

February 11, 2008

Message From the Chair Emeritus—Richard Johanson

An observation as we take a brief respite from the continuing and upcoming political campaigns of those who seek our support in their desire to be elected to public office. Let's declare the vertical pronoun unacceptable. There is no "I" in "Government". Ours is a government of the "People" which has no "I" either. Our task in the coming months is to select those persons we feel most qualified to conduct our local, state and national symphonies while recognizing that the baton makes no music. What We the People need are maestros most able to inspire each of us to play our best as participating musicians. A final thought—there is no "I" in "maestros" either, only in "musicians".

Upcoming Events & Engagement Opportunities

As Dick noted in his remarks, it is up to every individual to find his or her best way to make a contribution. When America's Promise Alliance launched, a national initiative to insure every child has an opportunity to thrive, the group made only 5 promises—caring adults, safe places, a healthy start, effective education, and opportunities to help others. It is the 5th promise that connects kids to their community and builds the character and self esteem that transforms lives. The same is true for adults. Whether your best efforts fit in economic development, community development or human development—every contribution affects the whole. The following bullets demonstrate the depth and breadth of inter-related activities where volunteers are leading, participating and making a difference:

12th Annual Fresno Compact Shareholder's Luncheon—March 5 at 11:30 a.m.-TorNino's

Bold ideas inspire; relationships and tools transform lives. Business-school partnerships take many forms based upon the type of business and the opportunities at a particular school. It is through interaction between the two cultures that students learn that they matter, there are jobs for them if they stay in school and alignment between learning and application increases. The Compact event is a time to honor and celebrate those that are making a difference. Call 559.265.3012 for info.

Bus Tour of Vocational Programs Offered by State Center Community College District

Last year's bus tour was so successful, State Center is offering another opportunity to tour the various technical and vocational programs offered in the district. Since Career Technical Education (CTE) is seen as part of the solution to many challenges—drop outs, workforce needs, pathways to quality jobs—increased knowledge about the opportunities among employers, academics and job developers is essential. The tour is scheduled for Thursday, March 27 from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Call Kim at 244.5906 or email at kim.quesada@scccd.edu by March 19 to confirm and receive a detailed itinerary.

Charter Schools: Answer, Threat, Inspiring Change?

There is increasing interest in and resources for charter schools in the San Joaquin Valley. The track record so far follows the pattern of start ups in business—some are terrific, some hobble along and some fail. The law firm of Lozano Smith is offering a workshop on February 28 from 8:30 to noon at the Smittcamp Alumni House to examine the relationship between school districts and charter schools. Call 800.445.9430 for more information. Sponsors include the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley and the Central Valley Educational Leadership Institute.

A Countywide Solution to Gang Prevention—February 21, 2:00 to 5:00

As our law enforcement leaders have said, "We cannot arrest our way out of crime." As a country, we have learned that controlling symptoms is costly and never ending. Whether it is

health, character or skill development—prevention and early intervention have the greatest return on investment for communities and individuals. The County of Fresno, like the City of Fresno, has stepped upon to address crime as a complex, systemic issue requiring the entire community to act differently. As the preceding bullets showcase, many of the solutions are already underway. How do we accelerate & scale ongoing efforts? How do we “link, align & leverage” resources behind shared strategies? How do we act as a united community to create prosperity, safety and wellbeing? The event is at the Clovis Veteran’s Memorial Building (453 Hughes Avenue) RSVP at rboren@co.fresno.ca.us or call 488-1710 by February 13.

Kick-Off Celebration—Fresno City/County Convention & Visitors Bureau

Stan Oken and a reconstituted board stepped up to rebuild the Convention & Visitors Bureau and infuse the Tourism Cluster with new ideas and enthusiasm to capitalize on some of our unique assets. On Thursday, February 14 at 10:00 a.m. at Grand Occasions (4584 West Jacquelyn Ave), the Bureau will unveil its new strategic plan. Not only will increased tourism serve our economic vitality goals, this cluster generates a myriad pathways to first, second and career jobs. RSVP to Leslie.mattos@fresnocvb.net or call 559-445-0308.