10th Annual New Partners for Smart Growth Conference

Charlotte, North Carolina
February 2011

City of San Joaquin - The Little City that Could! from swamp land to metropolis to...... ?

Cruz W Ramos, City Manager
CITY OF SAN JOAQUIN PROFILE

- Located along Manning Ave on the west side of Fresno County
  - It is almost equal distance to both I-5, and to SR 99 (about 22 miles each way) while crossing State Routes 33, 180, 145, 41.
  - Largest urban neighbor, City of Fresno is 30 miles away.

- Incorporated in 1920, its first GP was adopted in 1973
  - Cal Poly are currently updating the City’s GP.

- Small, family-oriented community of 4065 residents
  - 96% Hispanic: families/91% of households, 60%/ married couples, 45% of the population is under 19.
  - 38.6% unemployment rate (has been as high as 49%)
  - ¾ of population meet/exceed the Fed poverty guidelines

- Lowest crime rate in Fresno County
  - 70 hours of law enforcement provided by contract
Early History

- Early land barons: Jefferson Gilbert James

- The James Ranch – consisted of 72,000 acres – contained 30,000 acres of overflow “when once reclaimed, would make one of the finest bodies of agricultural land in the state.”

- Jefferson James bought swamp land at $1.25/acre and was it was reported that he was subsequently reimbursed at the same rate when land was reclaimed.

- He was also noted as a cattleman: invested in cattle twice
Land, the Swamp Act of 1856, Lawsuits and Water...

- Land acquisition was not possible until after the U.S. Land Commissioners decided what was private and public land.
- **1861** - James' first purchase—Home Ranch in San Joaquin
- **1864, 1867, 1871 & 1865 – 1873**
  - James property consisted of 57,000 acres he acquired by taking a partner and purchasing other land.
  - James' neighbors did not survive the dry years and had to sell
- **1890**
  - James controlled more than 150,000 acres of fenced land that he rented to farmers including Esaboro Wada, a Japanese, who raised the first rice crop on the James Ranch.
Birth of the City – Gravesboro
to Graham to San Joaquin

- **1908 -1912**
  - James sold part of the Ranch and appointed his son-in-law, general manager of the J.G. James Land Company.
  - After the death of Mr. James, his heirs, decided to sell more land and promoted land sales for Gravesboro
  - After the Railroad Line was built across the James River, the remaining land was sold for $3 M.
  - Gravesboro was renamed to Graham and land was set aside for parks, roads, and public buildings.
  - A new syndicate discarded the name Graham and renamed the town San Joaquin, to capitalize on the San Joaquin River full of water.
WHERE PROSPERITY IS ASSURED

THE SAFEST INVESTMENT IN THE WORLD IS GOOD FARM PROPERTY

The Choicest Farm Property in the World Lies in Fresno County, California

WATER! WATER! WATER!

35 Artesian Wells in Addition to One of the Best Irrigation Systems in California

River Bottom Soil

Read! Read! Read!

Alfalfa! Trieste Dairy Rice

Choose the Kind of Ranching You Like the Best

Close to Markets

EARLY HISTORY

To the farming, 200 years ago, the valley was known as the "Vallejo River Valley." The valley was a favorite hunting ground of the Mission Indians, and the only water supply was from springs and occasional floods of the river.

Alfalfa! Trieste Dairy Rice

Dairying Alfalfa and Plugs Will Prove Immediate Profitable on the James Ranch

Jane Doe

KING RIVER WATER

James Ranch

The Famous Fertile Jefferson

James Ranch of 72,000 Acres

Offered for Sale in 20, 40 and 80 Acre Farms

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Read What These Experienced Ranchers Say About The James Ranch

Call On Any Of These Men — Ask Them

What Others Have Done You Can Do — Act Now
Wheeling & Dealing – Water

1914 - 1937
• The syndicate advertised the abundant water supply and included an irrigation district into their plan.

• Ditches/levees were built, & Reclamation District #1606 consisting of 16,000 acres was bonded for $600,000.

• This bond or blanket mortgage had a "fine print" item in the purchase contract of the San Joaquin investor.
  • It said ALL the purchasers had to pay their mortgage IN FULL before any one of them could receive a deed for their land.

• The post WWI era was a period of financial manipulation that saw all but about 160 acres of land in the San Joaquin district sold for taxes owed and resold to private owners.
The End of a Dynasty

- The James Ranch was divided into two prosperous communities, Tranquillity and San Joaquin, and many large ranches.

- Residents have civic pride and a fine cooperative spirit reminiscent of the pioneer days when country folks gathered for a house-raising or a barn-raising.

  - Veterans of Foreign Wars decided to build a hall and held a cotton pickaree.

  - Local rancher, Frank Hall, furnished the 160 acre crop and on a prescheduled Saturday morning, thirty six machines and operators pitched in to the picking project job.

  - $400,000 of machinery participated and by 4p.m., the picker armada had picked 184 bales of white fiber. The new hall was financed with the picking check for more than $5,000.
German Prisoner of War Camp
The Pickeree – VFW Hall
More changes...

