

Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce and VISITORS CENTER



The Lark

BRINGING BUSINESS & THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER!

4787 Old Redwood Highway, Suite 101, Santa Rosa, CA 95403
Visitors Center: Mon. - Fri. 9 am - 4 pm www.markwest.org

707-578-7975
office@markwest.org

June 2018
Volume XXXII Issue 5

A SONOMA COUNTY WELCOME

This is a critical summer for all of us. While rebuilding efforts continue, visitors will be coming to find respite from their own everyday challenges.

As those of us lucky enough to live here know, Sonoma County is a region of extraordinary beauty flanked by the rugged coastline, charming towns, and vibrant hillsides.

Travelers come to Sonoma County with high expectations. Many will come in support of Wine Country and will ask about the fires. Others will come simply to enjoy the world's finest wine and food, to relax and partake in water sports and enjoy outdoor adventures.

For many, Sonoma County is a destination on their personal travel "bucket list" as part of a lifelong desire to visit California's storied Wine Country, dip a toe in the Pacific Ocean, or learn how to prepare a favorite dish. They're here to experience this coveted destination and to brag about their remarkable experiences to their friends – in short, to reap all the benefits you receive when you travel.



Let's work together to welcome visitors with open arms, smiling faces, and knowledgeable insights that ensure our guests treasure the time they spend with us. Let's show them the amazing hospitality they'll enjoy bragging about to their friends. And, while we're at it, let's invite them to visit again.

I wish you all a successful and joyous summer season.

*Contributed by Claudia Vecchio, CEO Sonoma County Tourism
cvecchio@sonomacounty.com*

TOURISM SECTOR SUPPORT BY THE SONOMA COUNTY EDB

The Sonoma County Economic Development Board (EDB), in partnership with **Sonoma County Tourism**, provides ongoing funding support to local visitor centers to provide important tourism support services.

The Sonoma County Economic Development Board also partners with our local chambers of commerce and visitor centers to grow and support our local hospitality sector. Click on the link below for more information and a list of the visitor centers and chambers of commerce located throughout Sonoma County.



Learn More at the EDB website: <http://sonomaedb.org/Current-Projects/Tourism/>

*June Social replaced by
Wikiup Community
Meeting
See p3*

UPCOMING EVENTS: next AFTER HOURS BUSINESS SOCIAL

Hosted by

Central Fire Authority of Sonoma County
45 Lark Center Drive, Santa Rosa

Thursday July 12, 2018
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

The Fourth of July is nearly upon us. Of course, as we all should know, it is officially called "Independence Day" because this holiday commemorates the birth of our nation as we mark the declaration of our independence from England. We regard July 4, 1776 as the date it all started. Well, what are the real facts and why did the 4th become the celebrated date?

There were numerous events that led to our separation from England. To make it official, Thomas Jefferson wrote the first draft of the Declaration of Independence in June of 1776. The Continental Congress actually declared our independence on July 2, 1776. The date the Declaration of Independence was actually signed was August 2, 1776. And the Declaration was finally delivered to Great Britain in November 1776.

So what DID happen on July 4, 1776?

The Continental Congress approved the final wording of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. That date was written on the Declaration of Independence and on the original printed copies of the Declaration that were circulated throughout the new nation. So when people thought of the Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776 was the date they remembered. The deaths of Thomas Jefferson and John Adams on July 4, 1826 may also have helped to promote the idea of July 4th as a date to be remembered.

The Fourth of July did not become a National Holiday until 1870.

OK, Now Back to Chamber Business.

Because of the importance of a Community Town Hall meeting to Mark West Area residents, we cancelled the June 14 Social and directed all our members to the San Miguel School Auditorium. You can read about this event on page 3. The Mark West Union School District was to host the June Social, but they will reschedule.

