

Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce and VISITORS CENTER

BRINGING BUSINESS & THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER!

4787 Old Redwood Highway, Suite 101, Santa Rosa, CA 95403
Visitors Center: Mon. - Fri. 10 am - 3 pm

www.markwest.org

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The Lark

Jul/Aug/Sep 2023
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\$1.8M FUNDRAISING GOAL REACHED TO PURCHASE PROPERTY FOR MARK WEST AREA COMMUNITY PARK

The Mark West Area Community Fund and Sonoma Land Trust today announced that they have successfully reached the fundraising goal of \$1.8M by October 1 to purchase a property to build the first downtown Mark West Area community park. The Fund anticipates taking title of the property on November 1, 2023. The property is located at 4614 Old Redwood Highway. Sonoma Land Trust has provided support for the acquisition of the property while the Fund organized its 501(c)(3) IRS standing and organizational set-up.

"The Mark West Area Community Fund is excited to announce that we have reached our fundraising goal to purchase property for our first downtown Mark West Area community park," said Brad Sherwood, president



It doesn't look like much now, but that's the whole purpose! This one-acre lot on Old Redwood Highway will bloom with trees, shrubs, walkways, benches, and opportunity for outdoor enjoyment for everyone.

of the Mark West Area Community Fund Board of Directors. "We achieved this goal through the generous donations of our community including businesses, community organizations, governmental organizations, and neighbors. Because of these donations, Mark West Area children will now forever have a park to play at in downtown Mark West. Seniors will now have a park in which to exercise and relax in downtown Mark West. The vision set forth by our Tubbs Fire rebuild block captains to build an official park to serve as a plaza for community gatherings that will support our ongoing rebuilding and community building efforts is becoming a reality. The Fund is thankful and appreciative of the donors that helped make this happen. We look forward to the next stage of designing and building the park for our community."

The Fund will next focus on park design and development. The Fund encourages community input via its website at www.markwestarea.org where park

design ideas can be submitted. The Fund is also coordinating with the Mark West Union School District to receive park ideas from its students. Deadline for submitting park ideas is November 1, 2023. Construction activities are anticipated to start in early 2024 with the goal of public access in spring 2024.

Below are the major donors that helped the Fund reach its fundraising goal:

- Sonoma County Ag + Open Space: \$1.169 million through Ag + Open Space's Matching Grant Program award to Sonoma Land Trust
- Saba Foundation: \$290,885 from the Foundation's grant program supporting the acquisition of the property and funding the construction of a children's playground in 2024.
- Mark West Area Municipal Advisory Council: \$250,000 from the Council's neighborhood improvement grant program
- Supervisor Gore: \$237,500 from Supervisor Gore's District 4 infrastructure funding budget
- Community Fundraising: \$34,669 from individual donations
- Sutter Health: \$20,000
- California American Water: \$10,500
- Jackson Family Wines: \$10,000
- Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce: \$10,000

To learn more about the Mark West Area Community Fund and to keep updated on the park, please visit www.markwestarea.org.

Contributed by Mark West Area Community Fund



*Brad Sherwood
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.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Over the past three months your Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce has been busy implementing several chamber mixers, community outreach events and of course holding our annual Installation Dinner. I had the honor of being installed as the Chamber's new president during the dinner, and with that the opportunity to meet many of our members.

I asked those in attendance to say one word describing why they are members of the Chamber. Words such as friendship, collaboration, marketing, support, and many others were said – but none more than community. The word community was repeated the most as the microphone was passed between tables of members.

It is that word, community, that I too would use to describe my passion and reason for being an active member of our chamber. It is also the word community that is prominently stated in our mission statement – bringing business and the community together. So it is only fitting that our chamber continue to support our business community, our neighborhood community, our community of youth, seniors and the next generation.

I am excited to continue driving our chamber to be not only the most “fun” in the region, but a shining example of how businesses can be successful by building community – it's a relationship in which businesses and people support one another and I look forward to fostering that with our members. Please never hesitate to contact me with any questions, recommendations or concerns at bradleywsherwood@gmail.com. Thank you for being a member of the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce, and I look forward to seeing you at our next event.

Onward!

Brad Sherwood, President

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

2nd 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

MAC CARRIES ON WORK OF MARK WEST CITIZENS' ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Mark West Area Municipal Advisory Council (MAC) is a group of volunteers appointed by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors to be a community-based conduit to share and gather information in the Mark West area, including Fulton. The MAC recently changed its name from the Mark West Citizens' Advisory Council to the MAC, to comply with State requirements.

