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**The Lark**

**Mar/Apr 2022**  
Volume XXXVI Issue 2

## PAUL PECK NAMED HEAD AMBASSADOR



Paul Peck has been named Head Ambassador for the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce. Paul first joined the Chamber in late 2016

while employed with Carlton Senior Living. After leaving Carlton in October 2018, Paul went to work with Pacifica Senior Living and remained an active Chamber member. Paul has worked in the senior living space for over 21 years. Most of his career has been in sales and marketing and for the past 19 months prior to retirement, Paul was the Executive Director at Solstice Senior Living in Santa Rosa. Paul became a Chamber ambassador in 2019. Now, as Head Ambassador, Paul plans to focus his efforts on increasing membership. Thank you Paul for all you have accomplished so far, and for stepping up to this important position!

## LIVELY DISTRICT 4 SUPERVISOR CANDIDATE DEBATE

Two-term Sonoma County Supervisor James Gore squared off against challenger Andy Springer in a forum/debate on Thursday, April 28th.

A huge crowd bore witness to a rousing confrontation between these two very different candidates. Each candidate had an opportunity to introduce himself and then the questions began.

Challenger Andy Springer focused on cost controls for our county's spending, rebuilding our economy, citizens' safety, and their rights to pursue Life, Liberty and Property. The two-term incumbent, James Gore, spoke about his long record of successes in Sonoma County, which includes fire safety for all of us through preparedness and the reorganization of the fire districts, his ability to work relentlessly within the political system to get things done, and his steadfast support of the business communities.

The event took place in the multipurpose room at Mark West Elementary School. It was co-sponsored by the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce and the League of Women Voters of Sonoma County. Ron Calloway, current Supervisor of the Mark West Union School District and candidate for Superintendent of Sonoma County Schools, was the MC for the evening. The moderator was Jim Masters and Therese Scherrer was the timekeeper. Questions for the debate were provided by the League of Women Voters, the Board of Directors of the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce, and the members of the Mark West Citizens Advisory Council. Each candidate had 90 seconds to answer each question. They each took turns answering first. They were also given time for a closing comment.

Please vote on June 7th.

*Contributed by Steve Plamann*



*Incumbent 4th District Sonoma County Supervisor James Gore (left) and challenger Andy Springer (right). Photo courtesy 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](mailto: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

To host a Ribbon  
Cutting, contact  
office@markwest.org



Interested in joining  
our Ambassador  
Team? Contact the  
Chamber at  
office@markwest.org

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I cautiously and optimistically ask the question, "Are we back? Is normal back"? It seems like we are playing on-again, off-again, and then back on with our masks and lives, as we are unsure what to do.

Part of that may be confusion and part may be politeness. I know when I go into a store and the clerks are all still wearing masks, I put mine on. But some of it is still a little fear for me. Getting back to normal may not feel like normal for a while, but we have worked toward it, and we will get there. The Mark West Area Chamber is scheduling Socials and other events, the Board is now meeting in person, and we are also getting out into the community to support our businesses and members.



Sonoma County residents listened intensely as James Gore and Andy Springer squared off.

We had our first Chamber Social for 2022 on March 29. It was a joint event with the Windsor Chamber at Sutter Hospital of Santa Rosa and we had a great turnout and a tour. It was a very

enjoyable evening and I want to thank hosts Dan Peterson, CEO of Sutter Hospital of Santa Rosa, and Ed Sheffield, Manager, North Bay Government Affairs. Sutter Hospital also offered a second opportunity for our members to tour their new Expansion Tower on April 5th. See the full article with pictures on page 3.

Our next big event was a forum/debate on April 28 between the candidates for the 4th District County Supervisor's race, incumbent James Gore and his challenger Andy Springer. It was co-hosted with the League of Women Voters of Sonoma County. The event venue was provided by Ron Calloway, longtime Superintendent of the Mark West Union School District and a candidate for Superintendent of Sonoma County Schools. See the full article on page \_\_. It was an amazing night and stands as a testament to our political process.

Sutter Hospital made their new addition official with a Ribbon Cutting ceremony on April 29th. It was a well-attended event and marked the era of a super hospital in the Mark West Area. We are so fortunate to have them here. They are committed to our community and to the best service possible for their patients. It has been a pleasure having such a supportive organization as a part of our chamber. See the full article on page \_\_.

