



Mark Scott Named Chamber Manager

FORMER El Cerrito fire chief Mark Scott has been named to replace Sewall Glinternick as manager of the Chamber of Commerce. Well known to both local citizens and the business community, the new Chamber manager retired in 2006 after serving 32 years here in a career that spanned all ranks in the fire department, including 20 years as a senior manager, fire marshal, battalion chief, and fire chief.



Scott also boasts a lifetime association with west Contra Costa business, as an employee, manager, partner, and small business owner, which gives him a unique set of skills that will help him serve the Chamber's needs during these challenging economic times. His active involvement in this community is characterized by continuous volunteerism and service club membership and leadership.

As a member of Salesian High School's Board of Directors, he has served on that institution's personnel, building and grounds, and development committees, and helped organize the school's Alumni Golf Tournament and Silent Auction.

A long-time member of the El Cerrito Rotary Club, Scott was also fund-raising chairman for the city's Fourth of July celebration. A member of that organization's Board of Directors, he helped with the group's development and fund raising activities. Scott is a 1994 honors graduate of St. Mary's College with a BA Degree in business management.

In announcing his appointment as manager, Chamber President John Stashik praised the work of the special search committee—composed of Michelle Blackwell, Jean Lipton, Baylan Megino, and Larry Seidell—for selecting Scott to replace Sewall Glinternick, who is retiring after serving 13 years as Chamber manager.

New Chamber Office



On February 9, the Chamber of Commerce will be open for business at a new office inside this building. The location is 406 Colusa Avenue, at the top of Fairmount, across the street from Fatapples' parking lot. Moving from the old office on San Pablo Avenue will begin February 5. The relocation became necessary when the city of El Cerrito purchased the Tradeway property which will eventually be redeveloped.

Independence Day Fair Sponsors Sought

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE members have been invited to become sponsors of this year's El Cerrito July 4th Festival. Last year more than 5,000 people attended the local July 4th Fair, and this year the city is hoping to make the event bigger and better than ever.

Festivities are scheduled to run from 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the corner of Pomona Avenue and Moeser Lane, with music to continue on the main stage until 7 p.m. Businesses that wish to become sponsors of this event may do so by mailing a check by May 15 to: City of El Cerrito, c/o July 4th Fair, 7007 Moeser Lane, El Cerrito, CA 94530. Five levels of sponsorships are available. They include: \$100, red; \$300, white; \$600, blue; \$1,000, sparkler; and \$2,000, fireworks.

All proceeds will be used for the 2009 festival. Remaining funds will be applied to a similar event next year or donated to the David Hunter Memorial Scholarship Fund.

Members: Cash In

OUR BEAUTIFUL new El Cerrito city maps offer members an exclusive opportunity to cash in! The Chamber's Board of Directors voted last month to allow members the opportunity to purchase maps at \$1.25 each (in lots of 20) for resale. The retail price is \$2.00.

Members interested in purchasing a supply of the maps for their customers, may arrange to do so by contacting the Chamber office at (510) 233-7040.

Local URM Update

THE CITY IS continuing to monitor the progress of the structural evaluation of unreinforced masonry buildings in El Cerrito, all of which are located in the local business district.

Based on the review of the reports so far, the city staff has noted the extent of the hazards posed by these buildings, and will use this information as a guide to working out a potential URM retrofit ordinance for El Cerrito.

The staff has already started a study of ordinances from other communities that currently have URM retrofit laws.

► See URM Update, page 3

Missing the Target

BY SEWALL GLINTERNICK

WHAT HAS BEEN, up to now, confidential information about the future of El Cerrito's empty Target store was made public January 20 when the City Council was asked to approve an agreement putting a stay on the Redevelopment Agency's right to repurchase the former Target site.

A 29-page report to the Council submitted by Community Development Director Mitch Oshinsky clearly indicated both Target and the city are between a rock and a hard place about disposition of the vacant facility.

Focal point of the problem appears to hinge on the city's right under the original 1990 Disposition and Development Agreement for the store to exercise an option to repurchase the Target site through November, 28, 2022, if the store is not open and operating as a retail use for 180 days.

The agreement gives the Redevelopment Agency the right to buy the property during the following 180 days at a price based on a complicated appraisal process designed to determine the site's fair market value at its highest and best use—which could be something other than retail.

If the highest and best use of the property is determined by the appraiser to be something other than retail, the city would have to have to pay more than the original \$8 million it took to buy the land and build the store. (The city could deduct from any increase in value the \$4.5 million it originally paid for the development, but would have to add an amount equal to the tax increment and sales tax money El Cerrito received when the store was open.) In any case, Target could not get less than the value of the land for retail use.

Oshinsky told the City Council that generally the price a retailer is willing to pay for land is much lower than other uses, and that the highest and best use of the Target site may be mixed use. He pointed out that, if the city repurchased the store, it could sell it for whatever use it chose at whatever price the market would bear. However, Oshinsky warned the Council, if the Agency chooses to exercise its repurchase option, it would have to find a buyer for the site willing to pay the amount due Target in the very near term. This, Oshinsky reported, would be "extremely challenging in the current financial environment."

Target Asks for Delay

THE LOCAL TARGET store was closed in July of 2008, which means the city's repurchase option was scheduled to begin on January 23rd of this year. However, Target Disposition Manager Julie Rosenbaum has asked the Redevelopment



Agency to delay the ability to exercise its option until April 30, 2009, to give the company time to work with the Agency to market the property for sale. This means the option could be exercised from May 1 through October 31, 2009. If Target leases the property to a retail tenant prior to April 30, the city would then have 60 days to repurchase the land.

There is a benefit to both parties in delaying the option period, Oshinsky told the City Council. Target would get the time to find a reuse scenario that would satisfy the city, and the Redevelopment Agency would have time to consider its options and find a buyer should the option be exercised.

