

March 3, 2008

Message From the Chair Emeritus—Richard Johanson

Last week the Fresno Business Council held its February board meeting. To many of us in attendance, this monthly gathering is an invigorating exercise in helping design, refine and execute regional transformation. It is also an opportunity to take an introspective look at our individual responsibilities in the process. The process looks like this:

Vision+Commitment+Goals+Pathways+Perseverance=Results.

Economic Development Corporation Raising the Bar On Performance

As more people embrace the reality of interdependence between economic, community and human development, the importance of a vibrant, expanding economy is top of mind for all sectors. The creation and expansion of local businesses is the primary path to sustainable economic vitality. The EDC has been going through a transformation since **Steve Geil** took the helm. The EDC now has 64 service providers, including government entities, who have committed to a 48 hour response window when contacted by a company or the EDC with a challenge or request for assistance. The EDC is also committed to the development of basic infrastructure, amenities and human development as all set the stage for economic development. Through collaboration, duplication is eliminated and existing resources leveraged netting increased results for everyone.

A View From Ground Level Where Life Changing Happens

It is in the middle grades when we lose many students. It is middle school when the single teacher, single neighborhood comfort of grade school shifts to the many teachers, many new faces pace of junior high. While students can't technically drop out at this point, many have already dropped out emotionally long before they leave the school buildings. Sequoia Middle School is committed to changing all of that. Here's a view from the grassroots:

- In 1.5 years, with the new principal **Mike Ribera** at the helm, Sequoia has turned 180 degrees noted a long time teacher.
- Students and parents now say the school is safe.
- Suspensions are way down; behavior is much better.
- Weekly graffiti has been reduced to less than once a month.
- Test scores are improving.
- Kids are participating in the CSUF Peer Mediation (Thank you **Pamela Lane Garon**)
- The staff members believe in the principal and credit him for leading the turnaround and engaging staff in their important work. (Inspiration works)
- The doctor's magnet is moving up to a potential 90 participants.
- **Mabel Franks**, Associate Superintendent of middle schools, is leading the effort to turnaround middle schools by supporting the principals, teachers and school staff.
- Ribera was recently named ACSA Region IV Middle School Principal of the Year.

Fresno State's ICWT Featured on "California's Water"—March 3 at 7:00 p.m. on KVPT

Huell Howser, host of several acclaimed PBS TV shows, will feature Fresno State's International Center for Water Technology (ICWT) on "California's Water", a series underwritten by the Association of California Water Agencies. Howser visited the Claude Laval Water Energy Technology Lab to learn first hand about new technologies being developed to enhance water and energy use for urban, environmental and agricultural purposes. The Water Technology Cluster, the beta test for the **Regional Jobs Initiative**, has inspired the development of other clusters and fundamentally changed economic expectations in the Valley. Kudos to leaders who explore possibilities instead of argue for limitations.

