

March 27, 2006

Message From the Chair Emeritus—Dick Johanson

Deborah Nankivell and I have had the very special privilege over the past several months of visiting with individual Business Council members. The most important message that we have taken away from our meetings has been the fundamental commitment of these business leaders to not only insuring the financial success of their businesses but to recognize that lasting success must include adding value to the community and inspiring a dedicated cadre of employees—a triple bottom line. To each with whom we have visited, we express a deep thank you. To those whom we shall be contacting for future visits, we look forward to meeting with you”

California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley—Recommendations to Date

Intense focus on our region will have both tangible and intangible results leading to transformation. By looking at the San Joaquin Valley as a discrete geography, economy and society, we can craft customized solutions to challenges that can not be met with a one size fits all approach from the state or federal government. To date there have been six recommendations that have received unanimous support:

- ◆ Endorsement of the CalTrans Master Plan for Highway 99, with a request for \$6 billion over ten years to complete the improvements spelled out in the plan and a request that the State initiate negotiations with the Federal Government for Interstate designation.
- ◆ Endorsement of the submission of a single application by the Partnership for the WIRED initiative (which we unfortunately did not win).
- ◆ Endorsement of the creation of an Air Quality Mitigation Zone that would provide State income tax credits, accelerated depreciation and low interest or no interest loans for investments that accelerate adoption of air quality mitigation technologies and production of clean energy. (Legislation has been introduced by Juan Arambula)
- ◆ Endorsement of a 5-year pilot program in the San Joaquin Valley to accelerate removal of gross polluting vehicles by increasing the incentive payments made under the Carl Moyer program to low-income families that wish to scrap gross polluting vehicles and replace them with complying vehicles. (Legislation has been introduced by Juan Arambula)
- ◆ Support for an accelerated review of the feasibility of Short Sea Shipping (use of sea lanes instead of highways for movement of goods between Northern and Southern California).
- ◆ Support for inclusion of a \$1 billion "earmark" for Highway 99 in the infrastructure bond measure.

The various work groups are working toward a November deadline to develop strategies to address economic development, higher education and workforce development, K-12 Education, Transportation and Highway 99, Land Use, Agriculture and Housing, Air Quality & Environmental Protection, Water Quality, Supply & Reliability, Health & Human Services and Technology and Advanced Communications.

The intangible benefits include an expanding awareness of the state and federal policies that have allowed our region to experience some of the worst social and economic conditions in our country. Despite troubling social and economic indicators, our region has been a tax donor to both the state and federal government for years. By joining together in the Partnership we are building the relationships, body of knowledge, and sense of community we will need to develop the clarity of purpose and united voice we will need to achieve the level of prosperity and quality of life great regions enjoy.

Public Forum for the Partnership Scheduled for Friday, April 7 from 9:00 to 12:30 p.m.

In order to gain public input and exchange information, those serving on the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley will host a public forum on Friday, April 7 from 9:00 to 12:30 a.m. at the Fresno Convention Center at the New Exhibit Hall. There are eight forums planned throughout the region. The Partnership is our opportunity to transform our region. It provides the platform and connections for us to step up and take responsibility for our future. Thank you to those who are formally representing us on the Partnership and to the many others who are working behind the scenes to insure that the best ideas are moving forward and acted upon in the spirit of the RJJ “implement as we go” approach to community transformation.