

Time Sensitive Material - Deliver by Feb. 6

Petaluma

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Business Confidence Is On The Increase

County businesses are more positive about the outlook for the local economy than they have been for several years, according to a report just issued by the Sonoma County Economic Development Board in partnership with the Sonoma County Workforce Investment Board.

Called the 2011 Business Confidence Survey and Report, the document reports findings from surveys of Sonoma County businesses.

According to the report, business confidence is climbing with the strongest indicators coming from agriculture,

hospitality and manufacturing.

The report said "Sonoma County business confidence is shining compared to its worst performance two years ago when the average business confidence rating on a scale of 1 to 10 was 3.2. Sonoma County is now doing much better with an average business confidence rating of 5.45."

The report also said that local firms are optimistic about the future and less economically challenged doing business in Sonoma County than in the U.S. as a whole.

"Businesses have yielded feedback as to what local government can do to help businesses succeed in Sonoma County", the report said. "The most requested three options were to help businesses stay and grow in Sonoma County, make the permitting process more efficient, and attract new businesses to Sonoma County."

According to the report, a majority of local executives expect to hire new employees in 2012.

"When asked whether they were considering hiring new employees

in 2012, 58% of business executives in Sonoma County responded in the affirmative, suggesting that Sonoma County's economy is getting back on track," the report said.

To view the full report visit the EDB website by clicking on the following link or copy and pasting it into your web browser's address bar: http://edb.sonoma-county.org/documents/2011/business_confidence_report_winter_2011.pdf.

Women in Business Report 2012 Plans

The Women in Business Committee has another year of fascinating speakers and terrific networking opportunities lined up, so mark your calendars and watch for details!

Following is the report submitted by the WIB correspondent:

In 2012, WIB committee members will focus their energy on: the Breakfast Speakers' Series, growing our committee membership, plotting for another conference in 2013, and celebrating with all Chamber members at a December holiday party. (We are no longer holding brown-bag lunch presentations.)

2012 Breakfast Speakers' Series

Plan now to join us for a delicious/nutritious breakfast accompanying expert presentations on wide-ranging topics to support your career and personal growth: March 6, May 8, July 10, and September 11.

WIB breakfasts are held from 7:15 to 9 a.m. at the Petaluma Women's Club on B Street. The cost is \$25 for Chamber members/\$35 non-members (additional \$5 at the door). Bring your friends, neighbors, and colleagues to network and enjoy!

Sponsor a WIB Breakfast

Looking for a cost-effective way to reach multiple audiences? Consider sponsoring a WIB breakfast! For \$150, you can present a 5-minute "infomercial" at the event, display your business materials, promote yourself with a 1/8 page ad in *Petaluma Business* newsletter, and receive a complimentary breakfast ticket. For event details and sponsor signups, contact WIB Sponsor Chair Peggy Wyman, AVP & Branch Manager, Sonoma Bank, at 707-763-4555, VOF: 410.

Wanted: More WIB Committee Members!

Fulfill your New Year's resolution to participate more in the community and network by joining the Women in Business Committee! WIB meets at 8:45 a.m., the second Tuesday each month, in the Chamber Office. To learn more and set a date to visit a committee meeting, call Committee Chair Shelly Moller, Edward Jones Financial Advisor, at 707-763-3006.



Wake Up Focuses on Both Personal, Municipal Health

The outlook for health care in our city, plus issues facing both Rohnert Park and Petaluma, will highlight this month's program for Wake Up Petaluma, scheduled for February 28.

The program moves to Rohnert Park for February, taking place at Sally Tomatoes Café and Bar, 1100 Valley House Dr. Rohnert Park. A hot buffet breakfast will be included.

Ramona Faith, the new director of

the Petaluma Health Care District, will talk about the health of our community, health issues ahead and new programs being implemented.

Ingrid Alverde, the City of Petaluma Economic Development Manager and Anthony O'Brien, Top Speed Data and chair of the Chamber's Economic Development Committee, will discuss economic development here and the coordination between the Chamber's Economic Development Committee

and development outlook for Petaluma.

Also, Gabriel Gonzalez, Rohnert Park's City Manager will speak about the happenings in our neighbor city.

Also on the program is recognition of new members and a raffle drawing.

Cost for the breakfast is \$20 for Chamber members, \$25 for non-members. Reservations needed - call 762-2785.

Ambassador Profile

Michele Flannery Merry We Meet

Reverend Michele Flannery, an Ordained High Wiccan Priestess and also a Petaluma Chamber Ambassador, has had a dream that everyone who wanted to find a soul mate had the chance to do just that, with like minded people. So out of her dream was born an idea that eventually grew into a concept and is now a reality; introducing "Merry We Meet" dating and social site for those who are Spiritual in faith; i.e.; Wiccan, Pagan, Jewish, Buddhist, Confucianism and the like. "We are a spiritually based, non Christian community," she said.