Our July Social will be hosted by the Rincon Valley Fire Protection District on July 12. Please come out and show your support for our firefighters. There will be plenty of good food and drink. Bring the kids or grandkids. There will be an opportunity for them to ride in a fire truck. The "Pot of Gold" drawing will be \$580.

A reminder that our 37th annual Installation Dinner will be hosted at Charlie's Grill at the Windsor Golf Club on October 12 from 6:00-9:00 PM. Bring your date and office staff and have a fun and entertaining time. James Gore, our 4th District County Supervisor and Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, will be the keynote speaker. Watch for details in this newsletter and on the Chamber website.

Don't miss this year's Harvest Faire and Business Showcase at the Luther Burbank Center for the Arts, tentatively scheduled for September 26th. It will be in the main lobby from 4:00 PM until 7:00 PM. This is always a great community event with free food and drinks, a silent auction to benefit the area, and a grand prize drawing for a \$200.00 shopping spree gift certificate.

Visit us at <http://www.markwest.org/> to find out more about all Chamber events.

Steve Plamann, President



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JUNE 14 COMMUNITY MEETING EXPLORES FATE OF FORMER WIKIUP GOLF COURSE

There was a packed auditorium at San Miguel School on Thursday evening, June 14. The Banke-Jackson family had invited the community to come and share their ideas on repurposing the former Wikiup Golf Course located just north of the intersection Mark West Springs Road and Old Redwood Highway. They were certainly impressed with how many people showed up.

Katie Jackson, representing her family, and Tony Korman of Korman Development, Inc. hosted the meeting. Korman Development has been managing the property since the Banke-Jackson family purchased it in 2015. Their joint message was that they didn't have plans yet and they really wanted to hear about the wants and needs of the community.

The community responded enthusiastically, if with a certain amount of skepticism. Initially only a few spoke, building on the idea that the Banke-Jackson family must have some idea of what they plan to do, and the community really wants to know what that is.

Both Korman and Jackson stated that although they've knocked around ideas they really do not have plans and can't make plans without hearing from the community. They are aware that they will never be able to make everybody happy. They reiterated that they know the general needs and that they want to hear from the actual neighbors about what those neighbors want and don't want.

Katie Jackson also took the opportunity to state that her family is very environmentally conscious and intends to remain environmentally considerate no matter what they end up doing.

Korman gave out the web site address: www.wikiupcommons.com. This is where you can read about the project and leave all your comments.

They also had a large picture of many of the acceptable purposes for K-type zoning, which is for "Recreation and Visitor-Serving Commercial District." At this point, Korman stated that based upon what he's learned and what he heard that evening, he could not see that any of those three categories would work.

The community applauded and the hands went up much more rapidly.

Further comments from the community made it clear that open space and walkability throughout the area are definitely highest on the list of residents' priorities. They want to preserve the animals and their way of life as much as possible. A walking bridge



A large and engaged crowd attended the June 14 meeting. The Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce canceled its regularly scheduled Social scheduled for the same date so members could attend this important community meeting.

to Larkfield was mentioned a few times, as a safety measure. Many people asked for a park and several suggested using the whole north side of Wikiup Drive. They want a park where people can gather.

Second only to that is a community center of some kind. Again, people want a place to gather. Some said "senior community" but most are open to any kind of center.

Protection and preservation of Mark West Creek is also high on the list of concerns. With development comes much more stress on the creek and many are concerned that, in spite of required mitigations, the health of the creek will be damaged and even some flooding could result.

Not far behind any of this is traffic and escape routes. Wikiup Drive is the only way in and out of the area. The October 2017 fire only made that more apparent; and adding more traffic certainly has the community concerned. They want another way in and out and they don't want Wikiup Drive to become a "super highway."

The water supply is a concern as well. Will California American Water have the ability to supply what is needed? And, of course, will there be sufficient emergency water? People have learned a tough lesson and they want these issues dealt with up front.

In general it was clear that the community wants no high-density housing but they do want it to remain residential, not commercial at all. Someone summed it up by saying, bottom line, they want to see the Jackson family "do something that fits the community."

