

Opinion

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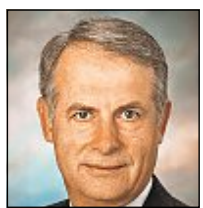
VALLEY VOICE

Riverside County is key to California's economic recovery

Just as voters in 2008 called for historic change, the election of 2010 proves that the level of frustration over lost jobs, a weak economy and a gridlocked government remains at an all-time high. With the recent announcement that California now faces a \$25.4 billion shortfall and the national unemployment rate hovers near 9.4 percent, it's time to restore Riverside County's leadership role in moving California forward.

More than a decade ago, as our state's economy grew, many pointed to Riverside County as a leader in job creation, technological innovation and vision. Whether you consider the robust construction, the worldwide agricultural industry or innovative renewable energy projects, our impact on California's economic growth was without question.

Although Riverside County's unemployment rate is a painful 14.8 percent, I have no doubt that our best economic days lie ahead. As a member of the state Senate, I'm singularly focused on finding

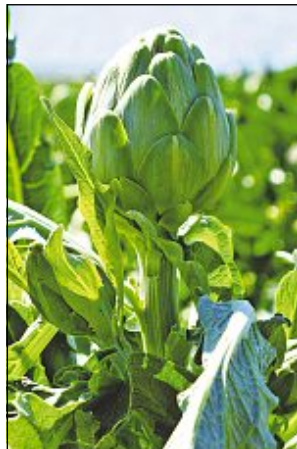


sen. bill emmerson

solutions to our state budget gap, but I'm equally committed to supporting economic policies that spur job growth locally.

I'm especially thankful for the leadership that our Board of Supervisors has shown in the battle to restore local economic growth. From encouraging contractors to hire local residents to helping companies acquire the necessary capital to expand and create jobs, the board's adoption of these economic policies will surely help lead us out of this crisis.

The regional approach being taken by the Coachella Valley



DESERT SUN FILE PHOTO

An artichoke at Ocean Mists fields in Thermal.

Economic Partnership is noteworthy for its vision. Its Economic Blueprint to retain and attract new businesses, create high-paying jobs, and increase our competitiveness nationwide will no doubt pay dividends to

“Every dollar received by agriculturalists in Riverside County in 2009 has the financial impact of three and half times that amount. Therefore, the total value of \$1,015,733,500 represents a financial impact of more than \$3,555,067,200 into the local and regional economy.”

RIVERSIDE COUNTY AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

the valley's job sector.

Raised on a ranch in Hemet, I understand the importance of preserving our agricultural heritage — especially when you consider the multiplier effect brought to bear by Riverside's agricultural sector.

According to a report by the Riverside County agricultural commissioner's office, “Leading agricultural economists agree that every dollar received by agriculturalists in Riverside County in 2009 has the financial impact of three and half times that amount. Therefore, the total value of \$1,015,733,500 represents a financial impact of more than \$3,555,067,200 into the local and regional economy.” Any sector that provides a 3-1 return on investment deserves our support.

In these tough times, only an iron-clad relationship between our elected representatives and local stakeholders will result in positive economic change to Riverside County. By standing shoulder to shoulder, our region can and will lead California on the road to a strong economy.

State Sen. Bill Emmerson, R-Hemet, represents the 37th District, which includes Bermuda Dunes, Desert Hot Springs, Indian Wells, La Quinta, Palm Desert, Palm Springs and Rancho Mirage. E-mail at senatoremerson@senate.ca.gov

LOOKING FORWARD TO A NEW YEAR

Thanks to supportive voters, Indio's future looks very promising

My first months here as Indio's city manager have been rewarding and full of exciting work. First of all, it is a pleasure to serve alongside a City Council that is innovative, engaged and ready to move the city forward. At the same time, residents should know that they have dedicated city staff who continue to serve the people of Indio day in and day out.

In the past few months and in looking ahead, the top priorities for the city are to enhance the city's financial position and to put sound policy in place. We have adopted new policies and practices to make sure the city runs effectively with an enhanced level of transparency.

