

Valdez will seek second term as Central Valley regional GOP vice chair

By John
Ellis



Fresno Republican Marcelino Valdez

Fresh off a strong performance by the region's Republicans in last November's election, Fresno insurance agent Marcelino Valdez said he plans to seek a second term as the state GOP's Central Valley Region vice chairman.

Valdez, 35, was first elected to the post two years ago unopposed after his lone potential opponent, Sacramento County resident Ruth Crone, dropped out of the race.

No one has stepped forward to challenge Valdez this year, butut like two years ago, Valdez said he's "still going to treat it as if I have an opponent."

Given how the GOP performed last year in the party's Central Valley region, which covers 11 counties from Kern to

Sacramento, it would likely be difficult to unseat Valdez.

In this part of the state, Rep. David Valadao and state Sens. Andy Vidak and Anthony Cannella won reelection in districts where Democrats had considerable voter-registration advantages. The wins by Vidak and Cannella were critical in Republican efforts to keep Democrats from holding a commanding two-thirds of the Senate's seats.

In addition, Jack Mobley ran a competitive state Assembly race against incumbent Adam Gray. The district is in Stanislaus and Merced counties.

Still, plenty of work remains, Valdez said: "I feel like I have unfinished business from the first term."

That work includes rebuilding county central committees and making sure they are ready for the 2016 elections. The priority of those central committees, Valdez said, is raising money, registering voters and doing everything possible to get Republicans to vote.

Two groups in particular the GOP hopes to attract are voters from the Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander communities. Valdez said those are two groups the party thinks it can win over in 2016.

Valdez — who lost a 2010 Fresno City Council bid to Clint Olivier — also remains the kind of Republican that the GOP says it needs to grow the party. He's Hispanic and his first language is Spanish.

He has been heavily involved in the local Republican political scene since 2008, and decided to seek the vice-chair position two years ago after the state Republican Party got yet another drubbing in the November 2012 election.

The election will take place Feb. 28 at the state Republican Party convention, which runs from Feb. 27 to March 1 in Sacramento.

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