

Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce and VISITORS CENTER



The Lark

July 2008

Volume XII Issue 7

BRINGING BUSINESS & THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER!

4787 Old Redwood Highway, Suite 101, Santa Rosa, CA 95403

707.578.7975

Office Hours: Mon - Thurs 1 - 4pm

www.markwest.org

markwest@markwest.org

27TH ANNUAL INSTALLATION DINNER AUGUST 1, 2008

Please register now for your tickets to our Annual Installation Dinner.

Our new board of directors will be officially installed by Supervisor Paul Kelley. Supervisor Kelley will give us an update on Sonoma County issues that affect us. Our speaker for the evening is Dorothea Logan, of Logan Investigations. She will discuss "How to properly screen an employment application", "Company Security" and "Home Security".

The event will be held at Chamber member Flamingo Conference Resort & Spa, at 2777 Fourth Street, Santa Rosa. A no-host cocktail hour starts at 6pm, followed by dinner at 7pm, then our speakers at 8pm.

LOCAL ALLSTATE AGENT EARNS REGIONAL CHAMPION AWARD

Mark Scheuer has been recognized by Allstate Insurance Company for high standards in customer satisfaction, customer retention and profitability. Scheuer is now one of the top Allstate agents in the nation in auto, property and commercial insurance and financial service sales.

Because of this, Scheuer has achieved the distinctive Allstate Regional Champion Award. For more than 60 years, this level of recognition has been Allstate's symbol of outstanding achievement and recognizes Scheuer as a symbol of the agency's dedication in serving customers.

"It's a tremendous honor to earn the Regional Champion Award," explains Scheuer, Allstate exclusive agent. "My commitment is to serve customers and I'm pleased that the company has acknowledged my efforts."



Mark Scheuer LUTCF
Allstate Insurance



June Social & Fundraiser
Wikip Tennis & Swim Center
more on page 3

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

AFTER HOURS BUSINESS SOCIAL

hosted by HEALTHY ARE WE
at the Chamber Office 4787 ORH

Thursday, July 10, 2008

5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Bring your business cards!

27th Annual Installation Dinner
Flamingo Conference Resort & Spa
\$40 person/\$75 couple

Tuesday, August 1, 2008

6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Register now at www.markwest.org

Find It Fix It: Solutions to Workplace Hazards
State Compensation Insurance Fund
1550 Neotomas Ave., SR

August 12, 2008

9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Register 573-6358 or www.scif.com

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.



Jim Bajgrowicz, President

The next Board of Director's meeting is July 8 at Grace Fellowship, 608 Larkfield Center 11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Want to keep abreast of important information pertinent to business and legislative items??

Go to: calchamber.com

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We all want to thank immediate past President WALT SMITH, board members and the OFFICE STAFF for their combined time and service to the Chamber during the past administrative year: new offices, additional volunteers, contributions and involvement by members, Trade Show Sponsorship, new hosts for our monthly get-togethers, etc. You all are to be complimented and thanked!

This new year will see even greater progress within the Chamber and its connection to you, our members. Committees will be reduced and replaced with task forces for specific programs/projects/services/events, with new approaches and limited time commitments. We will strive to offer "demand-driven" programs; participate in government affairs for the benefit of members and the community, demonstrating a genuine connection.

Traits sought within the Chamber will consist of participants with time management skills, good communications, financial competence, motivation, perseverance, sense of humor, technological proficiency, a flair for the creative, savvy political instincts and ego control.

The Strategic Vision for the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center is 1) to be respected as the community's business leader, 2) to be a valuable resource for our members, and 3) to direct visitors to and promote our members.

If you see a need, need information or assistance or have a memorable Chamber "moment" please feel free to contact me or the office to share your thoughts.

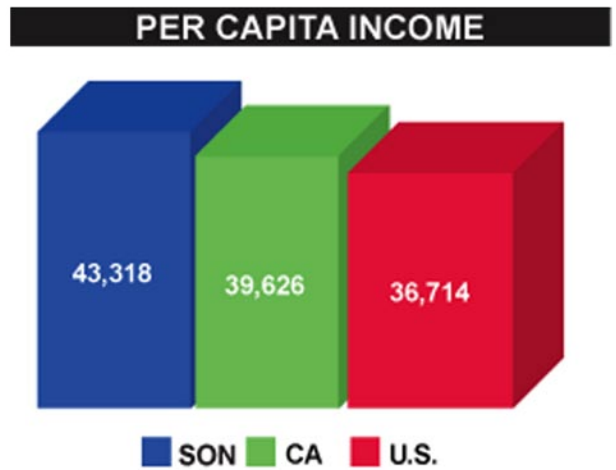
Respectfully, Jim Bajgrowicz, President

FYI: SPRING/SUMMER FORECAST REPORT FOR SONOMA COUNTY: SOME SURPRISING BRIGHT SPOTS

June 2008

The Sonoma County Economic Development Board (EDB), in partnership with the Sonoma County Workforce Investment Board (WIB), is pleased to bring you the Spring 2008 Local Economic Report Series.

