

# Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce and VISITORS CENTER



**The Lark**

December 2017  
Volume XXXI Issue 11

**BRINGING BUSINESS & THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER!**

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## INTRODUCING STUART TIFFEN, FIELD REPRESENTATIVE FOR 4TH DISTRICT SUPERVISOR JAMES GORE

We're reminded of the October fires every day in Sonoma County. We see them in the vivid scars they left on our landscape, those blackened hillsides that are struggling back to life. We see them in the lots filled with rubble and those now cleared and lined with wattles. And most of all, we see them in our family, friends, neighbors, and colleagues, all of whom were affected in some way, many of whom were impacted profoundly.

For local leaders - whether they be elected officials, business leaders, nonprofits or groups of neighbors facing adversity together - the mandate now is to recover, to rebuild, and to emerge as a more resilient community when all is said and done.

At the County level, Fourth District Supervisor James Gore's response to the fire has been to be present. Through reaching out on social media, sharing vital information in the press, listening at Town Hall meetings and speaking to people one-on-one in the hard-hit Fourth District, the mission of the Supervisor and his staff is to empower people not only to rebuild their homes, but to come back stronger.

As a part of that strategy, in partnership with the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce, Supervisor Gore has opened up a field office in Larkfield, at 4787 Old Redwood Highway at the Mark West Area Chamber office, across the street from Molsberry's Market. There, Field Representative Stuart Tiffen will keep office hours on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays for the foreseeable future, helping with questions on fire recovery, getting answers from officials at the county, Cal OES, Army Corps of Engineers, FEMA or any number of other agencies involved in the recovery effort.

Tiffen comes to the Fourth District office from the newspaper business, where he served as the Editor of The Windsor Times for the past three years. He's no stranger to rebuilding in the face of adversity. While serving in the U.S. Air Force stationed in Florida, he participated in rebuilding efforts after Hurricanes Ivan (2004) and Dennis (2005) in between deployments to Afghanistan.

To reach him, email [stuart.tiffen@sonoma-county.org](mailto:stuart.tiffen@sonoma-county.org) or call (707) 565-2241.



*District Four Field Representative  
Stuart Tiffen*

*December Social  
hosted by  
Exchange Bank Larkfield Branch  
and Molsberry's Market  
See p3*

**UPCOMING EVENTS: next AFTER HOURS BUSINESS SOCIAL**  
*Hosted by*  
**Best Western Plus Wine Country Inn & Suites** Thursday January 11, 2018  
870 Hopper Avenue, Santa Rosa 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM



Steve Plamann  
Aaction Rents  
President

*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.*

**CHAMBER MEETINGS**

**Board of Directors**

Second Tuesday  
Of Each Month  
11:30 am - 1:00 pm at  
Best Western Plus Wine  
Country Inn & Suites  
870 Hopper Av. S.R.

**Ambassadors Mtg.**

Second Thursday  
Of Each Month  
4:00 pm - 5:00 pm  
At the Chamber offices

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:**

Despite all we have been through this year, Sonoma County's economy is booming. According to several new national rankings we ranked 20th among 200 large metro areas as one of America's Best Performing Cities. Also, out of a possible 19 different tech sectors in a community, the county had eight above the national rate. This was compiled by the Milken Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank.

And the American Cities Business Journal, a media company that owns 40 business publications around the U.S. has ranked Sonoma County third among 106 metro areas for small business vitality.

We were also ranked fifth among metro areas for personal income growth by Governing.com, a publication owned by media and research company e.Republic.

Sonoma State economics professor Robert Girling said our economic outlook should remain good through at least 2018.

Projections from the State of California's Employment Development Department show that the Professional and Business Services industries will continue to grow more than any other industries in the county in 2018, with approximately 16.7 new jobs this coming year. This sector includes administrative and support services, management of companies and enterprises, and scientific/technical services. Total employment is expected to increase 9.0 percent during this time. (Source: CA Employment Development Department) In addition, the county remains an attractive option for small and medium sized businesses and corporations looking for new or expansion sites.

Together the recent reports offer a portrait of a county that is outpacing the nation in a number of key economic measures.

It's rare for this many spotlights at one time to shine favorably on the county's economic performance.

"In my time here it's unprecedented," said Ben Stone, executive director of the Sonoma County Economic Development Board. "I've never seen such a cavalcade of accolades."

