

## Fueling a debate

### As ethanol advocates push for new plants, state officials worry the additive will push gas prices up.

By Dale Kasler

Monday, March 28, Sacramento Bee

GOSHEN - At a dusty animal-feed plant in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley, Rick Eastman and Kevin Kruse are nearing completion of a dream: a large-scale factory, the state's first, that will convert boxcars full of Nebraska corn into the gasoline additive ethanol.

"Every fuel tank needs some," Kruse said with a smile.

After years of struggle, ethanol advocates in California believe their time has come. Ushered in by a controversial U.S. government environmental mandate, ethanol use in California has mushroomed. The additive is now being blended into the gas sold in 95 percent of the state, says the California Energy Commission.

Backers say the \$20 million Goshen plant, two months from completion, could be the opening shot in an ethanol-production boom that will bring investment, employment and economic development to rural California. Developers are close to obtaining financing for big plants in Madera and Pixley, and more could follow.

"Ethanol itself has become a mainstream fuel in California," said former California Secretary of State Bill Jones, an investor in the Madera plant. "It clears the air; it provides jobs when plants are built."

California officials, however, have mixed feelings about ethanol.

They like the idea of a new California industry and acknowledge how prevalent ethanol has become. But though its backers tout ethanol as a cheap and clean fuel additive, state officials say it sometimes can make gas more expensive - and not always cleaner.

With gas prices in California averaging \$2.37 a gallon and climbing, state officials are pressing the federal government to waive the mandate that requires the use of ethanol in most California cars.

"We don't think it's needed," said spokesman Jerry Martin of the California Air Resources Board, the state agency that regulates fuel recipes.

Without the federal mandate, "the bulk of refiners would sharply curtail their use of ethanol," he said.

Ethanol advocates say a sharp cutback is unlikely. In fact, they think ethanol usage will grow. But the state's stance adds to an air of uncertainty that hovers over the fledgling industry.

"It's a question that comes up in every investor meeting," said Jones' business partner, Neil Koehler.

Indeed, some say California could lose the ethanol race to the Midwest, where plants are springing up so rapidly analysts warn a glut may be coming.

"I'd like to see California get behind this a little more," Kruse said. "The Midwest is building like they're going out of style. California's going to miss its opportunity."

Still, ethanol backers say their product is gaining acceptance in California with refiners and policymakers alike. That's giving investors greater comfort, they say.

"The fundamentals of the marketplace require ethanol in California," said Russ Miller, developer of the \$80 million plant in Pixley.

Miller and other advocates say it's a no-brainer: The state will use up to 1 billion gallons of ethanol this year, more than one-fourth of U.S. supplies, but produces only 10 million gallons, at tiny plants in Corona and Rancho Cucamonga.

Meanwhile, California's petroleum refineries can't keep up with the demand for gas, and ethanol will help them stretch out supplies, advocates say. They're lobbying state regulators to nearly double the amount of ethanol permitted in a gallon of gas, to 10 percent - a move they say would reduce both pollution and pump prices.

The plants in Goshen, Pixley and Madera would be fueled by corn. Ethanol from rice straw and other "biomass" materials, seen by farmers as a gold mine, is another matter. Plants have been proposed, but experts say the technology is still five years away from being commercially viable.

Ethanol has long been controversial, due partly to a tax subsidy pushed through Congress by Midwestern agribusiness lobbyists. But investors are warming up to it. Last week, ethanol futures started trading on the Chicago Board of Trade, and Jones and Koehler's company, a publicly traded firm called Pacific Ethanol Inc., obtained \$21 million in a private stock sale to help finance the Madera plant.

California's ethanol odyssey began when Congress amended the Clean Air Act in 1990. It said gas sold in highly polluted areas, including nearly 80 percent of California, must include an additive from the family of chemicals known as oxygenates.

California chose MTBE. But in 1999 then-Gov. Gray Davis banned MTBE because it was contaminating groundwater.

That left ethanol. The state scorned it, saying shortages would mean big gas price hikes. It also said chemical properties of ethanol actually made it erode air quality in certain circumstances, especially in summer.

Davis delayed the MTBE ban a year, to December 2003, while asking the U.S. government to waive the oxygenate mandate.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has lobbied, too. In a letter last spring to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Schwarzenegger said the mandate "prevents or interferes with the attainment of the national ambient air quality standards for particulate matter and ozone."

