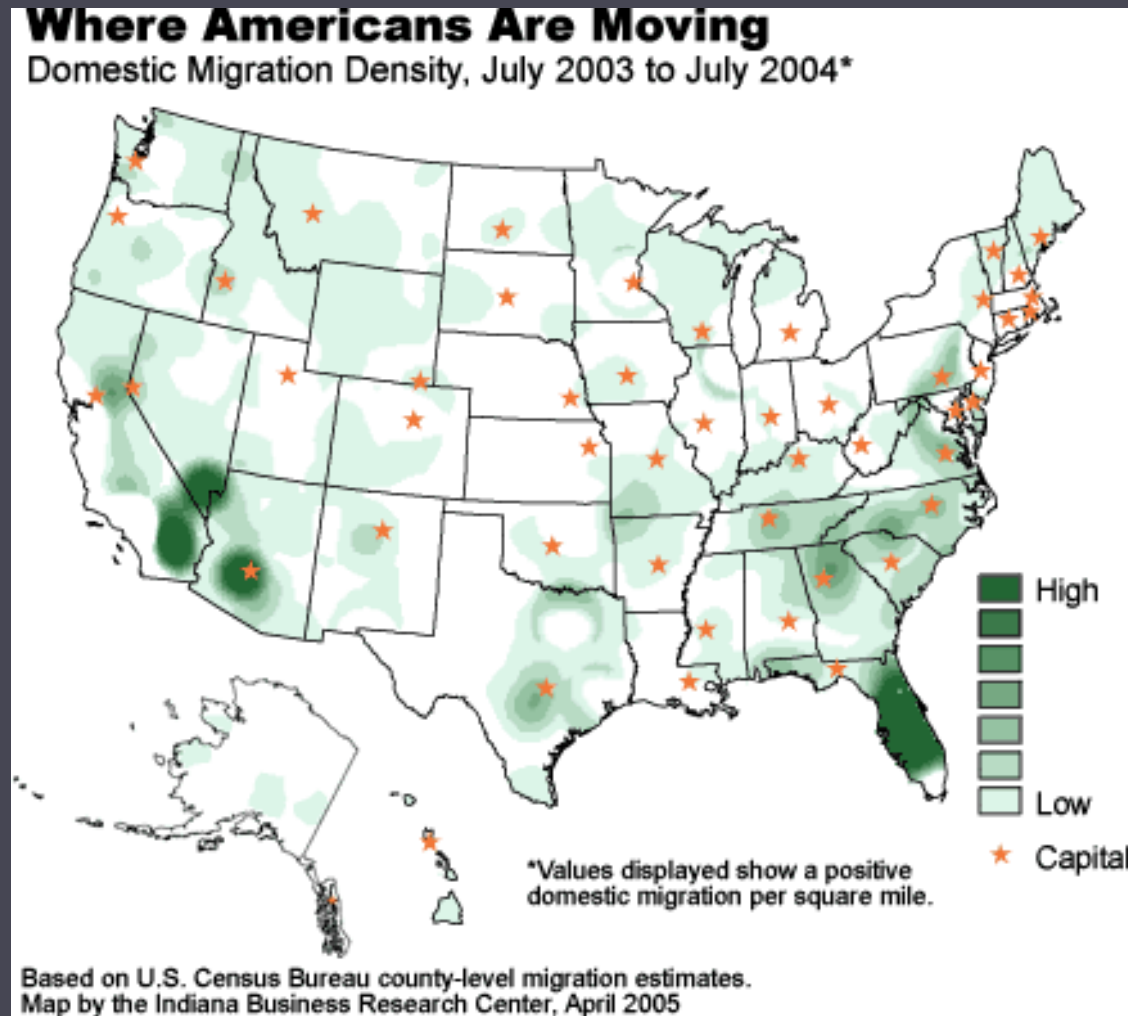
Overlying on Growth & Tourism



Share of metro private sector GDP from food, drinking, leisure, hospitality, construction, and real estate



