



At a glance (March 2008)

- Congressman Dennis Cardoza guest speaker for Enterprise Zone reception March 25th.
- State approves use of APN's for enterprise zone legal description
- CCEDC mission to Sacramento identifies projects for the valley
- Los Banos EDAC Request marketing assistance for community projects
- Agricultural land conversion statistics questioned

Upcoming: MCEDCO Board of Directors and Executive Committee May 1, 2008, Tri Colleges Center, Merced College

- Congressman Dennis Cardoza, 18th District was the keynote guest speaker at the inaugural kick off reception for the regional Enterprise Zone of Merced County on March 25th. The event was attended by dozens of local firms interested in learning more about the zone. Congressman Cardoza encouraged local businesses to take advantage of the zone and capture millions of dollars of taxes to help improve the profitability of their business. Attendees were requested by MCEDCO Board members to financially contribute to the zone to sustain benefits for the local economy.
- The State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) who oversee the enterprise zones of California formally approved MCEDCO's request to legally define the zone through the use of assessor's parcel numbers (APN's). Using APN's to define the zone will save thousands of dollars and avoid a complicated process to identify eligible properties through traditional "metes and bounds" linking thousands of properties and right of ways across Merced County.
- MCEDCO participated with the Central California Economic Development Corporation (CCEDC) mission to Sacramento March 10th – 14th meeting with brokers, developers and real estate consultants. CCEDC members contacted a dozen firms over three days, with MCEDCO participating with four broker meetings on the 11th. Sacramento realtors are increasingly interested in the valley as costs and perceived support for projects wanes in Sacramento.
- MCEDCO and representatives of the City of Los Banos Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) review the status of marketing efforts in the city over the past ten months. The EDAC also evaluated a recent survey of Los Banos commuters and identified projects to undertake in the coming year. MCEDCO was requested to assist the City facilitate development of a bowling alley, and follow up on recruiting retail shopping opportunities.
- A recent article in the Merced Sun Star discussed statistics from the California Department of Conservation cited by the Merced County Farm Bureau suggesting that 10% of Merced County's million acres of agriculture land was converted to urban and development uses in the past six years. The suggestion that 100,000 acres (10% of 1 million) of farmland have been converted to urban uses in recent years is questionable given that the total urban area in Merced County is 36,676 acres according to the same source. The Business Subcommittee of the Merced County General Plan Update, Economic Development Element work group will request the County's planners to review the matter. *MCEDCO supports preservation of farmland and recognizes that farming is the base of the local economy but is concerned that inaccurate information may cause more damage than good.*