We have two other great Socials coming up. The first is on May 26th



The large crowd at Sutter's Ribbon Cutting.

at the Chamber office parking lot. This Social will give local business owners who are considering joining the Chamber an opportunity to meet with our new and old members, our Ambassador team, and members of our Board of Directors. Food and drinks will be provided by the Chamber. On June 9th we head to Atlas Pavers in Santa Rosa for a Social in their beautiful outdoor patio and display area. They hosted last year and it was a really fun night. And then in July we will be at Accent Printing in Santa Rosa for another huge joint chamber mixer.

Stay safe, shop local, and come out and join us at our events.

Steve Plamann, President



## WINDSOR AND MARK WEST CHAMBERS HOLD JOINT SOCIAL AT SUTTER SANTA ROSA REGIONAL HOSPITAL

On Tuesday, March 29, the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce and Windsor Chamber of Commerce were able to come together for a joint Social at Sutter Santa Rosa Regional Hospital. The hospital was able to provide the mixer with snacks and drinks, and hospital CEO Dan Peterson took attendees on a tour of the hospital's new three-story wing. In addition to this tour of the hospital's recent expansion, attendees were able to participate in a business card drawing for several prizes.

Sutter Santa Rosa Regional Hospital has been in existence since 1867. Originally a small hospital built for the local community, the hospital became affiliated with Sutter Health in 1996. After a period of time, the original version of the hospital was replaced with a new, modern hospital in order to better meet the growing needs of the community. The hospital currently holds 84 beds and all-private patient rooms. Additionally, the design and construction of the building were

made with the environment in mind, and the hospital generates roughly 85% of its electricity on-site. The hospital is almost entirely water self-sufficient as well, with most of its water stored underneath the hospital itself.

However, the hospital has been faced with the increasing need for additional patient capacity. Since the modern version opened, the hospital has operated at or near capacity almost nonstop. In order to increase the number of patients they can care for on-site, Sutter Health has been working for the past few years to create its new, \$158 million three-story wing. The new wing covers 67,171 additional square feet, adds an additional



*Dan Peterson, CEO of Sutter Hospital-Santa Rosa, led the tour of the new Expansion Tower. Photo courtesy Steve Plamann*

40 all-private rooms, two new operating rooms, an endoscopy room, 13 outpatient care unit beds, 11 post-acute care unit bays, and 21 emergency department bays. This new expansion has been thoroughly tested, rigorously inspected, and had many design features added at the advice of the hospital's staff.

As a major part of the communities of both Windsor and the Mark West Area, Sutter Santa Rosa Regional Hospital was delighted to be able to host the recent joint Social for both areas' chambers of commerce. The chambers were also thankful to Sutter for their being able to host them and provide attendees with a tour of the new wings. Two tours were provided so as to prevent overcrowding, with



*Members of the Mark West Area and the Windsor Chambers socialize just before touring Sutter Hospitals new addition. Photo courtesy Steve Plamann*

the business card drawing being held in between. Both CEO Dan Peterson and North Bay Government Affairs manager Ed Sheffield were on hand to answer questions from attendees.

All in all, the staff and management of Sutter Santa Rosa Regional Hospital have been working hard to ensure that the launch of the new wing goes smoothly. The new space should allow them to better serve more patients, and they remain dedicated to giving patients the best service possible. Both the Windsor and Mark West Chambers of Commerce extend their gratitude to the hospital for hosting, and look forward to continuing to work with the hospital in bettering both communities for many more years to come.

*Contributed by Johnathan Williams*

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## SONOMA COUNTY AIRPORT HITS MILESTONE WITH NEW TERMINAL SET TO OPEN

Adapted from an article by Bill Swindell in The Press Democrat, April 13, 2022.

The renovation of the Charles M. Schulz-Sonoma County Airport took a major step forward on Wednesday April 13 as workers installed the final steel beam for the new terminal project with a goal to finally open the space by the fall.

Local officials, including U.S. Reps. Jared Huffman, D-San Rafael, and Mike Thompson, D-St. Helena, attended the ceremony, which marks a significant achievement in the project that has been a five-year effort since initial planning and will cost about \$40 million overall when finished next year.

"This ceremony is the start of a new era of local air travel in Sonoma County," Huffman said. "The completion of this new terminal will not only significantly improve user experience, but also encourage more local and sustainable travel."

