

# Essential Elements

## for the Future of the San Joaquin Valley

*2017 Public and Private Policy Series*



essential elements

## Grow Food, Grow Jobs - Creating the Nation's First Ag-Based Broadband Pilot

## Biographical Sketches

November 8, 2017  
Harris Ranch Inn and Conference Center  
[www.essentialelementsseries.com](http://www.essentialelementsseries.com)



**WEST HILLS**  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

## Introductions



**Stuart Van Horn** is the Chancellor of West Hills Community College District. In his 33rd year of community college service. He received his Bachelor's Degree from University of Great Falls, MT. He received his Doctorate in Educational Leadership in 2008, his Master's in Educational Administration in 1991 and has regularly authored reports and conducted studies of career and technical education, the business of sport, educational leadership, and economic impact. His doctoral study explored how California community colleges assess cultural competency in hiring processes for sport head coaches.

**William Bourdeau** has been the Executive Vice President of Harris Farms, Inc. since January 2012. He also serves on the board of director of the Westlands Water District, the San Luis Delta Mendota Water Authority, the California Water Alliance, the Jack Harris Memorial Scholarship Foundation and the West Hills College Foundation.



**Anna Caballero** was elected in November 2016 to the California State Assembly to represent the 30th Assembly District, which includes the Salinas Valley and Big Sur, San Benito County, Watsonville, Gilroy, and Morgan Hill. She has a 30 year legacy of public service in her community. She received her undergraduate degree from UC San Diego, and her law degree from UCLA. After graduating law school she moved to Salinas to provide legal services to farmworkers. She also started a non-profit called "Partners in Peace" to develop strategies to reduce youth and gang violence. At the request of her housing association she ran for Salinas City Council and served for seven years; where she focused on affordable housing, strengthening business and commercial opportunities for growth, redevelopment of downtown, and provide more parks and recreational space for kids and families. She became the first female Mayor of Salinas in 1998, and as Mayor she raised over \$80,000 in private funds to fund city libraries, and she put a measure on the ballot to raise money for essential services during a state budget crisis. Anna was first elected to the State Assembly in 2006, where she continued to focus on the needs of local residents. From 2010 to 2016, she joined Governor Edmund G. Brown's cabinet as Secretary of the Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency.

She became the first female Mayor of Salinas in 1998, and as Mayor she raised over \$80,000 in private funds to fund city libraries, and she put a measure on the ballot to raise money for essential services during a state budget crisis. Anna was first elected to the State Assembly in 2006, where she continued to focus on the needs of local residents. From 2010 to 2016, she joined Governor Edmund G. Brown's cabinet as Secretary of the Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency.

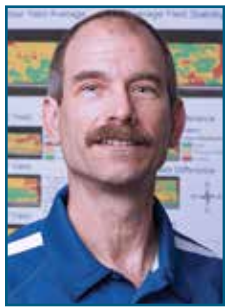
**Dr Linda Thomas** is the Vice Chancellor of Educational Services and Workforce Development at West Hills Community College District. In her 18th year of service to higher education, her present duties include planning and implementing strategies that provide leadership and direction of efforts for district Educational Services, Workforce Development, Categorical Funding and Grants, State and Federal Programs, Distance Education, Workplace Learning, Contract Training, Westside Institute of Technology, and Child Development Centers. She received her Bachelor's Degree from UC Riverside in Political Science in 1986. She received her Master's Degree in Theology from the Graduate Theological Union at UC Berkeley in 1990 and her Doctorate in Educational Administration and Leadership from the University of the Pacific in 2008. Linda's Doctoral thesis explored the ethics of teaching in higher education. Before assuming the duties of Vice Chancellor at West Hills, Linda served as both a faculty member and a Dean of Career Technical Technology.



**Gabe Youtsey**, Chief Innovation Officer, is creating a new strategy to catalyze innovation and entrepreneurship in food, agriculture, natural resources at the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources across California. He brings together the University of California's 100-year legacy of innovation in agriculture and natural resources in California together with industry, tech, finance, and government aimed at solving California and the World's challenges of food security and environmental sustainability. This is in support of President Napolitano's broader vision for UC innovation, and UC ANR's strategic plan.

