

Imperial Valley News

Heart of the Matter

Connecting rural communities to high-speed Internet

Written by CDFA

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Sacramento, California - The California State Board of Food and Agriculture will hear about issues related to connecting rural communities to high-speed internet at its upcoming meeting on Tuesday, June 5, 2018. The meeting will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the California Department of Food and Agriculture, 1220 N Street – Main Auditorium, Sacramento, CA 95814. The board will also hear from the state director of the California Farm Service Agency who will provide a report on current activities.

“The digital divide exists for rural communities in California,” said CDFA Secretary Karen Ross. “The more we can bring visibility to the issue and address the challenges to implementation, the sooner we can bring the opportunities of Silicon Valley to the Central Valley.”

Invited speakers include: Aubrey Bettencourt, USDA Farm Service Agency; Robert Tse, USDA Rural Development; Greg Norton, Rural County Representatives of California; Commissioner Martha Guzman Aceves, California Public Utilities Commission; Sam Bloch, the New Food Economy; Kaleigh Rogers, Motherboard (Vice Magazine); Sunne Wright McPeak, California Emerging Technology Fund; and Robert Gore, The Gualco Group.

In February 2018, the Federal Communication Commission released the 2018 Broadband Deployment Report that indicated that over 24 million Americans lacked access to fixed high-speed internet. In California, it is estimated that more than 1.4 million individuals lack access to wired broadband internet at any speed.

“As a farmer in the Central Valley, I’m well accustomed to the challenges of internet access,” said President Don Cameron, California State Board of Food and Agriculture. “High-speed connectivity is critical foundation for economic development and education within our rural communities.”

The California State Board of Food and Agriculture advises the governor and the CDFA secretary on agricultural issues and consumer needs. The state board conducts forums that bring together local, state and federal government officials, agricultural representatives and citizens to discuss current issues of concern to California agriculture.

All meetings are open to the public and attendance is welcome.