

Charities receiving less, giving less

By Mark Glover, Sacramento Bee

An industry that relies on giving is taking some lumps these days.

Northern California charitable organizations big and small have seen donations decline as the recession, high unemployment and declining home values erode donors' wealth.

Competition for the dwindling pool of private donations is also up, since nonprofits that long relied on government funding have been hurt by local and state budget cuts. The affected nonprofits have stepped into an already crowded pool of organizations seeking donations from recession-battered businesses, foundations and consumers.

"It's a very challenging environment at the moment," said Steve Heath, president and CEO of United Way California Capital Region, which kicked off its annual workplace giving campaign this month at the Sacramento Convention Center.

The United Way campaign is the region's largest, seeking donations from workers at some 700 employers in Sacramento, El Dorado, Placer, Yolo and Amador counties. Scores of nonprofits benefit from the campaign.

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