Airport visitors have had to manage workarounds since the construction project began in November 2020 for the facility first built by the U.S. Army in the 1940s. It is intended to handle a greater capacity with an anticipated record 700,000 passengers who will travel through the airport this year, said Jon Stout, airport manager. In 2019, the airport had 488,000 passengers.

"We have a strong interest in demand for our carrier partners. They added frequency for the year," said Stout, who added that there may be more than 20 daily flights by the fall.

The airport has already put in place its new ticket counter section. The focus will now go to inside construction of the new 30,000-square-foot section, which will be highlighted by the new terminal for Alaska and Alero airlines. That space will resemble a modern barnlike building that showcases natural light from skylights along with wood paneling of the roof.

"It's meant to blend and honor the rich agricultural heritage of this area," said architect Erick Schroeder.

The new terminal will have 238 seats and four ticket counters along with two gates to the aircraft. The plan is to open it for use by October, Stout said.

It will connect via a pathway to the current terminal that will still be used by American and United airlines, Stout said.



*Precision Crane of Windsor lifts the last beam into place.*



*Airport Manager Jon Stout speaks at the Topping Off Ceremony to celebrate the steel structural completion of the Airport's Terminal Modernization Project.*

The new space also will include a limited food service concession area inside the terminal and there are plans for a wine bar along with an outside patio, Stout said.

A new baggage claim area that will feature two separate carousels is also being constructed just south of the new terminal. That space, which also will feature car-rental counters, will be outside the security checkpoint and just next to the Sky Lounge restaurant.

The project this year received an additional \$8.2 million for expansion of the baggage system, an upgrade of furniture and a covered walkaway for the western side of the addition. Work crews

in the future also will have to finish construction of the front vestibule for the airport as part of the final stage of construction, Stout said.

Read the original article on the Press Democrat website at <https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/north-bay/workers-take-major-step-forward-in-charles-m-schulz-sonoma-county-airport/>

## CALIFORNIA AMERICAN WATER ON RATES, DROUGHTS, CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE

On April 13, California American Water (CAW) presented an update on rates, the drought, conservation, and customer assistance programs for the Mark West Citizens Advisory Council (MWCAC).

### Rate Information

Nichole Baxter, CAW's new External Affairs Manager for Northern California, began the presentation by diving into the recent rate changes implemented in the Larkfield service area. "The good news," Baxter said, "is that most of our customers in your service area are receiving a rate reduction." On average, with the new rate changes in place as of March 4, 2022, residential customers are saving 10.26% (an average of \$9.13/bill) and commercial customers are saving 14.37% (an average \$41.12/bill).

Customers who have "residential fire protection services," with sprinklers in the ceiling, are among the smaller segment of customers experiencing increased rates. Instead of continuing to reduce Meter Service Charges by one meter size, CAW will now bill the correct meter size, then provide a standard discount to the service that will be listed as a "Multi-Use Discount" on statements. This rate update helps balance the higher volume system capacity needed for emergencies with the reality that the volume is not regularly used.

### Drought & Water Conservation Information

Governor Gavin Newsom announced a new Executive Order on March 28, 2022, calling on water providers to activate their Water Shortage Contingency Plans and move to Stage 2, if they had not done so already. "All of our Larkfield customers are already in Stage 2," said Baxter. "Check your mailboxes for a postcard from us with information about the mandatory water restrictions in effect to help us all conserve."

In Stage 2 of the Water Shortage Contingency Plan, Larkfield customers may water no more than three days per week, between 8 p.m. and 10 a.m., with watering limited to 3-4 minutes at a time, 2-3 times per water day. Additional conservation measure outlined in Stage 2 include:

- Eliminate runoff from sprinklers.
- Use an automatic shut-off nozzle on hoses while washing cars.
- Do not irrigate or water outdoors for 48 hours after rain.
- Do not use potable water for non-recirculating fountains, ponds and water features.
- Do not use potable water to wash driveways and other hardscapes.

CAW is currently offering a "Larkfield Water-Smart Landscaping Turf Exchange Rebate Program," for those looking to up their conservation efforts and replace lawns with drought-resistant landscaping and irrigation. To learn more about the rebate program, visit [amwater.com/caaw/conservation/district-resources/sonoma-county/](http://amwater.com/caaw/conservation/district-resources/sonoma-county/) or call 707-542-8329.

