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OUR VIEWS

Foundations help make our region a better place to live

The \$5 million in donations raise the quality of life for residents.

On the 45th anniversary of the Fresno Regional Foundation, the philanthropic organization celebrated by announcing two grants totaling \$5 million. An unrestricted grant of \$3 million from the James Irvine Foundation will be used to help nonprofits working on economic, environmental and social challenges in the San Joaquin Valley. A \$2 million donation from long-time Fresno resident Ted Martin will be used to preserve the San Joaquin River.

The donations, announced at the group's annual luncheon Wednesday, adds to the growing assets of the Fresno Regional Foundation. The \$50 million in assets are being leveraged to improve the quality of life of this region.

The foundation's latest work is making a difference during this economic downturn, which has left many nonprofit groups in our Valley struggling for funding. Many of them would not be in business without the foundation's support.

The Fresno Regional Foundation plans to distribute the Irvine Foundation contribution in smaller grants of about \$100,000 to \$300,000 over the next three years. The donation from Ted Martin is designated only for San Joaquin River projects because of his intense interest in the impact the river has on the community.

James E. Canales, president and CEO of the Irvine Foundation, told the lunch crowd that the \$3 million grant will expand his group's partnership with the Fresno Regional Foundation. "We remain convinced that this organization — with your support — is doing exactly what it has pledged to do for 45 years now: help residents give back to the place they love, and serve as a trusted steward for charitable giving in the San Joaquin Valley."

Dan DeSantis, CEO of the Fresno Regional Foundation, believes that community donors will add to the Irvine money so that an endowment will eventually provide \$1 million a year to support nonprofits working in the Valley.

We support the commitment that the Irvine Foundation is making to our Valley, and the work of the Fresno Regional Foundation, which has spent more than four decades encouraging local giving to improve our region.

We are a better Valley because of the work of the foundations, and the nonprofit groups who get funding from them.

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