We Used to Count on Migrants

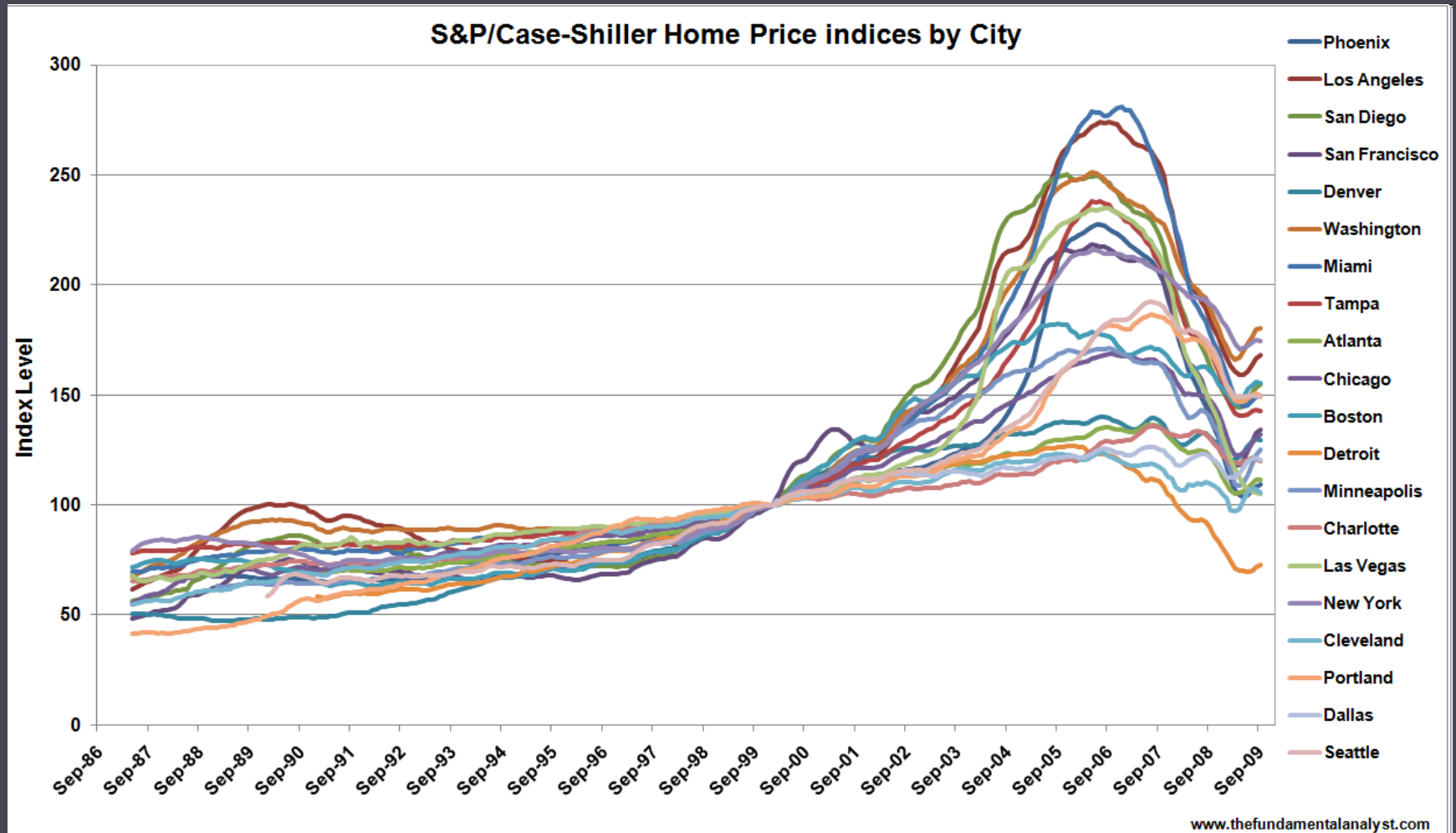


One More Migrant Wave?

- ▶ **We Are Due at Least one More Semi-Boom Round of Growth**
- ▶ **Case-Shiller Numbers Point to a Value Gap with California**
- ▶ **Look at RTC Cities in the 1990s—Phoenix, Dallas, and Denver**
- ▶ **In Recovery, Real Estate Overhang can Switch from a Drag on Growth to a Driver of Growth**



