



Aug. 10, 2007

Tie-down regulations meeting will be tomorrow in Easton

A meeting to discuss the new tie-down /agricultural hauling regulations will be held tomorrow, Friday, Aug. 10 at 10 a.m. at the C.P.D.E.S. Hall (Portuguese Hall), 172 West Jefferson in Easton. The meeting is open to the public and no RSVP is necessary.

There have been several questions about the California Highway Patrol's implementation of new federal regulations governing how loads of harvested agricultural products are secured for transport and the procedure for the exemption that currently is in place for the 2007 harvest season. The meeting is being held at the request of Assemblyman Mike Villines as an attempt to provide answers and to address complaints and concerns expressed by agricultural haulers. CHP Commissioner Mike Brown and CHP Chief Steve Vaughan will address the new changes.

For additional details, contact the Fresno office of Assemblyman Mike Villines at (559) 446-2029.

Summer recess delays passing of California budget

By Sara Borjas
Ag Bridge Program

The California State Legislature has left for their summer recess, leaving the state without a 2007-2008 fiscal budget.

The budget must legally be passed by June 15. However, the budget was approved on July 20 by the California Assembly but failed to pass the State Senate, placing the budget in a deadlock. Senate Republicans want to pass a balanced budget. They currently face a shortfall of \$699 million, a difference in which they will be proposing their own fix.

"My goal is to have a balanced budget," said Senator Jeff Denham. "It is not fair to the people of California for their Legislators to vote in favor of a budget that only increases the State's debt. A budget like this would force cuts to education next year. And, I do not support that," he added.

"The budget is long overdue, and now it is causing a disruption to some state services," says Adam Mendelsohn, the communications director for Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. Mendelsohn is referring to the overdue payments to hospitals, colleges and nursing homes, which were to be paid from the 2007-2008 budget.

Fortunately, the California Legislature is back in session Aug. 20 to Sept. 14. It is anticipated that the new budget will be on the top of the agenda.

Fresno State Summer Ag Bridge Program

By Sara Borjas
Ag Bridge Program

July 29 marked the beginning of the seventh annual Ag Bridge Program through California State University, Fresno. The two-week program is a chance for students to learn more about agriculture and become familiar with the Fresno State campus.

During the first week of the program, students visited growers and businesses, including Sun West, Campos Brothers, Sun Maid, Booth Ranches and Lyons-Magnus. They met with representatives from university administration, members of the USDA and past participants in the Ag Bridge Program. The second week, students shadowed leaders in the agricultural industry and experience ag careers first hand.

Suitably, let me introduce myself as Sara Borjas, student participant in the 2007 Ag Bridge Program. I have been given the opportunity of shadowing the Fresno County Farm Bureau's Public Relations Coordinator Liz Hudson and Executive Director Ryan Jacobsen.

The Ag Bridge Program is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and made possible by program director Lonna Torrico. It is in its seventh year and will continue to be an experience that exposes students to opportunities in agriculture and higher education in 2008.

Water Update: Watershed Coalitions are working

Water-monitoring data was presented recently to the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board by the watershed coalitions formed to help

farmers and landowners address water quality issues in the Valley.

Watershed coalition groups representing 21,000 Central Valley farmers met with the Regional Water Board on Aug. 2 to report on results of the water coalitions' sampling programs. Since 2003, nine agricultural-based water quality coalitions have spent \$9.5 million to sample and analyze water quality of rivers, streams, creeks and sloughs in the Sacramento-San Joaquin valleys and delta.

The water quality monitoring mandated by the water board through the Irrigated Lands Program has proven to be an effective tool to assess and improve water quality, and coalitions comprised of family farmers and ranchers are actively participating with the regional water board in its development and implementation.

Here's a brief recap of the Irrigated Lands Program:
NUMBER OF TESTING SITES: Water and sediment sampling data has been collected and analyzed from 313 sites in the Central Valley.

AMOUNT OF DATA COLLECTED: More than 10,000 tests have been completed and thousands more measurements collected. The results are directing water-quality coalition efforts to reduce farm impacts and identify future monitoring needs.

DOLLARS SPENT BY COALITIONS: To date, the state's farmers and ranchers have spent \$9.5 million to make this program work. The nine coalitions, staff and technical experts are solely focused on managing water quality.

NUMBER OF FARMERS ENROLLED: The Irrigated Lands Program is the single largest water quality program undertaken by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board. Over 7 million acres and 21,000 farmers are involved. The next largest program, at a tenth of the size, is the urban Storm Water Program.

Horses are at risk of West Nile virus – get them vaccinated

The return of West Nile virus to California this year is renewing calls for horse owners to make sure their animals are vaccinated. So far in 2007, five horses have been diagnosed with the disease – all have been either unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated.

In a news release issued this week by the California Department of Food and Agriculture, horse owners were urged to contact their veterinarians as soon as possible to ensure vaccination status is current. Necessary shots for the horses now will ensure optimal protection against the disease later.

Signs of West Nile virus include stumbling, staggering, wobbling, weakness, muscle twitching and inability to stand. Not every horse exposed to the virus will die, according to CDFA.

