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The Lark

October 2021
Volume XXXV Issue 10

BUSINESS LUNCHEON REPORT: SPEAKER JAMES GORE

Members of the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce, along with a few guests, gathered at the first Chamber business luncheon since the beginning of the Covid pandemic. Our special guest speaker was Sonoma County Supervisor James Gore. Food was generously catered by Molsberry Markets, and a space was provided by Best Western Plus Wine Country Inn & Suites on Hopper Avenue.

Supervisor Gore opened his speech by reiterating his goal of working to support the community, complete with a water-bottle toast to the business owners and representatives present. He spoke on his experiences with the various tasks required of a county supervisor, emphasizing the need to continue pushing through the chaos of busywork in order to keep moving forward with the real goal of improving the county. He also emphasized that he loves connecting with business owners. "I'm really trying to make sure that I find time with you guys, and so I really appreciate [this sort of meeting]."

The focus then shifted to water conservation. Notably, he stated that while there is plenty of reason to be thankful for the rain that has fallen lately, it will not be nearly enough to fully cure the drought. Water conservation and alternative sources of water are continually being sought by county officials, and he noted that certain ideas, such as desalination, are not financially viable. In the meantime, Supervisor Gore put out an oft-repeated call to action for citizens to continue adopting less wasteful practices, warning that new laws and regulations could come into effect if there is not a significant reduction in water usage – particularly during the summer months.

Supervisor Gore then turned his attention to Ron Calloway's continued work as the Mark West Unified School District Superintendent. While both thanking Ron for his work and reminding attendees of Ron's accomplishments as superintendent, Supervisor Gore also reminded those present that Ron is soon up for reelection.

Among the other topics addressed was a call to action for improved vegetation management and other fire prevention efforts. Supervisor Gore noted that many of the works of the current fire district have been born from the efforts of longtime Chamber member and former Fire Chief Doug Williams.

Other topics touched on briefly included the ongoing discussions with local Native American tribes and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) regarding the recognition of the Koi Tribe, the status of the Sonoma County Airport and its need for a new environmental impact report, and Supervisor Gore's own appointment to FEMA's National Advisory Council. Supervisor Gore introduced two members of his staff: Keith Roberts, and Chief of Staff Jenny Chamberlain. A Q&A session took up the remainder of the meeting.

In the end, the luncheon with Supervisor Gore was a tremendous success. The Chamber thanks Supervisor Gore for taking the time to discuss these topics with Chamber members, and wishes him luck in his continued efforts to keep improving Sonoma County.

Contributed by Johnathan Williams.



4th District Supervisor James Gore delivered a very heartfelt and caring talk to guests at the Mark West Area Chamber Luncheon. Photo credit: Steve Plamann

PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS: HOST A SOCIAL

The Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce is here to help members promote their business to the local community. You have a great opportunity to do this by hosting a Business After Hours Social which brings many local business owners and residents to your location for an evening of fun and networking. We will assist with your event and publicize it before and after on social media, through email, and in The Lark, our local newsletter. If you are interested in hosting a Social contact us at office@markwest.org.





Steve Plamann
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.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

November & December
3rd Tuesday Of Month

January - October
4th Tuesday of Month

11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Contact the Chamber
for links and
attendance information

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Cutting, contact
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our Ambassador
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce has been very busy this month with events and our Community Faire Silent Auction. I have many thanks to give to Chamber members and members of our community. Our October social at Solstice Senior Living of Santa Rosa was a beautiful event on a hilltop in Santa Rosa on a warm and peaceful night. The event was co-hosted by Tracy from Alegre Home care. Tracy is a new Chamber member and she has been very active. We witnessed a picture-perfect sunset, enjoyed great food and drinks, had many winners from our Business Card Drawings (all of whom received fantastic prizes), and enjoyed a great time networking with many other business owners and members of our chamber. Don't miss our next chamber social, hosted by Anytime Fitness in the Larkfield Center, on November 11th starting at 5:30. They have a large indoor facility with plenty of space to maintain social distancing.