The Trade, Transportation, and Utilities sector currently are the largest employing sector in the county, followed by Government and Education & Health Services. Trade, Transportation, and Utilities industries include wholesale trade, grocery stores, and more. This industry will continue to increase total employment through 2018, along with all other major industries in Sonoma County.

WOW, that is good news which will help us get through the long recovery from the fires. Like the Phoenix, we must now rise up from the ashes. I was talking with 4th District Supervisor James Gore last week and his goal is for the Mark West Area to be better than before the fire after the rebuilding is complete. I can promise you the Mark West Area Chamber will do everything we can do to support that dream.

*Continued on page 5*



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## DECEMBER 14 SOCIAL AND HOLIDAY PARTY SPONSORED BY EXCHANGE BANK LARKFIELD BRANCH AND MOLSBERRY MARKETS, INC.

Our annual end-of-year party drew a great crowd, and was filled with good cheer and great food. It was hosted as usual by Exchange Bank and Molsberry's Market.

Steve Plamann, our Chamber President, introduced Stuart Tiffen. Stuart is Field Representative for 4th District Supervisor James Gore. You can read more about him on page 1 of this newsletter.

Laura Buhner, Assistant Vice President and Branch Manager, welcomed us and introduced Dorothy Rodella, Vice President and Regional Sales Manager. Exchange Bank has been in Santa Rosa for over 100 years and here in Larkfield for fifty. Dorothy said that Exchange Bank was part of the 1906 earthquake rebuild and will also be a part of the rebuild of our community.

Brian Molsberry of Molsberry Markets, Inc. introduced his family and a few of his employees. That is always fun, as you can tell the employees and family are a cohesive unit and enjoy working with each other. Brian made a point of introducing Kim, who was responsible for jumping in on her own time and providing us with a terrific array of food for the evening.

Brian shared some thoughts about the challenges and recovery from the fire and he concluded with saying that we need to recover and rebuild our community and "all together, we will".

### Donors & Winners

The pot of gold was \$460. The winner was not present so January's pot will be \$480.

Jodie Williams won the 50/50 drawing and went home with \$89.00. By the way, the other 50% of this drawing goes towards the Spirit Awards program.

Dorothy Rodella, VP of Exchange Bank, won a 3-liter bottle of Kendall Jackson wine, donated by Molsberry Markets, Inc. She is soon to host her daughter's wedding and was most happy to receive this prize.

Pete Lescure, Lescure Engineers, won a two-pound box of See's candy, donated by me, Aggie Maggio, Realtor, Coldwell Banker.

Paul Peck, Carlton Senior Living, won Airport Express Tickets, donated by Tony Giraldi, Sonoma County Airport Express.

Pete Foppiano, Golden bear Financial, won a small Christmas tree, donated by Steve Plamann, Aaction Rents.

Melissa Moholt-Siebert, Ancient Oak Cellars was happy to win a gift certificate for Aaction Rents, also donated by President Steve. She was so happy to receive this as she has lost her home and ranch in the fire. They are going to rebuild and this gift will be an amazing help. Paul Erickson, Appraiser, also won a \$75 gift certificate to Aaction Rents.

*Contributed by Aggie Maggio, Realtor @ Coldwell Banker*



Our hosts Laura Buhner of Exchange Bank (center) and Brian and Joe Molsberry of Molsberry Markets, Inc (to the left of her, in civilian attire), along with several heroes of the recent fires, Sonoma County Firefighters.



Dorothy Rodella of Exchange Bank (right) and Lloyd Phillips. Dorothy won a 3-liter bottle of Kendall-Jackson wine that evening!



Steve Plamann (left), Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce President, awards Jodie Williams with her prize from the 50/50 Drawing. Laura Buhner of Exchange Bank is at right.



Erin McCauley, Director of Sales for Hilton Garden Inn Sonoma County Airport (left) with Lauren Hull (right) of The Windsor Connection.

**GO-BIZ “CALIFORNIA COMPETES” TAX CREDIT AVAILABILITY**

From an email sent by the Sonoma County Economic Development Board, December 1, 2017

**Don’t Leave Money on the Table!** State of California Offering Over \$100 Million in Tax Credits to Businesses of All Sizes.



The Sonoma County Economic Development Board (EDB) would like to help your business take advantage of important tax credits and hiring incentives. Since the inception of this program, we have assisted local businesses in obtaining \$5.5 million in tax credits, exemptions, and training subsidies.

