File #: 26-729, **Version:** 1

Receive a presentation from the County Administrator's Office and the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano highlighting the benefits of participating in the annual Counties Care Holiday Food Fight challenge to the residents of Contra Costa and Solano Counties; and Consider adopting a resolution challenging Contra Costa County to participate in the twenty-third annual competition

Published Notice Required? Yes ____ No _X _
Public Hearing Required? Yes ____ No _X _

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION:

The County Administrator's Office recommends that the Board of Supervisors receive a presentation from the County Administrator's Office and the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano highlighting the benefits of participating in the annual Counties Care Holiday Food Fight challenge to the residents of Contra Costa and Solano Counties; and consider adopting a resolution challenging Contra Costa County to participate in the twenty-third annual competition.

SUMMARY:

Solano and Contra Costa Counties, working with the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano (Food Bank), have been participating in an annual Counties Care Holiday Food Fight friendly challenge since 2004, when the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors extended the first challenge to Solano County. This will be the twenty-third annual event to raise funds for the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano.

The event allows employees in both counties the opportunity to help those in need in their respective communities through financial donations, as food insecurity and hunger remain continuing concerns in both counties and throughout California. In 2025, County employees and Friends of the Counties raised a combined $123,160, bringing the cumulative total raised since the first Counties Care Holiday Food Fight in 2004 to $2,724,338.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no cost associated with accepting the resolution challenging Contra Costa County to participate in the 2026 Counties Care Holiday Food Fight friendly challenge. If adopted by the Solano County Board of Supervisors, staff time of departmental food drive coordinators will be borne by the individual County departments involved in the drive.

DISCUSSION:

The Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano distributes millions of pounds of food each year through an extensive network of nonprofit and community partners. Most recently, the Food Bank surpassed 40 million

pounds of food distributed in a single year for the first time, a 2.3% increase over the prior year. The organization currently serves approximately 79,000 households each month and distributes enough food to provide more than 2.7 million meals monthly. Working with approximately 260 local nonprofit partners, including food pantries, soup kitchens, transitional housing programs, childcare centers and other community organizations, the Food Bank extends its reach throughout Contra Costa and Solano counties. Approximately 66% of the food distributed consists of fresh produce, protein and dairy products, and the Food Bank and its partners rescue and distribute more than 9 million pounds of edible food annually that might otherwise go to waste.

This would be the twenty-third annual Counties Care Holiday Food Fight friendly challenge if the Solano County Board of Supervisors authorizes Solano County to participate against the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors and their employees. To date, Solano County has won the Big Apple trophy 14 times and Contra Costa County has won the trophy eight times over the 22-year history of the challenge.

Solano County has enjoyed considerable success in the Counties Care Holiday Food Fight, winning the Big Apple Trophy in 2012 and 2013, and again from 2016 through 2018. Contra Costa County claimed the trophy in 2014, 2015 and 2019, breaking Solano County's three-year winning streak that year. Solano County regained the trophy in 2020 and has retained it every year since, including 2025, entering the 2026 competition with a six-year winning streak. During the 2025 challenge, Solano County employees donated an average of $15.67 per employee.

On October 6, 2026, Caitlin Sly, President and Chief Executive Officer for the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano, will co-present with the County Administrator's Office to the Solano County Board of Supervisors, urging the Board to participate in the twenty-third annual Counties Care Holiday Food Fight. If accepted by both Solano County and Contra Costa County, the 2026 Counties Care Holiday Food Fight will commence on November 1, 2026, and run through December 31, 2026.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Board could choose not to challenge the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors and employees this year, but this is not recommended, as Solano County won the food drive challenge last year and this would provide Solano County an opportunity to maintain the title. More importantly, while providing for some fun and friendly competition, the Counties Care Holiday Food Fight provides financial donations for the Food Bank to purchase food for people experiencing food insecurity in Contra Costa and Solano Counties.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano will coordinate competition efforts with Contra Costa and Solano Counties to conduct this food drive.

CAO RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION

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