San Joaquin Valley Water Flow Technology Cluster

Initial Meeting
April 13, 2001
8 – 10 a.m.

Central Valley Business Incubator
2555 Clovis Avenue
Clovis, CA 93612

I. Welcome and Introductions

Co-chairs Claude Laval, John Brewer, and Ray Dunn welcomed the participants. Self-introductions were made.

II. Project Overview and Key findings of Water Flow Technology Industry in the San Joaquin Valley

Kim Walesh and Kathie Studwell, consultants from Collaborative Economics and co-authors of "*The Economic Future of the San Joaquin Valley*," facilitated the meeting. Kim Walesh provided the project overview, and Kathie Studwell discussed key findings regarding the water flow technology industry in the San Joaquin Valley, which are outlined in the San Joaquin Valley Water Flow Technology Briefing Paper and in the attached overhead slides (enclosed).

III. Vision and Requirements for Cluster Development

Participants were asked to identify their vision for the water flow technology industry in the San Joaquin Valley and the two requirements necessary to achieve their vision. The following visions were discussed:

VISION STATEMENTS

1. Expose the San Joaquin Valley's irrigation technology worldwide;
2. Expand the industry;
3. Achieve sustainable growth that endures cyclical trends in agriculture;
4. Central Valley will become known as the world leader in water flow technology;
5. Change the atmosphere in the Central Valley so that it is a desirable place to live and work;
6. Recognized as the world leader by the industry;
7. San Joaquin Valley becomes known as the innovative leader in water flow technology industry;
8. Expand industry to include all water technologies;
9. Exposure worldwide for new technology and products;
10. Increase exports and expand markets;
11. Collaborate to develop whole water systems that can be distributed worldwide as opposed to selling piecemeal systems;
12. Raise the standard worldwide for water flow systems;
13. Influence legislation affecting water conservation;

14. The San Joaquin Valley will become a place with benchmark companies selling benchmark products that solve environmental issues; and
15. Organize as an industry to develop clout with elected officials.

REQUIREMENTS TO ACHIEVE THE VISION

1. Business Development

- Promote the industry more
- Market products
- Good communication within the industry – share information
- Increase size of market; introduce new products
- New product development; higher growth
- Value added of collaboration
- Develop marketing alliances
- Educate customers better
- Defend the markets we have by maintaining the right to irrigate
- Promote irrigation technology to visitors who come to view agricultural productivity; cross marketing between agriculture and water flow technology

2. Workforce

- Need help from educational institutions to meet need of manufacturing in the Valley
- Leverage federal workforce training dollars with special waivers to promote the industry internationally

3. Infrastructure (nothing listed here)

4. Quality of Life

- Better place to live

5. Technology/R&D

- Support new ideas – Center for Irrigation Technology at Fresno State; grow it
- Broaden scope of Center for Irrigation Technology to all water flow technology
- Educate others about technology in the San Joaquin Valley
- Technology Collaboration

6. Business Climate

- Support from local government (taxes, reliable infrastructure)
- Create "welcoming" government
- Develop clout with local, state and national leaders
- Advocacy

7. Other

- Legislation – Water Conservation
- Leverage other associations' work and efforts
- Advocacy for industry
- Export to common market (share new information about exporting)

- Help fight rules – trade barriers
- Bigger presence with visitors (i.e. agricultural visitors viewing agricultural production)
- Focused education
- Resources

IV. Priorities for Action

Following the discussion of areas for collaborative action, participants voted on three top priorities. They were: Workforce, Clout with Local and State Leaders, and Collaboration in Technology Development. Additional time was spent discussing action steps needed in the three priority areas.

A. Workforce Objectives

1. Businesses require machinists
    - Not easy to get skilled people.
    - Young people don't want to work with metal.
    - Sample training program in Long Beach is training 1,000 people for metalworking.
2. Industry / school alliance needed
3. Increase enrollment in high schools and junior colleges for industrial arts
4. Local junior college programs needed
5. Higher quality training programs needed
6. Increase standards for training programs
7. Industry also needs professionals trained in sales, auto CAD, finance, etc. New graduates in all disciplines are not trained well enough.
8. Water flow technology best kept secret as a career path in San Joaquin Valley
9. Advertise opportunities in machining
10. Meet with training/education partners and plan out better programs to meet industry's need
11. Cluster participants anonymously provide data on gross sales, number of employees, and estimated annual local expenditures; aggregated total will provide clout with local decision makers.

B. Clout with Leaders Objectives

1. Give decision makers perspective on size of industry
2. Companies headquartered outside of the San Joaquin Valley will leave if business climate does not change
3. Need to influence leaders on infrastructure, tax, and training issues
4. Need to improve public relations efforts
5. Become the "squeaky wheel" to get leaders' attention
6. Be in queue for money from state government for power crisis
7. Be a local influence for water conservation policy
8. Seek waivers to federal workforce dollars (e.g. $51 million annually in Fresno County alone) to promote the industry
9. Impact on local economy

C. Technology Collaboration Objectives

1. Build Center for Irrigation Technology at Fresno State to broaden its scope to Center for Water Technology
2. Use water technology as a springboard to other things
3. Find out where funding comes from
4. Water technology
5. Create center for potential clients can go to one location to find all the pieces of water systems packaged together
6. Recruit large Asian water companies to San Joaquin Valley to see water systems
7. If best practices are packaged, get Vivendi and others to come here to see it
8. Develop web site

V. Champions for Action Teams

Participants volunteered to serve on the three action teams (listed below). Each action team will meet once prior to the next cluster meeting to complete the action plan worksheet (enclosed).

A. Workforce: Bob Early (Chair), Richard Meno, John Showalter, Russ Densmore

B. Clout with Local and State Officials: John Brewer (Chair), Nick Dvorak, Sheila DeLany, Don Thompson

C. Technology Collaboration: Angelo Mazzzei (Chair), Claude Laval, Ray Dunn, Nick Dvorak

VI. Overview of Water Flow Technology Grant Program

Ashley Swearengin provided an overview of the grant program received by the University Business Center, Central California Futures Institute, and Center for Irrigation Technology at Fresno State to support the water flow technology cluster. Funding is available to support visits to the San Joaquin Valley from international clients, develop a bi-lingual web site promoting San Joaquin Valley water flow technology to international markets, and provide training to local water businesses on exporting and e-business applications.

VII. Next Steps

Those present agreed to begin work on the cluster task forces. David Zoldoske and Dan Clawson offered the assistance of the Center for Irrigation Technology in the development of the Water Cluster.

Two more meetings of the Cluster will be scheduled, with the first one occurring in approximately 5 weeks and the second one during the summer. Meeting announcements will be e-mailed and mailed to the cluster as soon as they are scheduled.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 a.m.