*Contributed by Aggie Maggio
Realtor @ Coldwell Banker*

MOLSBERRY'S MARKET GOING STRONG

I recently asked Brian Molsberry of Molsberry's Markets, Inc. about a rumor I had heard. Supposedly, Molsberry's Market, the beloved grocery store landmark in the Larkfield Shopping Center, was on the verge of going out of business because most of their customers moved away after losing their homes in the Tubbs Fire.

Happily, this rumor is FALSE. Brian says that although their business dropped drastically immediately after the fire, it rebounded and they are down for the year by less than ten percent. So although the news isn't great, it's not disastrous.

Brian says that after the initial slump, sales were buoyed by the de-construction crews who were clearing burned lots in the Larkfield/Wikiup/Mark West area. They'd come in to buy breakfast, and pick up their lunches as well. As of June, the lots are cleared and construction has not yet begun in earnest so sales to work crews have dipped a bit. But that will change as more foundations are dug and the framing goes up.

Proof that Shop Local Works!

Importantly, local residents are going out of their way to shop at Molsberry's. Folks who lost their homes and are now living as far away as Cloverdale still make the trip to shop at Molsberry's, and many drop in for their groceries when they are in town to check on their rebuilds. Brian has new customers who drive all the way from Sebastopol because they feel the need to support businesses in the fire zone. And of course, all their regular customers whose homes still stand buy there as they always have.

The Fire's Far-Reaching Effects

One of the biggest problems -- and one not often anticipated -- is the loss of qualified employees. This is true of all businesses in Larkfield Center and elsewhere; Brian says that virtually every store in Larkfield Center has a "Help Wanted" sign in its window. Many workers had to leave after the fire destroyed their homes and they couldn't find anywhere local to live. Some had to leave after spouse's or parents' businesses were destroyed or forced to close, and their families had to move away. And some retail employees no doubt have gotten higher-paying jobs in debris removal or construction. Two of the Molsberry's staff lost their homes and are now rebuilding.

Brian estimates that about a third of their pre-fire customers are not rebuilding, and have either moved away or will do so soon. These people say not to worry, someone else will buy their property and build on it and will need to buy groceries. But the Molsberrys have been running that store for several decades, and have seen at least six generations of customers come and go. They regret the loss of long-time friends and customers, and know they will have to build new relationships with new neighbors if they are to earn their business.

The Molsberry family, in their usual fashion, is building ties with the community. One construction company is building 78 new homes in the Larkfield-Wikiup area, and they expect some families to be moved in by Christmas. To celebrate the progress, this builder is hosting a barbeque in September for all 78 families and their various friends, relations, and supporters. They've asked Molsberry's Market to provide the catering, a job they are happy to do. Yes, that will be a bit of revenue but more importantly, it will help cement the relationship Molsberry's Market has with the reconstituted community.

Contributed by Peter Loughlin, Loughlin Marketing



In this photo from a couple years ago, some of the Molsberry family touts the accomplishments of a community food drive to combat hunger.

Interested in joining our Ambassador Club?
Contact the Chamber at
office@markwest.org
707-578-7975



To host a Ribbon Cutting,
contact...
Aggie Maggio
aggiemaggio@icloud.com



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

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, July 12, 2018
 Chamber Business After Hours Social 5:30-7:30pm
 Hosted by **Central Fire Authority of Sonoma County**
 45 Lark Center Drive, Santa Rosa

Thursday, August 9, 2018
 Chamber Business After Hours Social 5:30-7:30pm
 Hosted by **Aaction Rents and Friendly Feed & Supply**
 1000 River Road, Santa Rosa

Thursday, September 13, 2018
 Chamber Business After Hours Social 5:30-7:30pm
 Hosted by **Hilton Garden Inn Sonoma County Airport**
 417 Aviation Blvd., Santa Rosa

Tentative date: September 26, 2018
28th Annual Wine Country Business Showcase
 The Luther Burbank Center for the Arts is still working to restore their facilities after the fires. We are working with them to set a new date. Watch for news in this newsletter and on the Chamber website.



