

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

Is there a greater month than December? Apart from its religious significance to most of us, it is also a continuation of the spirit of **Thanksgiving**. I submit this as a partial list on behalf of this Business Council:

- **Thanksgiving** for family and friends
- **Thanksgiving** for the being part of an association of business and professional leaders.
- **Thanksgiving** for the opportunity to help inspire and create a broad based regional transformation.
- **Thanksgiving** for the privilege of working with other organizations in pursuit of our mission.
- **Thanksgiving** for the ongoing support of our members and allies as we enter the New Year.

May each one who reads this Bulletin be richly blessed with a spirit of **Thanksgiving** during this special holiday season.

### **Year of the Tipping—2006**

As we close out 2006, I think it's fair to say we did reach a tipping point. Unemployment has reached a 27 year low, Measure C passed by an extraordinary 77.5%, and Fresno Unified is in the midst of a transformation. We have launched a Human Investment Initiative that mirrors the RJI to link, align and leverage the many systems that address social, health, justice and educational challenges in our community. The Regional Foundation has experienced a rebirth and is proving to be an able partner in the work to create a prosperous, healthy and safe community. The Blueprint Process promises to yield an actionable strategy to address land use, transportation and the strategic placement of the building blocks of a vibrant community. We have taken responsibility to make the growth in our region an asset and any obstacles to our vision simply challenges we are building the capacity to meet. We have become investment worthy and financial capital is showing up to support business start ups and expansions and to strengthen neighborhoods and nonprofits. By working together, we have demonstrated that we can create a community of choice. If you receive this bulletin, you no doubt are already engaged in community transformation. Let's all reach out to neighbors, colleagues and friends and encourage them to get involved. Acceleration and scale are a numbers game and relationships and trust are what make them possible.

### **California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley**

Like nesting dolls, we keep creating bigger and stronger platforms to launch transformational efforts that will impact every aspect of our community. Each level of government impacts a greater set of issues. The Valley has a unique topology, demographics, history and set of assets. The one size fits all policies and funding mechanisms of the past were a misfit. Thanks to the leadership of the RJI, Governor Schwarzenegger created an opportunity for our region to determine its own fate by creating the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley. This is a platform for us to launch our own strategies to customize solutions to long time challenges. Ashley Swearengen, Director of the Community and Economic Development Office at Fresno State, was selected as the Secretariat for the Partnership as it moves into its next phase of action plans and execution. The preceding paragraph is a short list of accomplishments in our community. The same action oriented, results focused approach will guide the work of the Partnership to serve the region as a whole. If you are unfamiliar with the Partnership, the website is <http://www.bth.ca.gov> and the initiative is on the left hand side. It is the Valley's time to shine.

### **Prosperity in the New Economy Requires Life Long Learning Along Multiple Pathways**

Continuing to upgrade technical skills and intellectual knowledge are the obvious responsibilities of life long learning. A life long commitment to a healthy lifestyle has become everybody's concern. Less obvious but equally important are the inner, more personal skills involving the social, ethical and psychological dimensions. Without these inner resources, working on teams is difficult. They are essential to building and maintaining trust, the cornerstone of effective collaborations. Character and competence are the building blocks of a quality life. On Friday, March 9 Dr. James P. Comer will be in town to discuss the 6 developmental pathways necessary for children to achieve academic and personal success. While his focus is on the schools, his message is useful to all sectors. Personal development is critical to the success of every organization. The event will be held at Fresno Pacific University from 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Call 559.453.3643 for reservations or go to [www.fresno.edu/educationforum](http://www.fresno.edu/educationforum).