

Mike Reagan REFLECTIONS

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YOUR ADVOCATE FOR SOLANO COUNTY'S 5TH DISTRICT

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"There are plenty of opportunities for government to benefit from good business practices. Emulating them will allow us to operate more smartly with the taxpayers' dollars."

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Chair duties enable me to push for business approach

You wouldn't think that switching seats would make all that much difference, but I am surprised how much more effort sitting in the middle (as the Chair of the Board) takes. Ceremonial duties, a mountain of signatures (literally), and more direct interaction with staff seeking direction are all in addition to what I was already doing. And, for those of you who know me personally, you realize that means I'm having a ball. You should be noticing a theme this year – a more business-like approach that focuses government on getting its work done efficiently, professionally, and at the best value for the taxpayer. The more we get government thinking like business, the more likely we are to get businesses which generate quality jobs to locate here. This newsletter highlights how some of the efforts over the last two years are coalescing into momentum for change.

Economic Summit unleashed enthusiasm about Solano

The list of incredible ideas stemming from the Economic Summit was somewhat overwhelming, and there was plenty of enthusiasm to put them into action. The business community is moving forward to create a county-wide business council, our education providers are working together on workforce development strategies, the County shifted its road plan focus to concentrate on the arterials, and a County lobbying trip to Washington, D.C., got the encouragement of Housing and Urban Development to join forces with the smaller cities to compete for Community Development Block Grants. More things are in the works. Our challenge now is to link the ideas of the Summit with ideas already in progress (like the Solano County Water Agency determining our water capacity and needs) into a coherent vision that we as a community can move forward. When we all gather again on June 19, I have two expectations: 1) assess what we learned at the first summit and what has evolved since then and 2) determine what are the next steps and who will act as champions.

Citizen Advisory Committee reinvigorated for General Plan

The General Plan Citizens Advisory Committee got a needed "shot of espresso" from the Board to get the CAC moving more efficiently toward a comprehensive plan for Solano. A smaller committee with a chair, more meetings, and an aggressive schedule will get us to the finish line, as promised, before the Orderly Growth Initiative expires. The Board also allocated funds to do in-depth studies on the Collinsville, Suisun Valley, Old Town Cordelia and Green Valley areas.

Reserve strategy, bond rating reduce costs for construction

Most people don't consider putting a strong reserve strategy and good bond ratings in their construction toolbox, but a good corporate chief financial officer will tell you it's the first tools to sharpen. Standards & Poor rated our investment portfolio AA+ and upgraded their rating on our existing County bonds – saving we taxpayers \$500,000. We have adopted the most detailed reserve policy among California governments – actually giving a rationale behind our focus on building investment capital while protecting the County from financial uncertainties. When we go this fall to get the bond funding for expanding the jail, these tools should have the same attractive interest rates and save us even more.

Thank you for stepping up and serving Solano County

Thanks to the following people for volunteering to serve their community: **John Kakacek** to the Airport Land Use Commission, **Dan Fowler** to the Solano Arts Council, **Dee Alarcón** to First Five Solano, and **Michelle Chargualaf** to the Local Mental Health Board. **MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE:** A current list of appointment opportunities are on www.mikereagan.net.

Serving You on These Committees

Board of Supervisors

- *Executive Committee which includes Agenda Review, Strategic Planning, Personnel and Legislation*
- *Military and Veteran Affairs Committee*
- *Economic Development & Tourism Committee*
- *Senior Issues Committee*

Delta Protection Commission

Federal/State Executive Committee for the Long-Term Management Strategy for Dredging in the Delta

California State Association of Counties

- *Housing, Land Use and Transportation Committee*
- *Economic Development Committee*
- *Water and Flood Control Task Force*

Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management Board

- *Budget & Audit Committee*
- *Technical Rules Committee*

ABAG Bay Area Hazardous Waste Management Facility Allocation Committee

Travis AFB Environmental Restoration Advisory Board

Fouts Springs Youth Facility Board of Directors, Chairman

Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO)

- *Fire District Consolidation Committee*

Solano County Water Agency Board of Directors

Remote Access Network Board

Solano Economic Development Corp. Executive Committee & Board of Directors

Solano City-County Coordinating Committee, Chairman

Travis Regional Armed Forces Committee

Travis Community Consortium

Lobbying efforts more ambitious, reflect more unified voice

With about 85% of the County budget flowing from federal and state coffers, it makes sense, make that dollars, for policymakers to understand the issues of importance to us here in Solano. The two trips I took back to Washington, D.C., to lobby County issues also included significant issues for Travis AFB, the Solano Transportation Authority, and several of our local and regional water-related agencies. You are going to see more of this type collaborative lobbying effort; our state and federal leaders can respond better to a unified voice. This strategy is necessary to protect us from the ramifications of federal and state budget shortfalls. Our lobbying efforts will keep us in tune with what may happen and allow us to influence the outcomes to protect the interests of Solano taxpayers.

Comprehensive study moves market-based pay idea forward

Repairs to the County's compensation system took a giant leap forward this quarter when the Board commissioned a consultant to do a serious top-to-bottom classification and compensation study. This is quite the undertaking for an organization this size – slated to take about two years. It also took some time to convince my colleagues on the importance of this task. We need this study to ensure we have people doing the right jobs at the right market-based price. Our goal: ensuring our human resource practices are not a burden on the people we hire or to those we are suppose to serve. When the dust settles, we will have a more flexible HR system that benefits employees, management and most importantly the taxpayers.

Inserting better customer service into County operations

At my request, we made a few changes to how Board meetings are managed to remove some "clunkiness" in the process and improve customer service. Public comments on items we can take no action on are at the end of the agenda, presentations are limited to 5 minutes, and comment times on agenda items are 3 minutes (which aligns us more with other jurisdictions). The past practices were akin to the bad customer service you get when you go to a store and the clerk makes you wait while they provide "good service" to somebody who interrupts via the phone. In another attempt at inserting excellent business practices into government processes, every single employee in the County is receiving training in the customer service culture and will soon have it as a component of their performance evaluation.

Strategic plan more strategic with high leverage projects

The County's strategic planning process is maturing, shifting from management by objective to focusing on high leverage projects that will have a ripple effect throughout the county. One project looks to take advantage of the planned jail expansion to reduce recidivism and break the cycle of violence. Inserting more substance abuse and mental health treatment, vocational and academic education, anger management courses, and diversion programs are potential ways of reducing the cycle of repeat offenders. Another project looks to expand the use of our family resource centers to provide neighborhood-based services for the entire family from infant to centenarians. These projects are in addition to the General Plan process and the developing customer service cultural revolution.

Midway exit development serves needs of new VA cemetery

The Board recently approved a small highway commercial site off westbound I-80 at Midway Road for a gas station, fruit stand and general store. Despite hyperbole in the media, this is not an indication that the County is going after the coveted retail dollars. I want the County to focus on developing job centers that don't fit well inside city limits. The development of this decades old highway commercial-zoned site is a unique situation. A compelling case was made to serve the needs of commuters using this exit to get to work at Travis AFB. Travelers to the new Veterans Administration cemetery across the freeway will have last-minute needs, including buying silk flowers that the applicant was noted for at his former downtown Vacaville business. The City of Vacaville, based on negotiated city boundaries, could not do the traditional annexation of the property. Court precedents on "takings" also sided with the applicant. After all due considerations, my vote respected the property rights enshrined in the U.S. Constitution.