

# New report says South San Joaquin Valley economy a state leader

 [fresnobee.com/2014/07/28/4044809/new-report-says-south-san-joaquin.html](http://fresnobee.com/2014/07/28/4044809/new-report-says-south-san-joaquin.html)

By Helen Tracey-Noren

A new report finds that the South San Joaquin Valley, defined as Fresno, Tulare and Kern counties, has shown the most economic improvement in the state since 1990.

"South San Joaquin Valley; A Growing California Success Story" will be presented Wednesday evening during a free panel discussion at the Fresno Convention Center.

The Pat Brown Institute at California State University, Los Angeles was commissioned by The California Endowment to create the report. Beacon Economics paired up with Cal State LA to investigate economic trends.

Employment rates, growth rates of different industries, population growth rate, and a forecast on how the South San Joaquin Valley will grow in the future are included in the study.

"The analysis of the San Joaquin Valley is usually depressing," said Raphael Sonenshein, executive director of the Pat Brown Institute at Cal State LA. "Then you see this report and it shows that the San Joaquin Valley is a powerhouse for the rest of the state."

Chris Thornberg, who worked on the report at Beacon Economics, will present the findings on Wednesday.

The panel will include Leilani Barnett, the Central Valley regional manager at the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, and Blake Konczal, executive director of the Fresno Regional Workforce Investment Board.

Most of the study is based on nonfarm jobs -- a decision that, Sonenshein said, gives a clearer view of the local economy.

"The study uncovers how diverse the job industry is there," Sonenshein said. "It's the diversification that is almost always a sign of future growth."

The report says the Valley has "exceeded its pre-recession employment peak" adding 8,000 more jobs than the area lost since July 2010. A total of 61,300 jobs have been added since that date between the three counties.

However, during the time researchers looked at -- from 1990 to 2013 -- nonfarm employment has only increased by 0.7%.

Because of more affordable housing compared to the rest of the state, an increase of business travel and tourism, and a rising population, the study predicts the Valley will continue its growth by an additional 5% to 7% over the next few years.

The full 61-page report can be seen at [www.patbrowninstitute.org](http://www.patbrowninstitute.org).

## If you go

What: Panel discussion on the new report, "South San Joaquin Valley; A Growing California Success

Story"

When: Wednesday, 5:30 p.m.

Where: Fresno Convention Center, 848 M Street

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