



May 4, 2007

FCFB Annual Banquet Recap

Poochigians receive Farm Bureau Distinguished Service Award

Recognizing years of service to Fresno County farmers and ranchers in the policy arena, Fresno County Farm Bureau President Russel Efirid presented the 2007 Distinguished Service Award to former State Senator Chuck and Debbie Poochigian, of Fresno.

"We appreciate all you both have done, not only for agriculture, but for the Fresno Community," said Efirid, while making the presentation at the FCFB Annual Banquet last night. Efirid recalled the Poochigian's long-time ties to agriculture, having both grown up on raisin and grape farms in the Lone Star and Kearney Park areas, respectively. Chuck's parents, the late-Frank and Gladys Poochigian, farmed in the Lone Star of southeastern Fresno County since 1918. Debbie's parents, the late-Deran and Mimi Koligian, farmed in the Kearney Park area of southwestern Fresno County. Both Chuck and Debbie attended local schools, including California State University, Fresno, and have remained active Fresno County residents their entire life. Chuck and Debbie have three grown children, Mark and his wife Jennifer, Kirk, and Laura, and grandson, Deran.

At the end of 2006, Chuck completed 12 years representing the Valley in both the State Assembly and State Senate. Prior to public office, Chuck practiced general civil and business law in Fresno, and served in both the Deukmejian and Wilson Administrations in cabinet leadership positions.

Throughout his career, Chuck has been a strong advocate of business and agriculture in California, a champion of fair and limited taxation and minimal government regulation, and a defender of rural and Central Valley communities with regard to equitable distribution of resources for infrastructure improvements and adequate health care delivery. He was a champion of rural crime prevention.

Debbie has held several leadership positions within the Republican Party and has served as the key organizational person behind most campaign events for high-level Republican federal and state candidates.

In March, Senator Dave Cogdill named Debbie as 2007 Woman of the Year for the 14th Senate District.

Debbie has provided stellar leadership as a member of numerous charitable boards and civic committees. She is a participating member of the Board of Directors of the Fresno State Alumni Association, California Women for Agriculture, Henry Madden Library Leadership Board at Fresno State, and Secret Garden Party Committee for the Arne Nixon Center for the Study of Children's Literature at Fresno State. Additionally, she has been a member of the Board of Trustees at Saint Agnes Medical Center, Board of Directors of Fresno Area Crime Stoppers, Board of Directors of the Fresno County and City Historical Society, and Ag One Tribute Committee to establish the Bill Jones Leadership Development Program. She also served as Co-chair of the Fresno State Alumni Association Homecoming Tailgate.

As part of the FCFB recognition, the Poochigians were presented with a specially monogrammed shovel and a resolution by the California State Legislature.

Celebrating 90 years

This year's banquet, "Your Passport to Agriculture" provided a look at the many cultures that make-up Fresno County agriculture and saluted FCFB's 90th year as an advocacy organization. As part of the anniversary celebration, a time capsule, which will be opened at the 100th anniversary celebration, was displayed containing various Farm Bureau memorabilia. In addition, Fresno County Supervisors Bob Waterston, Phil Larson and Judy Case presented a resolution recognizing 90 years of service to agriculture.

Like many other farm bureaus, FCFB began with the need for the U.C. Agricultural Extension Service to disseminate information and promote better farming methods. Today, Farm Bureau is one of the lead agricultural organizations to educate its members and to advocate for political action and community outreach.

Check the May issue of *Agriculture Today* for a full recap and photos of the event.

FCFB Wishes to thank its sponsors of the Annual Banquet:

Rancho Vista Del Rio (Borba Farms)
Rain For Rent
State Compensation Insurance Fund
Allied Grape Growers
Wellington Ranch and Resort (Ben Ewell)
Donaghy Sales
Jerry Baird Agency, Inc.
Jeffery T. Roberts
Bank of the West
Kenneson Farms
Robert V. Jensen, Inc.
Fresno Equipment Co.
Hedrick's Chevrolet
Microdot Security
Britz Fertilizers, Inc.
C.D. Simonian Insurance
Trinity Fruit Sales
Smith Barney --Harry Gaykian

FARM TEAM Update

California Farm Bureau is asking its FARM TEAM members to help stop additional air quality fees and regulations proposed for farms, ranches and businesses. SB 240 adds burden and financial stress to farmers, ranchers and businesses by:

- Creating a "clean air" surcharge of up to \$300 annually per source on all stationary, indirect and area wide sources;
- Allowing for a one-time emissions fee on any source that causes or contributes to violations of the San Joaquin Valley, state or federal air standards up to \$100 million;
- Authorizing the district to increase surcharges on vehicle licensing fees to a maximum of \$30 annually per vehicle; and
- Adopting rules and regulations at the district level that currently only the state has authority to do.

