

Pistachio Industry

(continued from page 32)

lines," he said.

Soares is Down with California....And Rightly!

George Soares with Kahn, Soares and Conway, a Sacramento firm, discussed the severe problems of California. "We are often proud to say that agriculture is the #1 industry in California. But in reality the #1 industry, if you want to call it that, is government.

"When you put a price tag on what the government takes from our pockets, it's enormous. Then when you analyze what they do with what they take from our pockets, it's depressing," said Soares.

Soares noted that the Governor Schwarzenegger has been governor for seven years and he replaced ousted Gov. Grey Davis, whose approval rating at the recall was approximately 27 percent. "Today, perhaps one of the most popular governors we have ever had in California--I mean he is still a magnate. When he walks into a room, people surround him because he has that movie star quality. Today, his approval rating is...27 percent. California is essentially

a failed state," said Soares.

"As business people, we do not have to be happy about it. We simply need to recognize how dysfunctional we are and try to do something about it," Soares said.

"The state is \$20 billion to the negative, and we just did a budget six months ago. It's a simple math problem. We spend about \$100 billion a year, but we bring in \$80 billion a year.

Mario Santoyo



Dave Cogdill



Chris White



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It's not hard math, it's an undisciplined body of people that are making decisions that are causing us to be in this situation.

Water Debate

A panel discussion moderated by George Soares brought together Dave Cogdill, Calif. State Senator; Mario Santoyo, general manager of Friant Water Users, and Chris White, general manager of the Central California Irrigation District.

Cogdill focused on the positive with the crafting and signing of the Water Bond by the governor. Santoyo and White praised the bond, but focused on the reality of the critical water shortages among federal water district users and stressed the need to iron out a compromise regarding the ESA so that the pumps are turned on when growers need them in the spring and summer!

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