Thursday, October 11, 2018
 Chamber Business After Hours Social 5:30-7:30pm
 Hosted by **Sutter Santa Rosa Regional Hospital**
 30 Mark West Springs Road, Santa Rosa

Friday, October 12, 2018
 37th Annual **Installation Dinner** 6:00-9:00pm
 At Charlie's Restaurant at the Windsor Golf Club
 1320 19th Hole Drive, Windsor

Thursday, November 8, 2018
 Chamber Business After Hours Social 5:30-7:30pm
 Hosted by **Anytime Fitness**
 490 Larkfield Center, Santa Rosa

Wednesday December 5, 2018
 Holiday Tree Lighting - Community Event - 6:00pm
 Hosted by **Molsberry's Markets, Inc.**
 522 Larkfield Center, Santa Rosa

Thursday, December 13, 2018
 Chamber Business After Hours Social 5:30-7:30pm
 Hosted by **Larkfield Exchange Bank and Molsberry's Markets, Inc.**
 500 Larkfield Center, Santa Rosa

SONOMA COUNTY EDB ANNOUNCES FALL ECONOMIC FORECAST

October 5, 2018, 7:00 – 9:00 AM

DoubleTree Hotel Sonoma Wine Country

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Economist Dr. Chris Thornberg, Founding Partner of Beacon Economics



An expert in economic forecasting, regional economics, labor markets, economic policy, and real estate analysis, Dr. Thornberg was one of the earliest and most adamant predictors of the subprime mortgage market crash that began in 2007, and of the global economic recession that followed. Dr. Thornberg holds a Ph.D in Business Economics from The Anderson School at UCLA and in 2015, was named to California State Treasurer John Chiang's *Council of Economic Advisors*, the body that advises the Treasurer on emerging strengths and vulnerabilities in the state's economy. For further information: <http://sonomaedb.org/Calendar/Fall-Economic-Forecast-Breakfast/>



Sonoma CONNECTION

John Essman

P O Box 1381
 Healdsburg, CA 95448
(707) 433-8774

john@sonomaconnection.com
www.sonomaconnection.com

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NORTH BAY CONSTRUCTION CORPS GRADUATES 26 READY-TO-TRAIN WORKERS

Adapted from a story by Gary Quackenbush on the North Bay Business Journal website, June 22, 2018

With construction workers in high demand following last October's wildfires, 26 students from the 2018 North Bay Construction Corps program, and two-week boot camp, graduated June 22 in a ceremony held at the Healdsburg High School.

Participants get an opportunity to experience first hand, the day-to-day life on a construction site while earning academic credit from Santa Rosa Junior College's work experience program and receiving a \$750 stipend per person for their work.

The graduates completed a five-month career exploration and training program along with a two-week intensive Boot Camp where they practiced newly acquired construction skills while building four micro-homes in eight and a half days. Of the 26 graduates, there were 23 men and three women. Several already have jobs or job offers in construction and one was accepted into a heavy equipment operator's program.

Read the entire story on the North Bay Business Journal Website: <http://www.northbaybusinessjournal.com/northbay/sonomacounty/8462636-181/north-bay-construction-corps-graduates>



MILLENNIALS REVERSE URBAN MIGRATION, HEAD FOR SUBURBS. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR BRICK-AND-MORTAR RETAILERS?

Adapted from an email sent by Ben Stone of sonoma-county.org on June 11, 2018

A new study by the Brookings Institute - Early decade big city growth continues to fall off - means that "the "decade of the city" may be less valid during the waning years of the 2010s. While most big cities are still gaining population, the rates of that gain are falling off for many of them as the nation's population shows signs of broad dispersal."

