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Betts Company CEO named Strong Workforce Champion

Award recognizes standout contributors to workforce and social mobility

FRESNO, California – Mike Betts, Chairman and CEO of the Betts Company, has been named a Strong Workforce Champion by the College of the Sequoias for helping to advance regional efforts to build a strong workforce and enable social mobility by spearheading development of a unified manufacturing strategy in the San Joaquin Valley.

Betts has been a committed supporter of College of the Sequoias' career technical education (career education) programs, which are the result of intense collaboration among a vast array of partners outside the community college system, among them industry and workforce development agencies.

Strong Workforce Champions are individuals and organizations who demonstrate the essential components of the Strong Workforce Program. They:

- Advance work-based learning opportunities, including internships and apprenticeships.
- Collaborate with career technical education faculty to develop programs and curricula with the skills that industry demands.
- Support development of quality career technical education faculty.
- Support general career technical education efforts.
- Support sustainable funding for career technical education programs.

"Mike is a driving force behind achieving a unified strategy in the San Joaquin Valley so that we can uplift our region into inclusive prosperity and wellbeing," said Stan Carrizosa, superintendent/president of the College of the Sequoias. "He is a role model for steward leadership."

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The California Community Colleges is the largest system of higher education in the nation. It is composed of 72 districts and 113 colleges serving 2.1 million students per year. Community colleges supply workforce training, basic skills courses in English and math, and prepare students for transfer to four-year colleges and universities. The Chancellor's Office provides leadership, advocacy and support under the direction of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges. The Doing What MATTERS for Jobs and the Economy framework invests in California's economic growth and global competitiveness through industry-specific partnerships, education, training and services that contribute to a highly skilled and productive workforce.



Through his diverse contributions, Betts, whose company is a custom spring manufacturer, has demonstrated many of the essential components of the Strong Workforce Program. One of his most significant was the leading role he played in creating the San Joaquin Valley Manufacturing Alliance, which has united relevant entities in the region to work together to advance Strong Workforce objectives.

The alliance, in partnership with the Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board, has launched a Manufacturing Internship Program that places recent high school graduates who completed a high-caliber manufacturing program in a paid, three-month internship at a partner manufacturing company. The internship creates a seamless transition between the high school manufacturing experience and enrollment in that field of study at the community college level.

Among his other contributions, Betts played an instrumental role in creating new high school and college heavy diesel mechanical programs.

"From the beginning of his career, Mike recognized that success would require deep and enduring partnerships between industry, government, education and student," said Deb Nankivell, chief executive officer of the Fresno Business Council. "He has been steadfast in earning the trust and respect of key people in all of these sectors."

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The Strong Workforce Program is a bold step California took in 2016 to create 1 million more middle-skilled workers, thereby producing a job-ready workforce for employers and lifting low-wage workers into living-wage jobs. Grouped into seven areas targeting student success, career pathways, workforce data and outcomes, curriculum, CTE faculty, regional coordination and funding, the leading-edge state economic development program is driven by "more and better" CTE. The "more" pertains to increasing the number of students enrolled in programs leading to high-demand, high-wage jobs. The "better" aligns with strategies to improve program quality, as evidenced by students completing or transferring programs, getting employed or improving their earnings.

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