

Bush highlights trade, tax cuts during visit to

By Robyn Rominger
Managing Editor

President George W. Bush made four stops in California last week on his way to Asia.

The first stop was at Ruiz Food Products Inc. in Dinuba, the largest frozen Mexican-food manufacturing company in the United States. During his remarks to an enthusiastic, flag-waving crowd, Bush highlighted international trade, estate taxes and his economic recovery plan.

"We passed historic tax relief," Bush said. "We wanted to make sure that people had incentives to invest, so we reduced the tax on capital gains and dividends. And we want people, whether you're a farmer or a rancher or a small business owner, to be able to pass your assets on from one generation to the next without the government stepping in the way again. And so we got rid of the death tax."

The president outlined his plan to spur economic recovery, which includes improving foreign trade policy.

"We need to make sure that our trade policy opens up markets and creates a level playing field," Bush said. "I want to be selling U.S. farm products all over the world."

Bush also discussed homeland security, saying, "America must not forget the lessons of Sept. 11."

Ruiz Food Products co-founder Fred Ruiz appeared on stage with Bush.

"It's been my honor to come to a place that's the embodiment of the American Dream," Bush said. "We believe people in this country ought to be able to work hard and dream big, and realize their dreams. And the Ruiz family has done that."

"It started with Grandma Rosie's pots and pans and the first batch of enchiladas. Fred was just telling me they produce 3 million burritos a day. For a man who likes burritos, I'm in heaven," the president said, invoking laughter among the predominantly Hispanic crowd. "I'd also like to thank the hospitality Louis Ruiz has shown me, the patriarch of this great family, the initial dreamer, along with his son, to build and create, but most importantly, to provide jobs for over 1,200 people—a chance for 1,200 people to realize their dreams. That's what America is all about. We're here to herald the greatness of America, the American spirit, the strength of our country."

Dignitaries at the event included U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Mel Martinez; U.S. Reps. Devin Nunes, R-Visalia, and George Radanovich, R-Fresno; and Fresno Mayor Alan Autry.

During his visit to California, Bush also



Photo/Robyn Rominger

President Bush waves to a welcoming

made appearances in Fresno, Riverside and San Bernardino, and met with Governor-elect Arnold Schwarzenegger, before departing for Asia. Bush left California for Japan, the first leg of a six-nation tour, which included attending the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Bangkok. His trip, in which he sought support for the U.S.-led fight against international terrorism, was also scheduled to include brief stops in Singapore, the Philippines, the Indonesian re-

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President Bush waves to a welcoming crowd in Dinuba.

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sort island of Bali and Australia.

Farmers who had the opportunity to see Bush during his stopover in California commented.

Regarding the president's remarks on estate taxes, California Farm Bureau Federation President Bill Pauli said, "There was strong applause and recognition of the importance of the elimination of the death tax, and how important that is to farmers and ranchers up and down