

# KERNTAX MAKING A DIFFERENCE: KERN LEADERS ACADEMY

## THE SITUATION

KernTax recognized the need to establish a program which further develops and enhances the leadership qualities of individuals who are committed to working with the business community to solve the region's economic and social problems. The program would educate participants regarding the various issues facing the county with the goal of developing visionary community leaders who recognize that a healthy business climate is necessary for a strong economy, and a strong economy is essential for a vibrant community. Educating and training civic, professional, and business leaders with outstanding leadership potential would enable them to enter public service with the appropriate skills and vision to creatively address the challenges facing Kern County.

## KERNTAX'S RESPONSE

In April 2008, the Kern County Taxpayers Education Fund was established to research, organize, and disseminate information and education to the public and business community of Kern County in order to facilitate economic growth and development. KCTEF's primary project is the Kern Leaders Academy, based on the San Joaquin Political Academy in Fresno. The Kern Leaders Academy's board of directors, strategic partners, and sponsors are pleased to be a component in this unique education and training program that introduces creative solutions to enhance the visionary leadership within our region.

## THE RESULTS

The Kern Leaders Academy selects eight community leaders each year to participate in this extensive education and training program. The program provides 72 hours of instruction over a nine-week period. Among other leadership strategies and skills, the Academy teaches community leaders how to listen with a clear understanding of how to seek the right independent decisions. Successful graduates recognize they have the knowledge and vision to put their services forward as a community leader, and potentially as an elected public official, capable of offering creative solutions to the challenges facing Kern County.



## ACADEMY TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Ethics, Leadership and Critical Thinking
- Giving Back to the Community
- Being an Effective Advocate
- The View from the Dais
- Homelessness in Kern County
- The County's Changing Demographics and Economic Outlook
- Kegley Institute Fall Lecture Series
- Addressing Societal Needs
- Public Education
- Kern County Energy Production
- Kern County 2029
- The Fundamentals of Funding Local Government
- Valley Issues
- Poverty: The Economic and Social Costs
- State Issues
- Agriculture and Water
- Healthcare
- Local Government

In its first ten years, the Academy has prepared 77 high-potential leaders who will work to make Kern County a better place. The Academy would not be possible without the dedicated support of Wonderful Orchards, Adventist Health of Bakersfield, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, WZI Inc., Heise Media Group, and the Kern County Taxpayers Association.