- Small dairies and poultry farms became less and less profitable.
- Machinery became more efficient; less man power was needed to operate larger farms.
- There was a small but steady exodus of young people leaving the farms to work in cities.
- When some of the older farmers retired, they sold or leased their land to neighboring younger farmers who had the machinery and the ability to farm more acreage.
**Challenges**

- *Early land schemes*
- **Water challenges**
- Industrialization
- *RDA & AD schemes*
- Exodus
  - Housing
  - Education
- Aging infrastructure
- **Water Challenges**
- Job Creation
- Long Term Sustainability

**Lessons Learned**

- Question & Vet All
  - Techno India Group
  - Visotec
  - Mega Floral Trees

- Negotiate/Barter or Plead and/or Badger
  - Staff – all purchases (min 2 bids)
  - Vendors – best & final rates
  - Contractors – change/swap for service

- Hold All Accountable
  - Contract personnel decisions may cost city fines
The City Today - Community Enhancement Projects

• Downtown Beautification
• Rehab City Hall
• Safe routes to school
• Community Computer Lab
• Installed security cameras
• City owned childcare center
• SJ Veteran’s Memorial Hall
• RBEG grant to improve storefronts
• Created Wi-Fi system; model used in other cities
• New sports park (completed Phase 1 of 3)
• Renovated old firehouse to house American Ambulance
  Model: CPUC EE approved for low income community
• Collaborations with WHCC for local training/education
• Funding for expansion of PW Yard, purchase equipment
• First Five funded Tot Lot & Shade Covers
• Funding to reroof the VFW Hall & install fence
• WWF Expansion, Lift Station/Lab/Dog Pound
Downtown Façade Program
Making Employees Whole & Bold

- 11 FT Employees down from 25
  - Everyone wears rotating hats
  - Rotating PW duties on a quarterly basis
    - Cross training & identifying interests

- Compensation Study
  - Salary Increases & additional Holidays
    - Work outside box for Salary Step Inc.
    - Day to day duties are covered in wages/benefits

- Tools, training & education
  - City pays & allows time off
    - Need to institute policy
  - Staff meetings/Close the Loop
Resources

- Partner with those who share the same constituents
  - Schools, clinics, law, etc.
  - Economy of scale: building projects & purchases/services
- Cities, Counties, & Businesses
  - Copies of grants & studies
  - Equipment
  - Manpower
- Universities/Colleges
  - West Hills Community College, Cal Poly
  - GP Plan Update
- Joint Training Grant/WHCC
- Sheriff’s Parking Lot
- Local Government Commission
- CSUF – Vetting Projects, Lending Expertise
- California Rural Housing & Federal Reserve
  - Small Communities Network
- PGE – LGP w/Energy Coalition
- Feeding Kitchen
  - Foundation and Salvation Army
- Proteus’ Los Promotores
Resources, Grants, Training and Opportunity?
Land Retirement, Drought & Water Allocations: Jobs Lost = Hunger & Poverty
WHY SAN JOAQUIN?

Ideal Location for Business
• Financial incentives
• City staff = Gofers & Elected officials are Cooperative

Superb Transportation
• Center of CA – easy access to major thoroughfares
• “Team Track Spur” is available – Short Haul Rail Line

Leading Agricultural Area
• One in every three jobs in the County relates to agriculture
• County boasts 7,500 farmers,
  • harvesting 250 crops on 1 million irrigated acres.
  • grows cotton, tomatoes, lettuce, grapes, citrus, and much,
  • a total annual gross crop revenue topping $4 billion.
### Interstate & Highways

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interstate 1-5 – 25 miles</th>
<th>State Route 33 – 15 miles</th>
<th>State Route 180 – 7 miles (on James Road)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Route 145 – 7 miles</td>
<td>State Route – 23 miles</td>
<td>State Route – 27 miles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Industrial and Commercial Land

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industrial Land Developed – 26.8 Acres</th>
<th>Industrial Land Undeveloped – 138 Acres (within Sphere)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Developed – 13.5 Acres</td>
<td>Commercial Undeveloped – 52.0 Acres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Rail

“Team Track Spur” available on San Joaquin Valley Railroad (short-line rail)

### Water and Sewer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Water</th>
<th>Sewer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three wells have capacity to pump 3,500 gpm, or 5.0 mgd. Two of the wells have Emergency generation capability. Water quality &amp; production capacity are excellent.</td>
<td>Current capacity is 0.252 mgd. A $8.1 million expansion is in process. Federal and State loans and grants will provide funding.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The SJRDA staff with the full support of the City Council has internal and external resources to assist in economic development with job creation.
Rebirth of the City?

Water

- California has adopted laws on the use and control of its waters. These policies and court rulings were thought to ensure adequate water, but do they still?

Diligence & Perseverance

- Leave no stone unturned
- Join and sit at the table with the “big boys.”
- Lead the pack...remember, Thomas the Train (the Little City ...)

Stake Your Claim to Fame

- No rivers, no mountains – run through us – just flat land
- Onion Capital of California – arts, crafts, green, rural village – Asheville watch out!
Conclusion

- The land is fertile but water remains an issue...

- City produces people with:
  - ambition,
  - foresight,
  - self-assurance
  - and talent –

- that is its most important product–
  - the spirit lives on
- and so will San Joaquin –
- The Onion Capital Of California
Disclaimer – the validity of the information contained and comments expressed in this document are solely attributable to those of the management that slept through most of the project.