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Brown University Professor Partners with the City of Blythe in Groundbreaking Socio-Economic Research Initiative Amidst Potential Prison Closure

Blythe, CA - The City of Blythe is proud to announce a collaborative research initiative with Professor John M. Eason of Brown University, the Urban Institute, and the Justice Labs of America, focusing on the socio-economic impact of the potential closure of Chuckawalla Valley State Prison.

Professor Eason, an expert on the impacts that prison building and prison closure have on communities, has raised concerns about the lack of planning and awareness regarding the economic and social repercussions that prison closures can have on rural communities like Blythe. The City recognizes the gravity of these concerns and is committed to collaborating with Professor Eason and his team to identify and address the challenges and opportunities that may arise in the wake of a prison closure and the potential repurposing of the facility.

The researchers aim to conduct comprehensive studies involving observations, interviews, surveys, and archival research. These efforts will not only engage decision-makers, community leaders and residents of Blythe but also extend to studying similar scenarios in other rural areas across the United States. The findings of this research are expected to guide Blythe and other rural communities in navigating the economic and social transitions post-prison closure. The exact scope of this project is still in development and may change pending funding and decisions of city staff and the research team.

On Thursday, December 7 at 4 p.m., students of Professor Eason presented their preliminary findings to the City Council in a special meeting at City Hall. This presentation shed light on the early stages of the research and its potential direction.

"As the City of Blythe anticipates the potential closure of Chuckawalla Valley State Prison we are forced to confront the effects on our community, economy and civic infrastructure that the loss of this institution may bring," said Interim City Manager Mallory Crecelius. "If the state of California finalizes the closure of this prison, this promises to be a seismic change in our community. We welcome the efforts of this research team to study this transition and help us pursue a just and equitable future for Blythe."

"Whether due to staffing, safety, and budgetary concerns or to the long-overdue rethinking of incarceration in our society, we know that some prisons may close," explained Professor John M. Eason. "Our research hopes to guide Blythe and other rural communities through this process in a way that both strives for justice and ensures the long-term stability of the community."



The City of Blythe is prepared to engage in this vital research project and offer necessary support, hoping to become a model for other rural communities facing similar challenges. The collaboration signifies a proactive approach to ensuring the well-being and economic stability of Blythe in the wake of significant institutional changes.

For further information regarding this initiative and the ongoing efforts to support the Blythe community during this period of change, visit the [Save Chuck website](#).