Federal money will help address foreclosures

There is some good financial news: The city has been successful in securing approximately \$12 million in federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds to help address local foreclosures.

The city is also expecting \$4.1 million in new revenue for fiscal year 2010-11. This comes in the form of many items including the sale of city land, increases to cable franchise fee revenue and a settlement with Imperial Irrigation District. It is important to highlight that the majority of new revenue is a result of the passage of Measure S. I am thankful to Indio residents who, even in these tough economic times, they value the essential city services that exist in Indio.

Citizens Finance panel is quickly moving ahead

The city is quickly moving forward to bring the Citizens Finance Advisory Commission to fruition early next year. We will continue to make the most out of the resources we are given and provide the best possible services efficiently and effectively.

As we take this moment to acknowledge the success of our



dan martinez

community toward aligning costs with resources, I must share with Indio's residents that difficult challenges remain ahead.

The city will need to live within its means. We will work toward ending our reliance on the use of one time revenues, continue to identify ways to be more efficient, focus on bolstering our reserve and protect the city against potential unforeseen circumstances. We have created a multiyear financial model where we will plug in strong economic data to help guide us to a structurally balanced budget.

New businesses are coming to the city

There are still many exciting things under way for Indio. In the months ahead, we anticipate Toys “R” Us and Babies “R” Us, Famous Footwear, Anna's Linens and Kids Club to come online, new restaurants and retailers will open in the downtown area, residents can access their city services via an iPhone application, the city's festivals will continue to flourish and bring in thousands of people despite the economic downturn and we will start seeing more life in housing development.

I look forward to the New Year and would like to hear from residents, community leaders and business owners on how the city can enhance its services. We will continue to reach out to the community as we want to make sure that voices are heard and issues are addressed.

Dan Martinez is Indio's city manager. E-mail him at DanMartinez@indio.org



COMING TOMORROW: ECONOMIST JOHN HUSING

EDITOR'S NOTE: Throughout December, leaders in the Coachella Valley will share what they are optimistic about in 2011.

SHARE YOUR VIEWS

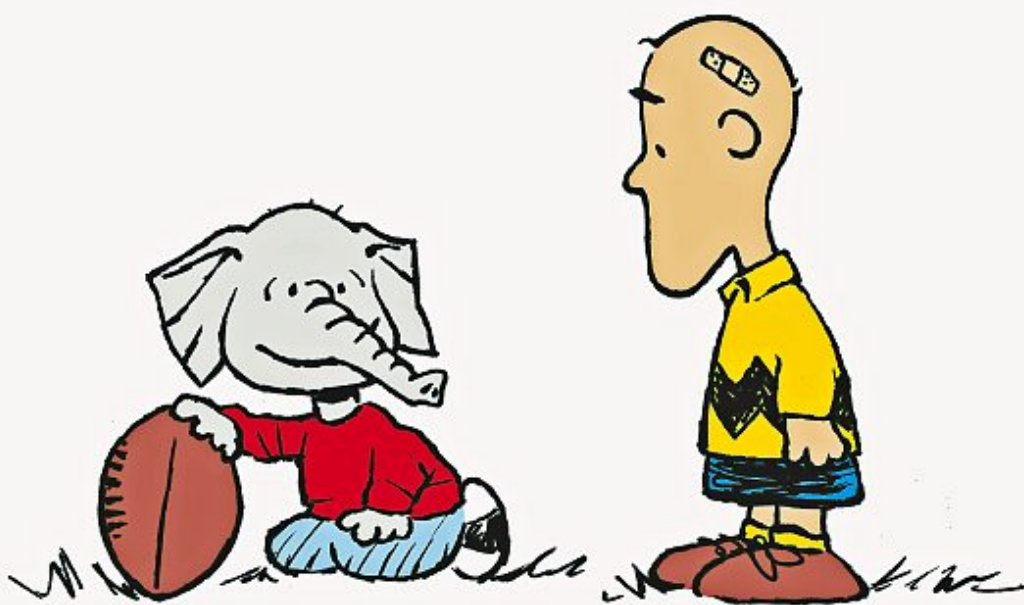
The Desert Sun welcomes guest columns addressing local political and social issues.