"Merry We Meet is a social site that includes the values we have lost as whole over the last 15 years" she said. "Family is first. We have a director for the single parents groups, who coordinates the

events that are age appropriate for parents that are on a limited budget or out of social ideas of "What to do," and can have a place in an adult supervised environment and yet still meeting other single parents and make friendships and bonds."

The community as a whole will have lots of information posted from how to plant your ultimate garden to how to do a ritual for a Pagan Holiday. This side of the site has a lot of information for everyone to post and comment on. "This dream has been in the making for over 12 years, and with the expertise of Teutschel Design it is finally my reality. This is a membership driven website and the cost for joining it is \$10.00 a month, which in this economy is very reasonable considering all the



Michele Flannery

information and events you can attend," she said.

"The Petaluma Chamber is also a great family to be a part of; I have had personal success with being a part of the events and benefits the Chamber has to offer. Being in the Ambassador program has been really rewarding and I have always said 'We are the handshake between the Chamber and our local businesses.' I have made great networking connections as well as lifelong friendships."

G & C Auto Body Gets National Honor

Chamber member G&C Auto Body has been named one of the top 10 auto body shops in the nation by the national publication *Automotive Body Repair News - the Body Shop Authority*.

G&C has seven shops in the North Bay, including one in Petaluma at 896 Lakeville Street. The article credits

owner, Gene Crozat with a number of innovative business practices, including working entirely with contractors for a labor force, operating a car rental business for customers, and operating without bank loans.

G&C was one of only two California shops to be honored by the leading industry publication.

Business Briefs

The **Pacific Empire Chorus (PEC)** is having a different kind of crab feed. There will be all-you-can-eat crab, plus pasta from the Pasta King, and homemade desserts. The Valentine Show will feature both sentimental and swinging tunes, local favorite Petaluma Pete, no-host bar, drawings for prizes, and a wine auction. Event takes place Saturday, February 11, 5:30-9:30 pm, Herzog Hall, Petaluma Fairgrounds. Tickets are \$40 in advance, \$50 at the door. Online at www.pacificempire.org or call 877-772-0087.

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PETALUMA BUSINESS CREDITS

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Editorials & Opinions, Analyses, Commentary, Viewpoints

Commentary

Chamber Certificates Show Good News

A little known service the Chamber provides is the issuance of Certificates of Origin for those local businesses exporting to other countries around the world.

If you are looking for indicators of economic revival - the first robins of the spring so to speak - perhaps an interesting indicator is the Certificates of Origin. Last year, our office saw a major increase in the issuance of those certificates.

We have about 15-20 businesses now getting those certificates locally, and the countries these businesses are exporting to says a lot about how much Petaluma is a part of the global economy.

These are just some of the countries for which certificates were applied in 2011:

Middle East - United Arab Emirates, Doha Qatar, Turkey, Jordan, Kuwait

Europe - Greece, Germany, Russia

South America - Brazil, Peru, Chile

Africa - Egypt, South Africa

Asia - Taiwan, South Korea, China, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, India, Singapore, Japan

The resurgence of applications for the certificates is certainly a good sign, as is the widespread geographical reach of the markets our local businesses target.

The above is just another item in what is becoming an increasing flow of hopeful news about our local economy.

In January, economist Jerry Nickelsburg of the respected UCLA Anderson Forecast spoke in Santa Rosa, and while his outlook for our economy was cautiously optimistic, it was nevertheless optimistic. We are going to be getting better this year, he said. It's not happening quickly, this recovery, but it will be happening.

Sometimes, it depends how you interpret your data. In January a County-wide meeting to discuss economic recovery, a Sonoma State economist showed a slide saying that employment in the manufacturing sector was declining sharply several years before the economic collapse, and shouldn't be expected to return to its former status. This was challenged by a representative of the manufacturing industry, who insisted that manufacturing was doing just fine.

Then there was an article in a business publication that indicated both could be right. Manufacturing is making a comeback, but more and more jobs are being replaced by machines.

Another indicator that 2012 could bring good news is the business confidence report, issued annually by the Sonoma County Economic Development Board, who interviews Sonoma County businesses every year to assess their plans for the upcoming year.

This document, reported on page one of this issue of *Petaluma Business*, shows us that County businesses have a much more upbeat idea of opportunities facing us in the year ahead than they did 12 months ago.

When our local businesses have the confidence to invest in growing and expanding, our entire local economy will benefit.