Refiners say they don't mind using ethanol, but the mandate puts them in a straitjacket that sometimes makes blending gasoline more difficult - and more expensive. David Hackett, a petroleum consultant, said the mandate increases gas prices up to 10 cents a gallon.

But ethanol advocates think resistance is softening, in part because ethanol is currently about 30 cents a gallon cheaper than gasoline. Refiners are even using ethanol in parts of California where it isn't required, said Pat Perez, manager of transportation fuels at the Energy Commission. The commission says that, assuming the mandate stays in place, ethanol use could increase 25 percent by 2012.

And despite its request for the waiver, the Schwarzenegger administration has good things to say about ethanol. California views ethanol "as a very important component" and is "trying to create an ethanol industry," state EPA Secretary Alan Lloyd said at a recent press event.

Ethanol in California sometimes has the feel of a wildcatter's venture. Take Eastman, who's leading the project in Goshen.

A weathered-looking man of 54, he has been nibbling around the edges of the ethanol business since he was farming in Winters in the 1970s. He once developed a small plant that could make ethanol from fermented watermelon juice. He made enough fuel to run a tractor, but commercial prospects were limited.

"The economics of that one didn't work out," he said.

Later, he built the small Rancho Cucamonga ethanol plant. After selling that business, he took aim at a larger project.

Forming a company called Phoenix Bio Industries, he hooked up with Kruse, president of a Goshen feed-grain manufacturer, Western Milling, which serves the dairy industry.

It was a natural pairing. The two had talked about ethanol for years. And Western Milling had the infrastructure in place: rail facilities for importing corn from Nebraska. (The men say they may use some California-grown corn, although Midwest corn is cheaper and more abundant).

An ethanol plant is a distillery. Corn is blended with enzymes, cooked into a slurry and fermented over a three-day process.

The plant, which will employ 30 workers, is a mix of new and used equipment, including some old winery storage tanks. To make the project pencil out, the plant will sell a byproduct known as wet distiller's grain to area dairy farmers for feed.

A lot is riding on this. The two men raised about \$10 million from "friends and family," Kruse said, and borrowed another \$10 million. Kruse and Eastman invested more than \$1 million each, they said.

"This is a passionate personal endeavor," Eastman said. "We're excited - we're excited about the future of ethanol."

## **Smog board wants to clear the air indoors**

By Edie Lau  
Sacramento Bee  
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The California agency famous for putting the squeeze on automotive tailpipe emissions is poised to tackle dirty indoor air.

In a hefty report to the Legislature completed this month, the California Air Resources Board asserts that indoor air can be as polluted and dangerous to breathe as outdoor air, costing the state at least \$45 billion a year in lost worker productivity, medical expenses and premature deaths.

Yet, by and large, the government does little to stem indoor air pollutants, which come from sources as disparate as cigarettes, gas stoves and certain types of air purifiers.

"Efforts to reduce indoor pollution are not commensurate with the risk it presents," said Dorothy Shimer, an air pollution specialist and co-author of the report.

Among the findings of the 333-page document, which is based on hundreds of scientific studies: The risk of cancer from breathing toxic air contaminants indoors - such as formaldehyde - is comparable to the risk of cancer from breathing diesel exhaust particles outdoors.

"(It's) an astounding finding, and I think that it means that we have to elevate the priority of indoor air pollution," said Bonnie Holmes-Gen, assistant vice president for governmental relations at the American Lung Association of California.

How much state government is able to clean indoor air will depend upon the Legislature, because the air resources board considers the indoors a realm beyond its regulatory reach.

"Our entire authority is outdoors," said Richard Bode, chief of the health and exposure assessment branch of the air board, which is part of the California Environmental Protection Agency.

Air board scientists have studied indoor air quality for 15 years or so, but the research is used chiefly for educational purposes, not regulations.

Cal-OSHA and the state Department of Health Services also have a hand in indoor air quality, but their involvement, too, is limited. Cal-OSHA can set rules on ventilation and emissions in workplaces, but its standards are based upon exposures of healthy people working eight-hour days. The health department does research and surveys on indoor air pollution but lacks regulatory teeth.

Holmes-Gen said someone should be given the job of looking at indoor air comprehensively, and that someone should be the air board - not the least because the board has a history of tackling difficult environmental issues and overcoming an industry resistance to change.