The California Competes Tax Credit is an income tax credit available to businesses who invest and create new jobs in California. The state will be accepting applications from January 2, 2018 through January 22, 2018 for \$100 million in tax credits.

Any business can apply for the tax credit and 25% of the credits will be reserved for businesses with revenues of less than \$2 million. The application, and a helpful Tax Credit Application Guide can all be found online here.

Please contact Ethan Brown at (707) 565-7589 or [ethan.brown@sonoma-county.org](mailto:ethan.brown@sonoma-county.org) for assistance in applying for the tax credit or to learn more about how the EDB can help your business with:

- Workforce issues- finding qualified employees, on the job training, and hiring incentives
- Obtaining permits and navigating the regulatory process
- Marketing and demographic research
- Access to capital
- Energy efficiency and other rebate programs

**DON’T WAIT!** The application period **ENDS January 22, 2018.**

**2017 SPIRIT OF SONOMA COUNTY AWARDS**

The Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce honored Roni Berg of the Mark West Citizens Advisory Council at the 17th Annual Spirit of Sonoma Awards on December 8. Roni, who is a long-time community volunteer and activist in the Fulton/Mark West area, attended with her husband Kendall Haven and friends Paul Gibson and Ginger Hamilton. At the awards ceremony, special recognition and gratitude also went out to Sonoma County Sheriff Rob Giordano for his outstanding leadership and effective communications during the recent firestorms which greatly impacted our community.



Roni Berg (left), with husband Kendall Haven accepted her Spirit of Sonoma County award.



Fourth District Supervisor James Gore (left) presented an award of special appreciation and gratitude to Sonoma County Sheriff Rob Giordano for his superlative actions during the recent fires.

Interested in joining our Ambassador Club? Contact the Chamber at [office@markwest.org](mailto:office@markwest.org) 707-578-7975



To host a Ribbon Cutting, contact... Aggie Maggio [aggiemaggio@icloud.com](mailto:aggiemaggio@icloud.com)



Keep abreast of important information pertinent to local business issues: <http://edb.sonoma-county.org/>

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, January 11, 2018  
 Chamber Business After Hours Social 5:30-7:30pm  
 Hosted by **Best Western Plus Wine Country Inn & Suites**  
 870 Hopper Ave., Santa Rosa

Monday, March 26, 2018  
**28th Annual Wine Country Harvest Faire & Business Showcase**  
 4:00pm-7:00pm  
 For information call the Chamber: 707 578-7975  
<http://www.markwest.org/contactus.cfm>



Wednesday April 25, 2018  
**Chamber Business Luncheon 11:30am-1:00pm**  
 Topic: Fire Recovery Update & Other Business  
 Speaker: Fourth District Supervisor James Gore  
 Hosted at Best Western Plus Wine Country Inn & Suites  
 870 Hopper Ave, Santa Rosa

## MOLSBERRY'S MARKET HOSTS FIRE RECOVERY FUNDRAISER BARBEQUE

Here's more evidence of the amazing home-grown support from the community for the community. Molsberry Markets, Inc. - always a frontrunner in public affairs in the Larkfield/Wikiup/Mark West area - hosted a fundraiser barbeque event on Saturday October 28. They served hot dogs, hamburgers, drinks, and chips. They asked for donations from their guests and raised \$9,000 for a general fire relief fund, and a further \$5,000 for a "Thank You" fund for our heroic first responders. Dave Rogers Design in Windsor contributed the signs that directed guests to the donation spots and inspired them to be generous. Thank you Dave! You should note that a full 100% of the money raised (about \$14,000 in all!) is going to fire relief. We at the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce are immensely proud of the generosity and spirit of volunteerism we have seen in our local businesses since the fires. Thank you Molsberry's Markets!

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, CONTNUED FROM PAGE 2

One way we all can help this area get back on its feet is to do all our shopping locally, especially at Christmas when our local merchants are counting on a good end to their year. My wife and I spent most of our money for gifts in small locally owned shops. The service is always better and more personal when the store owner is part of the local community. We all benefit by shopping locally.

We had two really fun Chamber events in December: the Christmas Tree Lighting event at the Larkfield Shopping Center sponsored by Molsberry's Market and our Christmas Social at Exchange Bank, co-sponsored by Molsberry's Market. Both events broke attendance records and were filled with the Christmas spirit of giving, sharing, and enjoying each other's company. At the Christmas Social we also shared holiday cheer, great food and many opportunities to win a prize. Thanks again to our hosts Laura and Brian.