Therefore, indicators like a growth in the issuance of Certificates of Origin are indeed a welcome sign.

President's Message

Government Affairs Committee Starts Work On Annual Plans

Our Government Affairs committee members got together in a January morning meeting to discuss issues that will be facing Petaluma this coming year, and started a process to decide how to deal with those issues.

Judging from reports from that meeting, the discussion was far ranging and thorough, and gives a good indication of the range of issues the Chamber Board may be dealing with in the coming year.

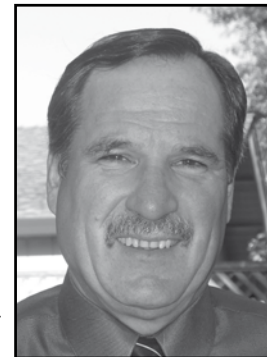
Perhaps the top of the list of concerns, I am told, was the fact that Petaluma will be losing a major part of its redevelopment funds, if not the entire amount, in the coming year. This action by the State, upheld by the courts, signals a setback to the City's efforts to implement the recently approved Economic Strategic Plan, as well as initiatives by our new City Economic Development Manager Ingrid Alverde to make City Hall more user-friendly for local businesses.

For those of you not up on the intricacies of taxation, the redevelopment law allowed a city to identify a blighted area, designate it as a redevelopment area, and receive most of the increase in property tax revenues from that area from that point forward. The State's action closes doors for access to those funds.

More than economic development will be affected. Many of our local non-profits will be adversely affected, for example. Expect our Government Affairs group, as well as the Chamber Board, to be deeply involved in this issue as we go forward.

Another issue the GA folks will be monitoring closely is the possibility of at

By Ron Malnati,
President,
Petaluma Area
Chamber of
Commerce



least two local tax issues that may be on the ballot this year - one a local effort to create money for parks and recreation, the other a County effort to generate funds for children's programs.

Other issues that came up included the overdue dredging of the Petaluma River, and our city's dependence on easy navigation of this inland waterway.

In late February, the City is scheduled to act on the Deer Creek Village project, for which the EIR was rejected by the Petaluma Planning Commission. Our committee will be following this project closely.

Plus, this year is election year. Although the Petaluma Chamber does not endorse candidates (it does support or oppose ballot measures), the GA committee may be expected to host a candidates' forum or forums, as it has in the past. We will be electing a new representative to Congress, and a new State Assembly member. We will have elections to City Council as well.

And, if the past is any indicator, we will have issues or events this year that even the best prognosticators didn't anticipate in January.

Even so, one should expect our volunteers on the GA committee, a great many of them former Chamber Board members, to be directly and proactively involved in representing the best interests of our local business community.



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City Manager Discusses Challenges Facing City

The City of Petaluma, already battered by the worst recession since the 1920's, received another blow when the courts upheld the State of California's rights to eliminate redevelopment programs Statewide.

City Manager John Brown, addressing a crowd of about 50 at the February Wake Up Petaluma breakfast, said the loss to the City is going to be about \$14 million dollars.

He said that programs and projects currently underway, either under construction or for which contracts have been let, such as the current work at the East Washington/Highway 101 interchange, will not be affected.

He said that important programs of seismic and sprinklers retrofits to older buildings will be affected. The City will attempt to honor all programs currently underway, but there is unlikely any funding for future retrofit assistance of this type.

He said that there are currently seven City Hall jobs now funded by

redevelopment money. He added that more than 70 City jobs have already been vacated through layoffs and not replacing personnel who have left for whatever reason.

He said the City doesn't see much relief coming in from property tax revenues, which were down 2% last year, but there are some indications that sales tax receipts may be on the uptick, particularly from auto sales.

He also expects an increase in development activity from "pent up demand." This town is "open for business," he said, explaining that a considerable amount of effort has gone into finding ways to streamline the permitting process for larger projects.

He pointed out that the Regency/Target project construction has begun with Target due to open a year from now, and the Deer Creek project will get final Council review on Feb. 27. Plus, Basin Street's Riverfront Project should start its way through the planning process this spring.

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Casa Looking For Business Partners

Casa Grande High School is looking for local businesses interested in becoming a community partner with the school.

In particular, Kelly Mace, College and Career Center Specialist who helps connect students to community partners for job shadows, internships and senior project advisors, is looking to expand the school's database of local job shadow hosts.

"Cold calling local businesses generates contacts, but can be time consuming and frustrating," she said. "It would be great if interested local businesses had an opportunity to contact the school

directly."

Casa is looking to develop community partnerships with local businesses or individuals who would be interested in becoming any of the following: job shadow host; senior project adviser; guest speaker; internship host; and/or mock interview/career workshop panelist.