Started in 2016, the goals of the MAC are to:

1. Make small “neighborhood improvement” grants, using funding from Cal Am franchise tax fees.
2. Review and advise on local projects to provide a community perspective.
3. Advise on transportation, public works, and local land use.

In 2023, the MAC partnered with the MWA Community Fund and the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce to purchase the one-acre property at 4614 Old Redwood Highway, to create the first community park in the Mark West area. The MAC provided its largest neighborhood improvement grant in MAC history by contributing \$250,000 toward the acquisition of the land. The MAC is excited to continue this partnership to develop and open the park.

For more information please visit www.markwestcac.org.

Contributed by Karen Fies, Chair, Mark West MAC



Karen Fies. Photo credit: County of Sonoma.

2023 INSTALLATION DINNER

As part of the return from the pandemic, the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce was delighted to welcome the return of their annual July Installation Dinner. Hosted at Charlie's Restaurant at the Windsor Golf Club, the Installation Dinner was a resounding success that saw over 70 attendees gather in order to welcome in new Chamber president Brad Sherwood, new board member Nichole Baxter of California American Water, and other returning board members. The dinner was provided by both Molsberry's Market and Charlie's Restaurant at the Windsor Golf Club. Charlie's, as in the past, provided their large banquet hall.

Following dinner, multiple speakers spoke about various events going on in the Mark West Area and other parts of the county. Notably, Jon Stout, manager of the Charles M. Schulz-Sonoma County Airport, was able to give the crowd an update on the status of the now-completed terminal project at the airport. Other speakers included Keith Roberts of Supervisor James Gore's team, outgoing Chamber president Steve Plamann, and new Chamber president Brad Sherwood. Though he was not able to attend in person, Supervisor Gore also provided a video message for the Chamber and Board.

Once the speakers had concluded the Chamber board of directors was officially sworn into office by of Supervisor Gore's team. The board also recognized the long service of Past President Steve Plamann by presenting him with a plaque in recognition of his service. Finally, Chamber president Brad Sherwood thanked the board and attendees for the warm welcome he received.

The Chamber thanks Charlie's Restaurant at the Windsor Golf Club, Molsberry's Market, and every member who purchased tickets for the event, for making the evening such an incredible success. We look forward to seeing everyone next year.

Contributed by Johnathan Williams



Incoming Chamber president Brad Sherwood addresses Chamber members at the 2023 Installation Dinner. Photo credit: John Nelson.

MARK WEST UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT'S SCOOP

The Mark West Union School District welcomed students and families back for the 2023-2024 school year on August 16th! Preparation for the new school year began over the summer and included such projects as: updates to facilities, the purchase of 180 new chromebooks for the elementary school sites and the installation of a new playground at Mark West Elementary. Not to be forgotten, the installation of new playgrounds at John B. Riebli Elementary and San Miguel Elementary are scheduled for Thanksgiving Break (weather permitting)!

The enrollment window for students interested in attending the Mark West Charter School (7th & 8th grades) in the 2024-2025 school year opens on Monday, October 2, 2023 at 8:00am and closes Tuesday, October 31, 2023 at 4:00pm. This is the ONLY enrollment window for the Charter School. Interested families, including current district families, may access the 2024-2025 Online Enrollment by going to <https://markwestusd.aeries.net/air/>. For more information, please contact Nikki Dale, Office Manager, at 707-524-2741.

Contributed by Dr. Rachel Valenzuela, Superintendent



Dr. Rachel Valenzuela, Superintendent. Photo credit: Mark West Union School District.

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AUGUST SOCIAL REPORT

Summer's final month saw the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce gather for a wonderful evening at the site of the planned Mark West Area Community Park. Hosted by the Chamber itself, with wine provided by Ancient Oak Cellards, the event was a great chance for Chamber members to learn about the plans for the Mark West Area Community Park and the efforts of the Mark West Area Community Fund, whose members were at the event to help provide information and answer questions. Food and drinks were provided by local businesses, and there were plenty of raffle prizes to go around.

The MC for the evening was Paul Peck, of The Lodge at Piner Road. After a brief welcome and thank you to the attendees, Paul passed things off to Brad Sherwood, president of the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce. Brad welcomed everyone and began to share with Chamber members what was happening in the Mark West Area.

Brad spoke about the Community Park, the plans surrounding it, and the benefits it will have for both the Mark West Community and the Chamber. Brad then allowed time for Mark West Area Community Fund representatives to provide more information on their efforts to get the park funded, and to answer questions regarding the park. The evening then progressed to the various raffles.