General guidelines include:

- Columns should be 500 to 550 words.
- We print the author's photo and contact info (typically an e-mail address) with the column.
- Anonymous columns are never published.
- Stick to a single topic and avoid personal attacks.
- We reserve the right to edit and republish (including electronically) all columns.

Direct column submissions and questions to: **James Folmer**, community conversations editor, at james.folmer@thedesertsun.com

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See more editorial cartoons from the Gannett News Service and Cagle Cartoons at mydesert.com/opinion

YOUR VOICE

The slaying of officer Ryan Bonaminio Funeral was sad and inspiring

I would like to thank The Desert Sun for publishing the letter from Los Angeles Police Department officer Joseph D. Marx to the Department of Corrections concerning Officer Ryan Bonaminio.

I had an opportunity to know Ryan, albeit briefly, while I was the deputy chief in Riverside. I, along with the other police chiefs from the Coachella Valley and about 50 officers, attended the funeral for Ryan on Nov. 16 in Riverside.

I have been to several police funerals in the past 31 years and they are always very sad, as this one was, but it also was very inspiring. To witness more than 6,000 uniformed officers from throughout California and out of state was heartwarming and uplifting paying their respect to a fallen brother officer.

Ryan truly was a hero not only serving his country but his community as we discovered by the testimonials from his military partners, fellow officers, friends and family. Sometimes members of the public don't understand the reality of police officers dealing with dangerous criminals who are very quick to victimize and, in this case, murder a police officer to prevent capture.

Annually in the United States, between 150 and 200 officers are killed in the line of duty through various ways from traffic accidents to violent acts like this. Ryan was not the first and certainly won't be the last to die in the line of duty but this is something all officers understand and comes with the career.

Being a law enforcement officer is inherently dangerous day in and day out but everyone in this line of work understands the danger that comes with the responsibility of keeping our communities and our citizens safe and secure.

David G. Dominguez chief of police, Palm Springs

See a video of the funeral service for officer Ryan Bonaminio at mydesert.com/opinion

illegal immigration

Controlling borders in basketball

The owner of the Phoenix Suns basketball team, Robert Sarver, opposes Arizona's new immigration laws. Arizona's governor, Jan Brewer, released the following statement in response to Sarver's criticism of the new law:

“What if the owners of the Suns discovered that hordes of people were sneaking into games without paying? What if they had a good idea who the gate-crashers are, but the ushers and security personnel were not allowed to ask these folks to produce their ticket stubs, thus nonpaying attendees couldn't be ejected.

“Furthermore, what if Suns' ownership were expected to provide those who sneaked in with complimentary eats and drink? And what if, on those days when a gate-crasher became ill or injured, the Suns had to provide free medical care and shelter?”

— Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer

Bob Miller Indio

Free cars for lawmakers

Our broke state can't afford luxury

Isn't it ironic? The state of California is in debt more than any other state, yet lawmakers in Sacramento feel they deserve a free car, courtesy of us, the taxpayers.

I appreciate the fact that Assemblyman Brian Nestande and a few others drive their own cars — a few honest politicians. How unique! The others reimburse the state a fraction of the vehicles' purchase price.

Our state is broke. Our unemployment rate is at least 4 percentage points higher than the national average. Yet, the aristocrats in Sacramento feel that their constituents owe them fancy cars. Are we their humble slaves to just do their bidding?

We are the only state stupid enough to give these money-grubbers such perks. Isn't it time to rein them in? How about making them part-time legislators? Most other states do that.

Diane Brady Desert Hot Springs

MYDESERT POLL

Today's question

Did you watch the televised court hearings regarding the same-sex marriage ban?

To vote, go to mydesert.com/opinion

Monday's poll results

313 votes cast as of 5 p.m.

Should California continue to provide vehicles to its rank-and-file lawmakers for unlimited use?

2.6%.. Yes, as currently done **85.6%..... No**
11.2%.... Yes, with restrictions **0.3% ... Undecided**