



The Lark

Bringing Business & the Community Together!

Volume XX Issue 4

April 2006

Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce

642 Larkfield Center
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
Tel: (707) 578-7975
FAX: (707) 578-0397
markwest@markwest.org
www.markwest.org
Office Hours: M-Th 1-4 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.

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After Hours Business Social

April 13, 2006

Hours: 5:30pm-7:30pm

Hosted by:

Marbles Café
1770 Piner Road
Santa Rosa

Chamber Announces New Directory!

The Chamber will be printing a new, updated **2006 Membership Directory** in early April. Members will be listed by business category and alphabetically.

Advertising is available for members - please contact the Chamber office at 578-7975 to order your ad space, or order online at www.markwest.org - **by April 5th!**

Business card size ads are \$75,
1/2 page ads \$180 and full page ads \$225.

***Please act now to get first choice
on the placement of your ad!***

Community Demonstration Garden

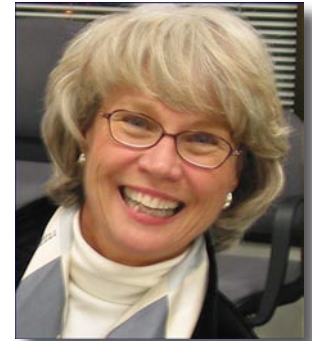
Join **California American Water** on Saturday April 22nd, from 11am-2pm at our community demonstration garden on 4790 Londonberry Drive for the official community kickoff of the new garden. Stop by to see to see a variety of low water-use plants, get tips and suggestions from conservation and gardening experts, and enjoy a hot dog and soda with us!

With springtime around the corner, now is the time to start thinking about ways to use water wisely. Gardening and landscaping can account for over 50% of water use. The **Larkfield Community Demonstration Garden** has been planted with a variety of drought-tolerant and low water-use plants that look great and are available at local stores.

You can also get in touch with us by calling **(707) 542-8329** or emailing larkfield@amwater.com. We'd be happy to share with you other ways to save water.

Invitation to Chamber Members: The **Pacific Coast Air Museum** is hosting an after hours social on Tuesday April 25th from 4:30 to 6:15pm. **Please RSVP to Roger Olson at 707-396-3425 or rolson@callatg.com.**

**Visit your Chamber's office, or call 578-7975:
642 Larkfield Shopping Center, Santa Rosa, CA 95403**



Janet Wentworth of J&M Marketing won a delightful doorprize at our March Social. see Page 3

Affordable Office Space Move in Now!

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.

**2006 Construction Report
March 2006**

The Sonoma County Economic Development Board (EDB), in partnership with the Sonoma County Workforce Investment Board (WIB), is pleased to bring you the 2006 Construction Report. Our research partner, Moody's Economy.com, produced this report for the EDB.

Highlights include:

- Recent conditions in the Sonoma County construction industry are mixed. Residential construction accelerated in the second half of 2005 so that the total number of permits issued exceeded 2004 by about 10%. Nonresidential construction permits issued in 2005, however, did not outnumber issuance in 2004, although the shortfall was modest.

- Overall, however, the industry is in good health. This is indicated by the record high 14,200 workers on construction payrolls, which rose in 2005 for the second consecutive year.

- The housing market appears to be at its peak, with some slowdown in house-price appreciation in last year's fourth quarter. The California Association of Realtors reports that the median sales price for single-family homes in the North Bay peaked in September and fell in each of the subsequent three months. Despite the recent downturn, however, the median sales price remains 10% above the year-end 2004 estimate; exactly equal to the U.S. average trend but somewhat below the 15% rate over the year for California.

- Pressures from the macroeconomy are largely on the downside for Sonoma County's construction industry. These include rising interest rates,

rising materials prices, rising labor costs, and little pent-up demand for new housing. Additionally, the Sonoma County economy currently ranks third worst in the nation for housing affordability. This situation undermines both housing demand and the long-term health of the economy.

- Sonoma County builders must still look to the long-term for significantly stronger demand growth. Current excess supply will keep commercial and industrial construction rather light through the coming year. The latter years of this decade, however, will offer more upside potential once the current inventory of industrial and office space is absorbed.

Thank you for your continued interest in the Economic Development Board's research. As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at (707) 565 - 7170.