### Customer Assistance Programs

CAW provides financial assistance to low-income families and customers undergoing monetary hardships. Eligibility for the "Customer Assistance Program" (formerly named Low Income Ratepayer Assistance) is determined based on a household's gross yearly income or participation in qualifying public assistance program (CARE). Assistance is provided in the form of a monthly discount on customers' water bills.

In addition to ongoing customer assistance, CAW has activated COVID-19 recovery programs for assistance with past-due bills. The first program, which was automatically applied to qualifying customers' bills dated March 2020 through June 2021, was funded by the California Water and Wastewater Arrearage Payment Program (CWWAPP). The next program to roll out for COVID-19 arrearage support will be funded by the federal Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP). Unlike CWWAPP, LIHWAP will be administered by a third-party service provider.

Baxter concluded the presentation by sharing information about upcoming virtual classes, including "Drought Resilient Lawn Care" on April 26, and "Drip Irrigation 101" on May 10. Visit <https://www.amwater.com/caaw/conservation/district-resources/sonoma-county/> for a complete calendar of educational events.

*Contributed by Margaret DiGenova, California American Water*



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## Enhancing the Health, Beauty and Safety of Trees



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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## REDUCE YOUR WILDFIRE RISK

May is National Wildfire Awareness Month and your Sonoma County Fire District wants to remind its residents to begin the preparation process in removing flammable vegetation and fuel from around your structure. While we may sound like a broken record, we want all our residents to be proactive and prepared. Due to another dry winter, we are once again facing the harsh reality of a potentially significant fire season. In 2021, Sonoma County residents were spared the trauma of another large-scale wildfire in the county. Unfortunately, 2022 is looking a lot like the past several years. We must all do our part to ensure that our properties are defensible, and we are prepared to evacuate at a moments notice. Help us help you!


*Contributed by Sonoma County Fire District.*

*Infographic provided and copyright by National Fire Protection Association*

**Protect Your Home**

### 7 Ways Residents Can Reduce the Risk that their Homes & Property Will Become Fuel for a Wildfire

- #1 Clear**  
 Clear off pine needles, dead leaves & anything that can burn from your rooflines, gutters, decks, porches, patios & along fence lines. Falling embers will have nothing to burn.
- #2 Store Away**  
 Store away furniture cushions, rattan mats, potted plants & other decorations from decks, porches & patios. These items catch embers and help ignite your home if you leave them outside.
- #3 Screen & Seal**  
 Wind-borne embers can get into homes easily through vents & other openings and burn the home from the inside out. Walk around your house to see what openings you can screen or temporarily seal up.
- #4 Rake**  
 Embers landing in mulch that touches your house, deck or fence is a big fire hazard. Rake out any landscaping mulch to at least five feet away.
- #5 Trim**  
 Trim back any shrubs or tree branches that come closer than 5 feet to the house and attachments, and any overhanging branches.
- #6 Remove**  
 Walk around your house and remove anything within 30 feet that could burn, such as woodpiles, spare lumber, vehicles and boats – anything that can act as a large fuel source.
- #7 Close**  
 If ordered to evacuate, make sure all windows & doors are closed tightly, and seal up any pet doors. Many homes are destroyed by embers entering these openings and burning the house from the inside out.

 NFPA has many more tips and safety recommendations on its websites, including [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org).



## RIGHT OF PETITION FOR SEATS ON THE MARK WEST AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

As required by the Chamber By Laws, the President appointed a nominating committee of three Directors who have nominated a slate of candidates to fill expiring Board of Directors positions. Each candidate will fill a two-year term and needs to be an active member. The slate of recommended candidates is as follows:

### Member / Business

### Term

#### TO BE ELECTED

Jason Riggs, Extended Child Care	2020 – 2022
Margaret DiGenova, California American Water	2020 – 2022
Laura Buhner, Exchange Bank	2020 – 2022
Beth Henry, Windsor Chamber	2020 – 2022
Pete Lescure, Lescure Engineers	2020 – 2022
Brian Molsberry, Molsberry Markets, Inc.	2020 – 2022

#### HOLD OVERS

Todd Anderson, Best Western Plus Wine Country Inn and Suites	2021 – 2023
Alicia Mills, Mark West Union School District	2021 – 2023
Millie Gibson, Elusik Tax & Accounting Inc.	2021 – 2023
Doug Williams, former Chief of Central Fire Authority of Sonoma County	2021 – 2023
Willie Lamberson, Lamberson Tile	2021 – 2023
Samantha Paull, Samantha Paull Planning & Consulting	2021 – 2023
Steve Plamann, Aaction Rents	2021 – 2023

#### Right of Petition:

Additional qualified candidates may be nominated by petition, which must bear the signatures of at least ten (10) active members. Such petitions shall be filed with the judging committee by May 31, 2022. The determination of the nominating committee as to the legality of the petitions shall be supervised by the judging committee. Petitions should be mailed to the Chamber office at the address indicated below.

