

Fireworks fundraising off to good start

Group raises \$22,000 so far to keep annual July 4 celebration going, says it still needs \$8,000 more.

By Ryan Vallancourt
News-Press

LA CRESCENTA — In symbolic fashion, members of the Crescenta Valley Fireworks Assn. collected oversized checks from the group's biggest donors at Dominick's Restaurant & Pizza, on Monday.

It was at Dominick's where association co-founder and Crescenta Valley Town Councilman Steve Pierce sat plotting in late February about how to save the annual Fourth of July fireworks show.

"This is the table where it all began," Pierce said, tapping the red and white, checkered tablecloth of the table where he sat brainstorming with fellow association co-founders David Meyers and John Drayman two months ago.

Since then, the fledgling committee — whose mission is to raise funds for a fireworks show this year and in perpetuity — has rallied support and donations from a host of community businesses and political representatives.

On hand at the Monday event was Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael Antonovich, who presented the association with \$5,000.

"This is a community event and having a public and private partnership is a great thing," Antonovich said. "We wanted to be a part of it."

The contribution from Anto-



TAMMY ABBOTT News-Press

Checks were presented to the Crescenta Valley Fireworks Committee at Dominick's Italian Restaurant Monday. Pictured, from left, are Paul Dutton, Honorary Mayor of Crescenta Valley Leslie Lesh, Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Rick Dinger and Steve Pierce.

novich's office is the association's largest donation so far, association President Rick Dinger said.

State Sen. Bob Margett has also pledged \$1,500 and at least six Crescenta Valley businesses and organizations have chipped in \$1,000 a piece with a five-year commitment, Dinger said.

By Monday, the association had raised about \$22,000 in donations and pledges, about \$8,000 shy of what the associa-

tion needs to put on the event this year, Pierce said.

Association members hope more local organizations, businesses and Crescenta Valley residents will chip in to the fund.

"We have money, but we need more," said Grace Andrus, president of the Crescenta Valley Town Council and secretary of the Fireworks Assn.

The annual Fourth of July fireworks celebration was a 17-

year tradition in the community before it was canceled for lack of a location last year.

The event was almost lost again this year when the Crescenta Valley Chamber of Commerce, which has long organized the event, canceled.

Because the event is now being put on by a community-based, nonprofit organization — as opposed to the chamber, which sought to turn a profit from the event — residents who have grown accustomed

to taking in the fireworks from their homes have more of an obligation to contribute, Meyers said.

"Those families that have the parties and barbecues in their backyards on the Fourth of July, they kind of have an obligation to help out," said Meyers, association treasurer.

"Without the fireworks, would they have their party?"

Judging by the community's support for the association already — and by its disappoint-

ment when the show was canceled in 2006 — the association does not expect more fundraising to be too much of a challenge, association Vice President Paul Dutton said.

They're planning three fundraisers in the next two months and they plan to send envelopes to residents requesting donations.

"We're not going to let this baby die," Dutton said. "We're going to keep going till we get it."