

September 24, 2007

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

I attended a meeting last week at which the topic was expanding the awareness of what the Fresno Business Council is all about—our vision, our mission and our values. More importantly, our goal is to communicate what can happen when business leaders join with others across sectors to work together to solve community problems. Like other steps in the American story, most are taken by entrepreneurs willing to plunge into the unknown to continue the great experiment of self governance. For examples of how civic entrepreneurs are stepping up across the country, check out “*Civic Revolutionaries: Igniting the Passion for Change in America’s Communities.*”

**In The Loop—Metro Rural Loop Presented to Madera City Council**

Last week **Keith Bergthold** rolled out four possibilities for the multi-modal, multi-faceted long term strategy (Metro Rural Loop) to the Madera City Council. Option A—4 counties (Madera, Fresno, Tulare & Kings), option B—3 counties, option C—2 counties and option D—just Fresno County. The enthusiastic reaction from the entire council and the major for not just Option A but for regional strategies for many issues was inspiring. Our neighbors to the north want to be “in the loop” that is connecting our region slowly but surely. Thank you to the many organizations and individuals who have been steady ambassadors for stewardship and regionalism. The San Joaquin Valley is an interdependent community linked by challenges and opportunities and ripe for transformation. Thanks to **Keith Bergthold**, **John Wright** and **Kevin Castanos** for your steward leadership and the cities of Fresno and Clovis for your commitment to collaboration.

**Education or Training; Self Actualization or Workforce Training—Closing the Gap**

As we work to ensure clear pathways through K-12 and on through higher education and into the workforce, the ideological gap between education and employers must close in order to accelerate this process. During the research stage for the Human Investment Initiative, the importance of being committed to what works in practice, not just theory kept reoccurring. Too often policy makers and funders are so far removed from the realities of poverty, addiction, fear and violence, the very best intentions yield little and those on the front lines instead get more rules, fewer resources and more demands for measurable outcomes. “Vertical integration”, where policy is informed by the experience of practice will require increased respect and communication and in an ongoing education loop across systems and up and down hierarchies.

**Human Investment Initiative Roll-Out—FBC Member Forum—9.27.07—7:30 a.m. UBC**

On September 27<sup>th</sup>, the Human Investment Initiative (HII) will be presented at the University Business Center at 7:30 a.m. As a companion to the RJJ, the HII aims to “link, align and leverage” the skills and resources of the human development systems behind shared goals and strategies. According to WIB, we have 27,000 jobs going wanting because of lack of skills or personal barriers. To become a vibrant community, we must look at economic development as both job creation and human development.

**Teaming Up To Strengthen Nonprofits—Institute for Nonprofit Capacity (INC)**

The United Way, Fresno Nonprofit Advancement Council, American Humanics Program at CSUF, and the Central Valley Business Incubator have teamed up to provide training to nonprofit leaders. INC is offering a six week, 24 hour course, The Six Essential Building Blocks for the Successful Nonprofit Organization, at the Central Valley Business Incubator. Classes will meet on Friday afternoons from 1:00PM to 5:00PM beginning October 5th and ending November 16th. Participating organizations will be asked to commit a senior staff member and two board members to the class. The course will cost \$350 per organization. For further information,

telephone **Ann Vermel**, United Way of Fresno County, at 559-243-3668 or email [INC@unitedwayfresno.org](mailto:INC@unitedwayfresno.org). While many skills are transferable, effectiveness demands the discipline of life long learning.