Our chamber luncheon was a huge success with our guest speaker James Gore, 4th District County Supervisor. We had a full house for this very informative and intimate opportunity to hear what is going on in our community from a very dynamic and involved leader. James Gore has become a hero in the eyes of many Sonoma County residents because of his dedication to the safety and rebuilding of our neighborhoods. Please see the complete article on the Luncheon on page 5 of this issue.

Our Community Faire Silent Auction ended October 31st. I want to thank all the Chamber businesses and others who donated the auction items. And a big "thank you" to all who participated by bidding on items! All proceeds from the auction will go back into the community, in many ways, to support local businesses and citizens. Please check out the article on page 3 for a complete list of all the auction item donors and all the winning bidders.

We are heading into Christmas, the biggest sales time every year for many businesses. This is the time to get out into your community and spend your money for gifts, decorations and holiday cheer at your neighborhood merchants. Ordering things online does not bring sales tax dollars into our community, it doesn't add any local jobs, it doesn't support your friends' and neighbors' businesses, and it also increases the environmental impact on our area by requiring much more transportation emissions and waste from packaging. Your local merchants are there for you all year 'round. They may also employ you, your spouse, your children or your neighbor. And they are much more likely to be buying support items for their business from another business in our area. In fact, for every \$100 spent locally, roughly \$70 of it returns to local activity. They may also be helping to support a local sports team your child is playing on or a local charity that means something to you.

Please support your local community and if you are interested in getting more involved, contact the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce at www.markwest.org.

Steve Plamann, President



The November 11 social will be at Anytime Fitness in Larkfield Center. Attend the social and find out how Anytime Fitness can help get you in shape and keep you in shape, so you're prepared for the chase in case someone runs off with your bear.



Thank you so much for your generous support of the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce Online Auction! With your help the funds raised through the auction allow us to continue 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.

AUCTION LOT

Beer & Pyr
One Night Jacuzzi Suite Stay
Full Day Meeting Room Rental
Child Care Credit Voucher
Child Care Credit Voucher
Trees of the California Landscape
Two Night Stay for Two
Happy Hands
Fab Feet
KORBEL Picnic Basket
Anthropologie Kitchen Basket
GODINGER Glam Votive Holders
Kids Fun & Conservation Bag
Safari West Overnight Excursion
Copper Triple Tube Bird Feeder
Single Tube Thistle Feeder + Nyger Seed
Wild Bird Feeder Feed Ball + Nyger Seed
Wild Bird Feeder Feed Ball + Nyger Seed
Balletto Pinot & Brut Rose Duo
KJ Pinot Noir Magnum
Family Revocable Living Trust
Become a Friend of Pepperwood Preserve
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Family Fun Basket
Fall Coffee Lovers Basket
Bites & Beverages at Final Edition
Bites & Beverages at Final Edition
Yellow Spiral Finch Tube
Bisordi Ranch and Vineyards Favorites

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Molsberry's Market
Kobrin Financial
Lescure Engineers
Lescure Engineers
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WINNER:

Steven Plamann
Sabrina Wei
Douglas Williams
Jesse Savou
Megan Guerrero
Ardie Audiss
Sabrina Wei
Catherine Boire
Catherine Boire
Samantha Paull
Rodgers Christine
Ramona I.
Megan Guerrero
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Catherine Boire
Margaret DiGenova
Catherine Boire
Catherine Boire
Jacquilyn Schieber
Teresa McCallister
Sabrina Wei
Margaret DiGenova
Laurie Pellman
Ardie Audiss
Douglas Williams
Laurie Pellman
Jacquilyn Schieber
Sabrina Wei
Rodgers Christine

Thank you to our auction lot donors & generous bidders!

Each of our winners will be contacted directly to make arrangements the drop-off or pick up of your auction lot!

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OCTOBER SOCIAL REPORT

With clear skies and a beautiful sunset, the October social was a rousing success. Good food and good conversation abounded, and the hosts made sure everything proceeded according to plan. Held in the “back yard” of Solstice Senior Living, Chamber members were treated to the wonderful hospitality of Solstice’s own Paul Peck and Alegre Home Care’s Tracy Hinman.