"They are a regulatory body, and they have the expertise," said Holmes-Gen, "... and they have shown that they are not afraid to adopt technology-forcing regulations."

Industry opposition stymied an effort three years ago by then-Assemblyman Fred Keeley, D-Santa Cruz, to empower the air board to go indoors. Keeley's bill passed after he revised it to require the air board only to produce a report on the subject. That's the report that has just been completed.

Keeley since has been termed out, but other lawmakers may step in. Staff for Assemblywoman Sally Lieber, D-Mountain View, for example, said Lieber is planning a hearing on indoor air.

The hearing, not yet scheduled, would be before the Select Committee on Air and Water Quality, chaired by Assemblywoman Fran Pavley, D-Agoura Hills. Pavley carried landmark legislation in 2002 that authorized the air board to regulate automotive greenhouse-gas emissions - a first in the country.

Keeley, now treasurer of Santa Cruz County, said given the hazards of indoor air, the state has a duty to step in. "It would be immoral not to act," he said.

The reason indoor air may be as bad as outdoor air boils down to ventilation.

The volume of air indoors is much smaller than outdoors, and indoor air typically is more stagnant. Consequently, a molecule of pollution inside is more apt to be inhaled than a molecule of pollution outside.

Researchers have actually quantified this, and concluded that indoor emissions are 1,000 times as likely to be inhaled by a person - even if the amount of emissions inside is much smaller than outside.

"Being close to a pollution source turns out to matter as much as or more than how big the source is," said William Nazaroff, an environmental engineer at the University of California, Berkeley, and one of four scientists who peer-reviewed the air board study.

Moreover, Californians, like the rest of the industrialized world, spend some 87 percent of their time indoors, according to the report.

Nazaroff said scientists have known since the 1970s that indoor pollution is a problem. Researchers suspect that dirty indoor air contributes to the ills, such as asthma, that we associate with exposure to pollution outdoors. But historically, public attention has centered on large emissions sources: factories, power plants, cars, etc.

"When we began seriously focusing on fixing air pollution, we were probably right to focus on outdoors, because the outdoor sources were so massive and uncontrolled, and we hadn't introduced as many things indoors that produce pollution," he said.

"It's only natural that as the outdoor pollution sources come under control, the indoor problems grow in relative significance."

Some sources of indoor pollution are well-known, such as cigarette smoke. Others are less obvious - for instance, air purifiers that deliberately generate ozone. Makers tout ozone as killing germs and eliminating odor-causing chemicals. But ozone itself is harmful to breathe.

Another little-known trouble source: Natural-gas stoves.

The biggest culprits are unvented stoves, or stoves in which cooks don't use the ventilation hood. But even properly vented appliances pose a risk, because combustion creates byproducts that aren't completely sucked away by a hood, Nazaroff said.

"After the gas burns, you end up with nitrogen oxides and soot, and you also may end up with some formaldehyde," he said. "There's no exposure that's good to those things."

By the same token, fireplaces and even candles make particulate pollution, which is bad for the lungs and heart. "Any kind of combustion, in my view, is something to avoid," Nazaroff said.

The list of sources goes on: Mold, dust mites, cockroach droppings; radon; off-gassing from particle board, new carpets and furniture; fumes from consumer products, including certain cleansers, pesticides, hair spray and nail polish.

At an air board meeting this month, industry representatives defended their products. "These aren't just pollutants in a can," said Laurie Nelson, a lobbyist for the Consumer Specialty Products Association, representing makers of goods marketed as providing a cleaner and healthier environment, including disinfectants and odor-masking fragrances.

Nelson said reformulating products to minimize emissions could render those products less effective.

Nevertheless, putting pressure on manufacturers to make less-polluting products is one obvious way to clean up indoor air, said Nazaroff, who supports more government involvement.

Even a voluntary program could work, he said, one in which manufacturers who meet emission standards could put a label on their goods, similar to the "Energy Star" label allowed on energy-efficient products.

What regulating indoor air is not likely to involve is pollution police checking the air inside people's homes, Nazaroff added.

"Some of what we're talking about ... is not going to require profound change in habits ... and could lead to significant improvement in environmental health," he said.

