

POLICY WATCH – September 2015

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With Fall upon us, NBLC is hoping that rain isn't far behind. The drought is contributing to the devastating fires throughout our state that have produced great damage and loss. Our condolences to those who have suffered so much and our praise to all who have been so generous in trying to help others in their time of need. Redwood Credit Union is collecting contributions for the Valley Fire Victims at <https://fundlyenterprise.com/Donate/LakeCountyFireRelief/#/>.

In this issue, we welcome our newest member, La Tortilla Factory. NBLC's Chair, Brad Bollinger said, "La Tortilla Factory represents all that is good in North Bay businesses. It is a homegrown company, producing high quality food, well respected for its commitment to its employees and to the community. Not only is La Tortilla Factory a family owned enterprise, it is a pioneer in what I refer to as the North Bay's foundational specialty foods industry. It is important that this critical sector is represented on the North Bay Leadership Council and to have them join us in our work to make the North Bay an even better place to live and work."

And we honor Dr. Ruben Arminana, the president of Sonoma State University with the Murray Legacy Leadership Award. Dr. Arminana has a remarkable legacy as one of the greatest presidents of Sonoma State University. NBLC recognizes his excellence in transforming Sonoma State University into a major community asset, consisting of academic achievement, facility enhancement and the creation the Green Music Center -- which is now a North Bay magnet for the arts and tourism.

We also lament the failure of the state and federal governments to provide the transportation fixes we so need. California's infrastructure declines further each day, while the costs to improve it skyrocket. We must continue to press our elected representatives to put the solutions in place to make our infrastructure safe, efficient and economically competitive.

We hope to see you at the Leaders of the North Bay Awards luncheon on the 23rd!

Best,



Cynthia

La Tortilla Factory Joins North Bay Leadership Council

Brad Bollinger, Chair of North Bay Leadership Council's Board of Directors, announced La Tortilla Factory is a new member of the organization. La Tortilla Factory, the leading specialty baker of premium wraps and tortillas, has a 36-year heritage of creating healthy food with quality ingredients. La Tortilla Factory's innovative products have set in motion a national shift in eating habits by continuously creating healthier, more flavorful premium products, setting numerous industry standards along the way, and transforming the simple tortilla into an icon of good living. The company is based in Santa Rosa and has over 300 employees.



Bollinger said, "La Tortilla Factory represents all that is good in North Bay businesses. It is a homegrown company, producing high quality food, well respected for its commitment to its employees and to the community. Not only is La Tortilla Factory a family owned enterprise, it is a pioneer in what I refer to as the North Bay's foundational specialty foods industry. It is important that this critical sector is represented on the North Bay Leadership Council and to have them join us in our work to make the North Bay an even better place to live and work."

Jeff Ahlers, President and CEO, will be the member representative. Ahlers is responsible for shaping the direction of the company and long-term growth strategy. Ahlers said, "La Tortilla Factory joined NBLC because we want to work with other likeminded organizations who share the values of our company. As our company grows, we want to become more involved in positively shaping the future of the North Bay, and as a member of NBLC, we have that opportunity."

La Tortilla Factory's Sonoma County location – an intersection of the culinary arts, farm-fresh produce and some of the world's finest wineries – continually inspires the family business. All the goodness that Sonoma County embodies guides the company as they move into the future, crafting wraps and tortillas rooted in family heritage but which also satisfy today's consumers' desire to eat deliciously and with their health and the health of their family in mind. La Tortilla Factory has also been voted one of the best places to work in the North Bay for the last nine years.

La Tortilla Factory has deep community roots as well. Like NBLC, they believe that more can be done together than alone. They support several local and national non-profit organizations, some of which include: Social Advocates for Youth (SAY); Breast Cancer Research Foundation; Jose & Mary Tamayo Memorial Scholarship; The Sutter Pacific Medical Foundation and many local school and youth programs. Prior to becoming CEO of La Tortilla Factory, Ahlers served on its board of directors. His background includes more than 35 years of experience in food retail and bakery food manufacturing. From a community perspective, Ahlers cares deeply about the protection of children. Over the years, he established a "cause related marketing" business in order to help the fight against human trafficking of children.

Dr. Ruben Arminana Honored with Murray Legacy Leadership Award

North Bay Leadership Council (NBLC) has chosen Dr. Ruben Armiñana as the recipient of the Murray Legacy Leadership Award, which will be presented at the Leaders of the North Bay Awards luncheon on October 23. Dr. Armiñana is the longest tenured president in Sonoma State University history, and NBLC



recognizes his excellence in transforming Sonoma State into a major community asset, including the creation the Green Music Center, which is now a magnet for the arts and tourism in the North Bay.

