



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

2015 MAY 15 P 1:50

**Garrad Marsh, Mayor**  
**City of Modesto**  
1010 Tenth Street, Suite 6200  
Modesto, CA 95354  
[gmarsh@modestogov.com](mailto:gmarsh@modestogov.com)

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May 15, 2015

Dear Community Leader:

The San Joaquin Valley is considered the world leader in agricultural commodities and is often referred to as the "bread basket of the world." Unfortunately it has also been labeled the "valley of the poor" by a variety of news sources in their coverage of our region. Many consider the San Joaquin Valley the most economically depressed area of California.

Travel and Tourism can play a critical and distinct role in enhancing and stimulating economic development and job creation for our region. This will also help us diversify our local economy. The travel and tourism industry is one of the nation's strongest sectors, according to the US Travel Association.

Travel and Tourism is a 10.9 billion dollar industry in California and yet the San Joaquin River Valley (Fresno to San Joaquin County) travel spending for the five counties in 2010 was only \$2.6 billion. According to Dean Runyan and Associates, total employment was 27,000 and total tax revenue was \$167 million, which includes \$40 million in local taxes in the San Joaquin River Valley. We believe our region can do more to create jobs, attract more customers to our local businesses and increase local tax revenues by doing more to attract visitors to our region. Our Modesto City Council recently adopted the attached resolution; which also urges your city and all our local cities, counties and stakeholders to adopt a similar resolution.

Fresno, Madera, Merced, Stanislaus, and San Joaquin County are linked together by the San Joaquin River. This creates the opportunity to market the region to a broader audience as the "San Joaquin River Valley." How can we use this as a foundation to build and create additional travel and tourism opportunities for us as a region? How can we do more to market and brand our region into a statewide, national and international destination that will attract visitors, investments and job creators?

A group of volunteers representing Convention and Visitors Bureaus, the Great Valley Center, Business Leaders, Economic Development representatives, and Farm interests have joined together to strategize on how to best market and brand the SJ River Valley. This group will be known as the SJ River Valley Coalition and will make presentations to elected bodies, civic groups and service organizations on the missed opportunity of growing the travel and tourism sector in this region. We welcome thoughts, ideas, suggestions and an open dialogue as we move this effort forward. Our valley should be recognized and valued for our agriculture, bustling downtowns, rivers and our great outdoors; which give us the opportunity to showcase our amazing region. We encourage you to support the San Joaquin River Valley Travel and Tourism project as a viable way to promote and stimulate economic growth for our region, and help to increase our jobs base with a new approach to economic development.

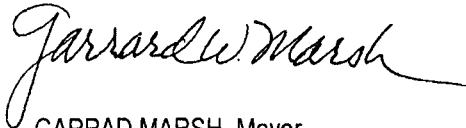
Re: Letter of Support- Travel and Tourism  
May 15, 2015

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On behalf of the City of Modesto, I strongly encourage you and your City Council to help build upon our rebranding efforts and adopt the attached resolution.

If you have any questions or need further information, feel free to contact the author and sponsor of our resolution, Tony Madrigal, Modesto City Council member, District 2 at [tmadrigal@modestogov.com](mailto:tmadrigal@modestogov.com) or 209-579-4776.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Garrard W. Marsh". The signature is written in black ink and has a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

GARRAD MARSH, Mayor

**MODESTO CITY COUNCIL  
RESOLUTION NO. 2015-37**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MODESTO,  
CALIFORNIA, RECOGNIZING THE SAN JOAQUIN RIVER VALLEY AS A  
TRAVEL AND TOURISM DESTINATION TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE CITY OF MODESTO AND THE  
SAN JOAQUIN RIVER VALLEY REGION**

WHEREAS, the San Joaquin River Valley is comprised of the counties of San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera and Fresno, and the San Joaquin River Valley project is an ongoing collaboration of the convention and visitors' bureaus from all five counties in the region; and

WHEREAS, the San Joaquin River Valley offers visitors scenic open spaces, mild climate, beautiful rivers, fishing, museums, wine tasting, hiking trails, historic destinations, and agritourism activities; and

WHEREAS, the City of Modesto is centrally located in the San Joaquin River Valley and is internationally recognized as the birthplace of George Lucas and American Graffiti, and is home to the largest winemaker in the world, Gallo Wines, while only an hour's drive from the Sierra Foothills which lead to Yosemite National Park; and

WHEREAS, the City of Modesto is geographically situated between the Tuolumne and Stanislaus Rivers which serve as tributaries to the San Joaquin River, and thereby has great opportunities for agritourism and recreational tourism; and

WHEREAS, the City of Modesto and the San Joaquin Valley continues to experience double-digit unemployment and recognize the need to diversify our local economies; and

WHEREAS, travel and tourism in California is a \$110 billion industry annually, and in 2014 the San Joaquin River Valley only received \$2 billion in travel and tourism revenue according to the State of California Department of Tourism; and

WHEREAS, the City of Modesto and the San Joaquin Valley stand to benefit from jobs, economic stimulus, and entrepreneurial activities by embracing and promoting regional travel and tourism as an important component of an economic development strategy; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Modesto hereby recognizes the San Joaquin River Valley as a regional travel and tourism destination, and congratulates and commends the San Joaquin River Valley project for its advocacy and leadership in advancing regional tourism as an economic development and economic diversification strategy; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City of Modesto encourages public and private efforts to advance cooperative regional tourism development efforts among San Joaquin River Valley and Sierra Foothill governments, business groups, and their communities; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City of Modesto shall invest funding, as available and only after Council approval, to help promote, brand, and market the San Joaquin River Valley as a regional travel and tourism destination, including but not limited to increased public signage, staff resources, and participating as a stakeholder in collaborative marketing and promotional efforts; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City of Modesto invites the San Joaquin River Valley tourism project to report regularly to the Modesto City

Council on its progress and opportunities for economic growth from tourism across the San Joaquin River Valley; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City of Modesto directs the Mayor to send a letter to all the Mayors and City Councils, County Boards of Supervisors, School Boards, and State and Federal legislators in the San Joaquin River Valley urging them to adopt this resolution; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City of Modesto in directs the Mayor to send a letter to the President, Governor of California, and our State and Federal legislators in the San Joaquin River Valley urging support and funding for the further development of the San Joaquin River Valley as a regional travel and tourism destination.

The foregoing resolution was introduced in a regular meeting of the Council of the City of Modesto held on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2015, by Councilmember Madrigal, who moved its adoption, which motion being duly seconded by Councilmember Lopez, was upon roll call carried and the resolution adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Councilmembers: Cogdill, Gunderson, Kenoyer, Lopez, Madrigal, Zoslocki, Mayor Marsh

NOES: Councilmembers: None

ABSENT: Councilmembers: None

ATTEST:

  
STEPHANIE LOPEZ, City Clerk

(SEAL)

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

By:   
ADAM U. LINDGREN, City Attorney