Following the usual introductions and announcements, Paul and Tracy were able to introduce themselves and discuss what their businesses offer to the community. Solstice has been working to care for seniors for over 40 years, ensuring that their residents are not only cared for,



The Solstice Senior Living grounds are lovely all year ‘round, but particularly so on this warm autumn evening.



Stephanie Bisordi staffs the entrance booth at the October 2021 social

but are able to participate in all sorts of activities across the various fields of wellness. For seniors at Solstice in need of specialized care, Alegre Home Care serves as the on-site agency to provide that extra bit of dedicated care for residents. Together, Solstice and Alegre are able to give a complete package of care to seniors in need.

Once the announcements had concluded, the time came for the monthly Pot of Gold, 50/50, and Business Card drawings. The 50/50 prize of \$47 was won by Lauren Hull of The Windsor Connection magazine. The Pot of Gold was worth \$300 yet again, and once again went unclaimed due to the absence of the winner, Beth Henry. Seven different prizes were up for grabs in the

Business Card drawing, with donations coming from Healdsburg Senior Living (two separate fall harvest gift baskets), Banner Bank (a Banner Bank-themed mug and chocolates), Solstice Senior Living (a picnic snack gift basket), Key Properties (a cookie tin), Alegre Home Care (a blue gift bag containing a Home Depot gift card), and Anchor Health (a blue gift bag containing a bottle of wine and a snack bag). Winners included Ericka Wanliss of Solstice Senior Living, Katherine KG Philips of KG Properties, Ignacio Jacinto of Aaction Rents, Bill Kammerer of Always Best Care, David Mohle of Accent Printing, Lori Rooney of North Bay Biz, and Tracy Hinman of Alegre Home Care. Congratulations to all of the winners, and a reminder to every

Chamber Member to always bring your business card to socials for a chance at great prizes like these.

Our next social will be held at Anytime Fitness on November 11th, Veterans Day. Be sure and come on over to the Larkfield Shopping Center for a wonderful time with fellow Chamber members, and remember that you have a chance to win the Pot of Gold, 50/50 drawing, and Business Card drawing if you are present. Thank you once again to Solstice Senior Living and Alegre Home Care for providing us with an amazing social this month, and we look forward to continuing to learn more about you going forward!

Contributed by Johnathan Williams. Photos by Doug Williams and Steve Plamann



Tracy Hinman from Alegre Home Care won a blue gift bag with wine and snacks donated by Anchor Health. Paul Peck of Solstice Senior Living is at left.



Ignacio Jacinto (Left), Willy Lamberson (Center), and Steve Plamann (Right) speak at the October 2021 social.

GRATITUDE

With the 2021 fire season rapidly coming to an end and the rains of our winter months upon us, we are all heaving a sigh of relief and gratitude. After facing what was one of the worst fire seasons in California's history, Sonoma County residents can actually take solace in the fact that we "dodged a bullet." With nearly 2.5 million acres burned and 3 lives lost, other parts of the state were not so fortunate. Sonoma County was given a reprieve and I, for one, am grateful.

It's been a long and rocky road for all of us, never feeling like we could catch a break. Between several years of disastrous wildland fires and drought, along with the Covid pandemic, our lives as we knew them have been turned upside down and possibly forever changed. We found ourselves living in constant fear, alienated from our families and friends. The thought of another significant wildland fire season in Sonoma County coupled with Covid was almost too much for many to handle. While our public safety professionals were still on the front lines all summer long evacuating residents and working hard to gain the upper hand on these catastrophic incidents, we can be grateful that it wasn't our backyards that were burning once again.

With the holiday season right around the corner, I am optimistic that a decrease in Covid restrictions will allow family and friends to once again gather and give love and be grateful for all that we have. With the state of affairs in our country being so unsettled, it almost seems selfish to be grateful. Homelessness is at an all-time high, political views have created division, and while our economy is slowly recovering, we are still seeing businesses closing and a degree of uncertainty in the confidence of the American people.