## Panel One: *Broadband Fields of Dreams – Farmers’ and Community’ Needs*

**Dennis Donohue**, former mayor of Salinas, works with Western Growers to further develop the Western Growers’ Center for Innovation & Technology® (WGCIT) into a premier agtech startup incubator. In this role, Donohue drives agtech initiatives, bolsters innovation programming, further facilitates relationships between start-up companies and growers and spearheads business development at the WGCIT in Salinas, Calif. Donohue has been lauded for his leadership in agriculture where he plays a key role in creating innovative business models, identifies new technologies and develops initiatives that integrate agtech and innovation into the business structure at organizations such as Cultiva Global, European Vegetable Specialties/Royal Rose, River Ranch Fresh Foods, Fresh Express Farms and Fresh Western Marketing. Additionally, his dedication to the community and region is unmatched. Donohue’s strong civic commitment includes his leadership as Salinas’ Mayor from 2006 to 2012 and serving on governing boards at the Grower Shipper Association of Central California, Salinas Chamber of Commerce and Steinbeck Innovation Foundation.



**Terry Brase** is an Ag Science Instructor at West Hills College focusing on teaching and developing precision ag courses. He is also Educational Consultant and Managing Owner of BrASE LLC, which provides expertise to ag businesses in developing precision agriculture educational programs. Brase taught at two Iowa community colleges for 30 years; teaching ag geospatial technologies for the last 23 years. He developed the first in the nation two-year degree in Precision Agriculture in 1995 with assistance from the National Science Foundation. In 2001 he was the originator and Principal Investigator of AgrowKnowledge, the National Center for Science and Technology in Agriculture. He has been instrumental in two ESRI Special Achievement in GIS awards and the recipient of the 2012 Educator Award of Excellence at the International Precision Ag Conference.

**Dr. Karl Longley**, an Emeritus Professor and Dean of Engineering and Computer Science at California State University, Fresno (Fresno State), is an environmental engineer and senior engineer with Fresno State’s California Water Institute. His current responsibilities include contracts with the Department of Water Resources investigating and developing various water technologies. Dr. Longley also served as the principal investigator for a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency grant focused on developing solutions for the safe drinking water needs of small, economically disadvantaged communities (DACs). He served on California’s Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVWB) for 26 years. He was a member of the Public Advisory Committee for the 2013 CWPU. He served as a member of the U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Agency’s Board of Consultants (1994-1998), and the California Governor’s Environmental Policy Council (1993-1997). He is a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE). Dr. Longley serves on the membership committee of the American Academy of Environmental Engineers, and he also is a member of American Water Works Association, the Nature Conservancy, and the Water Environment Federation. Dr. Longley earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of New Mexico, and both a Master of Science in Sanitary Engineering and Water Resources degree and a Doctor of Science degree from the Johns Hopkins University. He is a retired U.S. Army lieutenant colonel having served on active duty for twenty-one engineers as a sanitary/environmental engineer.



**Davena Witcher** is the Executive Director of AMOR, a community based non-profit that was established in 2008. She has a bachelor’s degree in nursing and previously worked at Valley Children’s Hospital in the neonatal and pediatric departments for 15 years. Since AMOR’s inception Davena served on the Board of Directors, was the Development Director from 2011-2013, and most recently transitioned to Executive Director. Under Davena’s leadership AMOR’s cornerstone project in Afghanistan doubled the number of children and their families treated annually to 75,000, opened a state-of-the-art neonatal nursery, and began teaching health education to young girls ages 10 -18 in three public schools. AMOR is currently working on a \$10 million capital campaign to construct and operate a multi-structure, eco-friendly facility in Mendota, right here in our Central Valley. The Wellness & Enrichment Center will provide wraparound medical, social, and youth services in this underserved town and in the surrounding communities. AMOR builds healthy communities worldwide by partnering with other organizations to cultivate dignity, empower neighborhoods, and provide opportunity in the communities we serve.



**Jeff Mitchel**, Cropping Systems Cooperative Extension Specialist, Department of Plant Sciences, University of California, Davis. Kearney Agricultural Research and Extension Center, Parlier, CA. West Side Research and Extension Center, Five Points, CA.

