

SECOND SYMPOSIUM
on
LIFE IN THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY

Friday, April 4, 2008, 8:30 am to 2:30 pm

University Business Center, California State University, Fresno

The purpose of the Symposium is to share faculty research findings and perspectives on various aspects of life in the Valley and to demonstrate how scholarship and social research expertise can be a resource in “powering the New California.” The Symposium is an effort of the Research Centers, Institutes, and Laboratories at Fresno State to inform the public about issues relevant to life in the San Joaquin Valley and part of Fresno State’s commitment to community engagement as the premier regional university.

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Program

8:30 am – 9:00

Refreshments

9:00 – 9:30

Welcome to the Symposium on Life in the San Joaquin Valley

Dr. Jeronima Echeverria, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, California State University, Fresno

Introduction of Morning Speaker

Robert S. Palacio, Ph.D., Chair, Department of Sociology & Director, Center for the Study of Social Life in the San Joaquin Valley

Choosing Our Future, Preserving Our Beauty

Bill McEwen, Columnist, *The Fresno Bee*

Bill McEwen is the principal news columnist for The Fresno Bee, the region's dominant newspaper.

He was born in Spokane, Wash., to a military family and spent his early years living throughout the United States and Europe. He attended Fresno State and landed his first reporting job with the old Fresno Guide. Bill joined The Bee in 1980.

During his 33-year career in journalism, Bill has done a bit of everything. He's hosted a sports-talk radio show, covered the Fresno State men's basketball team, been a sports columnist and sports editor, covered City Hall and, since 2002, has been a metro columnist.

This variety of assignments has taken him to refugee camps in Thailand, hurricanes in Louisiana, the Olympics and seven Super Bowls. His work has been honored by the California Newspaper Publishers Association, the Associated Press News Executive Council and the Associated Press Sports Editors.

His recent book, "It's A Dry Heat: Columns on Life in the Central Valley," was published in December 2007 and provides interesting reading for those who care about the future of the San Joaquin Valley.

The opinions in his columns inflame and inform: provoking discussion on topics as varied as downtown Fresno preservation and urban sprawl to Alan Autry's mayoral style and the virtues of riding his bicycle.

1:50 – 2:15

Poverty, Technology, and the Prospect of a Future: Crossing the Rural Digital Divide in the San Joaquin Valley

James Mullooly, Ph.D. Department of Anthropology and Co-Director, Institute of Public Anthropology, and Jason Scroggins, MA candidate (jmullooly@csufresno.edu)

Often considered a rural ghetto, the southern San Joaquin Valley suffers from the most persistent pockets of poverty in California. Adding to the economic woes is the growing digital divide plaguing rural California. No program has yet attempted to bridge this gap by directly involving rural youth with cutting-edge technology and entrepreneurship. This ongoing study focuses on the first such attempt by following the Pixley Robotics Club, an organization created by the Great Valley Center to foster grassroots technological entrepreneurship in the city of Pixley. The club is composed of 18 Pixley boys and girls between 9 and 14 years old who build and program Lego Mindstorm robots and compete against other youth groups in an international robotics competition sponsored by the Lego Corporation. The qualitative study follows the Pixley Robotics Club through training and competitions, assessing its impact on both the participants and the larger community.

2:15 – 2:25

Wrap-up Reflections on Today and Our Future

Dr. Benjamin Cuellar, Dean, College of Health and Human Services



31 individuals appointed by the governor to oversee the partnership which consists of 10 workgroups that focus on regional challenges in economic development, education, transportation, land use, agriculture, housing, air quality, environmental protection, water, energy, health, human services, technology and telecommunications.

1:00 – 1:25 ***The Determinants of Income among Hispanics in California's Central Valley: A Survey***

Antonio Avalos, Ph.D. Department of Economics and Research Director, CERECC (aavalos@csufresno.edu)

Using survey data from 2007, this study examines the main determinants of earnings among the Hispanic population in Fresno, Kings, Madera and Tulare counties. The analysis is based on an augmented standard human capital earnings model where various demographic and socio-economic characteristics are tested. Main findings indicate that among the factors explaining earnings among Hispanics, gender, education, being born in the United States, having access to the Internet and driving a car are the most important. Some lessons for regional economic development policy in Central California are drawn from the experience of the Hispanic population.

1:25 – 1:50 ***Housing in the Central San Joaquin Valley and Community Organizing***

Matthew Jendian, Ph.D., Department of Sociology and Director, American Humanics Program (matthewj@csufresno.edu)

Recently collected data about the costs, public concerns and opinions about housing in the central San Joaquin Valley (Fresno, Kings, Madera, and Tulare counties) will be presented. We also will describe some of the community organizing in the city of Fresno (e.g., Fresno Housing Alliance, El Dorado Park Charrettes) and the eight-county Central Valley region (i.e., San Joaquin Valley Affordable Communities Initiative and SJV Regional Housing Trust) that are attempting to increase the availability of safe, decent accessible affordable housing.

