

August 8, 2005

Message from the Chair Emeritus—Dick Johanson

Do you like artichokes? This thought hit me at the super market the other day. How long since you pondered (Swede's ponder a lot!) that an artichoke is nothing more than a thistle turned benevolent? We are all leaves on the bulb of our choice? We have the option of being part of a bedraggled thistle destined to dry up and blow away, or we can be part of an artichoke and nourish ourselves by deriving individual strength from our common heart. I think what we are creating around here is a whole new crop of artichoke hearts. Ralph Waldo Emerson said it this way:

OUR THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

“What Lies Behind Us And What Lies Before Us Do Not Compare With What Lies Within Us”

What Are We Thinking—Polling Results on Transportation Needs

Last week the steering committee for the Measure C Reauthorization effort learned what the public is thinking in some key areas. There were some encouraging signs and some clear indications about what matters. It is important to remember this is a snapshot taken in July. Included in the report (available on the COG website at <http://www.fresnocog.org>) is a causal model which identifies core values, spending priorities and impacts of various arguments on passage. The core values ordered by priority are 1) Vibrant economy, 2) Clean Air, 3) Leverage Matching Funds and 4) Citizen Oversight Committee. Linked to these values are the spending priorities. They include: 1) Repair potholes & maintain streets, 2) Insuring that Ag products get to market, 3) Improving bus service, 4) Trails & Bike Paths & 5) Para-Transit. The steering committee will use the results of the poll to guide the crafting of an expenditure plan.

A Celebration of Excellence & Gratitude

Members of local law enforcement will be recognized for innovation by state Attorney General Bill Lockyer at a dinner themed "A Toast to Fresno's Finest" on Thurs., Aug. 18 at Pardini's from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The honorees are being cited for their professionalism, dedication and leadership. The selection of nominees ~ men and women who serve the City of Fresno and Fresno County ~ was based on interviews with current and former colleagues. The event, hosted by the National Women's Political Caucus of Fresno County, is co-chaired by Fresno County Supervisor Susan B. Anderson and Assembly Member Nicole Parra. Tickets cost \$75. They're available at the Fig Garden Bookstore in Fresno. For more information, call 225.3116.

Harry Armstrong to Receive 2005 Vuich Ethical Leadership Award

Clovis has much to be proud of and many of the accomplishments are the result of the long term dedication of thirty-year member of the City Council, Harry Armstrong. The Vuich Award was created to honor and inspire ethical leadership. The criteria for selection include integrity, strength of character, exemplary ethical behavior, ability to build consensus, serving the public interest and vision for enhancing the community. Scandals involving elected officials can have a deep impact on a community's psyche, particularly if there are no countervailing forces. Harry Armstrong was one of two council members—the other was Pat Wynne—who refused to take part in corrupting the public process which resulted in Operation Rezone. During his long career, Harry helped guide Clovis from a small, isolated community into a thriving city in a rapidly growing metropolitan area. The awards luncheon will be held on Thursday, October 13 at the Schoettler Conference Center in downtown Fresno from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The Vuich Award and the Excellence in Public Service Award (recipient to be announced soon) are sponsored by the Maddy Institute at California State University Fresno, The Fresno Bee and The Fresno Business Council.

West Fresno Community Vision Plan Wins Two Awards

Through a four day interactive process involving 300 citizens, the residents of West Fresno designed their shared vision for a revitalized economy, improved ambience and safety and better mobility. Implementation is the next step. The plan has won awards from both the regional and state chapters of the American Planning Association. The project was the result of a collaboration that included COG, Fresno West Coalition for Economic Development, Caltrans and Walkable Communities, Inc.

