

October 30, 2006

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

It is hard to comprehend that the Business Council is about to enter its fifteenth year of existence. It is easy to comprehend why so many of our members have already welcomed their chance to help expand our mission through their generous contributions to our recently established “Investors Fund”. Thanks to the hard work of so many across our community, our opportunities now far exceed our capacity to take advantage of them. It is confirmation that we are doing what we set out to do a decade and a half ago. We are a nationally recognized leader in civic entrepreneurship because steward leadership has transformational impact.

### **Making the Critical Connections**

As our region has become proactive and collaborative, we are prepared to take advantage of state dollars should the infrastructure bonds pass. Infrastructure is an investment that creates jobs in the short term and ongoing opportunities into the future. As of October 26 and continuing until the day before the elections, KSEE 24 will be airing live coverage on each of the propositions on the November ballot in their evening news program at 6:30 pm. Each presentation will be approximately 5 minutes. Pete Weber will be on the evening news on Monday, October 30 to talk about Proposition 1B, the Transportation Bond measure, and Proposition 1E, the Flood Prevention Bond Measure. He will focus on the connection of these bonds to the San Joaquin Valley and, in particular, to Fresno County. He will also tie the Transportation bond to Measure C. Pete Weber has played a key leadership role in the Regional Jobs Initiative, the plan to transform Fresno Unified and the launch of the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley.

### **Integrating Education and the Workforce**

Last week, State Center Community College District held a planning session to further align the opportunities created through the Regional Jobs Initiative cluster industries with the curriculum at State Center. Along with a working session, Dan Walters (Political Columnist—Sacramento Bee) and Phyllis Eisen (Vice President, Manufacturing Institute of Manufacturers) spoke to the group about political realities and the importance of insuring a highly prepared workforce. Some key thoughts included:

- Community Colleges are manufacturers’ best friend.
- We must prepare people for work and to be an educated citizenry...we must do both.
- Technology is driving everything. We must all learn to be adaptive and commit to life long learning.
- Manufacturers are learning to adapt to multiple languages spoken in the workplace...everyone does not have to speak English to earn a living wage in the short term.
- To prepare a highly skilled workforce we must create alliances and partnerships that move beyond traditional boundaries.
- Manufacturing is the most productive segment of the economy. There were 16 billion dollars in product exported in agriculture last year. There were 16 billion dollars exported in a month in manufacturing. Every manufacturing job creates 7 in supporting industries and throughout the economy.
- There are thousands of unfilled jobs all over the country in the manufacturing sector that pay more than \$15 an hour. We simply lack the workforce. The workforce must be lean, flexible, agile, and cross trained.
- It takes a community to prepare the workforce and create prosperity.
- The National Association of Manufacturers is conducting a Dream It Do It campaign in key parts of the country to transform old myths about manufacturing and help students connect to their dream to make a difference through creating new products and solutions. Old ideas of a manufacturing workplace no longer fit.

### **Kudos to Everyone Involved in the Creation and Implementation of the Partnership**

Thanks largely to the persistence of Mayor Alan Autry and Pete Weber, our region has an opportunity to develop and execute solutions to our region’s unique challenges regarding everything from air quality and job creation to a prepared workforce and healthy communities. With the Governor’s visit last week and the

ongoing efforts of those involved, the Partnership is gaining momentum. It is up to all of us to step up and take advantage of the opportunities.