## **A buck a ride too much?**

### **Council to look at 15-cent hike as way to fight deficit**

By TODD MILBOURNBEE STAFF WRITER

Monday, March 28, Modesto Bee

Paul Evans pays 85 cents for a bus ride to his uncle's house, 85 cents to get home. It's 85 cents to the mall, another 85 cents to get back to the west side.

That might seem cheap to driving Modestans, but for people like Evans, a disabled man who is out of work and relies on the bus, fares can add up.

That's why Evans said he's worried about a proposal to increase one-way fares in Modesto nearly 20 percent - to \$1 a trip.

"They ain't gettin' it from me," said Evans, 44, sitting in the back seat of a Modesto Area Express bus as it made its way along Robertson Road last week. "It's too much already."

Finding itself in dire financial straits, the city of Modesto is searching for ways to spend less money - and ways to bring more in. One option the City Council plans to consider in coming months is an increase in bus fares.

Under a city staff plan, a regular monthly bus pass would go up \$6, from \$33 to \$39. A packet of 10 trips on dial-a-ride, a service for the elderly and disabled, would cost \$18, \$5.35 more than it does now. And a monthly pass for a bus that shuttles commuters to the nearest BART station would rise to \$145, a \$39 increase from the existing charge of \$106.

City officials estimate the increased fares would raise \$293,000, money the city needs as it confronts a \$10 million deficit. The funds also would help cover a shortfall in gas tax receipts. And, with the transit system relying less on subsidies from the Stanislaus Council of Government, the city would have more StanCOG money available for street repairs.

"We're in a position right now where we're having to look at everything," said City Councilman Brad Hawn, who heads the council's Finance Committee. "We're looking at everything and trying to do what's prudent."

## **No increase since 1999**

Modesto hasn't seen a bus fare increase since 1999. And riders pay far less than it costs the city to provide the service.

Compared with Stockton, Modesto buses are a bargain. That city charges \$1.25 a ride and 60 cents for seniors. Turlock is less expensive, charging 75cents a ride for adults and 35cents for people 61 and older.

Several Modesto riders said an increase wouldn't have much of a financial impact.

"It's still cheaper than driving around with your oil and your gas," said Jane Lowe, 65, a Modesto woman who's been riding since there were "seven buses, seven routes and seven drivers."

Lowe, who uses a wheelchair and receives a discounted rate, takes the bus every day to The Salvation Army, where she volunteers. "They make you wait sometimes, but it's a pretty good system."

For Philip Regalado, 17, the bus is a last resort. He takes it when his parents can't give him a lift. He said a 15-cent increase would bring Modesto's fares in line with Fresno, where he grew up.

"It wouldn't bother me," said Regalado, taking the 21 to a friend's house. "I'm used to putting in a dollar bill."

After years of decline, bus ridership in Modesto has increased in recent months, a sign of an improving economy, said Fred Cavanah, Modesto's transit manager. In all, the bus provided 3.2million one-way trips last year, he said.

But that number could slip if prices rise. Cavanah said the general rule is that for every 10percent fare increase, ridership declines 3 percent.

That means more people would likely turn to driving, walking or just not going out as often.

## **Public hearings come first**

Any fare increase requires approval of the full council. City officials said no action would be taken until they hold public hearings on the matter, which would likely happen in April.

Janice Keating, the councilwoman who heads the Economic Development Committee, said the council is sensitive to the plight of fare-payers.

"We have to be careful when thinking about raising rates for people who rely on the bus system, many of whom can't afford insurance on a car," she said. "We need to make sure people can afford their passes."

As for Evans, he thinks fares are too much already. [He said buses reduce congestion and improve air quality.](#)

He gathered his things as the bus neared his stop. He said if an increase goes through, he would have to re-evaluate his transportation options.

"Well," Evans said, as he shuffled to the door, "I still got my lefts and rights."

## **Groups push for pollution controls as state studies impact of cargo growth**

By ALEX VEIGA, AP Business Writer  
Fresno Bee, Friday, March 25, 2005

LOS ANGELES (AP) - Environmental advocates and community groups asked state officials Thursday to take steps to cut down pollution and other negative side-effects from the explosion of cargo traffic moving through California.

The comments came during a daylong public hearing conducted by the chiefs of the state's environmental protection and business, transportation and housing agencies.

The two departments are in the process of crafting a report evaluating how to improve the flow of cargo traffic in California and reduce the environmental and health impacts on communities across the state.

