

Opinion: California bashers are missing the real story

By Peter Schrag, Sacramento Bee

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie was only the latest to pile on California this week. The state, he told California GOP delegation at the party's national convention, had given itself to "the masters of huge spending and huge government." In electing Jerry Brown, it made "a bad choice with an old retread."

A couple of weeks ago, Mitt Romney compared us to Italy, Greece and Spain. Sarah Palin, calling California "a cautionary tale" in a Facebook posting, warned that "Obama's vision for America will make the rest of the country look like California, minus the beautiful scenery and warm weather."

The Golden State, she said, "once boasted the entrepreneurial innovation of Silicon Valley – the American creative engine," with the strong implication that it was no more.

And last week, state Sen. Mimi Walters of Irvine issued a handout headed "California Is Not Quite as Bad as Greece." Her bill of particulars included "Taxes, Taxes, Taxes," "3rd Highest Unemployment Rate in the Nation" and "Lowest Credit Rating in the Nation." Translated in this election season: It's all the Democrats' fault.

Do any of them really know the place they're talking about?

None of them seemed to know that the 365,000 jobs California gained in the 12 months ending in July meant that the state had grown jobs twice as fast as the nation – 2.6 percent vs. 1.3 percent. Professional, scientific, technical and

information services added 60,000 jobs.

The Bay Area – meaning Silicon Valley, in case Palin doesn't know – led the state in job gains. In the past year, the San Francisco metro area added nearly 41,000 jobs; the San Jose area gained more than 30,000; the East Bay gained nearly 20,000. Southern California and Sacramento also picked up jobs.

In the second quarter of 2012, more venture capital was invested in California-based companies than in the other 49 states combined. The state economy, said Steve Levy of the Center for the Continuing Study of the California Economy, “has its mojo back.”

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