



250 D Street, Suite 205 Phone: 707.579.4073
Santa Rosa, CA 95404 www.sonomacf.org

News Release
For Immediate Release

Contact: Joshua Rymer
707.570.9652, rymerjoshua@yahoo.com

Water Tops the List of Critical Issues in Community Conversations Series Survey

June 2015 – In late April over 150 people crowded Andrews Hall at the Sonoma Community Center at the invitation of Sonoma Valley Fund to discuss an array of issues concerning the future of the Valley and it’s roughly 40,000 residents. Based on the input received at the meeting, the Fund designed a survey to gather additional input and to begin to shape and prioritize next steps. Those survey results are in, and while they do not constitute a fully representative view of Valley residents¹, they are valuable nevertheless and helpful in understanding the concerns and interests of our community. Perhaps not surprisingly, the issue rated as the most important by the vast majority of survey respondents was “Creating a Sustainable Water Resource” for the Valley.

This survey was sent to all participants at the April 27th meeting, and was also publicized on Sonoma Valley Fund’s website and by both the Chamber of Commerce and the Sonoma Index Tribune. Nearly 250 people filled out the survey, including almost half of those who attended the April 27th launch of the Community Conversation series. The five issues cited as most critical to the future of the Valley by those who responded to the survey were (in the order cited by survey respondents):

- Creating a Sustainable Water Resource

¹ The survey results represented an oversampling of older residents with higher levels of education, with corresponding under sampling of several other populations, including Latino and younger/family communities.

- Creating Activities and Opportunities for Youth
- Building/finding more affordable housing
- Building strong relationships between the Latino and Non-Latino communities
- Guiding the future of the Sonoma Developmental Center for maximum benefit to the community

While all five of these issues were rated as ‘Most Important’ or ‘Important’ by a large majority of survey responders, sustainable water was ranked number 1 in the survey by a large margin (over 95% of survey respondents rated it as either ‘The Most Important’ or ‘Important’). The other four issues were closely clustered behind it in importance.

Sonoma Valley Fund wanted to hear about both the bright spots and the challenges facing the Valley. In particular, the Fund is hoping to more fully develop the community’s thinking by looking at the economic, social and environmental factors that play into these issues together, rather than separately.

Looking ahead, the Fund plans to work simultaneously on three related tracks:

- The Fund will invite the community to participate in a conversation in the autumn on the top rated issue – Sustainable Water.
- The Fund will continue to gather additional viewpoints on the all of the critical issues facing the Valley by taking the survey to communities and groups that were under-represented at the April meeting or through the online survey.
- At the same time, the Fund will continue it’s longer-term efforts to help build the community’s ability to address the most pressing issues facing the Valley.

The Sonoma Valley Fund continues to believe that the time is right for more concerted and coordinated efforts to shape the future of Sonoma. The response to both the Community Conversations launch and the survey are indicative of the growing interest and concern for the future shared by many residents of the Valley.

An affiliate of Community Foundation Sonoma County, Sonoma Valley Fund was created by respected community leaders to help sustain and improve the Valley's unique socioeconomic, environmental, and cultural qualities for generations to come. Sonoma Valley Fund serves as a bridge to the future by promoting and facilitating local philanthropy and legacy giving, encouraging estate-planning professionals to discuss Sonoma Valley bequests with their clients, offering a set of prudent investment options for donors and non-profits, providing trustworthy, responsible, and thoughtful stewardship of donor gifts, and, by serving as a bridge to the future, helping nonprofits build successful legacy and endowment programs. For more information visit www.sonomavalleyfund.org.