About 50 speakers, including business and trade associations, addressed the state panel Thursday. Attendees commented on a draft of a preliminary report to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger outlining issues that confront the state as it attempts to cope with rising cargo volume from the Far East.

Angelo Logan, executive director of East Yard Communities For Environmental Justice, a group that represents residents in the city of Commerce and neighborhoods east of Los Angeles, urged the panel to make minimizing pollution from cargo traffic a priority. "They're prioritizing economic development in the interest of the goods-movement industry at the expense of the communities that live adjacent to ports and (cargo traffic) corridors," Logan said after the hearing.

Representatives for another group, the Coalition for Clean Air, said the state agencies' draft report contained "environmental window dressing."

A final report with recommendations for dealing with issues such as strained port and railway capacity, jammed highways due to inland-bound truck traffic and worsening air quality from diesel exhaust is expected to be completed by the end of June, said Sunne McPeak, secretary of the Business, Transportation & Housing Agency.

"The logistics industry is very important to California's economy," McPeak said following the hearing. "But there are growing impacts on health and on the environment, and as the logistic industry is projected to grow, impacts will grow."

The state will seek additional input from residents and other interests in coming weeks, McPeak said.

[Fresno Bee commentary, Sunday, March 27, 2005:](#)

## **Freeway casino makes sense for Madera**

By Laughing Coyote

There has been overwhelming public support - and some recent opposition - voiced about the North Fork Rancheria's proposed casino in Madera County.

First, let's set the record straight: This casino will not be in an urban area. It's in an unincorporated rural area outside of Madera, and it is not an off-reservation casino. The North Fork Rancheria is landless and has no reservation.

Although other tribes in California may be proposing casinos within populated urban areas, North Fork Rancheria isn't one of them. Conversely, major tribal casinos operating in the foothill areas of Fresno and Madera counties are all surrounded by hundreds of homes, and have attracted even more major housing developments, which, in turn, are destroying pristine foothill ecosystems and wildlife habitats.

Once these fragile ecosystems are destroyed, they are forever gone. The increased traffic generates tons of air pollution ever closer to our national parks and forests. This creates overnight urban sprawl in environments previously untouched by development, producing more demand upon limited water resources.

The proposed site along Highway 99 makes a lot of sense economically and environmentally. Building a casino in North Fork was not economically feasible. But economics was not the only consideration in selecting a casino site by the North Fork Rancheria. Many of our tribal members still strongly identify as traditional Indian people and do not want to see our ancestral lands compromised by the environmental impacts a major casino can cause.

The traffic along Highway 99 already exists, as do future casino patrons and commuting employees. The environmental impacts are minimal compared with replacing beautiful mountain

landscapes with acres of parking lots, garish neon signs, water problems, sewage problems and bumper-to-bumper traffic.

### **Boom in Madera**

And unless someone else can come up with another plan to create hundreds of desperately needed jobs overnight in a county with one of the highest unemployment rates in the state, the casino remains the biggest economic boom for Madera County.

The North Fork Rancheria has never opposed the sovereignty of other tribes nor their right toward self-determination and economic development. We fully support and respect every tribe's right to pursue an economic development plan that benefits its tribal members.

The demand in Fresno and Madera counties for casinos still exceeds the supply, and the market is expected to continue expanding along with increasing Valley population.

It is unnecessary for any one tribe to attempt to monopolize the local casino industry by publicly opposing ours under the pretense of environmental concerns, or citing previous ballot propositions allowing gaming in California. The intent of Proposition 5 and Proposition 1A, passed by California voters in 1998 and 2000, was to address some of the historical wrongs suffered by California Indian tribes over the past 150 years, matters such as genocide, dispossession of our aboriginal lands and economic deprivation.

All of these historical injustices were suffered equally by all Indian people, not just those affiliated with federally recognized tribes with casinos. These ballot measures were not intended to make a few Indian families wealthy at the expense of the rest of the tribe through tactics such as tribal disenrollment or closing enrollment to Indian people who might possibly meet membership criteria.

Shutting the door on your own relatives, who have a right to belong to the tribe, is against the traditional and spiritual beliefs of California Indian people.

Have casino tribes forgotten about their still-impooverished relatives, who were left behind with no tribal affiliation, who never benefit from casino revenues?

The violation of civil rights of Indian people by their own tribal governments is increasingly gaining the attention of Congress and the federal courts. Tribal governments must stop hiding behind the facade of tribal sovereignty as a convenient excuse to violate the rights of their own people.

