



Supporting a Thriving Economy by *Expanding the Cultural Arts*

THE CITY OF FRESNO: BECOMING A TOP-TIER CITY IN CALIFORNIA

Within the last two years, Fresno has surpassed Sacramento to become the largest city in the Central Valley and is today the 6th largest in California. We have gotten bigger. Now, it's time for Fresno to get better and to become a top-tier city in California. Fresno, the "city with potential," must become the "city with results."

SUPPORTING A THRIVING ECONOMY BY EXPANDING THE CULTURAL ARTS

I am passionate about growing Fresno's economy. After completing undergraduate and graduate degrees in business at Fresno State and running marketing departments for several local businesses, I left the private sector to pursue my passion: spurring economic expansion and revitalization in Fresno and reversing decades-old conditions of high unemployment and concentrated poverty. To do so, I spent the last ten years developing and leading such programs as the Central Valley Business Incubator, Fresno State's Community and Economic Development Office, the Regional Jobs Initiative, and Governor Schwarzenegger's California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley.

I know from first hand experience there are many complicated issues that have to be addressed to improve our local economy and that we've got to make progress on a number of fronts simultaneously if we are to erase decades of high unemployment and poverty. **However, one thing is abundantly clear in today's globally competitive marketplace: *the cities that prosper are the cities with a thriving cultural arts sector.*** The old economic development saying, "The city with the cheapest land and labor wins" is a thing of the past. It has been replaced with the saying, "The city with the smart, creative people wins!" Fresno must have a thriving cultural arts sector to develop, retain and attract the brightest talent in order to be competitive in the global, knowledge-based economy.

DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CULTURAL ARTS INFRASTRUCTURE

The next Mayor of Fresno must do more than support individual programs targeting artists. That will simply perpetuate the status quo. The next Mayor of Fresno must work alongside leaders in the cultural arts community to build the next generation of cultural arts infrastructure - both the physical, as well as "soft" infrastructure that will cultivate new audiences, expand the cultural arts sector, and create new

opportunities to sustain the sector. As Mayor, I will be a champion for Fresno's cultural arts sector. I will:

- **Develop the Cultural Arts District (CAD)** – Ensure the 1996 Lowell-Fulton Mall plan is updated to provide unique design standards for the CAD. Implement streetscape improvements to support and leverage investments in ventures like the Warnor's Theater rehabilitation and the historic renovation of the Fresno Metropolitan Museum, as well as new projects like the Vagabond Lofts. The CAD should be a distinct district within the greater downtown area. We will need to develop a series of districts in downtown. The CAD should serve as the pilot and be the first fully developed downtown district. Let's create a distinct, compelling "sense of place" to serve as the headquarters for the region's cultural arts sector.
- **Support Implementation of a Regional Plan for the Arts** – Thanks to leadership from the Fresno Coalition for the Arts, Science and History on projects like the Cultural Arts Economic Impact Study and the master calendar/database for cultural arts events, there is tremendous momentum to undertake a comprehensive regional plan for the arts. As Mayor, I would work alongside cultural arts leaders to ensure the plan is developed **and implemented!**
- **Attract Resources to Support Cultural Arts Sector** – Whether its advocating for grant funds from Sacramento, wooing private foundations to invest in Fresno instead of other locations, or securing corporate sponsorships to implement our regional plan for the arts, as Mayor, I will provide active leadership in attracting new funding resources for our cultural arts sector.
- **Promote Fresno's Cultural Arts Sector** to audiences within Fresno, as well as those visiting the area. Make the cultural arts sector a centerpiece of Fresno's tourism promotion efforts. The California Travel and Tourism Commission reports that cultural arts and heritage are significant drivers for the state's tourism business. Fresno needs to be aggressive about capturing some of that business for our cultural arts sector.
- **Incorporate Art in the Neighborhoods** – Rejuvenating Fresno's most impoverished neighborhoods is a passion for me. We need a comprehensive approach to neighborhood revitalization. I will work to ensure that cultural arts are a part of the overall strategy to improve our neighborhoods. Just as landscaping is a low cost way to add value to real estate, the performing and visual arts are a low cost way to add vitality to a neighborhood.
- **Ensure City Departments are Working with the Cultural Arts Community** to find ways to bolster their efforts. We have too much work to do to allow friction between our city departments and our partners in the cultural arts community. In my administration, I will ensure regular communication and productive working relationships between City Hall and our community partners to help advance the cultural arts sector and better the city.