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**JAPANESE AMERICAN ASSEMBLY CENTER MEMORIAL DEDICATED AT
THE STANISLAUS COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS**

Turlock, CA (May 1, 2010) – The Fairgrounds today had a somber yet proud moment when the Japanese Americans who were temporarily held at the Turlock Assembly Center were memorialized with a monument.

The dedication ceremony honoring the Japanese Americans who were forced to move to the Turlock Assembly Center at the **Stanislaus County Fairgrounds** was held today, **May 1, 2010 at 11 a.m.**

On April 30, 1942, the Japanese American Assembly Center in Turlock opened after President Franklin Roosevelt signed an Executive Order that authorized the forced relocation of people of Japanese descent living on the West Coast during World War II. Several days later, thousands of Japanese Americans arrived outside the Fairgrounds to be checked-in. Today's ceremony presented a monument dedicated to those Japanese men, women, and children who were imprisoned.

Sixty eight years later community leaders, detainees along with their families, as well as the public came together today on the same grounds that once were a detention center for more than 3,500 innocent citizens.

“I was 10-years-old when I was brought here with my family,” said Ken Yasui, former internee and San Joaquin County Fair Board Director. “I remember the grand

stand and my father making us pick up blocks of wood to put under the foot of the bed so it wouldn't sink into the asphalt.”

Yasui, along with the other detainees that were at the memorial ceremony felt that it was “about time” that the community in Turlock recognized this event.

“It's a great honor to be part of this today,” said Yasui.

The program started with the presentation of flags by the Merced Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Mr. Hiro Asai of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team (RCT), and Mr. Howard Taniguchi from Military Intelligence Service (MIS). The program later presented key note speakers such as Supervisor Vito Chiesa, and Turlock Mayor John Lazar. Many of the speakers spoke about the infringement that was forced upon the detainees and how their constitutional rights were not honored and ignored.

“People left behind their homes, education, and belongings,” said Dr. Nancy Taniguchi, professor at California State University, Stanislaus. “I can't imagine the feeling of coming to a strange place and not knowing anyone.”

Dr. Taniguchi's class inspired some of her students, such as Kayla Canelo, who was the leading force to raise money for a monument and pitched the idea to the Stanislaus County Fair Board of Directors.

“We are very proud to be part of such a historical event,” said Dale Butler, president of Stanislaus County Fair Board of Directors. “There has been a lot of hard work put into making this memorial dedication come to fruition.”

The mission of the Stanislaus County Fair is to provide a family and community oriented experience promoting agriculture, entertainment and technology. For more information about the Stanislaus County Fair log onto its website at www.stancofair.com.

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