All in all, the event was a wonderful evening for all involved. The food was delicious, the news about the Community Park was wonderful to hear, and the company was splendid.

Contributed by Johnathan Williams



Chamber members enjoy a mixer at the site of the Mark West Area Community Park. Photo credit: Brad Sherwood.



In an earlier photo, members of the Mark West Area Community Fund Board pose at the park site. This shot gives you a better idea of the generous size of the park. Photo credit: Mark West Area Community Fund.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: THE LODGE AT PINER ROAD

Aging is a part of life, and everyone ages differently. For some elders, it is possible to remain at home, with minimal need for additional care. Others may require more attention and constant care, such as those with impaired memories due to diseases like Alzheimer's. For those who do need care, it is important for their families to choose the best possible location for their loved ones. For the elderly in Santa Rosa and the Mark West Area, The Lodge at Piner Road – a family-owned assisted living and memory-care community – offers fantastic care and excellent prices.

As one of the newest assisted living communities in Santa Rosa, The Lodge at Piner Road aims to offer top-of-the-line care for both standard assisted living and memory care residents. Residents are given a wide variety of amenities that are fully included with their monthly rate. These may include:

- Three meals a day
- Weekly housekeeping
- Weekly laundry services, including linens
- Scheduled transportation that allows residents to get around town if needed

- All utilities with the exception of phone service
- Wi-Fi connections for every room
- Cable TV
- A full-time activity program to provide additional entertainment and community bonding
- A pizza oven experience for residents who want to create their own pizza
- A café, complete with its own ice cream parlor, perfect for residents who want a sweet treat

Through these services and the incredible hospitality of their staff, The Lodge at Piner Road makes sure that residents are cared for while allowing them the space they need. Residents are free to participate in activities as they wish, which offers a great opportunity for bonding and community building.

As a recent addition to the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce, The Lodge at Piner Road has been very active, with Director of Resident Development Paul Peck graciously serving as MC at many Chamber socials and serving as the Chamber's Head Ambassador and Vice President of Membership. The Lodge at Piner Road also hosted a social in 2022, complete with a tour of the then-under construction facility. Now that the facility is open, The Lodge at Piner Road hopes to host another Chamber social in the future, as well as continue to be active with the Chamber.

Though it is one of the newest facilities of its kind in the Santa Rosa area, The Lodge at Piner Road has wasted no time in working to become one of the best local assisted living and memory care communities. With great community and reasonable prices, The Lodge at Piner Road aims to offer the best possible care to its residents. Paul hopes to see everyone at future socials, gives his many thanks for their support, and offers a reminder: "I am your senior living expert in Sonoma County. I have been serving seniors and their families for over 38 years."

Contributed by Johnathan Williams



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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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SONOMA COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT: FOUR YEARS OF SUCCESS AND A BRIGHT FUTURE AHEAD!

As we reflect on the past four years since the formation of the Sonoma County Fire District (SCFD), it is with great pride and gratitude that we share the remarkable progress and achievements we've made in ensuring the safety and well-being of our communities. The journey has been nothing short of extraordinary, and we owe this success to your unwavering support.



The Sonoma County 1 helicopter is the new pride of the fleet, but is only one of many positive developments. Photo credit: Sonoma County Fire District.

Financial Stability and Increased Services

Over the past four years, we have witnessed a remarkable increase in our services. Through careful planning, fiscal responsibility, and the support of our community, we have significantly increased our services. The addition of more on-duty firefighters and paramedics at fire stations has enhanced our ability to protect lives and property across the Fire District.

Unique Opportunities and the Arrival of Sonoma County 1 Helicopter

SCFD's unique partnerships have been instrumental in our success. Our collaboration with Medic Ambulance is a prime example. By harnessing the strengths of both organizations, we've adopted a "One Mission-One Team" approach, resulting in high-quality SCFD-EMS services in Sonoma County.

With our partnership with REACH we introduced, "Sonoma County 1," our Critical Care Transport (CCT) and Aerial Firefighting Helicopter. This addition is a critical tool in our firefighting arsenal, helping us combat the ever-present threat of wildfires from the air.

March 2024 Sales Tax Measure: Ensuring Sonoma County Fire Agencies Thrive

Looking ahead, the March 2024 sales tax measure holds immense promise. If passed, it will provide a substantial \$60 million in critical funding to Sonoma County's fire agencies. This funding will ensure that each fire department has access to the best facilities, equipment, and staffing, further strengthening our ability to serve and protect our communities.