There is no question that change needs to happen in our society today. We need to be more compassionate to those who are not as fortunate as we may be. We all need to do our part to be a positive part of the change. With that being said, we can also be grateful for what we do have and who we have in our lives. Today I choose to focus on the positive. To be grateful for all that I do have in my life: family, friends and health. Maybe we can all take a moment and reflect on the positive in our own lives and be truly grateful.

Contributed by Jim Boggeri, SCFD

SONOMA COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT: CURRENT EVENTS

The Sonoma County Fire District Board of Directors has voted to approve moving forward with a consolidation with the Bodega Bay Fire Protection District. This consolidation will increase the current staffing level at the Bodega Bay fire station from three on-duty personnel to five, while decreasing the fire tax for Bodega Bay residents by 70%. The increase in staffing will ensure that paramedic services will remain in Bodega Bay when their ambulance transports patients. The agreement now goes to the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors on November 16th. If approved, the Fire District will enter the LAFCO process (Local Agency Formation Commission), a process that helps ensure orderly changes in governmental jurisdiction.

Contributed by Jim Boggeri, SCFD

SONOMA COUNTY NONPROFITS RECEIVE RESILIENCY AWARDS

Since 2018, 200 fire departments and fire agencies statewide have received funding through the Wildfire Safety and Preparedness Program (WSPP). These grants are part of a broad program that is administered and managed by the California Fire Foundation (CFF). Pacific Gas and Electric Company supports the program with \$1.4 million in charitable funding.

Funding targets specific communities identified as having extreme or elevated fire risk. The WSPP focuses on two key areas to help keep communities safe. First, the Wildfire Safety Campaign that features fire safety education in multiple languages, to promote early evacuation during fires. This fire safety messaging is delivered via radio, television, and digital ads, and outdoor billboards in high fire-threat areas. Second, the CFF awards grants to fire departments, agencies, and community groups in support of projects and programs focusing on wildfire/disaster prevention, preparedness and/or relief and recovery assistance. Read the entire article on the Sonoma County Gazette website.

Contributor: Amie Windsor, Sonoma County Gazette



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Born and raised in Sonoma County, Jeff Kowell always loved the outdoors. So when he started working for a local tree service at age 23, it was a natural fit. In 1995, Jeff founded Image Tree Service, Inc. His in-depth knowledge of native species and how to maintain and nurture their healthy growth, combined with his personable approach to doing business, has since made it one of the most successful tree companies in Sonoma County. Licensed and insured, Image Tree Service serves all of Northern California with a safety-conscious work ethic and a high degree of customer satisfaction.

Whether you need land clearing, vegetation management or tree preservation, the company will selectively remove unwanted growth, shrubs, brush and trees. Jeff and his team have more than two decades of tree experience including preserving fire-damaged trees and replanting where trees are unsalvageable. Call to find out more about all their tree and vineyard services or to schedule an estimate.

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BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

DEFENSE BLOCK SECURITY: KEEPING PEOPLE SAFE

Feeling safe is something that everyone values. Whether at a sporting event, a town gathering, or even just entering a store, it is important that there is a feeling of safety. In many cases, this feeling is possible because of the general nature of the environment, but in other cases it is because of the actions of a security service. These services, separate from the normal police, are invaluable in keeping many of the places we visit daily safe and secure. In Sonoma County, one such company is Defense Block Security, a private security service that seeks to provide safety for a wide variety of venues.

Founded in 2006 by Kenny Neideffer, who was joined in 2019 by Fred Pena, D-Block Security was built on the idea of staying community-focused within Sonoma County. It is easy enough for a security service to offer guards that look big and intimidating in order



Fred Pena of Defense Block Security received his Chamber membership plaque earlier this year. D-Block Security, as the business is commonly known, puts a far more human touch on security services, tying them much more closely to the community. Photo credit: Lisa Goetowski

to ward off trouble, but it is important that security guards are also able to be friendly and courteous to the people they are protecting. When a business, organization, or even the county hires D-Block, they are not getting just an intimidating guard who scares off troublemakers, but a person who has chosen to make their career out of keeping others safe. One of Fred Pena's favorite parts of the job is seeing his employees change over time. "I like seeing the change in people as they become professionals and improve their personal lives," Fred says. "We're not just providing a body, but a person."