If no petition is filed within the designated period, the nominations will be closed, and the slate of candidates shall be elected at the regular May Board of Directors Meeting.

If one or more petitions are received with additional candidates, the names of all candidates will be presented on a ballot in alphabetical order and, with instructions for voting for the correct number, shall be mailed to all active members.

The ballots must be returned to the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce, 4787 Old Redwood Highway, Santa Rosa, CA 95403, no later than 3 pm, June 17, 2022.

The Board of Directors will declare the candidates with the greatest number of votes elected at the June Board of Directors meeting.

Sincerely,  
Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center

## RIBBON CUTTING FOR SUTTER'S NEW WING

The staff at Sutter Santa Rosa Regional Hospital celebrated the opening of the hospital's brand new expansion tower with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Friday, April 29. Refreshments were provided by local Girl Scouts and included cookies and lemonade. Speeches were given by Mike Purvis, former CEO of the hospital, as well as current CEO Dan Peterson, and Windsor Mayor Sam Salmon. Following their speeches, all three joined to officially cut the ribbon to declare the new wing open.

On the opening of the new wing, Dan Peterson said: "We're so proud to be able to offer even better service for our community with this new facility. This allows us to treat more residents here in-county instead of transferring them out of county."

Mike Purvis added: "What I see first of all is more capacity for those who need healthcare. It means a lot to be able to fully take care of the community we're in, and I'm confident in Dan's ability to bring it to an even greater level."

Contributed by  
Johnathan Williams.

Left to right: Former CEO of Sutter Hospital of Santa Rosa, Mike Purvis, who started the new edition project; current CEO of Sutter Hospital of Santa Rosa, Dan Peterson, who finished the project; and Windsor Mayor Sam Salmon.



## RON CALLOWAY RUNNING FOR SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Dear Community Members:

In my over 30 years in education, I have been privileged to serve as an Elementary School teacher and principal, Coordinator of Operational Services, Director of Human Services, Assistant Superintendent of Human Services and, for the past 11 years, Superintendent of the Mark West Union School District. There has been no greater privilege than to serve the students, families, and staff of this tremendous community.

As the Superintendent of the Mark West Union School District, during the 2017 Sonoma County wildfires, our educational community suffered unspeakable trauma when many of our families and staff members lost their homes. This profound experience emphasized the importance of the implementation of multi-tiered systems of support to address not only the academic piece but also the social and emotional needs of our children, families, and staff. This student centered approach and desire to engage our teachers and provide them with the resources they needed to succeed both inside and outside of the classroom, became my highest priority.

My connection with our school community is something I value deeply. During my tenure as Superintendent, I have continued to sub in our classrooms, share a favorite book with our youngest students, assist as crossing guard before and after school, and visit our sites on a regular basis. I have established strong, personal connections with staff, parents and community through providing clear and concise information and ensuring that all are kept informed through email and social media messaging.

Though I plan to retire from service to the Mark West Union School District at the end of June, it is my sincere belief that I can continue to make a difference for the students, families and public school employees throughout Sonoma County. I have therefore chosen to run for Sonoma County Superintendent of Schools. I believe my unwavering commitment to public education and my desire to provide all public school children the confidence to pursue their dreams in college or career readiness, coupled with my extensive background in education, make me the ideal candidate to serve the Sonoma County community.

My wife Suzanne and I are forever grateful for the opportunity we've had to raise our sons in this remarkable community and the Mark West Union School District. Though it is my sincere desire to continue to serve our community and the educational system at the County level, that decision will be left to the voters on June 7th.

My heartfelt appreciation to the Mark West community for your partnership and support of the students, staff and families of the Mark West Union School District and my best to all in the future -

*Ronald M. Calloway, Superintendent, Mark West Union School District*



# 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](http://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.  
Please email your materials to office@markwest.org

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