

**February 4, 2008**

**Message From the President—Richard Johanson**

Do you like allegories? The beneficial rainfall this area has received recently is supplying much needed underground moisture to our dormant plants, bushes and trees. In the months ahead this vital below the surface energy will transform itself into lush fields of green grasses, vivid swatches of spectacular wild flowers and a stunning array of fragrant and colorful blossoms on our bushes and trees. As an extended community we are carefully nourishing the root stock of this region's cultural and economic soil. We have added nutrients by strengthening alliances, establishing new collaborative relationships and formulating effective policies and programs designed to insure a better tomorrow for all among us. This Business Council's vision since our inception has been to ignite the potential for greatness in this fertile region by effectively converting the quietly accumulated energy of wintertime into the productiveness of an invigorated springtime. Exciting days are ahead of us.

**Transformational Change Is Personal & Requires Relationships, Tools & Commitment**

The most visible changes are new leaders, changing demographics, new and refreshed buildings and more resources. How they happen...the daily, grinding work of many people relentlessly committed to transformation is what ultimately leads to success. A potent example in our region is the Central Valley Educational Leadership Institute (CVELI) at Fresno State led by Dr. Walt Buster. As noted in CVELI's implementation partner's (Springboard Schools) annual report, "No one said that transforming our schools would be easy, but that hasn't stopped us from making it happen." In addition to hands on work in many SJV school districts, CVELI has developed high school networks so that they can learn from one another how to close the achievement gap. In addition, CVELI is working with State Center Community College District to develop future leaders. Bold visions are implemented when leaders inspire sustained action at ground level. For more information go to [www.springboardschools.org](http://www.springboardschools.org) and <http://csufresno.edu/cveli>.

**Learning Together—Succeeding Together—The Fresno-Long Beach Partnership**

When the Choosing Our Future team was looking for best practices in a major school district in CA, Long Beach was an obvious choice. Roll forward a few years and the two superintendents have formed a partnership to share knowledge and resources to accomplish common goals. The similarities and contrasts between the districts provide an unusual opportunity to learn from one another how to achieve a 100% graduation rate, prepare all graduates for success and help all students achieve CA academic standards. With the support of Broad, the Center for Reform of School Systems, Springboard Schools and the American Institutes of Research, the momentum for transformation is sure to accelerate. Our job is to continue to strengthen the community, insure healthy neighborhoods rich with important assets, intervene in troubled families, build accessible pathways to higher ed, technical education and jobs and invest in organizations and programs that work. Kudos to the leaders of both districts.

**California Green Innovation Index—2008 Inaugural Issue From Next 10**

What impact have environmental initiatives had on California's economy and quality of life? Next 10 teamed up with Collaborative Economics to develop the California Green Innovation Index to find out. As in other arenas, California chose a different path to the future than many other states and countries. Next 10 is focused on innovation and the intersection between the economy, the environment and quality of life issues. The report is rich with fascinating graphs, statistics and information. Check out the report at [www.nextten.org](http://www.nextten.org)