

September 26, 2005

**Message From the Chair Emeritus—Dick Johanson**

It is always interesting to contemplate what inspires individuals to give generously of both their positional and discretionary time in an effort to create a better society about them. All of us know many who fit into this category. They are immensely deserving of our admiration. I believe it was this “*esprit de community*” that gave rise to the formation and success of our Business Council. An old Portuguese proverb succinctly defines this commitment. I submit it as our –

**THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: “*When There Is No Wind---Blow*”**

**Measure C Reauthorization Moving Forward**

Reauthorizing Measure C will have positive impacts for decades in our community. Given rapid changes in technology, population, the economy and demographics, charting a course through an expenditure plan is a difficult challenge. The 25 person steering committee met all day Friday and half a day Saturday last week to create the framework for this \$1,700,000,000 investment in our community over the next twenty years. In addition to the direct benefits, these local dollars are the foundation for matching funds enabling us to leverage this resource many times over. Based upon public input through polling and testimony at meetings, guidance by professional staff, and the facilitation of a consultant, the committee came together around the key programs that will be included in the plan. The next step is determining specific projects within each program area. Kudos to the staff of COG and the FCTA for their many hours of additional service and patience with the process. Also, kudos to the co-chairs—Trini Rodriguez, Mary Savala and Lynne Ashbeck who have found a way to keep everyone at the table. Measure C adds up to jobs, a vibrant economy, access and quality of life for everyone in Fresno County.

**Eleventh Annual Restorative Justice Conference Held Last Week at Fresno Pacific**

Changing frameworks and core thoughts create different outcomes. Since July 24, 1998, leaders of Fresno County’s leading governmental agencies and community leaders have been working toward broad based systemic change based upon restorative justice (RJ). This approach has had a significant impact in terms of outcomes and cost savings in New Zealand and other countries. Fresno’s successful Victim Offender Reconciliation program (VORP), which was launched in 1982, has been duplicated throughout California and the United States. RJ is a way of thinking and responding to conflicts, disputes and offenses that holds people accountable for the consequences of their behavior and works to make the victim whole. The community has a vital role to play both in terms of prevention and restoration. The framework of RJ is readily applicable to all organizations, including families. At this year’s conference, a large panel of community leaders that included judges, educators, law enforcement, faith based groups, elected officials, the media and business all responded enthusiastically to taking the next steps in making Fresno County a Restorative Justice Community. The return on investment for effective prevention and early intervention has been documented many times. The challenge is changing attitudes and learning new skills of interaction. For more information, check out Fresno Pacific’s website at [www.fresno.edu](http://www.fresno.edu) and go to the Center for Peacemaking and Conflict Studies.

**Creative Economy Council Summit Set for October 11 at 6:00 p.m.**

In order to develop projects and policies that will support our region’s ability to attract, develop, support and retain creative professionals, the Creative Economy Council will sponsor a summit on Tuesday, October 11 at 6:00 p.m. at the UCSF Fresno Medical Education and Research Center at the Community Medical Center, 155 North Fresno Street. Tom Jones will facilitate the discussion. Please mark your calendars now and registration information will follow.

**Fresno’s Response to Hurricane Victims**

Working through the Red Cross, residents and organizations are working together to provide direct support to newly relocated refugees from the Gulf Coast. For more information:  
<http://www.centralvalleythreads.org>