Thank you for being a part of this incredible journey. We want to express our heartfelt gratitude to our community, partners, and dedicated first responders who have made these achievements possible. Together, we are forging a safer, stronger, and more resilient Sonoma County. As we move forward, our commitment to excellence remains, and we look forward to sharing more successes with you in the years to come.

Contributed by Sonoma County Fire District



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SEPTEMBER SOCIAL REPORT

As the season turns to fall, the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce was delighted to have the annual September social hosted by Cloverleaf Ranch, a longtime Chamber member who has had an amazing journey in recovering from the 2017 Tubbs Fire. Cloverleaf welcomed Chamber members to a delicious potluck meal, with a variety of delicious dishes contributed by attendees.

Shawna DeGrange, owner of Cloverleaf Ranch, was the host for our evening. Shawna told attendees about what Cloverleaf Ranch offers, and also spoke about Cloverleaf's amazing comeback



Cloverleaf Ranch hosted the first ever Chamber Social potluck. Speaking to the members is the owner, Shawna DeGrange. Photo credit: Steve Plamann.



from the devastation of the 2017 Tubbs Fire. Though the rebuild has been long and challenging, Cloverleaf has been able to continue providing their amazing camp programs and lessons to children from all across Sonoma County, and is still going strong. Shawna then allowed various members of her staff to follow up with their own stories of working at Cloverleaf, before returning the microphone to Paul in order to move on to other announcements.

The main announcement for the evening was that the Chamber will be hosting an October luncheon, which will be a paid event held at Best Western Wine Country Inn & Suites later in October.

Ultimately, the September social was a wonderful way to finally return to the location of a longtime Chamber member. With delicious food and a great evening at the ranch, the social was a great success.

Contributed by Johnathan Williams

Left: Longtime Chamber board director, treasurer, and past president Doug Williams won cookies from Tracy and COOKIE...take a bite!. Photo credit: Steve Plamann.

GOOD NEWS FROM THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE

We have good news to report from the Sheriff's Office. There are no significant crime concerns in the Mark West/Larkfield area. Over the last three months, we've had 675 calls for service in this area. The top three calls have been 911 calls from a cell phone (61), alarms (59), and traffic stops (57). Our best crime tip is, "See something, say something." Call Dispatch at 707-565-2121 if you see suspicious activity. Vigilant residents are the first line of defense against people committing crimes large and small.

To improve our public communications, we're now publishing a monthly email newsletter with important updates to help you stay informed. Sign up at our website (www.sonomasheriff.org). And keep your eyes open for our upcoming Annual Report, which is full of statistics and highlights from the past fiscal year.

If you see deputies enjoying a cup of coffee or meal in your neighborhood, feel free to say hello. We're always here for you and enjoy meeting the people we serve.

Contributed by Misti D. Wood, Sonoma County Sheriff's Office



Misti D. Wood, Community Engagement Liaison, Sonoma County Sheriff's Office. Photo credit: Sonoma Co. Sheriff's Office.

PROJECT UPDATE: MARK WEST SPRINGS SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS

Sonoma County Public Infrastructure is currently working on the Mark West Springs Sidewalk Improvement project, which includes retaining walls, storm drain culvert installation, ADA improvements, and final paving/stripping of the roadway. The project boundaries are between Old Redwood Highway and Ursuline Road, and serves the Larkfield Wikiup community and local schools. Construction began last year, coinciding with the 5-year anniversary of the Tubbs fire that damaged this area. Though construction activities were suspended over the winter, we have resumed work to complete the project.

Last week, crews installed drainage pipes from Ursuline to Old Redwood Highway, including trenching and excavating for the drainage inlets. We have also begun to backfill with slurry to lock the drainage pipe in place. Backfill work will continue this week. We will also begin excavation for the new curb and gutter line. We anticipate the new curb inlets will be installed and connected to the existing crossing culverts next week. We will also complete the backfill of the drainage ditch and sidewalk embankment.

Funding for this project is from SCTA's Measure M local tax dollars and infrastructure funds allocated by Supervisor Gore. When complete, the project will provide improved biking and walking routes, supporting the Board of Supervisors 5-year strategic plan for increased bicycle and pedestrian facilities and infrastructure resiliency.

Road work will cease should there be an emergency event requiring evacuation.

We are looking forward to completing this project and providing the Larkfield Wikiup community with much needed access. If you have further questions about this project, please reach out to Sonoma County Public Infrastructure at SPI@Sonoma-county.org.

Contributed by Janice Thompson, Deputy Director of Sonoma County Public Infrastructure



Excavation for new sidewalk along Mark West Springs Road, between Old Redwood Highway and Ursuline Road. Photo credit: Brad Sherwood



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:

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