He was named the sixth president of Sonoma State University in 1992 and is also a professor of political science and teaches and guest lectures periodically. He serves on local and regional boards including the North Bay Leadership Council and the Corporation for Education Network Initiatives in California and is a member of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities and the Santa Rosa Chamber Business Education Leaders Committee. His work at the California State University system level includes leadership roles in technology and finance.

Armiñana has transformed Sonoma State University from a part-time student commuter college at risk of closing due to low enrollment, to a university where ten students apply for every available opening. His vision and determination have changed a campus once nicknamed "Granola U" to be one of acclaimed educational reputation with facility enhancements of more than one million square feet of new buildings. The Green Music Center is a remarkable testament to his commitment to making SSU the center of North Bay arts and community life.

As president, Armiñana has excelled in furthering the academic and instructional programs of the university, leading to Sonoma State becoming one of the most popular campuses of the CSU. During his tenure, the university has constructed major new facilities for students including the Green Music Center, Schulz Information Center, Recreation Center, Student Center and the Environmental Technology Center. He also doubled the number of residential villages with a third of SSU's students living on campus, and oversaw the renovation of Darwin and Salazar Halls and International Hall. During his tenure, the university acquired the 450-acre Fairfield Osborn Preserve, the 3,700-acre Galbreath Wildlands Preserve and the 40 acre Los Guillicos Preserve, all of which are used for research and education.

He has been a leader in growing diversity on campus through his formation and support of the President's Diversity Council and working to bring more qualified Latino students from Sonoma County to SSU. In 2005, Armiñana was named as one of the "100 Most Influential Hispanics" by Hispanic Business Magazine.

Under his leadership, the SSU endowment grew to \$45 million, supporting many programs. His influence and support have led the university to become more cost efficient and sustainable through alternative energy improvements and water conservation measures.

Even his sharpest critics express admiration and acknowledge Armiñana's vision, drive and persistence for excellence. Dr. Armiñana has provided great leadership in ensuring that the community prioritizes education and developed public/private partnerships to improve the North Bay's ability to produce the workforce of the 21st century.

The Leaders of the North Bay Awards luncheon will be at the Hyatt Vineyard Creek, Santa Rosa on October 23, 11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m. Visit www.northbayleadership.org for tickets and more information.

Fix Our Roads? Special Session No Can Do

The Special Session on Transportation has come to an end, and it is not good. The legislature failed to reach a compromise on fixing the roads, with the Republicans holding the state's infrastructure hostage by keeping their pledge to not raise any taxes. No one wants to pay more taxes but the third world has better roads than California and it is time to invest in keeping people safe, goods moving and our economy strong. Despite the compromise proposed by Gov. Jerry Brown, the gridlock could not be broken even as our roads choke with traffic and poor quality. In an editorial in the Los Angeles Times, "Brown's compromise is California's best bet to fix roads," (September 6, 2015) Gov. Brown was praised for "finally offered a reasonable compromise that raises fuel taxes and vehicle fees while tapping carbon pollution fees to fund highway, street, bridge and public transit improvements. Legislators ought to support it and start reinvesting in critical state infrastructure."



The editorial pointed out that there is no disagreement on the need to fix the roads. Defining the problem, the editorial recapped, "Caltrans has deferred \$59 billion worth of highway and bridge repairs. Cities and counties face an even bigger bill, needing \$78 billion to return local streets to good condition. And the cost of fixing the roadways increases each year as pavement deteriorates and simple repairs turn into more expensive reconstruction projects. That's why Brown called a special session in June to focus lawmakers' attention on how to fund the work."

But, the editorial continues, "Republican leaders, however, have predictably opposed tax increases. Needing some GOP votes to pass the funding package, Brown has pitched a plan that embraces the leaders' calls for more public-private partnerships and cost-cutting on transportation projects while generating \$3.6 billion a year in new revenue. That's far less than the \$6 billion transportation advocates say is needed, but it would still be the largest infusion of transportation funding in years."

What gave the Republicans heartburn is Brown's proposal to "raise the gasoline excise tax by six cents a gallon and the diesel excise tax by 11 cents a gallon, and have both rise with inflation in the future — meaning that lawmakers could avoid the perennial fights over whether to raise the gas tax. He would also impose a new \$65-per-vehicle highway user fee that would apply to all vehicles, most notably the electric cars that avoid the gas tax by using less fuel. Brown has also proposed taking \$500 million from the cap-and-trade program — which generated \$2.2 billion this year from fees on carbon emissions — to pay for public transit investments, such as electric buses and cleaner rail cars, and to help make streets more bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly. Republicans want to spend cap-and-trade monies on road repairs, but Brown's plan is a more appropriate use of fees that are supposed to fund reductions in greenhouse gas emissions."