Within Sonoma County, D-Block has been able to provide services such as guarding non-congregate sites, or even providing security at events such as the Windsor Chili Cook Off.

With the local community as a focus and inspiration, D-Block has also sought to work with the community on projects outside of security services. Fred, who was born and raised in Windsor, believes that actions speak louder than words, and has worked to demonstrate that through D-Block's support of local community projects. One of their major contributions has been their sponsorship of the Santa Rosa Rugby Club. D-Block support has helped the SR Rugby Club stay together, acquire new uniforms, and participate in a major tournament in Colorado. Other contributions from D-Block have included donating to the Mark West Little League, as well as TLC Child and Family Services.

D-Block Security was also able to join the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce this year. Though D-Block is new to

the Chamber, Fred Pena's presence at Chamber socials has allowed the company to form relationships with other businesses in the Chamber, with the hope that these relationships will continue to flourish in the future. At the end of the day, hiring Defense Block Security to provide security is not hiring a nameless face to stand watch, but a person who prides themselves on being able to keep safe whatever they are assigned to guard, while also being able to interact with the community in a positive way. Whether in need of one security guard or several, D-Block security is ready to provide their very best to their community. For public or private needs, members of the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce can look to D-Block Security to keep watch over anything that needs protecting.

Contributed by Johnathan Williams



CALIFORNIA AMERICAN WATER: NEW OFFICE HOURS

The Cal-Am Water Larkfield office, at 4787 Old Redwood Hwy, is now open Monday through Friday from 8:30 am until 12:00 noon, and from 1:00 until 4:00 pm.
<http://www.californiaamwater.com> 707-542-8329



ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING DECEMBER 1, 6:00 PM

The Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce the return of the annual Christmas Tree Lighting event, hosted by Molsberry Markets, Inc. and the Larkfield Center. This year's event will take place Wednesday December 1, at 6:00 pm, in front of Molsberry's Market at 522 Larkfield Center.



As in past years, the event will feature Christmas music and songs sung by students from the Mark West School District. It's rumored that Santa Claus will arrive in his usual fashion, on a great big red and white "fire-sleigh" as seen in the background of this image from a past Christmas Tree Lighting event. Come on out and share in some holiday spirit!

CREATIVE SONOMA ANNOUNCES GRANTS FOR CULTURAL ARTS IMPACT

Adapted from a press release by Creative Sonoma, November 3, 2021

Creative Sonoma is pleased to announce that grants are available for nonprofit cultural arts organizations producing activities that occur before December 30, 2022. The County Board of Supervisors approved \$125,000 to fund these grants to support the cultivation of a vibrant community and economy through the arts to serve local residents and visitors.

Grants are available to support cultural arts activities across Sonoma County that will occur between January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2022. Nonprofit organizations, including museums and culturally specific organizations, that produce arts and culture programs, services, and events are eligible to apply. The application portal opens on October 28 and the deadline for applications is December 2, 2021.

Grants will fund cultural arts activities that contribute to the social cohesion of our communities countywide, in neighborhoods, or with student populations. Applications for projects that also advance the community's awareness and understanding of environmental sustainability are encouraged. Successful applicants will demonstrate a commitment to providing equitable access to and participation from communities of color and other traditionally marginalized communities.

For more information, please contact Samantha Kimpel, Samantha.kimpel@sonoma-county.org.

Creative Sonoma is a division of the Sonoma County Economic Development Board.

Please visit www.CreativeSonoma.org for more information.

