

Richard Samra, Chairman
2009 Elk Grove Chamber Board
Installation Address

January 10, 2009

Ladies and Gentlemen welcome and thank you for joining us this evening. It is great to see so many familiar faces gathered for this installation dinner. The Elk Grove Chamber of Commerce's long tradition continues this evening and we appreciate your continuing support and participation.

The past year was witness to many remarkable and historic events which include: A presidential election with the first African American nominated by a major party and the subsequent election of the first African American as President of the United States.

We also saw Stock Market gyrations that many consider (and perhaps hope) are once in a lifetime events. Financial turmoil engulfed some of the largest banks and brokerage houses not only in the United States but around the world. The U.S. economic downturn created a domino effect heard and felt around the world. And the interdependence of the world's economies became even more apparent.

The citizens and business community of Elk Grove are linked to these events whether they are national or international in scope. Our friends and neighbors are dealing with the impacts of these events on a daily basis. Understanding that things will improve in time does not lessen the pain of those struggling in today's business climate. It is not easy for many who find themselves either unemployed or underemployed in this job market.

However, it is important that we remember some common truths- the United States is still the most prosperous nation on earth. The fact that we will create new jobs and opportunities has not changed. The fact that we are still the land of opportunity has not changed. The fact that we are the economic engine of the world has not changed. The emergence of strong and vibrant economies around the world and especially in Asia are welcome events. A more prosperous world is

not a threat to us, in fact they are our markets now and in the future. People around the world have many common hopes and dreams and ingenuity is the engine for realization of those hopes and dreams.

As we move forward keep in mind the entrepreneurial spirit of business owners the members in the Elk Grove Chamber of Commerce. Capitalism is responsible for the prosperity that we enjoy. Perhaps it is ironic that those nations who for generations lived in countries with state run economies embrace capitalism without reservation around the world. Yet here at home, we the envy of world, have citizens who express extreme doubts. The naysayers must be proven wrong once more.

Elk Grove is on the front line of tomorrow and the opportunities that await. For all the development that has occurred we still have a city to build. At least three new hospitals are currently in the pipeline for our area. The medical offices and support services required to meet the needs of our citizens. Technical schools and advanced research centers will be in our future. A regional shopping mall will be realized at some point. Industrial parks and other major employers will help round out the jobs housing balance within our community.

The goal of growing our existing business's and to support an environment for other business's to start or relocate to Elk Grove has not changed. The current cycle will run its course and Elk Grove will be ready for the opportunities that follow.

The Elk Grove Chamber of Commerce will continue to be a strong advocate for the interests of the business community. The Elk Grove Chamber of Commerce is mindful of the responsibility to provide the best services possible to its membership. Providing opportunities, for networking, referrals through our website and events. Seminars and counseling opportunities, that help our members through these troubling times. The Chamber will continue with other important programs such as Leadership Elk Grove. Every effort will be made to

continue important events that the membership and community have come to expect from the Elk Grove Chamber.

Our local elected officials understand that they must work with business in a strong spirit of cooperation. We share a common goal of building a strong community that will afford opportunities to all of its citizens. Only with a strong sense of cooperation can we find true success.

The spirit of the Gold Rush of 1849 continues to this day. We walk in the footsteps of pioneers and risk takers who came to a new land to seek their fortunes. They faced remarkable trials, and responded with great courage. They believed in themselves and this remarkable land!

I am humbled with the opportunity to serve as Chairman of your Chamber. Ever mindful, of the strong leadership and vision of my predecessors Jack Williams, Francisco Rodriguez and Gregg Mason. I want to thank each of them for their leadership. Many people are responsible for the success of the Chamber. The staff and volunteer's (ambassador's/ members of the Board of Directors) devote many hours to that end without complaint. For all those Ambassadors, Board Members and volunteers who do so much please accept my gratitude for your efforts.

I look forward to working with our incoming Board of Directors and all of our supporters and volunteers. The true heart and soul of this organization, of course, are the members! For your continued support and confidence, I am very appreciative.