The editorial says that while Brown's proposal is not perfect, "the basic premise of the governor's plan is sound, considering the long-standing bipartisan support in California for raising gas taxes and user fees to fund road repairs. Republicans can't kick the can down the potholed road. It's time to start rebuilding." Unfortunately, the Republicans did kick the can down the road, with no deal reached in the special session and no hope in sight for a resolution of the legislature's differences. All that we can do now is put the pressure on our elected representatives to find a way to fix our roads!

And in more can-kicking, we have the House of Representatives again pushing back discussion of the eagerly awaited multi-year funding bill, which only received a three month extension back in July. Due to expire at the end of October, slow progress has been made with the biggest sticking point being the money. The similarities with the state legislature are not encouraging. Politico reporter, Jennifer Scholtes reports in Morning Transportation (09/14/15), “Creatively counting the outstanding issues in negotiating the House’s multiyear transportation funding bill, Rep. Peter DeFazio says there are ‘more than one hand, less than all my hands and toes.’ Some of the remaining points of divergence: environmental permitting for infrastructure projects, as well as bike and pedestrian issues, he said. The T&I ranking member suggested those points would get resolved pretty quickly, though, if the House’s tax writers would come through with some funding parameters.”

Politico reporters Heather Caygle and Lauren Gardner report that “Republicans have been aiming for a six-year bill that mostly sticks to current funding levels, while Democrats have been pushing for a bigger, bolder investment, according to multiple sources. ... Committee Chair Bill Shuster has made clear he wants a six-year bill to bring certainty back to a federal program that's functioned without it for so long. ... But lawmakers on the tax-writing Ways and Means Committee, who will have the ultimate decision on funding, are already talking about a bill that's much shorter, around three years.” The reporters do have some good news, saying that “while much remains unresolved, lawmakers on both sides say the last thing they want to do is carry the same old transportation funding problems into next year, with a presidential election and full season of campaigning for House members on deck.”

Members in the News

Kaiser Permanente awards grants to support Marin and Sonoma county nonprofit organizations

In 2015, Kaiser Permanente donated funds to local nonprofit organizations to improve the health of the communities in Marin and Sonoma counties.

Wells Fargo Sets \$125 Billion Home-Lending Goal to Hispanics

Wells Fargo said that it wants to extend \$125 billion in home mortgages to America's Hispanic community over the next 10 years.

Friedman's Home Improvement Donated \$25,000 to Valley Fire Victims via Redwood Credit Union

Friedman's Home Improvement donated \$25,000 to Valley Fire Victims via RCU

W. Bradley Electric Receives Gold Shovel Standard Certification by PG&E

WBE has recently been awarded the PG&E Gold Shovel Standard Certification for consistently demonstrating safe excavation practices. Contractors with this certification have proven that they meet the minimum criteria, which are heavily focused on industry best practices.

BioMarin is Approved by the Employment Training Panel for More Than \$11 Million to Train more than 10,700 Workers Statewide

The State of California’s Employment Training Panel today approved more than \$11.8 million to train more than 10,700 workers throughout California.

Keysight Technologies Announces Purchase of Electroservices Enterprises Ltd.

Move Further Expands Calibration, Asset Management Services Offering in Europe

Sonoma State University and Keysight Technologies Team Up to Bring STEM Education to Rural High Schools

Students at six Mendocino County high schools are learning how to make homemade Geiger counters and mud-powered batteries thanks to a group from Sonoma State University and a \$3 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

Sonoma Raceway Hosts Verizon IndyCar Series Title Fight

Six drivers remain eligible for the Verizon IndyCar Series championship, as the series returns to Sonoma Raceway this weekend for its season finale at the GoPro Grand Prix of Sonoma, Aug. 28-30.

Sonoma State University's Ruben Arminana Announces Retirement

Sonoma State University's president, Ruben Arminana, announces retirement during convocation speech.

Read more online at www.northbayleadership.org/news



Who We Are

Over twenty years ago, business leaders founded the North Bay Leadership Council on a simple premise: We can accomplish more by working together. Today, the Council includes 45 leading employers in the North Bay. Our members represent a wide variety of businesses, non-profits and educational institutions, with a workforce in excess of 25,000. As business and civic leaders, our goal is to promote sound public policy, innovation and sustainability to make our region a better place to live and work. For more information: Call

707.283.0028 / E-mail info@northbayleadership.org

www.northbayleadership.org