



PRESS RELEASE

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Governor Schwarzenegger Announces Appointment of 18 to the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger today announced the appointment of Connie Conway and Greenlaw Grupe, Jr., as deputy chairs and Michael Amabile, Alan Autry, Susan Benham, Paul Boyer, Marcelyn Buford, Sheila Carroll, Rayburn Dezember, Larry Fortune, Gary Gilbert, Jeff Grover, Coke Hallowell, Victor Mow, Jose Rivera, Frederick Ruiz, Lorraine Salazar, Sharron Thornton as members of the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley.

Conway, 54, of Tulare, is currently serving as chair of the Tulare County Board of Supervisors. Prior to her election, she was employed as district manager of CorVel Corporation, a nationally certified health care organization specializing in workers compensation disability management. Conway is the incoming president of the California State Association of Counties, a member of the board of trustees for the Tulare Hospital Foundation and a founding member of the Leadership Tulare Core Committee. Conway is a Republican.

Grupe, Jr., 67, of Lodi, has served as the chairman and founder of The Grupe Company, a land development firm, since 1966. He also currently serves on the advisory board of the Center for Real Estate and Urban Economics at the University of California, Berkeley. Previously, Grupe served as founding chair on the University of California, Merced Foundation Board of Trustees. He is a past-president and current member of the Urban Land Institute. Grupe is a Republican.

Amabile, 51, of Los Banos, has been Mayor of the City of Los Banos since 1994. He has also served as general manager of Espana's Restaurant since 1978. Amabile serves as chairman of the City/County Relations Mayor's Board, chair of the Local Agency Formation Commission and is a director in the Merced County Association of Governments. He has served as president of the Los Banos Chamber of Commerce and director of the California Restaurant Association. Amabile is a Republican.

Autry, 53, of Fresno, has been Mayor of Fresno since 2001. Since he has been in office, Mayor Autry enacted the "No Neighborhood Left Behind" infrastructure plan, participated in the formation of Operation Clean Air and in the formation of the Regional Jobs Initiative. Autry is the chief executive officer of Autry Entertainment Group, a film and television production and management company. Autry is a Republican.

Benham, 52, of Bakersfield, is serving her second term as a Bakersfield City Council member. She has been an attorney with the Kern County Public Defender's Office since 1980. Benham serves on the board of directors of the Bakersfield Homeless Center and the Boys and Girls Club. Previously, she was a founding member of the Kern County Women Lawyers Association. Benham is a Democrat.

Boyer, 54, of Farmersville, is currently a city councilman for the City of Farmersville. He has served as community development specialist for Self-Help Enterprises, a non-profit corporation, since 1977. Boyer is a licensed water treatment, water distribution and wastewater treatment specialist. He is the Farmersville representative on the Tulare County Association of Governments. Boyer is a Democrat.

Buford, 76, of Hanford, is currently serving her 17th year as a city council member for the City of Hanford. In addition, she is currently the chair of the Kings Economic Development Corporation. Previously, Buford was president of the South San Joaquin Valley Division of the League of California Cities. She is a member of the Kings Waste and Recycling Board and the Hanford Community Hospital Foundation. Buford is a Republican.

Carroll, 65, of Modesto, is currently the owner of Ross F. Carroll, Inc., a general engineering and contracting firm specializing in the preparation of land development since 1989. Previously, she served as a gubernatorial appointee on the

board of the 38th District Agricultural Association from 1995 to 2003. Carroll is a member of the United Way of Stanislaus County, the Modesto Symphony board of directors and is a trustee of the Gallo Art Center. Carroll is a Republican.

Dezember, 74, of Bakersfield, currently serves as a director of the Bakersfield Californian and Trustee of the University of California, Merced Foundation. He previously served as chairman of American National Bank from 1966 to 1990, director of Wells Fargo Bank from 1990-1999, director of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco from 1984 to 1989 and director of Tejon Ranch Company from 1990-2002. Dezember is a Republican.

Fortune, 57, of Fresno, is currently the president of Fortune Associates, a commercial real estate brokerage firm in Central California. Prior to this, Fortune was assistant vice president for Bank of California. He is a member of the Fresno Business Council, the Fresno County Economic Development Corporation, the Fresno City and County Chamber of Commerce and is chair of the Fresno County Workforce Investment Board. Fortune is a Republican.

Gilbert, 61, of North Fork, has served on the Madera County Board of Supervisors for the past six years. He started his career at the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection in 1962 and retired as south sierra regional chief in 1998. He is a member of the National Association of Counties and is the National Association of County's representative to the Wildland Fire Leadership Council. Gilbert is a Republican.

Grover, 49, of Modesto, is currently serving as county supervisor and chairman of the board of the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors as well as the chair of the Stanislaus County Council of Governments. In addition, he is the president and founder of Solecon, a mechanical contracting business, and a shareholder and the chief financial officer for Nexus Engineering, a mechanical engineering consultation company. He is a member of the Stanislaus County Workforce Investment Board. Grover is registered decline-to-state.

Hallowell, 70, of Friant, is currently the president and a founding member of the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation, a trust founded over 18 years ago. Previously, she served as a teacher for the Sanger Unified School District from 1978 to 1988. Hallowell also served on the State Center Community College District Board of Trustees for two terms. She is a member of the Planning and Conservation League and serves on the Resources Legacy Fund/Foundations. Hallowell is a Democrat.

Mow, 63, of Stockton, has served as a San Joaquin County Supervisor since 2000. Previously, he was a Stockton City Council Member from 1994 to 2000. Mow also was a member of the United States Army Medical Service Corps for two years during the Vietnam War. He is a member of the San Joaquin Flood Control Agency, the San Joaquin County Hospital Task Force and the San Joaquin County Council of Governments. Mow is a Democrat.

Rivera, 53, of Woodbridge, has served for over 27 years in hospital and healthcare administration positions and is currently a medical group administrator for Kaiser Permanente. Previously, he was assistant hospital administrator for Kaiser Permanente of West Los Angeles Medical Center. Rivera serves on the board of directors of the Business Council, Inc. He is a member of the San Joaquin A+ Educational Program. Rivera is a Republican.

Ruiz, 62, of Parlier, has over 40 years experience in the food processing industry. He and his father founded Ruiz Foods in 1964. He has served as a member of the University of California, Board of Regents since 2004. In addition, Ruiz is currently on the board of directors for the California Chamber of Commerce, a trustee on the University of Merced Foundation, a member of the President's Advisory Board of California State University Fresno and a member of Valley CAN "Clean Air Now." Ruiz is a Republican.

Salazar, 45, of Fresno, is currently co-owner of Sal's Mexican Restaurants, an independent family owned business that has been in operation since 1942. She is a member of board of directors of the California Restaurant Association and served on the Madera County Workforce Development Board from 1995 to 1998. Salazar is a Republican.

Thornton, 60, of Merced, has served as co-owner of The Grass is Greener Landscape Management since 2001. Also, she currently serves as state treasurer for California Women for Agriculture. Previously, Thornton served as accounting office manager for Big Valley Marketing with J.R. Wood, Inc. from 1993 to 2003. She is a member of the American Agri Women. Thornton is a Republican.

These positions do not require Senate confirmation and there is no salary.

The California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley was created by Governor Schwarzenegger when he signed Executive Order S-5-05. The partnership brings state agency secretaries and Central Valley representatives together to make recommendations to the Governor regarding changes that would improve the economic well-being of the Valley and the quality of life of its residents. The 26-member Partnership, led by the Secretary of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, is composed of eight state government members, eight local government members nominated by their County Council of Governments and eight private sector members, along with two deputy chairs.