## Panel Two: *SJV Information Highway is a Rutted Dirt Road - But It is a Start*

**Jackson R. Gualco** is the President/CEO of The Gualco Group, Inc., a government relations and public affairs consulting firm based in Sacramento, California. His firm represents a wide array of clients from agriculture, business, and the public sector. He served as Special Assistant to Assembly Speaker Willie L. Brown, Jr. He received a master's degree in Pastoral Studies from Loyola University and an MBA in management from Golden Gate University. He has a certificate in management from the UC Davis. His undergraduate degrees are from the UC Davis and Sacramento City College. He participated in executive level programs sponsored by the University of California, Harvard University, and Boston University. He is a member of the Deans' Advisory Council of the UC Davis College of Letters and Science and is a trustee emeritus of the UCD Foundation. He is the immediate past president of the Institute of Governmental Advocates, the association of state-level lobbyists. He sits on the Advisory Council of the State Legislative Leaders Foundation. He continues to serve on various search and advisory committees at UCD. His firm received the Outstanding Contribution to Agriculture award from the California Association of Pest Control Advisers.



**Sonja Harris** is a tech entrepreneur and company director of Conifer Communications: a rural wireless internet service provider in Tuolumne, Calaveras, Merced, Mariposa & Stanislaus Counties. Using cutting edge technology and a fixed wireless network, Conifer Communications offers residents and companies broadband internet with unlimited data, along with additional services such as security cameras, technology support, VOIP, & network solutions.

**Robert Tse** creates and implements innovative strategies to benefit California's regional and rural economies. He integrates policies, resources and initiatives through federal, state, local government and public-private partnerships. He is the USDA lead for the Strong Cities – Strong Communities (SC2) White House pilot initiative in Fresno. He is driving strategies for urban-rural broadband infrastructure and development of regional agriculture technology economic clusters in areas such as Fresno and Sacramento. His broad strategic reach also includes goods movement, international trade, health-food-agriculture systems, veterans and farming, water, and energy.



**Ricardo Lainez** is a professional Business and Market Development Executive with over 15 years in the Hispanic Market and Telecommunications industry. Mr. Lainez is currently expanding the market penetration of Telecommunications infrastructure (Fiber/Internet, VoIP) with Vastnetworks/ CVIN Business services. As an Advertising Executive and Account Manager at Seccion Amarilla USA, a Spanish directory. Mr. Lainez has worked over 12 years on projects with emphasis in the Hispanic demographic, as a Hispanic and Spanish speaker his understanding of the culture has helped developed marketing campaigns for clients as well as providing guidance on the best use of advertising dollars for product placement in said market. Mr. Lainez was an Account Executive at Univision Communications, Nexstar broadcast television networks (NBC and CBS), He was responsible for developing and growing market share of media and digital products. By actively being a consultant to prospective clients he provided information relevant to a successful campaign. At Sprint Nextel/AT&T/ Ubiqitel PCS in the Telecommunications industry, Mr. Lainez positively impacted the growth of customer base and limited churn rate. He was also a new business developer for a fundraising program in the nonprofit industry that created revenue of 1,000,000 in sales for the company and its affiliates.





**Rocky Chenelle** is the US Dept of Agriculture Rural Utilities Service Telecom program General Field Representative (GFR) for California, Nevada, and Hawaii/Western Pacific. His job includes participation in the planning, financing and construction of broadband networks and telemedicine/ distance learning networks. He joined the USDA in 2009 as a loan specialist for Rural Development in Hawaii. His colorful career has included Electronic Engineering and Program Management, Real Estate and Mortgage, Agriculture, and Small Business. He has degrees in Electrical Engineering and Business Management.

### Panel Three: *Build It and They Will Connect - Technology and Tasks*



**Ismael D. Herrera, Jr.,** Associate Director, Office of Community and Economic Development at Fresno State: contributes to the development of university-led activities that align Fresno State's assets to regional initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life and economic competitiveness of the San Joaquin Valley. He serves as the Lead Executive for the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley, a regional public-private initiative comprised of civic leaders from an 8-county region. Herrera launched the nationally recognized San Joaquin Valley Rural Development Center in 2010. His office administers the San Joaquin Valley Regional Broadband Consortium and the Fresno State Parent University digital literacy program. Herrera earned Bachelor's degrees from UC Irvine and a Master's degree from Harvard. He was raised in the communities of Firebaugh and Mendota and now lives with his wife and daughter in Kerman. Herrera represents rural western Fresno County on the Fresno County Board of Education.