RON CALLOWAY RUNNING FOR COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Ronald Meza Calloway, Superintendent of the Mark West School District, will run for Sonoma County Superintendent of Schools. Ron is a lifelong Sonoma County resident. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in liberal studies and multiple subject credential, attended Sonoma State University to attain his administrative credential, and completed his Master's Degree through Concordia University. He has been a local educator for over 30 years. He began his career as an elementary school teacher in Rincon Valley where he met his wife Suzanne. They have two sons.

Ron has served as an Elementary Principal, Coordinator of Operational Services, Director of Human Services, and Assistant Superintendent of Human Services. For the last 11 years he served as Superintendent of the Mark West School District. This position allowed him to utilize all his knowledge and background as both a teacher and an administrator. As an administrator, he demonstrated strong support of educational staff and teachers and demonstrated a deep commitment to the families in his district.

During his tenure as the Mark West District Superintendent, he was faced with many issues and crises, foremost being the Tubbs Fire which tore through the Mark West area with devastating impact on families, staff, and schools. Ron's leadership helped the whole district pull together in the aftermath of that event.



*Ron Calloway, Mark
West School District
Superintendent*

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, November 11, 2021
Chamber Business After Hours Social 5:30 – 7:30pm
Hosted by **Anytime Fitness**
620 Larkfield Center, Santa Rosa

Wednesday, December 1, 2021
Holiday Tree Lighting & Community Event 6:00pm
Hosted by **Molsberry Markets, Inc.**
522 Larkfield Center, Santa Rosa

Thursday, December 9, 2021
Chamber Business After Hours Social 5:30 – 7:30pm
Hosted by **Exchange Bank & Molsberry Markets, Inc.**
500 Larkfield Center, Santa Rosa

HEIDI WOULD NOMINATED TO CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors has nominated Heidi Would to the Mark West Citizens Advisory Council. Heidi was recommended for the Advisory Council by Willie Lamberson, who is a Chamber board member and a current member of the Council. Heidi will be replacing Pete Lescure, who has served five years.



REDISTRICTING UPDATE

Adapted from an article on the Santa Rosa Metro Chamber website, October 6, 2021

The December deadline for Sonoma County to pick new boundaries for its five supervisorial districts is looming. Every 10 years, Sonoma County must redraw its district boundaries using new Census data – this process is called redistricting. The new election lines determine which communities are placed in each supervisorial district, and voters within each district will elect one of their own as County Supervisor. Redistricting is happening now, and the County of Sonoma is asking for your help to plan, draw, and re-divide new County districts.

Redistricting balances population counts within each supervisorial district, and sharing your unique point of view will help ensure our diverse communities are fairly represented by the County Board of Supervisors to have a voice at the decision-making table on issues that impact our day-to-day lives.

Redistricting is different from most issues that come up in County government. Instead of being limited to saying you support or oppose a County-prepared ordinance or resolution, local residents were encouraged to draw new districting maps themselves. The proposed maps will be taken under consideration when redistricting decisions are made.

Read the entire article online at <https://www.santarosametrochamber.com/news/2021/10/06/main/redistricting-help-shape-sonoma-county-s-future/>



GOT LEAKS?

At California American Water, we're here to help you conserve water **INDOORS** so you can use less and save water and money on your water bill. Here are some simple tips:



Install aerators on kitchen and bathroom faucets: Check for worn washers and gaskets that might cause drips. Aerators add air into the water stream so you can use less water noticing a difference in water flow.



Replace old, non-efficient toilets with a new, high-efficiency models: A leaking toilet can double the total monthly water usage by the whole household. Save water and money with every flush.



Regularly check your toilet, faucets and pipes for leaks: Download our free leak detection kit at californiaamwater.com > Conservation > Detecting Leaks. If you find a leak, have it fixed as soon as possible.



The Lark Newsletter is published monthly under the direction of:

The Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Center
4787 Old Redwood Hwy, Suite 101, Santa Rosa, CA 95403

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The Lark Newsletter is emailed to member businesses each month.
For more information, contact the Chamber office at 707-578-7975.

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Deadline for publication is the 3rd Wednesday of the month.
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Application: <http://markwest.org/files/MembershipApplication200718.pdf>

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