



The Lark

Bringing Business & the Community Together!

Volume XX Issue 1

January 2006

Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce

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Office Hours: M-F 1-5 pm

Our Mission:

The Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce is organized to advance the economic well-being and uniqueness of the Mark West Area so that its citizens and all areas of its business community shall prosper."

In This Issue:

- New Local Park1
- Holiday Tree Lighting...2
- After Hours Social.....3
- President's Message...4
- Social Calendar.....5
- New Members.....6
- FYI: Small Businesses..5
- FYI: Economic Growth..6
- Chamber Directory.....7
- Corporate Sponsors.....8

After Hours Business Social

January 12, 2006

Hours: 5:30pm - 7:30pm

Hosted by:

Sutter Medical Center

3225 Chanate Rd.
Santa Rosa

Happy New Year!

The **Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce** wishes all of you a happy and prosperous 2006!

We would like to thank all of the businesses that contributed to our **Holiday Tree Lighting** (see our *President's Message on Page 4 for a list of contributors*). We would also like to thank the many volunteers that helped make our 2005 events successful, kept things running in the office, and helped with our office move. We appreciate all of our members, and hope to see you often in 2006!

We can help you with your business's New Year's resolutions - give us a call!

New Park in the Mark West Area!

California American Water commissioned **Brian Healey Landscaping, Inc.** to install a Park in our community. It is filled with a variety of drought resistant plants and trees. Eventually, Cal-Am will put in plaques so we will be able to identify which plants to landscape our yards with to conserve water. The Park is located at the end of Saint James where it meets Londonberry Dr.



photo & story contributed by Daryl Anderson

**You are invited to visit your Chamber's new office:
642 Larkfield Shopping Center, Santa Rosa, CA 95403**



Santa and Mrs. Claus visited the Mark West Holiday Tree Lighting

pictures inside...

Office Space!

2 private offices are for rent in the Chamber's new office space. Each is 12x12 feet, and the monthly rent includes utilities, bathroom and a kitchenette.

Call Pat at **578-7975** for details and a tour.

Bring a Friend!

Guests are welcome at the Chamber's Business Socials - bring a business associate to meet other business people in our area!

Our next social is January 12th!

The Community Celebrates at our Holiday Tree Lighting

Santa and Mrs. Claus arrived on the Rincon Valley Fire Department Fire Engine for our **Holiday Tree Lighting**. There was a great turnout by the community to enjoy caroling by the Mark West Unified School District Chorus, refreshments provided by local merchants, and a moment with Santa for the kids. Santa handed out approx. 200 candy canes to the crowd!



Mark West Unified School District Chorus



Who needs reindeer?



Santa & Mrs. Claus



The Holiday Tree!

photos by Daryl Anderson



Britt Cooper
Vice President
& Branch Manager

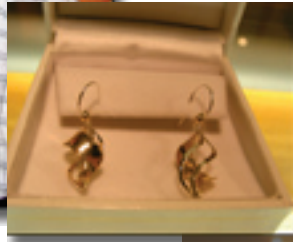
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**December Social
Hosted by Town Green Jewelers**

Rodney Montoya, Sales Manager, Town Green Jewelers, and Mark Lusaich, Owner, Town Green Jewelers, with Raffle Winner Ann Patty of North Coast Bank, Windsor



**Raffle Prize donated by
Town Green Jewelers**

photos by Sonoma CONNECTION

Walt Smith presents Sue Sloat of MWUSD, a certificate from the Chamber honoring the Mark West Unified School District as the Non-Profit Organization of the Year!

Holiday Spirit was abundant at the **December Business After Hours Social**. Our gracious host for the evening was new member **Town Green Jewelers** in Windsor. Owner **Mark Lusaich** and Sales Manager **Rodney Montoya** welcomed Chamber members with a sumptuous buffet (by **Mangiamo**) and a generous door prize: a beautiful set of earrings created by **John Bagley**. **Ann Patty of North Coast Bank** was the lucky winner who took home an unexpected and delightful holiday present.



Sonoma County Supervisor Paul Kelly attended the event and provided a brief update about current political issues in the County.

Everyone enjoyed browsing the showcases and catching up on holiday news. Thanks to **Town Green Jewelers** for a wonderful evening!



Rodney Montoya, Supervisor Paul Kelly, Board Member Jim Bajgrowicz

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 RWE Group

President's Message

Happy New Year!

The year of 2005 is now history and the members of the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce can look back at many successful events and activities. It is wonderful to observe how members working together produce results that cannot be achieved by anyone individually.



