



**Notes from One Voice WDC Debriefing  
held Friday, May 9, 2008, 9:00-10:00 a.m.  
at MCAG, 369 West 18<sup>th</sup> Street, Merced**

**In Attendance**

Joe Oliveira	Council Member, City of Gustine
Richard Gerbi	Owner, Gerbi Enterprises, Los Banos
Lynnette Gerbi	Owner, Gerbi Enterprises, Los Banos
Elaine Post	Redevelopment Manager, City of Los Banos
Dr. Robert Fore	Superintendent, Merced Union High School District
Lesa Rasmussen	Mayor pro tempore, City of Atwater
Nelson Crabb	President, Merced County Chamber of Commerce
Stacie Dabbs	Policy Advisor, Office of Congressman Cardoza
Scott Galbraith	President, Merced County Economic Development
Cori Lucero	Director of Federal Gov't Relations, UC Merced
Marvin Heppner	Realtor; Citizens Advisory Committee, MCAG
Bill Spriggs	Council Member, City of Merced
Mike Villalta	Council Member, Los Banos
Jesse Brown	Executive Director
Candice Steelman	Public Information Officer

**What we liked:**

- Sunday night's rehearsal was good to have, but we should have done this earlier. People who are going on the trip need to commit to the briefing meeting.
- Sylvia Smith is a good example for everyone. She always has her presentation nailed.
- The USDA meeting presentation was seamless.
- Hotel outstanding: "freebies", breakfast, location
- Ebbits Grill, good; America, bad service; Charley Palmer, excellent
- Briefings were the best in 4 years. Fred Abouselman was excellent; California Institute not so good; econ dev guy cocky. Have 3 overviews, include Governor's office.
- Meeting start time was good. Could bump it up to 9:00.
- This year we met with appropriations committee staff.
- Small interest groups were well received, rather than a large general group.
- Was truly "One Voice", no one deviated from the message. Impressive moments were when Feinstein's staff said they only wanted to discuss our top priority. As much as Bill Spriggs wants to see Campus Parkway constructed, he said that our top priority has been, for some time, the Los Banos bypass. A day later, Joe Sousa from Los Banos returned the favor by discussing Campus Parkway.
- Sen. Feinstein's breakfast was impressive. We should go each year just to hear the overview. Also, it was impressive that we were the largest delegation present.
- We've been told by staffers in DC that we have a very impressive One Voice program.
- Impressed with the young people we met with – very bright, very energetic.
- Joe Sousa's comments to Congressman Clyburn. He took Clyburn's remarks about impoverished South Carolina and compared them with the Central Valley. Clyburn was surprised to hear this.
- Some of the group used Fancy Flier, a shuttle service, that they recommend. 877-976-0682. They will ask for your phone – give mobile phone, not home phone, as this is the number they use to confirm reservations the day before or day of.

**Areas for improvement:**

- Need an issue's advocate to be on trip. Should we drop it if there's no representative? Or have a Board member briefed to speak about it?
- Anticipate questions and be prepared
- Have name tags for the benefit of those we meet with
- Bring business cards, have them ready to hand out when meeting starts
- Maybe we could print up One Voice business cards for those who don't have their own card
- Video our presentations so that we can see where to improve
- Have an arsenal of messages in case focus of meeting changes and we need to tie our message to the topic of interest
- One community in Merced County is not represented. Why is this?
- Don't schedule multiple meetings at same time with one office due to lack of room to meet
- Develop relationship with UC Merced lobbyist so that we can work more effectively. We get questions about UCM frequently. For example, the healthcare committee talked about the importance of having a UC Merced medical school.
- Bill Behrens meeting at White House complex didn't seem worthwhile
- Cut one overview and use time to run through our presentation
- Need to put our meetings in context by explaining we're part of a larger delegation and we spent 5 months looking at a long list of needs before deciding on these priorities.
- Don't rehash projects with Rep. Cardoza. He knows them. Ask him how we can support his efforts? Or what we could do to further our priorities?
- Need detailed graphics and maps. Put maps in context. Most people don't know where in California we are, even staffers for the Senators.
- Have more meetings on policy, not just appropriations
- Need a script for each meeting
- Have outside staff listen to our presentations prior to going on trip
- Didn't like hotel location, not near Metro
- Go back again during year. Some staffers in meetings told us this.
- Go earlier, like February or March
- Need to hear each other's pitch so that we can understand more and fill in, if needed
- Commit to attending the briefing meeting to go over presentation

### **Thoughts from Thane and Laura (Van Scoyoc Associates)**

In addition to many of the items covered above, they also had these suggestions:

- Send Van Scoyoc our fact sheets prior to trip for their input
- Generate list of necessary items to bring – extra business cards, photo ID, power bars/snacks
- Schedule two Van Scoyoc visits to Merced, one to be scheduled when projects are being developed
- Develop policy position papers in addition to the fact sheet
- To secure meetings with other Congressional Members outside of MCAG delegation, One Voice will need to be prepared to discuss regional issues, i.e. housing, agriculture, transportation
- VSA needs a list of all participants' cell phone numbers
- Give fact sheets to staffer at beginning of meeting, pull out and put the issues to be discussed on top
- Was there too much down time between meetings?

### **Follow up**

Delegates were asked to look over the notes from their meetings and send any follow-up items to Candice. A list of what we have so far is attached.