Anyone interested in becoming a community partner with Casa can contact Kelly Mace, College & Career Center Specialist, at 707-778-4690 kmace@pet.k12.ca.us or Danielle Walker, Community Outreach Coordinator, at 707-778-1085 or dwalker@pet.k12.ca.us.

Sponsors Sought For Awards Night

The Petaluma Area Chamber of Commerce is seeking sponsors for this year's Community Awards of Excellence event. The Chamber sponsors this event with the *Petaluma Argus-Courier* and the Sheraton Sonoma County-Petaluma Hotel.

This year's event will take place on March 29th at the Sheraton. There will be a reception from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. followed by the ceremony at 6:45 p.m.

Once again the event will be honoring Citizen of the Year, Excellence in Education, and Awards of Excellence for Large Business, and Small Business, Police Officer of the Year, Firefighter of the Year, Volunteer of the Year, Service to Seniors, Service to Youth, Service

Person of the Years and Agriculturist of the Year.

There are two levels of sponsorship available.

1. A sponsorship of \$150 entitles sponsor's name to be in the printed promotional materials, and two tickets to the event (\$40 value).
2. A sponsorship of \$300 entitles the sponsor to the above plus the use of business logo in printed promotional materials.

In order for a sponsor to be recognized in an upcoming *Petaluma Business* article, sponsorships should be confirmed by February 15.

Call 762-2785 for more sponsor information.



The Ribbon Cutting at the Paradise Sushi Bar & Grill was enjoyed by all.

Local Arts Center Has New Exhibit

The Petaluma Arts Association is presenting an exhibit called "Good Company: Great Clay and Glass in California, 1932-2012" from now until March 4.

This exhibition features works in clay and glass by members of the Association of Clay and Glass Artists in California (ACGA, founded 1945 by Carlton Ball).

It includes a number of works from the incredible collection of Forrest L. Merrill presenting the rich history of ceramic art in California's past and extraordinary work being made today.

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Ken's Keys and Locksmith
Marin County Sidewall Company
Marin French Cheese Company
Park Place Hearing Center
PEP Housing (Petaluma Ecumenical Properties)
Petaluma Creamery
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Raley's Supermarket

Ramfire Building Maintenance
Redwood Regional Medical Group
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Calendar - February

- 3 Government Affairs**
PACC Conference Room
6 Petaluma Blvd. N., Suite A-2
7:30 A.M.
- 6 Business Education**
PACC Conference Room
6 Petaluma Blvd. N., Suite A-2
4:00 – 5:30 P.M.
- 7 Ambassadors**
Petaluma Valley Hospital,
Pat Schaefer's Office
400 N McDowell Blvd.
7:30 A.M.
- 9 Business After Hours - BNI- Rivertown Business Builders**
Pelican Art Gallery & Custom Framing, 143 Petaluma Blvd. N.
5:30 – 7:30 P.M.
- 14 Women in Business Committee**
PACC Conference Room
6 Petaluma Blvd. N., Suite A-2
8:45 – 10:00 A.M.
- 15 PYPN Mixer**
Taps Restaurant & Tasting Room
205 Kentucky St.
No RSVP required; free admittance
6:00 – 8:00 P.M.
- 16 Economic Development Committee**
PACC Conference Room
6 Petaluma Blvd. N., Suite A-2
7:30 A.M.
- 17 Government Affairs**
PACC Conference Room
6 Petaluma Blvd. N., Suite A-2
7:30 A.M.
- 20 Presidents' Day – PACC Office Closed**
- 21 Leadership Alumni**
PACC Conference Room
6 Petaluma Blvd. N., Suite A-4
9:00 – 10:00 A.M.
- 21 Agribusiness**
Sonoma-Marin Fair Conference Room
175 Fairgrounds Dr.
12:00 – 1:30 P.M.
- 28 Wake Up Petaluma (RSVP)**
NOTE: Location Change
Sally Tomatoes Café & Bar
1100 Valley House Dr.
Rohnert Park
\$20 Members, \$25 Non-members
RSVP online or call 762-2785
7:30 – 9:00 A.M.

Looking Ahead – March

- 8** Business After Hours - Massage Envy
- 14** Women in Business Breakfast
- 14** PYPN Mixer
- 15** Business After Hours - FedEx
- 17** E-Waste event-check the March Calendar for details
- 22** Business After Hours - Cordoza's Deli & Café
- 27** Wake Up Petaluma
- 29** Community Awards

To check out our new on line calendar click on Chamber Events on the bottom menu bar at www.petalumachamber.com

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service is available to existing and start-up small business owners in the areas of:

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