CDFA is collaborating with state, federal and local agencies to detect and respond to the disease in California. For details, visit: www.cdfa.ca.gov. Questions may be emailed to CDFA at: WNVirus@cdfa.ca.gov.

Fair Hall of Fame Program is looking for nominations

The Big Fresno Fair has created a program to recognize those individuals who have had a positive, long-term impact on the Fair.

The Big Fresno Fair Hall of Fame will honor individuals who have demonstrated long-time continued support and extraordinary passion for the betterment of The Big Fresno Fair. Nominations are being accepted for the 2007 Big Fresno Fair Hall of Fame until Wednesday, Aug. 15. A maximum of five inductees will be inducted into the "Hall of Fame" annually.

Hall of Fame inductees will be honored at the Annual Past Director's Reception and will be recognized at the Big Fresno Fair Opening Ceremonies on Wednesday, Oct. 3. In addition, Hall of Fame inductees' names will be displayed on a wall of recognition for public viewing, and a special "Hall of Fame" stakes race will be provided at the Annual Fair's Race Meet in honor of the new inductees.

Nomination forms are available at the Fair Administration Office, 1121 S. Chance Ave., Fresno, or online through a downloadable PDF at www.fresnofair.com. The Big Fresno Fair runs from Oct. 3 through Oct. 14.

Annual Ag Awards nominations underway

Sharpen your pens because Wednesday, Aug. 15 is the deadline to apply for the 2007 Agriculturalist of the Year Award and the Baker, Peterson & Franklin Ag Business of the Year Award.

The Fresno Chamber's Agriculturalist of the Year award honors a community-minded citizen who has demonstrated a commitment to Fresno agriculture, through both personal efforts and leadership abilities. The Baker, Peterson & Franklin Ag Business Award honors a for-profit service or product related agribusiness or farming entity headquartered in the Central San Joaquin Valley.

This year's luncheon will be held in conjunction with the Center for Agricultural Business at California State University Fresno, as part of the 26th Annual Agribusiness Management Conference on Thursday, Nov. 9 at the Fresno Convention Center, Valdez Hall. For more information, please contact Deborah Bristol at (559) 495-4825 or email:

dbristol@fresnochamber.com. For details about the Baker, Peterson & Franklin Ag Business of the Year Award, call Julie Maldonado at (559) 432-2346 or e-mail: julie@bpfcpa.com.

Update: Upcoming State Comp Employer Seminars

*By Sara Borjas
Ag Bridge Program*

The State Compensation Insurance Fund will be holding seminars for State Comp employers later this month.

"Contractor Beware: Safety Around Overhead and Underground Gas and Electric Lines" seminars will be held on Aug. 22 at the Fresno District Office, 10 River Park Place East, Fresno, 1st Floor Conference Room. A seminar in English is from 1 to 2 p.m. and a seminar in Spanish is from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m.

"Hiring Practices: What Employers need to know from hiring to termination" seminar will be held on Aug. 24 at the State Compensation Insurance Fund, 10 River Park Place East, Fresno from 9 to 10 a.m. For information contact Monika Flores at (559) 433-2688.

Registration and information for all seminars available online at www.scif.com/seminars.

Enterprise Zone workshop set for Aug. 30

Workshops about the Fresno County Regional Enterprise Zone and available tax credits will be held on Thursday, Aug. 30 in Selma and Kerman.

The Selma workshop will be held from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Selma Cultural Arts Center, 1045

Rose Ave., Selma. The Kerman workshop will be held from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Kerman Seminar Community Teen Center, 15100 W. Kearney Blvd., Kerman.

The workshop will focus on tax credits that are available to businesses located within the Regional Enterprise Zone, such as state tax credits for each qualified employee hired, tax credits for corporations on purchases of \$20 million per year of qualified machinery and machinery parts, and preference points on State Contracts.

For more information, contact Jose Leon-Barraza, at the Economic Development Coordinator, (559) 262-4168; or email: jbarraza@co.fresno.ca.us.

A smile a day...

Don't make this mistake while planning for your summer vacation...

While shopping for vacation clothes, a husband and wife passed a display of bathing suits. It had been at least 10 years and 20 pounds since the wife had even considered buying a bathing suit, so she sought her husband's advice.

"What do you think?" she asked. "Should I get a bikini or an all-in-one?"

"Better get a bikini," he replied. "You'd never get it all in one."

He's still in intensive care.

If you have a funny, clean! story or joke to share, email it to lizh@fcfb.org.

Next Week's Calendar

Aug. 16 FCFB Public Relations Committee meeting, noon, Sequoia Brewery (Media Night wrap-up meeting)

This Week's Calendar

Aug. 7 San Joaquin Valley Air District Citizen's Advisory Committee; Operation Clean Air Board meeting

Aug. 8 Fresno Chamber Governmental Affairs Committee meeting;

Aug. 10 Tie-down regulation meeting; Chamber Ag, Water & Environmental Committee; Summer Bridge Program luncheon at Fresno State

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Visit www.fcfb.org