The annual tree lighting in December to celebrate Christmas and the other holidays was another fine example of many members pulling together to make the event successful. Among those participating were the **Larkfield Shopping Center** (providing the tree), **Molsberry Markets** (providing refreshments and other assistance), **Larkfield Bakery** (providing refreshments), **Larkfield Florists** (providing Santa's Chair and additional coordination), the **Mark West School District** (providing the choir), the **Rincon Valley Fire District** (delivering Santa), and **Cal-Am Water** (providing barricades). In addition, several individuals were involved, such as **Pat** and **Dee** from the office, **Daryl Anderson** (photographer), **Jim Bajgrowicz**, **Walt Smith**, **Don** and **Barbara Wilson**, and, of course, **Pete** and **Marion Foppiano** who made sure that Santa and Mrs. Claus were on the job! Everything came together to put a lot of smiles on a lot of faces.

A grand thank you is owed to **Rodney Montoya**

of **Town Green Jewelers** for hosting another very successful Business-After-Hours. There was plenty of good networking and more very fine food from **Mangiamo**.

Meanwhile, a very special thank you is in order for **Sue Sloat** who has accepted the position of corporate secretary. Sue has been a faithful member of the Chamber and has been responsible for securing the meeting room for Chamber board meetings.

So, please remember, everyone can get involved. Do business with a fellow Chamber member, recruit a new member, help find a tenant for the Chamber office, host a Business-After-Hours, participate in Chamber functions, or do some combination of those things. Working together creates rewards that can't be achieved individually.

Best Wishes for a Very Happy New Year!

The next Board of Director's meeting is January 10, at the Mark West School District Office from 11:30 am - 1:00 pm.

The Ambassador's Club helps with Chamber Membership recruitment and by introducing new members and guests at the After Hours Business Socials. Network for your business by joining us, and have FUN, too!

Call the Chamber Office at **578-7975** or email **info@markwest.org** for more info!



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FYI: Small Businesses Drive California's Economic Engine

(December 21, 2005) The importance of small businesses to the California economy is illustrated once again in the most recent California Small Business Profile released by the Office of Advocacy in the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

Small businesses are "the dynamo that powers California's economy," says Michael T. Hull, SBA regional advocate. "Without it's small business owners, California's economy would not be nearly as strong as it is today."

Huge Part of State Economy

In 2004, an estimated 1,068,602 — 99.2 percent — of California's employer firms were small businesses (fewer than 500 employees), according to the SBA Profile. In 2002, small firms employed 53 percent of the state's non-farm private sector workforce.

From 2001 to 2002 (the latest data available), firms with fewer than 20 employees gained 117,379 net jobs, while firms with more than 500 employees lost 263,913 jobs.

Increased Owner Diversity

In 2002, 871,617 small firms in California were women-owned, up 24 percent from 1997. These firms generated \$140.9 billion in revenues.

Minority-owned businesses also grew from 1997:

- Hispanic-owned firms totalled 427,805, up 27 %
- Black-owned firms totalled 113,003, up 43 %
- Asian-owned firms totalled 372,221, up 19 %
- American Indian/Alaska Native-owned firms numbered 40,541, up 52 percent.

Regulatory Burden on Vital Sector

According to Office of Advocacy research, complying with federal regulations alone costs the nation's smallest firms **\$7,647 per employee each year**, 45 percent more than the per-employee costs of larger firms.

(From the California Chamber of Commerce)

New Members

Town Green Jewelers
 Mark Luzaich
 730 McClelland Dr.
 Windsor, CA 95492
 535-1401 (F) 535-1451
 markl@americantank.com

Real Estate Appraisal Services
 Connie Dorsett
 1409 Forestview Dr.
 Santa Rosa, CA 95401
 527-5503 (F) 527-5323
 rosetown@sbcglobal.net

Renewing Members

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| Guadalupe Private School | (1987) |
| Cal State Central Credit Union | (1988) |
| Wikiup Golf Course | (1988) |
| Scott M. Slonoff E.A. | (1989) |
| Airport Business Center | (1989) |
| Mark West Union School District | (1989) |
| BoDean Co., Inc. | (1993) |
| Friendly Feed & Supply | (1994) |
| Eddie's Bar & Grill | (1997) |
| Empire Graphics & Printing, Inc. | (1998) |
| Larkfield Shopping Center | (1999) |
| Ken's Signs | (2001) |
| Rosenburg's Restaurant Equipment | (2003) |
| North Bay Capital Assoc., LLC | (2005) |



upcoming
Business-After-Hours-Socials

Jan 12	Sutter Medical Center of SR
Feb 9	Grace Fellowship
Mar 9	Goodwill / Job Link
Apr 13	Dan Beck, Attorney
May 11	Healdsburg Nursery
Jun 8	ZAP! Electric Vehicles

**FYI: National, State Economic Growth
May Depend on Housing Outlook**

(January 3, 2006)
From the California Chamber of Commerce:
for the full article, visit <http://www.calchamber.com>

National Economy

Third quarter economic growth was supposed to be affected by the hurricanes and higher gasoline prices. Instead of slowing sharply, advance gross domestic product (GDP) growth for the third quarter of the year was 3.8 percent.