The new numbers for big cities (those with a population of over a quarter million) are telling. Among these 84 cities, 55 of them either grew at lower rates than the previous year or sustained population losses. This growth fall-off further exacerbates a pattern that was suggested last year. The average population growth of this group from 2016 to 2017 was 0.83 percent-down from well over 1 percent for earlier years of the decade and lower than the average annual growth rate among these cities for the 2000 to 2010 decade."

An article in Axios - "Millennials are moving to the exurbs in droves" - expanded on that study and notes that:

Businesses need to adjust: They may have to build more locations, perhaps smaller and at greater distances. But that doesn't necessarily mean astronomical costs, as among the new ways to deliver stuff will be inexpensive drones.

Read the article in Axios here: <https://www.axios.com/cities-suburbs-exurbs-millennials-552dd0fd-2223-4be4-b457-5af2cfd94ee7.html>

Editor's note:

One idea in the Axios article is that brick-and-mortar businesses will need to "re-focus their mission on providing amazing customer experiences" in order to maintain a profitable share of the market. It's the same old story: You must adapt to your audience in order to thrive.

We also note that the recent Supreme Court decision to allow states to collect sales tax from online sales will tend to level the playing field between online retailers and brick-and-mortar retailers. In brief, one of the greatest incentives to buy online -- lower total cost of purchase -- has been weakened. So local retailers in places like Santa Rosa may well be playing from a hand of greater strength to an audience of greater size in the future.

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.

Editor: Peter Loughlin, Loughlin Marketing
 707-704-6498 peter@loughlinmarketing.com
 Photography Credits: John Essman, Sonoma CONNECTION
 707-433-8774 john@sonomaconnection.com

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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OFFICERS

President
 Steve Plamann Aaction Rents
 707-838-4373 stevep@aactionrents.com

Past President
 Doug Williams
 707-696-8244 dougw1955@aol.com

Corporate Secretary
 Marnie Cameron Mark West Union School Dist.
 707-524-2970 mcameron@mwusd.org

Corporate Treasurer
 John Essman Sonoma CONNECTION
 707-433-8774 john@sonomaconnection.com

VP Business Services
 Todd Anderson Best Western Plus
 Wine Country Inn & Suites
 707-545-9000 hixtodd@sbcglobal.net

VP Community Services
 Margaret DiGenova California American Water
 707-542-8329 Margaret.DiGenova@amwater.com

VP InterChamber Events
 Erin McCauley Hilton Garden Inn
 Sonoma County Airport
 707-545-0444 Erin.McCauley@Hilton.com

VP Publicity & Public Relations
 Beth Henry Accent Printing & Design, Inc.
 707 570-1444 beth@accentprinting.com

VP Community Safety
 Doug Williams
 707-696-8244 dougw1955@aol.com

*VP Membership
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DIRECTORS

Laura Buhner Exchange Bank, Larkfield Branch.
 707-523-4392 laura.buhner@exchangebank.com

Sally Crain Broker at Century 21 Alliance
 707 636-1629 sallycrain@hotmail.com

Tony Geraldini Sonoma County Airport Express, Inc.
 707-837-8700 tony@airportexpressinc.com

Peter Lescure Lescure Engineers, Inc.
 707-575-3427 plescure@lescure-engineers.com

Brian Molsberry Molsberry Markets, Inc.
 707-546-5041 brianm@molsberrymarket.com

HEAD AMBASSADOR

John Essman Sonoma CONNECTION
 707-433-8774 john@sonomaconnection.com

OFFICE VOLUNTEER

John Essman
 707-578-7975 office@markwest.org

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Santa Rosa, CA 95403

AFTER HOURS BUSINESS SOCIAL

Thursday July 12
5:30 - 7:30 pm

CENTRAL FIRE AUTHORITY OF SONOMA COUNTY

45 Lark Center Drive,
Santa Rosa

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THE WINDSOR TIMES