9:30 – 9:55 ***Quality of Life in the Central San Joaquin Valley: 2001 through 2007***

Edward Nelson, Ph.D., Department of Sociology and Director, Social Science Research Laboratory (ednelson@csufresno.edu)

The Social Science Research Laboratory has surveyed residents in Fresno, Madera, Kings, and Tulare counties since 2001. We've focused on issues including financial satisfaction and expectations, performance of government, confidence in leadership, crime, public schools and satisfaction with community and neighborhood. Telephone surveys were conducted in English and Spanish. People tend to be more satisfied with objects closer to the center of their lives than with objects farther away. People rate public schools in their community higher than in the state. People are more satisfied with their neighborhood than with their community. Local governments are rated more positively than state government, which is rated higher than the federal government. However, respondents are very unhappy with the performance of government at all levels. Crime is seen as the most pressing problem facing local communities. About one-third of respondents felt their financial situation has improved over the past few years, but about one-quarter thought it had been getting worse. Satisfaction with community and neighborhood remains at a fairly high level.

9:55 – 10:20 ***Observing Quality of Life in the Great Valley: Initial Findings of the Partnership for Assessment of Communities***

Robin Maria DeLugan, Ph.D., Department of Anthropology, UC Merced (rdelugan@ucmerced.edu)

Simon Weffer-Elizondo, PhD., Department of Sociology, UC Merced

With rapid population growth in the San Joaquin Valley, government and the private sector seek ways to address existing regional disparities. The scientific context of this ongoing study is to examine, at the level of targeted urban neighborhood or rural unincorporated area, the conditions and factors that affect the quality of life of the region's residents over a 10-year period. Qualitative and quantitative data about conditions and factors are gathered from residents to compare changes over time in local communities and to communities across the region. In addition, theories are being tested about the role of community organizations and civic involvement as fundamental to quality of life issues. This presentation focuses on the findings of the initial pilot study, paying particular attention to local notions of civic engagement, social cohesion and volunteerism.

10:20 – 10:35 **Break**

10:35 – 11:00 *Air Quality Measurements in Fresno*

Segun Ogunjemiyo, Ph.D., Sam Omolayo, Ph.D., Stuart McFeeters, Ph.D., Erika Antonio, and Michelle Himden, Department of Geography; San Joaquin Valley Environmental Research Laboratory; Urban Planning /GIS Lab (sogunjemiyo@csufresno.edu)

We present preliminary results from an intensive field campaign conducted as part of an air quality study funded by the National Science Foundation to characterize ozone profiles in an urban environment. For several days between June and September 2007, an ECC ozonesonde was used with a Vaisala DigiCORA tethered system to measure ozone concentration profiles over Fresno, Calif. Profile measurements were made and transmitted to the sounding processor in the 400-406 MHz meteorological band, where they were processed and then sent, via an ethernet connection, to a notebook PC for analysis and archiving. Flights were launched on different days and times representing varied atmospheric stability conditions. The results demonstrate a clear pattern of the dependence of ozone concentration on a number of factors tied to urban scale meteorology and synoptic scale transport systems. The study produced data that could be used to improve air quality forecasts for ozone in the study region.

11:00 – 11:25 *Responding to the Needs of Mothers and Children Affected by Methamphetamine Abuse in the San Joaquin Valley*

Virginia Rondero Hernandez, Ph.D., Department of Social Work Education (virginiarh@csufresno.edu)

The San Joaquin Valley has historically been heavily affected by the production, sale, distribution and abuse of methamphetamine. Effects of methamphetamine pervade the lives of families and, more specifically, the lives of children whose parents abuse this highly addictive drug. This presentation also focuses on the effects of methamphetamine abuse on children and families, primarily those involved with child welfare systems. Barriers to treatment and the need for collaborative approaches for response to these barriers are highlighted, and implications and recommendations for service delivery are offered.

11:25 – 12:15 **Complimentary lunch provided**

12:15 – 1:00 **Introduction to Keynote Speaker**
Dr. Luz Gonzalez, Dean,
College of Social Sciences

A Bundle of Wishes for OUR SPACE

Coke Hallowell, Governor-appointee, California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley

Coke Hallowell is active in many community organizations, most notably as a founding member and board president of the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust. She was elected to the State Center Community College District Board of Trustees in 1975 and served two terms. Coke also served on the SCCC Foundation Board and now is a member of the Honored Board.

A former elementary school teacher and founding member of the Sierra Foothill Conservancy, Coke lives with her husband, James, on a ranch in Madera County. They have two daughters and two grandsons. As part of a personal commitment to the community good, the Hallowells have placed a conservation easement on the property to protect its open space virtues.

In 2005, Coke was named one of six national winners of the annual Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Award for Outstanding Public Service, to recognize service benefiting local communities. The award is presented by the American Institute for Public Service, a nonprofit organization founded in 1972 by the late first lady and then-Sen. Robert Taft.

Coke has been part of the parkway effort from its inception in 1988, fueling the drive to assemble the 22-mile greenbelt with her energy and gracious passion. She is the inspiration for the Coke Hallowell Center for River Studies on Old Friant Road. Coke stands out among local visionaries who overcame initial mistrust and objections to create the parkway. Her quiet, yet determined style has been a major factor in representing the idea to landowners along the river, as well as to the general public.

In June 2006, Gov. Schwarzenegger announced formation of the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley to improve the economic, social and environmental quality of life in the region. Coke was among