California

Officially, California non-farm payrolls declined 23,700 jobs in September, a number the council found unbelievable. The decline was probably due to a change in public school starts. However, some on the council felt that the report was not good overall, while others pointed to record high household employment numbers.

In any event, the recent jobs data showing weakness runs a bit counter to other trends: Personal income growth in the second quarter was up 6.4 percent, following 6.5 percent growth the quarter before. California real gross state product in 2004 was up 5.6 percent, better than the nation's. State revenues are coming in stronger than expected, probably boosted by recent real estate gains, that is, property taxes and capital gains taxes.

Looking forward and given national trends, the council did not see much of a slowdown ahead unless real estate weakens considerably. It seems to represent half of the trend jobs growth in California. Another possible thing helping the state budget picture could be rising year-end bonuses and recurring stock option activity in finance and high-tech. A more vigorous stock market could also make a dent in the state budget deficit.

Regionally, the most important mini-trend may be the budding recovery of the Bay Area as indicated by rising net office and warehouse absorption numbers and annual job growth turning positive, essentially since October 2004.

Banking

Bank lending continues to boost the economy. Nationally, commercial bank lending has been rising at a strong pace. Total loans were up 11 percent to 12 percent annually for the past three quarters. Commercial and industrial loans also look better, growing in low double digits. Real estate lending experienced a strong annual 14 percent increase year over year through the third quarter.

Real Estate

The California commercial real estate sector continued to improve in the third quarter with Southern California doing very well and Northern California recovering. The business community appears to be feeling better about the economic outlook as indicated by positive net office and industrial absorption, an occurrence limited so far to Southern California but now spreading into the Bay Area and Sacramento.

Residential real estate continued to weaken here and there in California with sales declines in Sacramento, the Tri-Valley commuter markets, and San Diego. Price appreciation appears to be flat lining since this summer, thanks also to a sharp rise in listings in many sub-markets. Pricing frenzies are a thing of the past.

Creative financing is easing off, mortgage rates are rising, and interest-only loans are becoming less attractive because of the flattening of the yield curve.

Rising short-term rates are beginning to cut into margins of mortgage originators, which are compensating by creating more volume with more favorable financing. A changed interest rate environment will make this strategy harder to maintain. The sub-prime market may already have gone the other way.

Tourism

The tourism industry was worried about rising gas prices. Innkeepers around the state reported to give deals to guests to help offset the cost of gas — for example, giving guests a free tank of gas, a gas discount off the room rate, etc. However, with gasoline prices down, the pressure is subsiding.

Agriculture

This year looks like it will be a good one, although not as good as last year. Stone fruit are doing better, but they are not doing great.

There seems to be too much product. Inventories in the grape industry are too high. Due to the rains last spring, raisins are late with their drying process. Producers of tree fruit are hoping for better fruit quality and more favorable weather conditions than the last few years. The markets for nuts, almonds, pistachios and walnuts are strong because of high export demand. As a result, prices for open "ag" land has risen 25 percent, but it may be peaking.

Foreign investments are putting pressure on pricing. Weather conditions have improved the water outlook for the rest of the year.

Mark West Area Community Information

AREA POPULATION - within a 3 mile radius - 20,000
ELEVATION - 160 feet above sea level
BOUNDARIES - Area approximately bounded by:
Shiloh Road - North
Piner Road - South
Mark West Lodge on Mark West Springs Rd - East
West Olivet Road - West

About the Newsletter

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The Lark is published monthly under the direction of:

The Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce

642 Larkfield Shopping Center
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
(707) 578-7975

Deadline for publication is the
3rd Wednesday of each month.

ADVERTISING

**Monthly \$25; 3 Months \$60
6 months \$107.50; 1 year \$200**

FLYER INSERTION: \$35 per issue. You supply 200 copies of your 8.5 x 11" flyer on 28# paper. If you would like to have your flyer typeset and printed by the Chamber, the cost is \$75.

The Lark Newsletter is mailed to member businesses each month. For more information, please contact Office Manager Patricia Morelli, at 578-7975.

THE DEADLINE FOR LARK PUBLICATION

The deadline for all articles, pictures, and flyers for the Lark is the third Wednesday of each month, following our Monthly After Hours Business Social.

The Deadline for the February Lark is **January 18.**

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