



Call to Action by Chamber President

A CALL TO FOCUS on building membership and to continue working with the city was sounded last month by new Chamber of Commerce President John Stashik, owner of Premier Graphics, as he took his new post.

“In the immediate future,” he told those attending the January business luncheon, “we must focus on building membership. That means the Chamber must provide a real value for the member’s dues dollar.”

Improving the Chamber’s Web site is essential to this effort, he explained, as he called for the site to include an easy-to-use business directory that is kept up to date.

“We enjoy a good relationship with City Hall, and will continue to work with the city to enhance economic development and businesses in El Cerrito,” Stashik told the group.

He went on to point out that, during the past few years, much had been accomplished within the organization that the Chamber could be proud of, citing such things as office modernization, development of the “Taste of El Cerrito,” scholarships for El Cerrito High students, and publication and mailing of the *Membership Directory & Buyers’ Guide* to every city resident.

Stating he would be working with a great team of officers and directors, Stashik said: “I look forward to the enthusiasm and energy that the new board members will bring to our organization, combined with the experience of our dedicated Chamber veterans.”

He went on to say that, from his perspective as a 32-year local resident, things were looking good for the city, and El Cerrito was “a great place to live and to do business.”

Stashik concluded by telling the gathering: “It will be a busy year for the Chamber. I urge all members to participate as much as possible. That’s what keeps any organization like ours moving forward.”

80th Anniversary



Klem Schmidt

HONORS FOR ASSOCIATE CHAMBER MEMBER, the El Cerrito Lions Club, came fast and furious early last month when the local service club celebrated its 80th anniversary with a gala luncheon at the Mira Vista Golf & Country Club. Pictured here, from left to right, Chamber Manager Sewall Glinternick looks on as Mayor Bill Jones marks the event with a proclamation from the city, Lions President Barbara Renteria holds a certificate appreciation from the Chamber, and Supervisor John Gioia holds a presentation from Contra Costa County.

Welcome

NEW MEMBERS



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Updates Made to Chamber Web Site

THE EL CERRITO Chamber of Commerce Web site was updated last month. The site now includes revised dues rates and information on upcoming Chamber events. It also has a link to the *Byline* (as a PDF file), archived back issues, a current list of the organization’s directors, and e-mail contact information. A revised version of the member business directory will be completed as soon as possible.

The site itself may be completely redesigned in the near future. The Chamber has asked eight area Web designers to bid on this task, and the decision to move ahead on the redesign will depend on the cost estimates, as well as on the Chamber’s financial condition.

In the meantime the present Web site is quite functional will continue to serve members and the public.

Member Discount

THE NEWLY OPENED FedEx Kinko's at 9889 San Pablo Avenue, which recently joined this organization, has launched a discount program designed to save fellow Chamber members money.



According to center manager Richard Lyle, this new program is specially designed so local small businesses can take full advantage of his firm's products and printing services at discount prices.

Lyle invites all Chamber members to come in, pick up a brochure that describes the program, fill out a retail center agreement, and get a FedEx Kinko's National Discount Card.

Everyone who participates in the program will qualify for one of two tiers of discounts, each determined by the customer's annual spending total.

Those who spend from \$1,000 to \$6,000 annually will get 20 percent off on black and white or color copying and five percent saving on all other services. Customers who spend \$6,000 to \$12,000 a year will get a 30 percent discount on copy work and 10 percent off all other services.

The discount pricing and savings will be available to card holders purchasing color or black and white copies and prints, forms and memos, professional manuals and presentations, brochures, newsletters, and fliers. They will also apply on a complete range of finishing, binding and paper options, banners, posters and signs, promotional decals, and graphics, as well as faxing, scanning, and direct mail services.

Lori Misses One

Lori Trevino, El Cerrito Economic/Redevelopment Manager and Chamber director, missed the February 6th board meeting. However, she had a good excuse.

She was home taking care of her new baby daughter, Carina, who was born on January 27. Congratulations, Lori and family!

Home Prices Drop

FOR THE FIRST time in eight years the average sale price of homes in El Cerrito went down last year.

Figures provided by the West Contra Costa Association of Realtors, an Associate Member of the Chamber of Commerce, indicate that the average sale price of local homes dropped \$24,224, or slightly more than three and one-half percent, in 2007 over the \$684,371 average posted in 2006.

While 2007 was the first time since the year 2000 that the average sale price of homes here failed to increase over the previous year, the news wasn't all bad.