continued on page 4



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2006

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JUNE SOCIAL & MWCS D FUNDRAISER
 hosted by: **WIKIUP TENNIS & SWIM CENTER**

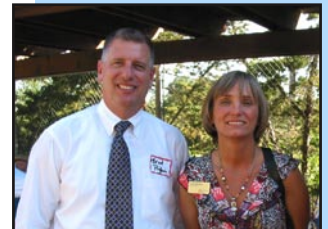
The Wikiup Tennis & Swim Center was the site of the June 11th Mark West Area Community Services District fundraiser held along with the support of the Mark West Chamber of Commerce. Over 55 chamber members and local residents were present to help raise funds for community mailings, public meetings and the promotion and awareness of the district formation.



Pete Lescure of Lescure Engineers, Inc., Paul Kelley, SC Supervisor, Jm Bajgrowicz, President-Elect, Doug Williams, RVFD

Donations made that evening entitled all guests to a tri-tip dinner with fixings prepared by Jim Bajgrowicz from the Office of Jim Bajgrowicz and Andre Andrus from Andre M. Andrus Electrical. Doug Williams from the Rincon Valley Fire District assisted in the serving of the delicious meal. Guest speakers included Sonoma County Supervisor Paul Kelley and Mark West Area Community Services Committee member Pete Lescure.

Supervisor Kelley gave a very detailed explanation of The Mark West Area Community Services District explaining how the district would provide an opportunity for local control and management within the Larkfield and Wikiup area over services including water, sewer, trash services, parks and recreation and street lighting. Supervisor Kelley stated that he is seeking volunteers from the community to join the formation committee which will assist in gathering more community support of the district. Kelley also invited ideas and feedback from citizens in the form of emails and written correspondence to him. (Supervisor Kelley's email address is pkelley@sonoma-county.org)



New Board Members: Brad Pighen, GRP Wealth Strategies, Laura Buhrer, Exchange Bank

Pete Lescure introduced other committee members in attendance which included Daryl Anderson, Doug Williams and Jim Bajgrowicz. Pete discussed the relationship between the services district and California America Water (CalAm) which provides water utility service in the Wikiup and Larkfield areas. He also asked for volunteers to help with the committee's work.



Jennifer Neylon and Demerus Lescure of Lescure Engineers, Inc.

The evening concluded with a raffle for items including vacation accommodations donated by committee secretary Jennifer Neylon, and a diamond pendant, free hair styling, Wells Fargo Center for the Performing Arts show tickets and a case of wine. The Mark West Community Services Committee and The Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce would like to thank the following businesses who donated items for the fundraiser and made the event possible: Starbucks Coffee, Aaction Rents, Airport Health Club, Lescure Engineers, Martingdale's Quality Meats & Deli, Costco, CalAm Water, Sapphire Salon, Molsberry's Market, Michael & Company Jewelers, Wells Fargo Center for the Performing Arts, Lytle's Redwood Empire Beauty College.

*photos by Sonoma CONNECTION
 Visit www.MarkWest.org/June2008Social
 for more photos*

Submitted by Anthony Geraldi, Head Ambassador

BUSINESS-AFTER-HOURS-SOCIALS

- JULY 10 HEALTHY ARE WE**
- AUG 14 FINAL EDITION**
- SEP 11 DAVIS CARPETS**
- OCT 9 WINE COUNTRY HARVEST FAIRE**
- NOV 13 NORTH BAY CORPORATION**
- DEC 11 Call to host our Holiday Social!**
- JAN 8 AKEENA SOLAR**
- FEB 12 CELLULARWORLD**



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**FYI: SPRING/
SUMMER
FORECAST
REPORT FOR
SONOMA
COUNTY:
SOME
SURPRISING
BRIGHT SPOTS**

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Highlights from the Spring 2008 Local Economic Report include:

- Employment has remained unchanged for the past two quarters and tourism has softened somewhat, although Sonoma County’s technology-producing and winemaking industries are holding steady.
- Improved population growth and the now record-low number of residential construction permits are expected to bring the housing market back into supply/demand balance by mid-2009.
- The relatively high wealth of the population has maintained consumer spending strong enough to strengthen retailing payrolls in recent months.

Thank you for your continued interest in the EDB’s reports. As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at (707) 565-7170.

Sincerely, Ben Stone, Executive Director

Recent Performance. The Sonoma County economy is struggling to break out of recession. Employment has remained unchanged for the past two quarters, driving the jobless rate up by nearly one percentage point. The housing market remains on a downward path with prices falling for the past year and construction still weak. Given all this weakness, however, the county does enjoy more stability among its basic industries than many other areas of California. For example, the sharp cutbacks of a year ago in financial services employment have abated and Sonoma County’s technology-producing and wine-making industries are holding steady. Tourism has softened somewhat.