Our New Year's Party and monthly After Hours Social will be January 11th, hosted by Best Western Plus Wine Country Inn & Suites at 870 Hooper Ave. in Santa Rosa. Our host will be Todd Anderson. It starts at 5:30pm and ends around 7:30pm. Please join us and help us welcome in the New Year. This is a great opportunity to celebrate and start the year off spreading the word to others in your community about your business.

Happy Holidays!

Steve Plamann, President



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## SONOMA COUNTY BUSINESS LEADERS SAY HOUSING STILL TOP ISSUE FOR 2018

Adapted from a story by Bill Swindell and Robert Digitale on the Press Democrat website, December 31, 2017

As business leaders look ahead to 2018, the effects of the devastating October wildfires are still largely on their minds.

The fires caused the lack of affordable housing in the area to truly become a crisis, which is a major concern for employers who want to recruit and retain a talented workforce. There is a fear within the business community that they could lose workers or customers if the rebuilding process is delayed or prolonged, threatening the strong growth in the local economy over the last decade after it emerged from the recession.



“For the county to continue its growth, it must rebuild quickly and efficiently and get the shadow of the fires behind us,” said Robert Eyler, an economics professor and director of the Center for Regional Economic Analysis at Sonoma State University. “The outlook for the county economy in 2018 is tricky due to the unknown amount of construction that will be engaged to help with reconstruction in Santa Rosa and beyond.”

The Press Democrat this month asked a few local business leaders and analysts to give their outlook for 2018. The answers, provided via email, have been edited for brevity and clarity.

### **Brett Martinez, president and CEO of Redwood Credit Union in Santa Rosa:**

*What is the biggest obstacle that is emerging in the quest for rebuilding after the fires?*

I think the biggest challenge will be how many homes can we build and how fast can we rebuild them. I am starting to hear some good news about people who have committed to a price that was not as bad as originally expected, and the rebuild timeline is fairly quick. If this becomes more of the norm, that will be good news.

*Are you worried about recruiting and retaining employees given the cost of housing?*

Short term, yes, but I think it will work itself out in the long term. This is still an amazing place to live and raise a family. Retention has always been a concern (with regard to the cost of housing), but since the fires, recruitment from out of the area could pose big problems. It’s very difficult to recruit great employees if they can’t find a place to live.

### **Claudia Vecchio, president and CEO of Sonoma County Tourism:**

*Where will hotels get the workers given such a tight local labor market?*

The labor market was already tight prior to the fires. We will pull from the same labor market that we have in the past, and we are working with local schools and education systems to raise awareness of hospitality as a professional industry, either full time or as part-time or seasonal employment.

*Do you have any concern about tourists not showing up in the spring as a result of the fires?*

We are confident tourists will return to Sonoma County in the spring. While the fires certainly impacted immediate travelers’ decisions to visit the area, other destinations facing similar situations have rebounded fairly quickly. While we believe this will happen here, we’re being proactive in getting the word out now and investing in programs that drive immediate and long-term visitation.

Read the full story on the Press Democrat website at <http://www.pressdemocrat.com/business/7796724-181/sonoma-county-business-leaders-say>

**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  
 West Olivet Road - West Lodge on Mark West Springs Rd - East

*The Lark Newsletter is published monthly under the direction of:*  
 The Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Center  
 4787 Old Redwood Hiwy, Suite 101, Santa Rosa, CA 95403

ADVERTISING: 6 months \$107.50; 1 year \$200  
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 You supply a .pdf version of your 8.5" x 11" flyer to info@markwest.org  
 You can pay online at <http://markwest.org/payment>

The Lark Newsletter is emailed to member businesses each month.  
 For more information, contact the Chamber office at 578-7975.

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Deadline for publication is the 3rd Wednesday of the month.  
 Please email your materials to info@markwest.org

*Promote your business with  
 your flyer in the Chamber newsletter.  
 You supply the flyers - We do the work!*

**CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP DUES**

*Effective May 1, 2006*

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 business affiliation)	

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## AFTER HOURS BUSINESS SOCIAL

Thursday January 11  
5:30 - 7:30 pm

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THE WINDSOR TIMES