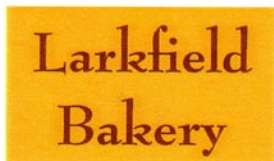
Sincerely, Ben Stone Executive Director

For the full report, please visit:

http://www.sonoma-county.org/edb/pdf/2006/2006_construction_report.pdf

**New Chamber Membership Dues
Effective May 1**

Standard Dues		Non-Profit Dues
\$125.00	Business (1-5 Personnel)	\$110.00
\$175.00	Business (6-10 Personnel)	\$155.00
\$245.00	Business (11+ Personnel)	\$215.00
\$625.00	Corporate Sponsor	
\$ 95.00	Individual (no plaque or voting)	



Fresh Danish from Scratch
Sandwiches on Fresh Baked Bread
Cakes * Pies * Cookies * Muffins

Sunday 6:00 am - 2 pm
Mon-Thurs 5:30 am - 6 pm
Fri-Sat 5:30 am - 9 pm

Just North of the LBC on Old Redwood Hwy
570 Larkfield Center Santa Rosa, CA 95403
707-579-4991

serving espresso



Serving Larkfield

Our Larkfield team works hard each day to make sure you receive high-quality water. Please do your part in conserving this valuable resource. To learn more about your water quality and ways to conserve, visit our Web site at www.calamwater.com.



March Social

Hosted by

Goodwill Industries/Job Link

Mark West Area Chamber members were treated to a delicious buffet at the March Social hosted by **Goodwill Industries of the Redwood Empire/Job Link**. The event was held at the host's facility in Southwest Santa Rosa. Hosts included Stephanie Munson, Employer & Account Rep., Laurie Petta, Workforce Development Director, Ulla Mast, Bilingual Community Resource Specialist, and Alix Shor, Employment & Training Program Coordinator, all of Goodwill Industries/Job Link, and Valerie Nagle, EDD, EAC, and Karen Fies, Section Manager for the County of Sonoma Human Service Department Employment & Training Division.

They announced an Employer Seminar: **"Crush the Myths of Labor Law"**, on May 4 & 5 at the Double Tree Hotel in Rohnert Park. Call Stephanie at 584-2441, or email: joblinkear@yahoo.com. *Discounts available until April 3.*



**Valerie Nagle, Laurie Petta, Ulla Mast
Stephanie Munsen & Don Wilson**

**Doug Williams,
Rincon Valley
Fire Department
Chief, won a
Doorprize**



**Janet Wentworth
of J&M Marketing
won a Doorprize**



**Chamber President Doug Williams,
Karen Fies, Sonoma County HSD,
Alix Shor, Goodwill/Job Link**



President's Message

It's time once again to process nominations for the Board of Directors of the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce. The chair of the nominating committee this year is board member and past-president **Leonard Sevall, Sevall, Thwaites & Soper**. Please give Call Leonard at 546-2146 to inquire about a seat on the Board.



The final push for a new directory of Chamber members is underway. This would be a really good time to recruit new members and to provide extra visibility to the members of the Chamber. Ads are available in a variety of sizes and each one helps the Chamber maintain its needed cash flow. Many members are involved in the production of the directory and special thanks go to **Kathleen Palmer & John Essman, Sonoma Connection**, for keeping the project on track.

The Chamber was treated to another very enjoyable business-after-hours social at **Goodwill Industries/Job Link** in March. Former board member **Stephanie Munson** and associates provided some wonderful hospitality and some terrific refreshments.

Another thank you goes to **Grace Fellowship** for providing meeting space for the Board of Directors on short notice. The Chamber is fortunate to have supporters like **Grace Fellowship** and the **Mark West School District** that are able to provide nice facilities in which to conduct Chamber business.

Mother's Day is around the corner and it's time to think about participating in the annual fundraiser for the **Rincon Valley Firefighters**. Breakfast, at a nominal cost, will be available that morning at the **San Miguel School** on Faught Road. There will also be a benefit drawing with some nice prizes that day. The suggested donation is only a dollar a ticket.

Finally, please be aware that the Chamber is facing a challenge with cash flow at this time caused by the office move in November. That fact is a reminder of the need to finish the leasing of the remaining office space, the need to recruit new members, and the need to participate in the directory. With everyone's help, the Chamber will be able to continue to provide the services that it does to the Mark West area.

Respectfully,

Doug Williams

Are you interested in helping the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce? Attend the Board of Directors Meeting.

The next Board of Director's meeting is April 11, 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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info@sonomaconnection.com
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Web Site Design & Marketing • Computer Consulting
Digital Photography • Search Engine Optimization



BRYAN HEALEY
5241-H OLD REDWOOD HWY
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

OFFICE 541-0777
MOBILE 843-0703
CSL# 837788 C-27

**FYI: EYE Want to Know....
How to reduce computer eyestrain**

By Dr. Maureen McCoy, O.D.

Many of us spend a lot of time at a computer monitor and experience irritating and uncomfortable eye strain regularly. Here are some tips on how you can ease the strain:

20/20/20 rule.

Every 20 minutes glance away from your monitor at an object 20 feet away for 20 seconds. This will relax your eye muscles.

Get up and walk around at least once every 2 hours to give your eyes and your body a rest.