The North Fork Rancheria Tribal Council has pledged that this tribe will not become embroiled in disenrollment legal disputes other casino tribes are currently engaged in.

Sadly, this is becoming more widespread in Indian country, and the time will come when Congress and the courts may eventually intercede by either diminishing or eliminating tribal sovereignty altogether, along with the casinos. If that happens, then all Indian people will lose.

*Laughing Coyote is an enrolled member of the North Fork Rancheria, a freelance writer, environmentalist and advocate of aboriginal land rights for California Indians.*

[Bakersfield Californian, Sound Off, Sunday, March 27, 2005](#)

### **Sound Off for March 27**

Reader: As a dedicated member of the Sierra Club for 35 years, I did not recognize the Sierra Club that The Californian reported so negatively. As a community service, the Sierra Club for years has led weekly conditioning hikes. The reporter in attendance did not report a positive word about the wonderful camaraderie and exercise enjoyed by the walkers, nor any comments from longtime members who were on this hike.

To label the Sierra Club as "dwindling" is inaccurate. Although the unsuccessful local Buena Vista Group has been "dwindling" from its inception, the Kern Kaweah Chapter is not "dwindling." To focus almost the entire article on the ineffective Buena Vista Group ignores the main segment of the local Sierra Club.

The Kern Kaweah Chapter, by contrast, has been led successfully by visionary citizens who sacrifice their time and energy to improve the quality of our lives. These dedicated activists who "get things done" -- Joe Fontaine, Carla Cloer, Gordon Nipp, Harry Love, Ara Marderosian, to name just a few -- have many outstanding achievements.

It is the responsibility of reporters to report truth. Labeling the Sierra Club as "radical" makes the public think it's true but Sierra Clubbers are generally highly educated careful thinkers and not a "bunch of wackos."

Is it "radical" to clean the air so that our children don't suffer from asthma?

Is it "radical" to promote photovoltaics and hybrid cars to lessen our dependence on foreign oil?

Is it "radical" to preserve ag land so that our increasing population can eat?

Is it "radical" to preserve the last remaining sequoias for the next generations?

No one in the Sierra Club tells you "how to believe." On the contrary, Sierra Clubbers are individualists, thinking and believing on their own, working tirelessly on causes to improve society. When you hold your first California John Muir quarter, thank the Sierra Club for improving your life and preserving your earth.

-- Eva Nipp

Jenner: I appreciate your devotion to your convictions and to the organization you clearly love.

Reporter Sarah Ruby's report was fair, balanced and accurate. Her story focused on the struggles to invigorate the Bakersfield club. Although she didn't deal with the camaraderie and exercise provided by club hikes, she did indeed report on the Sierra Club's efforts and successes in affecting public policy.

The descriptive words you object to were not concocted by Ruby. She quoted a Sierra Club member as saying the club needs to shed its image as "a bunch of wackos." The word "radical" was used in a quote from a woman in the community who agrees with many of the Sierra Club's positions yet refuses to join.

I understand your interest in defending your organization, but with all due respect, I believe Ruby really did fulfill her responsibility "to report truth."

[Bakersfield Californian, Letter to the Editor, Sunday, March 27, 2005](#)

## **Borbas 'milking' us**

Here's a good one: The Borba dairymen now are petitioning to have a portion of their ag property removed from the Williamson Act provisions so they can more quickly develop some of their land into guess what? Housing tracts and commercial businesses?

Aren't they the ones who said the air quality in the valley would be preserved if they built two huge dairies, instead of allowing housing development?

Well, our county supervisors bought their line and now we have the frequent stench of cow manure. Maybe the smell doesn't emanate from their dairies alone, but they led the stampede of dairies from Chino that is further degrading our poor air quality.

Of course, we suspected it was the Borba plan all along to convert their dairy lands into other more profitable uses, just as they did in Chino at a huge return.

And now while development in the county is going even faster than imagined, they're ready to join the boom. After all, dividing farmland into housing tracts is far more profitable than dairy farming, even with all its government subsidies.

Maybe some of this would be a tiny bit palatable if the Borbas had tried to become a part of the community, as they promised they would. Instead, they continue to exploit Kern County without making a positive contribution.

-- TOM SPENCER, Bakersfield