

December 24, 2007

Message From the Chair Emeritus—Richard Johanson

This is our final Bulletin for 2007. We are making significant progress as a collaborative partner in creating a new tomorrow for this region. It is now time to contemplate our individual and organizational opportunities to increase our contributions in 2008. Recently I was given a wonderful little book entitled *The Velveteen Principles*. I submit the following quotation as our 2008 mantra: “Generosity does not involve handing over boxes tied with ribbons. Instead, it is an expression of a certain spirit of goodwill and encouragement. When we are generous in this way, we support people when they need us most, not when it is most convenient for us. And we support them as they strive to become authentic themselves.” For further inspiration, read on...

The Fresno Area Approach to Community Transformation

For many years the Fresno Region has taken part in a network of regions across California to learn from one another as we all find a path to create prosperous, livable and healthy regions in a rapidly changing world. We have learned about the role of civic entrepreneurs, those that can apply an entrepreneurial spirit and technical expertise to difficult community challenges. Civic entrepreneurs create networks that cross any boundary to achieve the desired outcome. They act as stewards of whole seeking sustainable solutions not short term or symptom oriented quick fixes. They have a vision, passion, and go after what would be impossible to achieve if limited by the tools, thinking and models that served the industrial age. Not yet quite on commercial radar, civic entrepreneurs are making a difference across the country. The next bullet offers a reflection from the Sacramento Region.

Reflections: A mandate for distributed leadership—Lesson Learned From Sacramento

The Sacramento Bee recently asked local citizens, “What is the most important lesson that Sacramento or the region should take from 2007, and how can it be applied next year?” **Susan Frazier**, CEO and managing partner of the regional nonprofit Valley Vision stated the following:

“It has always been there, but 2007, more than any other year, surfaced this simple but powerful truth: **Leadership in the Sacramento region does not require a hero.** During my tenure at Valley Vision, the lament has been long and loud: “Where is that one strong person? We need someone to take the helm, clear the way.” That plea ignores award-winning regional collaborations and enviable connections among leaders from all sectors.

The hierarchical model of leadership is crumbling as cities and regions discover the innate power of building coalitions and creating solutions that work for most. As a wider diversity of citizens escalate their participation in civic dialogue, a new way of leading becomes obligatory if initiatives for change and improvement are to be sustainable. This is democracy at its best – something to celebrate as a gift in our society.

In this region, we are blessed with many engaged and informed citizens and leaders. This creates a mandate for distributed leadership – for influential people to show up as the need arises. Not the same person or group for every task, but the right people for each new situation. This kind of leadership is nimble, responsive and effective. I, for one, think this bodes very well for our collective future, and I salute all of our region’s leaders as they choose to step up when their turn comes around.”

Happy Holidays!