**Gladys Palpallatoc** is Associate Vice President for Northern California at the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF). She has over ten years of experience in community, economic and sustainable development – with over nine years of work specifically in the telecommunications and technology policy area. The focus of her experience has been primarily in public policy, working to help build partnerships between the public, private and community sectors. She worked with the California Foundation on the Environment and the Economy (CFEE) on a “Regional Telecommunication Project” focused on eradicating the Digital Divide in the East Bay. She continued working on telecommunications issues when she joined the Bay Area Council in 2000. Gladys completed her undergraduate education at University of California at Santa Barbara, concentrating in Political Science.

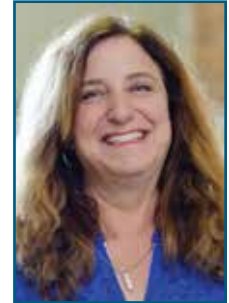


**Adelina Zendejas** is Deputy Director of the Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy at the California Department of Technology. She is responsible for promoting collaboration between key public, private, non-profit, and community based organization stakeholders to foster and support broadband initiatives and digital literacy programs to improve statewide broadband expansion, adoption and inclusion. She is active in a range of broadband and digital literacy issues. She is a board member of the California First Responder Network, and is a member of the California Broadband Council Workgroups on: Identifying State buildings and structures for collocation, Overcoming local barriers to deployment and adoption, Acquiring state surplus computers to schools, and Tribal Broadband. Prior to her current appointment, she was a member of the Technology Services Division management team at the California State Board of Equalization. From 2002-2004, she served as CIO at the California Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board. From 1999-2002 she held leadership positions at the Department of Information Technology as Special Assistant to the Director and Deputy Director of the Administrative Services Division.



**Jake Soberal** is the Chief Executive Officer of Bitwise Industries. Bitwise was founded in 2013 to move the technology industry in the Fresno region forward. Bitwise provides quality place, education, and execution in Fresno for the technology industry. Bitwise provides resources in these areas on the belief that they are the missing pieces to the fast growth Fresno’s technology industry. Place is comprised of a technology hub, Bitwise South Stadium, and a collaborative workspace, Hashtag. Education is delivered via Geekwise Academy, a training program that teaches computer programming and infrastructure. Bitwise Industries provides execution by way of its full-service, custom software development firm, Shift3 Technologies.

**Robyn Krock** leads and manages projects in Valley Vision’s Food and Ag Economy and Broadband impact areas. She provides expertise in meeting design and facilitation, key informant interviews, stakeholder focus groups, and is skilled at connecting ideas and people. Robyn is well-versed in the community aspects of local food systems, and authored an MS thesis titled “Food Access, Ag Sustainability, and Education: Collaborating to Promote a Regional Food System.” Prior to joining Valley Vision, Robyn returned to UC Davis earning graduate degrees in community development and anthropology.



## Our To-Do List



**Jeff Weekley** an Iowa native, started his professional career in the U.S. Navy as a Cryptolinguist, learning Korean and Spanish while at the Defense Language Institute. After leaving the USN, he returned to Monterey as a subject matter expert and programmer for a small company developing a defense simulation, called JTLS®. He was then asked to join both the Mechanical Engineering/ Aerospace department and the Modeling, Simulation and Virtual Environments Academic Group at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) with a joint appointment as Research Associate. As a founding member of the MOVES Institute, Mr. Weekley spent 15 years on faculty, specializing in digital media, academic technology, modeling, and visual simulation. This early work led him to join SIGGRAPH and CineGrid, where he served on various executive committees, sub-committees and working groups.

As a member of NPS’ HPC Advisory Committee and IT Task Force, he was key in fulfilling the university’s IT Strategic Plan for cyberinfrastructure, HPC and visualization capabilities. Recently, he spent a year working in New Zealand at the Research & Education Advanced Network New Zealand as the Science and Education Manager. He’s also lived in Europe, South America and the Middle East. He speaks French, Spanish, Korean and English fluently. In his adopted hometown of Marina, CA, he served two years as an Economic Development Commissioner, sat on the IT Advisory Committee and still consults with the city on cyberinfrastructure. He served on the boards of local, national and international non-profits centered around civil liberties, social justice and equality. Mr. Weekley is a keen home cook who, for many years, ran Monterey’s only fake, Italian pizzeria, called Fugazi’s..





**WEST HILLS**  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

[westhillscollge.com](http://westhillscollge.com)



essential elements

[www.essentialelementsseries.com](http://www.essentialelementsseries.com)

 @whccdworkforce

Once you **go here,**  
you can **go anywhere**™