



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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TWO WILL SHARE COVETED CAPITOL ROLLER HONORS

Governor's Chief of Staff and Bay Area Assembly Member co-winners in sushi-making contest

SACRAMENTO – In a spirited competition, Assembly Member Fiona Ma and Governor Schwarzenegger's Chief of Staff Susan Kennedy tied for top honors and will share the 2010 Capitol Roller Award, signifying California's top legislative sushi maker.

Assembly Member Ma and Chief of Staff Kennedy defeated Senator Dennis Hollingsworth in making California rolls. The competition was part of the ninth annual California Rice Commission (CRC) Circle of Life Reception, held today at the Sheraton Grand Sacramento. This is the first time in four Capitol Roller contests that the competition ended in a tie.

"I had fun," Kennedy said. "I think it was a fair contest and I'm happy to split the award."

Assembly Member Ma said she was equally pleased with the results, especially considering her appreciation for rice and growing knowledge of how it's farmed.

"I was very honored," Ma remarked. "I grew up eating rice. It has been an important staple in my household. Going out and seeing how it grows and is harvested really makes me appreciate rice."

Ma and Kennedy share possession of the Capitol Roller award, a framed Samurai sword, until next year's competition.

The three competitors received expert coaching from Billy Ngo, Executive Chef of Kru Restaurant in Sacramento.

More than 100 people attended the luncheon, which also included the CRC awarding its Circle of Life Award to conservation groups in the Migratory Bird Conservation Partnership.

"California's rice lands provide valuable habitat for migratory birds," said Graham Chisholm, executive director of Audubon California, who accepted the award on behalf of the Migratory Bird Conservation Partnership. "Rice farmers understand that their land can be profitable and provide excellent habitat at the same time."

The Migratory Bird Conservation Partnership - comprised of Audubon California, PRBO Conservation Science, and The Nature Conservancy - seeks to protect, restore, and enhance lands that support bird populations in California.

For more information about the Circle of Life Reception, and for photographs from the event, contact CRC Communications Manager Jim Morris at 916/387-2264 or jmorris@calrice.org.

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The California Rice Commission represents the entire California rice industry, including all growers and handlers who farm and process rice produced on some 500,000 acres annually.