

## Budding Valley businesses to face a prestigious panel

By Sanford Nax / The Fresno Bee

10/10/08 23:19:55

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Eight emerging businesses will make pitches for venture capital Friday at a Fresno conference that will attract the managing director of an \$89 billion private equity/venture capital fund.

The third annual Central Valley Venture Conference will feature Bob Grady, the San Francisco-based managing director of The Carlyle Group. He will talk about how venture capital can help transform regional economies like the central San Joaquin Valley's.

Lt. Gov. John Garamendi will discuss the economic downturn and the role state officials can play in its recovery.

Each year, conference organizers select representatives of growing businesses seeking financing to address a panel of venture capitalists.

The event this year features a diverse group, including new businesses involving former employees of Pelco, a Clovis company that is a leader in video surveillance, said Craig Scharton, chief executive of the Central Valley Business Incubator.

Those spinoffs are **KaloVision**, a biometric security system that uses iris and facial recognition databases, and Mosaic Dynamic Solutions, which sells security systems featuring network video control and recording.

Other companies that will give short presentations include:

Robotic Built Structures, which makes environmentally friendly multifamily housing.

Cool Building Systems, which uses natural conduction and convection to eliminate heat on roofs and in attics.

No Gears or Belts, a stock exchange for commodities.

Cottonwood Creek Ventures, a waste-water treatment company that recycles minerals and salts into environmentally friendly irrigation water and commercial fertilizer.

Band of Neighbors, a Web-based system that allows people to form networks using cell phones and land lines, primarily for security purposes.

Galaxy IT, a Web-based business that develops visual-collaboration software for writing, chatting and other multimedia activities.

Each group has six minutes to make its pitch to the panelists, who include Tony Olivera, chairman of CalPERS Finance Committee; Ed McNulty and Brad Tribsch of the Central Valley Fund; Randy Williams of Keiretsu Forum of the San Francisco Bay Area; Paul Yett of Hamilton Lane; and others.

Tribsch said venture capital continues to flow even though banks and other traditional lenders are cutting back.

"The Valley is starting to get some traction with respect to creating an environment [for investors]," he said.

The Central Valley Fund was created in part to find investments in the area. In March, it pumped \$3.35 million into Madera fertilizer company Ultra Gro LLC.

In 2006, it invested \$4.5 million in Fresno-based MuniServices to finance a management buyout that company officials said allowed the company and its 112 employees to remain in Fresno. MuniServices audits local governments and agencies to help them find unrealized revenue.

Last November, Fresno-based software company Decipher Inc. received an investment from DCA Capital Partners, the first the Roseville-based venture capital firm has made in the Central Valley. DCA Managing Partner Curt Rocca put the value of the investment at between \$1 million and \$10 million, but wouldn't disclose further details.

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