Blink more frequently.

Your eyes need the natural lubrication that blinking provides (normal blinking is every 5 seconds). Computer users often blink less than normal resulting in dry, itchy or irritated eyes. Artificial tears (rewetting eye drops) can be used to lubricate your eyes, preservative free is the best option.

Adjust your workstation.

Position your monitor 18-30 inches from your eyes with the top of the screen at eye level where you can look slightly down at your work. Eliminate reflected glare on your screen from surrounding lights. Sitting parallel to a window, closing blinds, an antiglare monitor screen and antiglare coating on your glasses all reduced unwanted reflective glare.

Use special eyewear.

If you spend the majority of your time at a computer, glasses or contact lenses designed for you to focus correctly on your computer screen can help. These special glasses or contact lenses are designed to accommodate your unique viewing distance and angles at your computer.

Relax.

If possible, lean back, relax and close your eyes for a few moments.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please contact Sonoma Eyeworks at 707-578-2020 or visit us online at www.SonomaEyeworks.com

- Submitted by Cynthia Harmon, Sonoma Eyeworks

New Members

Larkfield Pet Supply

454 Larkfield Center
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
548-9696

Full line of Premium Pet Supplies

Bon Appetit Gifts

Joanne Martensen
466 Larkfield Center
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
579-6487

Unique Gifts & Home Supplies

Norm's Kitchen

Nancy & Jim Elsa
478 Larkfield Center
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
579-4007

**Serving Home Style
Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner**

Renewing Members

- Law Offices of Bajgrowicz & Coppock (2002)**
- Curves of Wikiup (2003)**
- J&M Marketing (2005)**

upcoming
Business-After-Hours-Socials

- Apr 13 Marbles Cafe**
- May 11 Healdsburg Nursery**
- Jun 8 ZAP! Electric Vehicles**
- Jul 13 Beck Law Offices**
- Aug 10 Granma's Attic**
- Sept – Dec OPEN**

FYI: Guidelines for Political Communications to Employees

Informing your employees and stockholders about the impact of proposed state legislation, regulations and ballot measures is within your rights as a business owner. *Just remember to do it the right way.*

The dilemma: You know that pending state legislation, a proposed regulation or a ballot measure will have a huge impact on your business, either directly because it affects your company/industry, or indirectly because of its impact on the jobs climate and economy. You'd like to let your employees know about your concerns — but can you?

The answer is yes — IF you keep in mind and follow some “dos and don'ts” outlined in state law or regulations. Following is a quick overview, including actions to avoid.

You CAN

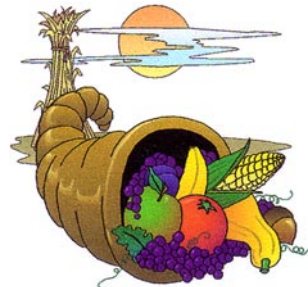
- Communicate with your employees, stockholders and their families about the company's support of or opposition to state legislation, regulations or ballot measures.
- Encourage your employees, stockholders and their families to support or oppose state legislation, regulations or ballot measures.
- Communicate your political messages to your own employees (and their families) through such means as:
 - internal mail systems (separate from payroll distribution);
 - e-mail systems;
 - regular mail;
 - bulletin boards;
 - phone bank messages; or
 - employee meetings.
- Inform employees, stockholders and their families about the effect of state legislation, regulations and ballot measures on the company, its employees and stockholders.

You CANNOT

- Control or direct the political activities of your employees “through or by means of threat of discharge or loss of employment.”
- Coerce your employees to support or oppose a ballot measure.
- Reward or punish employees for their political activities or beliefs (or threaten to do so).
- Put any political messages in or on employees' payroll envelopes.

NO PAYCHECK STUFFERS.

From the California Chamber of Commerce



**Wine Country
Harvest Faire &
Business Showcase**

**Thursday
October 5, 2006
Wells Fargo Center
(Luther Burbank Center)**

Booths Available Now!

Contact Pat or Dee
at the Chamber Office:
578-7975

**Or purchase online:
www.MarkWest.org**

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

Editors: Kathleen Palmer & John Essman
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Printing: Clone Digital Printing & Copying 527-6565

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 May Lark
is **April 22.**

Chamber Board of Directors & Staff

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Rincon Valley Fire District
dwilliams@rvfire.org

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VP Business Services, President-Elect

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528-2510
Law Office of James Bajgrowicz
bajgrowiczjim@cs.com

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VP Public Relations - Pro Tem

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Thank you to our
**Corporate
Sponsors!**



RIVER ROCK CASINO
ALEXANDER VALLEY



A Sutter Health Affiliate



Sonoma
CONNECTION



Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce
642 Larkfield Shopping Center
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

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Santa Rosa



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