Your comments are essential to killing this bill in the Senate Transportation & Housing Committee. Submit comments by May 8.

FCFB programs recognized by PR trade association

Two of FCFB's outreach programs were recognized today by the Central Valley Chapter of the Public Relations Society of American, a national PR

trade association. Receiving an Award of Excellence in the Public Affairs Program category was FCFB's Ag Water Quality Management handbook and workshop program. Also, FCFB's Fresno County Farm and Nutrition Day received an Award of Merit in the Special Event project category.

The members of FCFB's Water Advisory Committee and Agriculture Education Committees deserve "pats on the backs" for developing programs that stood out among many entries for their public relations effectiveness. The Image Awards for Excellence in Public Relations were judged by public relations professionals through a PRSA chapter in Florida.

The PRSA Central California Chapter was established in 1992 and serves the counties of Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced and Tulare, as well as individual members in San Luis Obispo, Santa Cruz and Stanislaus counties.

Labor seminars for employers set for Wednesday

The Fresno County Employer Advisory Council is sponsoring two labor regulations training opportunities in May with the first one set for Wednesday, May 9.

A seminar about Cal OSHA and Workplace Safety will be presented by Darren Cousineau, Occupational Safety Specialist, Fresno City College, on Wednesday from 8 to 9 a.m. at the EDD Manchester Center, Room 209. There is no cost to attend and continental breakfast will be provided.

The seminar will cover the top five ways to minimize safety hazards without impacting a business' bottom line, how a safe work environment can lower workers' compensation premiums, and how to avoid major OSHA violations.

On May 16, a seminar on sexual harassment training will be presented by S. Brett Sutton, esq. and Susan K. Hatmaker, esq. This seminar meets the California AB 1825 mandatory training requirements for supervisors, managers, human resource professionals and business owners. All attendees will receive a certificate of completion.

The seminar will be held from 8 to 11 a.m. at the Ramada Inn, Highway 41 and Shaw Ave., Fresno. The \$35 registration is due by Friday, May 11.

For details on both seminars, contact Kris Stuebner, of the FCEAC, at (559) 435-9648.

National Ag Marketing group to meet on May 8 in Fresno

The National Agri-Marketing Association (NAMA) is inviting NAMA Members, local business representatives, college students and anyone else looking to learn more about NAMA to attend a mixer on Tuesday, May 8, at 5:30 p.m., at the Central Valley Business Incubator, 2911 E. Barstow Ave. (Fresno State Campus).

NAMA provides networking opportunities for agri-marketing professionals in marketing, advertising, public relations, media and more. For details, contact Sandy Creighton at (559) 260-6499, or email: screighton@farmprogress.com.

Tree Fruit crop estimate is up from 2006

There should be more California-grown plums, peaches and nectarines available this year. The California Tree Fruit Agreement estimates that the total harvest of the three crops will be up six percent, compared to a year ago.

Farmers have begun harvesting early varieties of peaches and nectarines, and the plum harvest will start soon. The Tree Fruit Agreement says weather has been favorable so far and that fruit quality is excellent.

It's time to make blueberry jam!

Blueberries will probably show up in farmers' markets first and in retail stores a few weeks later, reports the California Farm Bureau Federation.

Harvest has begun in the southern San Joaquin Valley, and will move northward starting next week. Farmers have been planting more blueberries

in the Central Valley. Because of that and because weather has cooperated so far, farmers expect to have more berries to sell this season.

Smile for the week...

A motorist found his car bogged down in a muddy pothole on a country road. Seeing a farmer on a tractor in a nearby field, he called out to him to ask for help. The farmer agreed to pull his car out of the hole for \$100.

After the car was on dry ground, the testy driver told the farmer, "At these prices, you should be pulling people out of the mud night and day."

"Can't," the farmer replied as he hopped back up on his tractor. "At night, I have to haul water for the hole."

Send your "Smile" contributions to lizh@fcfb.org.

Next Week's Calendar

- May 7** Farmland Conservation Model Program; 1:30 p.m., COG office; Land Buffer Task Force, 3 p.m., COG
- May 9** Fresno Chamber Governmental Affairs Committee, noon, Chamber office; San Joaquin Valley Viticulture Technical Group meeting, 10 a.m., FCFB office.
- May 11** Chamber Ag, Water and Environment meeting, noon, Chamber office; CWA Scholarship interviews, noon, FCFB office.

This week's Calendar

- May 1** County Strategic Planning meeting
- May 2** Fresno County Land Conservation Committee meeting
- May 3** FCFB Annual Banquet
- May 4** PRSA Image Awards Luncheon

Fresno County
Farm Bureau

1274 W. Hedges Ave.; Fresno, CA 93728; (559) 237-0263