Stability. Remarkably, weakness in the economy remains confined largely to housing-related industries. Consumer spending is strong enough that retailing payrolls have strengthened in recent months. This is due in part to the relatively high wealth of the population, which has allowed households to weather well the impact on their balance sheets of a more than 25% decline in the median sales price of single-family homes. While this price downturn may be overstated by the lack of mortgage credit availability at the high end of the market, it still represents a considerable shock to the economy. Indeed, the delinquency rate on first mortgages in the county has jumped from a very low 1% rate two years ago to nearly 4.5%, now about equal with the U.S. average but a far cry from the current 9% rate in nearby Solano County.

continued on page 5



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Ambassador Club?
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Risk. The greatest near-term risks to the economy are the high price of energy and the impact it will have on tourist arrivals. With \$4/gallon gasoline a reality and air travel more costly, visitor arrivals could very well weaken this summer. The only hope for any growth comes from international arrivals, spurred by the weak dollar. International arrivals through San Francisco's airport continue to rise, but this will not likely be enough to offset weak domestic arrivals. If the energy shock lengthens the national recession, business investment spending could also weaken, which could shatter the newfound stability in Sonoma County's tech-producing industries. These two points underscore the fragility of current economic conditions. The outlook assumes a healthy recovery, based on stabilization of housing markets, a strong global economy, and renewed business investment.

Longer term. The long-term outlook holds more promise. Its high quality of life increasingly will attract retirees. Further, now that housing affordability is improving in the county, in-migration of working-age households should also improve. In fact, population growth turned positive in 2007 for the first time in four years according to Census estimates. Further, the relatively high quality of the workforce, as measured by the share of adults with post-secondary degrees, should lead to a creative and increasingly productive economy.

Return to balance. Improved population growth and the now record low number of residential construction permits are expected to bring the housing market back into supply/demand balance by mid-2009. This will signal a new start in the economy as it not only improves construction payrolls, but also price stability, creating a new level of consumer confidence in the area.

Sonoma County's economy will feel a stronger rebound by 2010 as consumer spending once again supports travel and tourism and the wine industry, and investment spending filters through to its tech-based economy. But further, tourism offerings are expected to expand into a wider array of health and wellness services, attracting a broader base of visitors. Longer term, local policymakers' efforts to support new environmental technologies that encourage efficient local resource use may help take the edge off of relatively high local business costs.

Steven G. Cochran

**FYI: SPRING/
SUMMER
FORECAST
REPORT FOR
SONOMA
COUNTY:
SOME
SURPRISING
BRIGHT
SPOTS**

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**FYI: CALCHAMBER, TRUCKERS, FARMERS,
CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTORS, BUSINESS AND
COMMUNITY LEADERS FORM NEW COALITION**

The California Chamber of Commerce, along with truck owners, farmers, construction contractors and other business and community leaders, has announced the formation of “Driving Toward a Cleaner California” (DTCC).

The coalition is committed to working with the California Air Resources Board (ARB) to craft a sensible truck and bus replacement rule that both cleans the air and keeps California’s economy moving forward.

The recently proposed on-road diesel truck and bus replacement rule — set to be voted on by the ARB this October — would have an impact on the more than 1.5 million trucks and buses used to transport goods and people on California’s roads, highways and farms.

Starting in 2010, this proposal requires every diesel truck and bus operating in California today — this includes “those transiting California roadways from other states and countries,” according to the ARB — to be replaced or retrofitted. Considering the millions of goods and products delivered via truck each day in the state, these regulations could have a profound, negative impact on California’s economy and competitiveness.

Given the multibillion-dollar cost of this regulation — and the current volatile economic environment — the DTCC coalition believes the affected industries and other sectors should be given the opportunity to comply in the most reasonable timeframe and flexible manner possible.

Many companies, including many small owner-operators, are being asked to dispose of equipment and assets before their useful life has been completed and purchase new equipment before it would otherwise be acquired.

According to the ARB, 55 percent of truck owners are small firms with five trucks or fewer. Nearly one-third of truck owners — 32 percent — are owner-operators who own just one vehicle. The ARB has yet to make a full disclosure to business owners and consumers of the true economic impacts of the proposed mandate.

The DTCC coalition’s goal is to come to consensus with the ARB on a rule that cleans the air while also: keeping the maximum number of companies in business and workers employed; ensuring the business environment stays at its most competitive; and holding increased costs to other businesses and consumers to a minimum.

For more information on the DTCC coalition, visit www.drivecleanCA.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
 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
 FLYER INSERTION: \$35 per issue.
 You supply 200 copies of your 8.5" x 11" flyer on 20# paper.

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

Editors: Kathleen Palmer & John Essman (707) 433-8774
 Sonoma CONNECTION info@sonomaconnection.com

Printing: Clone Digital Printing & Copying (707) 527-6565

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
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**THURSDAY
JULY 10, 2008
5:30 pm - 7:30 pm**

hosted by

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at the Chamber Office
4787 Old Redwood Hwy.

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