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Solano County Fair Association Announces 2017-2018 Officers

Solano County, CA – The Board of Directors of the Solano County Fair Association (SCFA) is pleased to announce its recently elected Officers for 2017-2018: Mike Coakley of Vallejo, President; Dennis Yen of Vallejo, Vice President; and Carole Paterson of Fairfield, Treasurer. Coakley, Yen and Paterson will hold their offices for a one-year term that began with the Association’s September 2017 Board meeting and will continue through its August 2018 Board meeting.

“I feel it is the duty of everyone in our community to serve in some capacity to make our world a better place,” commented Coakley, who follows Lee Williams as Board President. “Rather than just sit on the sidelines and complain, people should get involved if they want things to change.” Coakley was appointed to the Board in April 2014 by District One Supervisor Erin Hannigan to fill a vacated seat.

Coakley is currently a Property Management Expert with Cirimele Property Management where he manages 350 properties in Vallejo and Benicia. His work in this field has given him an extensive knowledge of the community, working with both long-term and new residents to the area. Prior to his career in property management, Coakley spent over forty five years in the telecommunications industry including thirty years with AT&T, culminating in a position as District Marketing Manager for all of central California. After his time at AT&T, Coakley worked for ten years as a communications consultant in the Fresno area, followed by several years as a telecommunications specialist in the banking industry.

Coakley has been actively involved with several boards, commissions and philanthropic organizations throughout central and northern California including Rotary Clubs, the Board of Directors of the South Lake Tahoe Chamber of Commerce, the South Lake Tahoe Planning



Commission, Chairman of the United Way of Tracy, member of two separate Grand Juries in El Dorado and Solano Counties, Past President of the Blue Rock Springs Golf Course Board of Directors, the Board of Directors of the San Joaquin Country Club, and the Board of Directors of the Vallejo Chamber of Commerce. Coakley resides in Vallejo with his wife, enjoys playing golf, and maintains an active interest in communications.

Dennis Yen, also a District One appointment by Supervisor Hannigan, joined the Board in February 2014. "I was energized from the first moment we discussed the possibility of me joining the Board," stated Yen. "Like many Vallejoans, the Solano County Fair is a treasured summer memory dating back to my childhood. Besides being an avid fairgoer, I learned from a very early age that the Fair also brought its own brand of economic benefit as our family-owned restaurant saw more than its share of fairgoers and fair workers throughout its run. Night after night the restaurant would be filled with laughter and friendships, old and new, as our patrons loudly regaled each other with events from their day at the Fair. The byproduct of which was an atmosphere of acceptance and community sharing."

Yen is a third generation Chinese-American whose family owned and operated restaurants in Vallejo from the late 1920's through the mid-1970's. He attended Vallejo public schools, graduating from Vallejo High School in 1963, and completed his education at San Francisco State University, earning a Master's Degree in Speech/Communication in 1969. He is the proud father of two, daughter Jennifer and son Cory, who both work as law enforcement officers.

Yen has a wide and varied career history including the obligatory years in the family restaurant business (which he took over later in life), working as an Assistant Professor at the University of Alaska, a Training Specialist with United Air Lines in Chicago, working for Solano County in both the Social Services and Probation Departments, and finishing his career with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation where he retired from his position as a State Parole Agent. He has been involved in many Vallejo community organizations including the



Suburban Vallejo Kiwanis Club, the Vallejo Golf Club, and the Solano Community College Governing Board. Through his tenure on the SCFA Board, he hopes to foster the activities at the Fairgrounds that allow the community to assemble and that provide education to an incredibly broad assortment of lifestyles and cultures, such as the annual Youth Ag Day held each year in March.

Carole Paterson joined the Board in the fall of 2012 upon accepting the appointment by former District Two Supervisor, Linda Seifert. “I serve on the Board because I want to contribute my time and resources to one of the significant countywide events that showcases so many outstanding aspects of Solano County in a family-friendly environment,” commented Paterson. “Just one example of that is the livestock area during the Fair. The enthusiasm of young people for learning about something and then exhibiting it with pride at the Fair is easily seen. There are not many outlets for children to showcase their efforts to such a large audience or the opportunity for fairgoers to learn about what so many young people living in communities throughout Solano County are doing in pursuit of excellence.”

Having been born and raised in Vallejo and living her whole life in Solano County, Paterson finds her volunteer appointment to the Fair board as coming “somewhat full circle.” As a six year old Blue Bird in the late 1950’s, she served tea and cookies from the patio overlooking the garden vignettes behind the County building. Then as a teenager in the 1960’s she led tours of the American Red Cross’ bomb shelter constructed on site at the Fairgrounds to sooth Cold War jitters. “And then when I joined the 4-H staff in the 1970’s,” recalls Paterson, “I was headed each summer right back to the Solano County Fair!”

Paterson retired in the summer of 2011 from her position as Director of the University of California’s Cooperative Extension department in Solano County. She served the bulk of her 35-year career there as the 4-H Youth Development Advisor, working with families throughout the



county. Towards the end of her tenure, she conducted research in the area of adolescent youth development while also serving as the department head.

Established in 1949 to produce the annual County Fair, the Solano County Fair Association is a 501(c)3 non-profit agency that is governed by a Board of Directors. Each of the five districts within the county is represented by three Directors who are each appointed by their district's County Supervisor. Current Board appointments are Mike Coakley (President), Norma Placido and Dennis Yen (Vice President) for District 1; Kari Birdseye, Norma Lisenko and Carole Paterson (Treasurer) for District 2; Ray Bell, Gary Falati and Raymond Simonds for District 3; Joseph Lopez (2nd and 3rd position currently open) for District 4; and Rosie Enriquez, Kathleen Mariano and Lee Williams for District 5.

The Solano County Fair Association has been providing educational, cultural, artistic, commercial and recreational programs to the residents of Solano County for over 65 years. The mission of the Solano County Fair Association is "to ensure a positive experience for the public by providing a year-round multi-purpose venue that showcases and celebrates the wide variety of resources and activities available to our diverse community."

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