



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 28, 2012

Contact:

Kathy Halsey, Interim Executive Director
209-522-5103, ext. 111
1120 13th Street, Modesto, CA

Great Valley Center Announces New President/CEO

Modesto, CA – Great Valley Center (GVC) today announced that at the conclusion of an exhaustive search, it has selected Dr. Benjamin T. Duran as its new President and Chief Executive Officer.

“We look forward to the outstanding leadership experience in the Central Valley Ben Duran brings to the Great Valley Center organization,” said Kathy McKim, GVC board chair and AT&T’s Vice President of External Affairs. “We’re confident he will have tremendous impact on the region.”

Although Duran, a lifetime valley resident, officially begins his new position January 1, 2013, he has already begun meeting with GVC staff and helping the organization settle into its new offices in Modesto.

“The chance to lead the Great Valley Center came at the perfect time in my life,” Duran said. He served as Superintendent/President of Merced Community College District from January 1998 until retiring in December 2011. “This new position gives me the opportunity to continue to serve communities in the Valley and to help create the next generation of leaders here in the Valley.”

Duran says he was drawn to the position because of the work the Great Valley Center has done in the past and the quality of the team. “We look forward to joining Valley communities and local policy makers to bring positive change to our region,” he added.

Duran will lead the GVC at a pivotal time in the organization’s tenure. Going forward, the GVC has refined its mission to better focus its leadership programs on the needs of the Central Valley’s Stanislaus, San Joaquin and Merced counties.

About Dr. Benjamin T. Duran

Duran earned a BA degree from California State University, Stanislaus, an MA degree from Chapman University and a doctorate in education from the University of Southern California. He spent 40 years as an educator in Merced County, first as a high school teacher in Le Grand, before becoming vice principal of Le Grand High School from 1976 to 1980 and then assistant director of the county’s migrant education program. He returned to Le Grand in 1983 as superintendent of schools, a position he held until 1991 when he became vice president for administrative services at Merced College.

During his career at Merced College, he chaired the Community College League of California’s 2010 Commission on the Future, and served as president of both the California Community Colleges (CCC) Chief Executive Officers Board of Directors and the CCC Economic and Workforce Development Program Advisory Committee.

-continued

His community involvement has included serving on the Greater Merced High Speed Rail Committee, Merced County Regional Arts Council, Mercy Medical Center Board of Directors, Merced School Employees Federal Credit Union Board of Directors, UC Merced Foundation Board of Directors, CSU Stanislaus Community Advisory Board, GVC Board of Directors, and the Center for Public Policy Studies.

About the Great Valley Center

The Great Valley Center (GVC) was founded in 1997 for the purpose of providing a regional intermediary with a broad mandate to engage in a number of strategies that would increase the long term sustainability of the Central Valley. GVC works on multiple fronts engaging and informing citizens, training local leaders, and delivering programs that respond directly to critical gaps in the Valley's communities. For more information, contact Kathy Halsey, Interim Executive Director, at kathy@greatvalley.org or 209-523-5103 ext. 111.

###