Those who bought homes here in 2000 when the average price was \$390,462 and then sold them at or above last year's \$660,147 average made at least a 143 percent profit on the deal, reinforcing the basic rule of economics that indicates real estate in El Cerrito is a good long-term investment.

Diagonal Parking?

REPORTS OF A possible change in plans for upgrading a portion of the San Pablo Avenue business district surfaced recently in a memo authored by Public Works Director/City Engineer Jerry Bradshaw.

During development of a joint El Cerrito/Richmond Specific Plan, the possibility of installing diagonal parking in the block between Fairmount and Central Avenue was discussed.

Because of the uncertainty raised by this possibility, Bradshaw reported, the city is omitting planned construction of a new median in that block.

The original project concept included construction of new medians in the two blocks from Carlson Boulevard to Central Avenue. According to Bradshaw, a new median between Fairmount and Carlson remains in the project's scope.

In the weeks ahead, the city staff plans to meet with businesses that have asked to discuss plans for improvements in the Central to Fairmount area. The staff will also meet with stakeholders near the San Pablo Avenue/Madison intersection, where a new flashing crosswalk and other safety improvements are being considered.

Library Hosts Angel Island Slide Show

THE EL CERRITO LIBRARY, an Associate Member of the Chamber of Commerce, will host a slide and lecture program on Angel Island history at 7 p.m., Thursday, March 6, at 6510 Stockton Avenue.

William Wong, author of *Angel Island: Images of America*, will discuss his book and show rare photographs from the San Francisco Bay island that played an important role in Chinese American history.

Federal Gov't Seminar

MEMBERS OF THE Chamber of Commerce have been invited to attend Small Business Government Contracting seminars sponsored by area Congresswoman Ellen O. Tauscher.

Designed to educate small businesses on how to sell their product or service to governmental agencies, "Introduction to Federal Contracting" will be held from 3 to 5 p.m. July 8th in the Council Chambers at Walnut Creek City Hall. The same seminar will also be held from 3 to 5 p.m. in the Solano County Supervisors' Chambers in Fairfield at 675 Texas Street.

In Sympathy

The Chamber extends its sincere sympathy to Gloria Pugliesi and the family of Peter Pugliesi, who passed away on February 16. The Pugliesis have been longtime Chamber of Commerce supporters since 1978 through their construction company.

To reserve space or to obtain further information call (925) 932-8899 or (707) 428-7792.

Art on Stockton Avenue

AS REPORTED in last month's *Byline*, The Glenn Custom Framing, a Chamber member located at 7027 Stockton Avenue, has reinstated their Gallery of Art. Opening March 5th is an exhibition featuring four local artists which runs through April 30th.

Patricia Leslie is an animal portrait artist who does watercolors. The photo below shows one of her paintings that will be on display at The Glenn.



The Glenn Custom Framing Gallery of Art

The other artists with work appearing at the gallery are Lila and Sharon Banuelos who are photographers. Rounding out the exhibition is Jackie Carter, with a display of art quilts.

A reception night will be held on Friday, March 14, from 7 to 9 p.m. with free refreshments. The Glenn Custom Framing is open Tuesdays through Fridays from noon until 6 p.m. Saturday hours are noon until 5 p.m.

For more information contact The Glenn at (510) 558-1078. On the Internet: www.theglenncustomframing.com.

The El Cerrito Art Association is an Associate Member of the Chamber of Commerce.

Save the Planet

WITH EARTH DAY just around the corner, Chamber members can help "Mother Earth" and the El Cerrito Art Association shrink your carbon footprint by purchasing a canvas grocery bag to use over and over again.

The 10-ounce, 10x15-inch, 100% cotton bag comes with a five-inch gusset and 27-inch handles and can hold everything from toys to groceries. It even comes with space where you can create your own art—or use art supplied by a member of the El Cerrito Art Association.

The bags are for sale at The Glenn Custom Framing, 7027 Stockton Avenue, (510) 558-1078, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday noon until 6 p.m.

Support Local Business
www.ShopElCerrito.com

Reinvestments Pass 80

EL CERRITO Chamber of Commerce reinvestments for the year 2008 went over the 80 mark by mid-February.

Members who have not yet paid their dues for the coming year are being urged to do so as soon as possible.

As of February 1, 2008, the cost of joining the Chamber is: Associate members, \$70; 1 to 5 employees, \$135; 6 to 10 employees, \$220; 11 to 15 employees, \$235; 16 to 25 employees, \$280; 26 to 50 employees, \$320; 51 to 100 employees, \$375; 100+ employees, \$415; banks, \$375; financial and title companies, \$290; and utilities, \$345.

