



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 to discuss an array of issues concerning the future of Sonoma Valley and it’s roughly 40,000 residents. Based on the input received at the meeting, Sonoma Valley 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 were nevertheless interesting, rich and helpful in understanding the concerns and interests of our community. Interestingly, 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:

- Creating a Sustainable Water Resource
- Creating Activities and Opportunities for Youth

¹ The survey results represented an oversampling of older, better-educated and wealthier residents with corresponding under sampling of several other populations, including Latino and younger/family communities.

- 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 complicate the community’s thinking by looking at economic, social and environmental issues that are usually looked at separately rather than together.

Looking ahead, Sonoma Valley Fund plans to work simultaneously on three separate tracks:

- The Fund will invite the community to participate in a conversation in the autumn on the top rated issue from the survey – Sustainable Water.
- The Fund will continue to gather additional viewpoints on the critical issues facing the Valley by taking the survey to communities and groups that weren’t captured at the meeting in April or through the online survey.
- At the same time, the Fund will continue it’s longer-term efforts to help build the community’s capabilities 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 and is managed 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 promotes and facilitates local philanthropy and legacy giving by serving as a bridge to the future, helping nonprofits build successful legacy and endowment programs, encouraging estate-planning professionals to discuss Sonoma Valley bequests with their clients, offering a set of prudent investment options for donors and non-profits, and providing trustworthy, responsible, and thoughtful stewardship of donor gifts. For more information visit www.sonomavalleyfund.org.