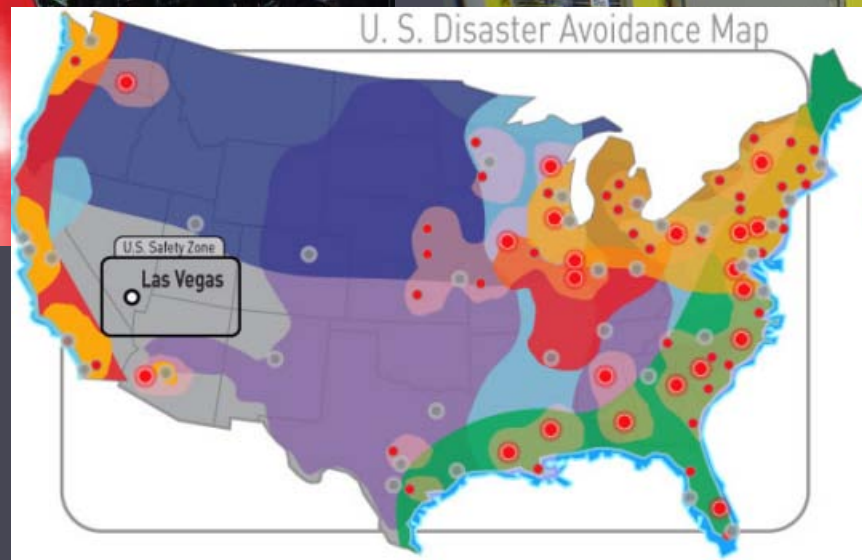
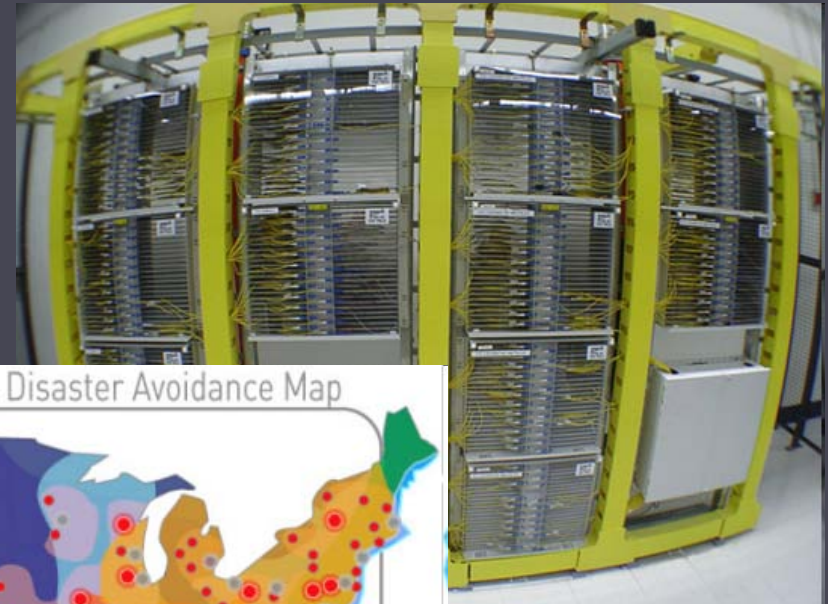
Case-Shiller Boom/Bust



A Future in Alternative Energy



Tech Future: The Switch



Repurpose Yucca Mountain



Leverage the Region's World City Assets



Vegas as a Permanent Trade Show



CEA Now Has Exclusive Rights to the Trademark "World Trade Center Las Vegas" The Consumer Electronics Show will Now Become a Permanent Fixture in Las Vegas...May Others Follow?



And There are Other Big Shows



Comic Con is a Perfect Fit For Las Vegas. This is Now the Biggest Media Show in the Industry and Would Play to the Vegas-Hollywood Connection



So What's Holding Las Vegas Back?

- ▶ **A Relatively Uneducated Workforce—See the Recent Brookings Mountain Monitor**
- ▶ **Las Vegas's Native-Born Population is Less Educated Than Denver's *Foreign*-Born One**
- ▶ **We are Dramatically Under Investing in Higher Education**
- ▶ **UNLV Ranks Below New Mexico**



A Serious Research University

- ▶ **The Arizona Plan: Build up the Research University in the Largest Metropolitan Area**
- ▶ **Either Fund UNLV or Cut it Free**
- ▶ **Let UNLV Keep its Out-of-State Tuition**
- ▶ **Allow for Differential Tuition**
- ▶ **UNLV is the Only Graduate School Game in Town—Expand it!**
- ▶ **Leverage Federal Research Funds**



IMW True Research Universities

- ▶ Carnegie Research University
“Very High” Category
- ▶ Just 7 Total in the Mountain West:
- ▶ 3 in CO, 2 in AZ, 1 in Utah, 1 in NM
- ▶ A Big Fat *Zero* in Nevada
- ▶ UNLV/UNR rank with NAU in AZ
- ▶ Las Vegas—a Metro with Almost 2 Million—Has the Research Capacity of Flagstaff, AZ or Las Cruces, NM—Wow!



Final Comments

- ▶ **Make Strategic Investments in Higher Education**
- ▶ **Go After Federal Resources—Stop Leaving our Money on the Table**
- ▶ **Target Businesses that Match Key Clusters and our Comparative Advantages**
- ▶ **Finally, We Should Establish a New Economic Vision for Las Vegas**



Thank You!