Latest to show their support by joining for another year are: Work Place Development Board, M. A. Hays Insurance, Foley & Bonny, Department of Motor Vehicles, Doherty's Truck Rental, FastServ Mobility, Miracle Auto Painting, Soroptimist International of El Cerrito, The Glenn, Civic Plaza Apartments, El Cerrito Florist, Playland-Not-At-The-Beach, David Boisvert (Aerovance), Tehiyah Day School, and El Cerrito Lighting.

Business Gets Its Share in 2007

THE EL CERRITO business community got its share of attention and benefits from local government, according to "2007 Year In Review," issued by the city late last month.

The report pointed out that—among other things that were accomplished last year—the city staff had developed and kicked off a "Shop El Cerrito" campaign that included a special Web site and promotional materials. They also produced marketing materials for business and developer recruitment.

Laying the groundwork last year for attracting new business in 2008, El Cerrito officials contracted with the Buxton Company to determine how best to focus on getting new firms to move here.

Unreinforced masonry buildings, most of which are in the business district, were provided with warning signs by the city last year. After city staffers had met with the owners of these buildings, funding was provided for ongoing engineering evaluation of the URMs for a possible redevelopment and retrofit program.

In other business-related action last year, the city:

- Fully implemented a business video surveillance program as well as a massage ordinance.
- Completed the San Pablo Avenue signage program.
- Completed the design and awarded a contract for median landscape renovation on San Pablo Avenue that includes the planting of 139 trees and thousands of shrubs.
- Made significant progress in designing overall San Pablo Avenue streetscape improvements.
- Worked with PG&E and Smartlights to provide energy efficient opportunities to El Cerrito businesses in 2008.
- Continued outreach to new businesses and residents via welcome packets.

Finally, according to "Year In Review," in 2007 the city staff proposed revisions to the Business License Ordinance, and added a new page to the city Web site which deals with the Upper Fairmount Development Program.



El Cerrito

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
Linking Business and Community Since 1936

P.O. Box 538 • El Cerrito, CA 94530

Chamber Officers

President	John C. Stashik, Premier Graphics
First Vice President	Baylan Megino, Pre-Paid Legal Services, Inc.
Second Vice President	Kent Langston, Orchard Supply Hardware
Secretary-Treasurer	Charlie Weaver, Certified Public Accountant
Past President	Blaine Davis, Edward Jones

Staff

Manager	Sewall Glinternick
Secretary	Pat Berndt

LUNCHEON MEETING

Noon, Tuesday, March 25

Mira Vista Golf & Country Club
7901 Cutting Blvd., El Cerrito

FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Bring a prospective member to lunch with you
(with the member's business cards)

SPECIAL GUEST INTRODUCTIONS

RSVP by March 21st • (510) 233-7040 • \$16

Calendar of Events

- March 3 City Council meeting; 7:30 p.m.
- 5 Chamber Board of Directors meets; 8:30 a.m.
- 5 Art Exhibit begins at The Glenn; story on page 3.
- 6 Author William Wong will give a slide show-talk at the El Cerrito Library on his book: *Angel Island (Images of America)*. 7:00 p.m.
- 17 City Council meeting; 7:30 p.m.
- 17 St. Patrick's Day.
- 17-19 ACS Daffodil Days. See Patti or Francie to order, and support the cancer society.
- 22 City of El Cerrito annual Easter egg hunt, Arlington Park, 10 a.m.
- 25 Chamber of Commerce luncheon meeting; noon.
Mira Vista County Club; RSVP by March 21 at (510) 233-7040.
See box above for program.
- May 14 Chamber Day at the Races; Golden Gate Fields.

Sales Tax Rate Increase July 1

PASSAGE OF Measure A in the February primary election with 71 percent of the vote means that businesses in El Cerrito will have to raise the tax on sales here from 8.25% to 8.75% starting July 1.

The \$1.2 million dollars this half-cent increase is expected to raise in its first year will be used to finance a program of street repair and maintenance.

Thank You!

Our deep appreciation is extended to new director **Graeme Murison**, Department of Motor Vehicles, El Cerrito office (at Kearney St. and Manila Ave.), www.dmv.ca.gov, for co-sponsoring the expense of printing and mailing this *Byline*.

Byline typography and layout  Premier Graphics Phone: (510) 235-2195
www.4premiergraphics.com