Another indication of Target's strong desire to postpone the option period is the report that Ms. Rosenbaum has proposed an agreement under which the Redevelopment Agency would terminate its repurchase rights if Target would forgive the \$600,000 balance of a \$750,000 loan the company made the city so it could prepare the site for construction.

While terminating the repurchase option would make the site more marketable to potential buyers, Oshinsky warned the Council that the option was "the only leverage the city had to prevent Target from selling or leasing the property for an undesirable use."

In requesting the Council to approve a proposed letter of agreement putting a stay on the Redevelopment Agency's repurchase rights from January 23 to April 30, Oshinsky said: "If the Agency isn't in a financial position to exercise the option in six months, it will be forced to take what Target offers—risking potentially the reuse of the site in such a way that the city's revenue loss could be permanent."

Plenty of Give and Take

ACCORDING TO THE report sent the Council, from the time Target began plans for their Richmond store there has been a long series of confidential meetings and letters concerning the future of the El Cerrito facility as the city staff attempted to discover Target's intentions.

► See *Missing the Target*, page 3

Reinvesting in the Chamber

AS OF JANUARY 26, these individuals and businesses showed their support for the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce by rejoining the organization for another year.

Charles Weaver, CPA
Velocity Lock & Key
Freeway Motel
Ball Chiropractic Center
Dr. Foor Paws Pet Hospital
Bayview Aerie #2323 Eagles
Mechanics Bank
Norge Cleaners
Old West Gun Room
Tradeway Stores
Windrush School
Rotary Club of El Cerrito
Berndt Landscape & Garden Maint.
Center For Better Hearing Aids
The Junket
Anderson Enterprises
Jin Jin Acupressure Therapy
Diablo Trophies & Awards
El Cerrito Royale
Fatapples, Inc.
Sunset View Cemetery Assn.
Premier Graphics
East Bay Sanitary Co., Inc.
Marvin Gardens Real Estate
The Glenn Custom Framing
DABK, Inc.
Miriam Awenius
Gloria Pugliesi
Fire Chief Lance Maples
PetVet/Petfood
Honda of El Cerrito
Miller & Stolarczuk Optometrists
El Cerrito Art Association
Marty's Motors
Curves for Women
Kathleen Perka
Seidell Enterprises, Inc.

Little Caesars
El Cerrito Heating & Sheet Metal
El Cerrito Florist
Vena & Dean Flint
Ann Hardina
Marvin Collins Construction Co.
El Cerrito Public Library
Mooser Square Partners
Universal Building Services
Plaza Auto Service
SRY Construction & Electric
Tehiyah Day School
Women's Therapy Center
Contra Costa Civic Theatre
Pirlo Properties
Doherty's Truck Rental
Larry Parks, Ltd.
Uncle Wong's Restaurant
Shoot On Site! Photo Services
Civic Plaza Apartments
SavoirPrint.com
Janet Abelson
West Contra Costa Waste Management
Orchard Supply Hardware
John Bear
Ifshin Violins
Soroptimist Int'l of El Cerrito
Assured Judgment Recovery
Cerrito City Club
D'Jour Floral & Antiques
Blaine Davis, Edward Jones
FedEx Office
More Than A Carpenter
Olivero Plumbing Co., Inc.
Workforce Development Board
WCCUSD

Give Us Liberty



With the giant scissors, Chamber President John Stashik cuts the ribbon at the grand opening of Liberty Tax Service in El Cerrito. Flanked by two Statues of Liberty is city Councilmember Bill Jones. Owners Silvia and Marcus Anderson are at right.

LIBERTY TAX SERVICE, a new Chamber member which opened for business on January 12, is the local office of the third largest tax return company that boasts over 3,000 offices nationwide. They are located at 11100 San Pablo Avenue at the Bank of the West plaza.

As big as the chain is, owners of the local office, Marcus and Silvia Anderson, have hearts that are even bigger. They have campaigned repeatedly during their 12 years in this area for the March of Dimes, and this year their office will be donating 200 free tax returns to teachers and collecting cell phones for soldiers so they can call their families.

The heads of the local Liberty office proudly say their mission is: "To set the standard, improve each day, and have some fun."

MISSING THE TARGET

Continued from page 2

The responses to the Redevelopment Agency's inquiries, according to the information released last month, "ranged from closure, to renovating, to redevelopment of the site with a new store possibly in combination with more retail and residential development." At a meeting in the fall of 2007, the Target staff spoke of developing a mixed use project with retail and residential that would break ground shortly after the opening of the Richmond store.

During the summer, Agency staff began a series of meetings and telephone conversations with Target officials and a potential developer of the site, Capital Counties, regarding a mixed-use project that would include a new Target store. According to Oshinsky's report, Target presented various options that were under consideration, "even bringing their architect to present

a final model of the potential development."

However, as the economy began to turn in the fall, there were indications that the project would not happen. This was confirmed when Capital Counties staff working on the project were laid off, and when Target's stock had dropped nearly 50% and the company announced it was reducing its capital investments by \$1 billion.

URM UPDATE

Continued from page 1

Initial reports on conditions here indicate a sampling of the range of retrofit costs are: 7,008 square foot buildings, \$108,000 to \$130,000; 3,300 square foot buildings, \$86,000 to \$133,000; 1,500 square foot buildings, \$95,000 to \$114,000; and 1,250 square foot buildings, \$61,000 to \$98,000.

Playland Hours

PLAYLAND-NOT-AT-THE-BEACH, will be open every Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. throughout the month of February. The "Museum of Fun" at 10979 San Pablo Avenue is proving to be a popular location for children's birthday parties, where youngsters can play pinball machines, watch a magic show, see amazing exhibits, play games and take home souvenirs.

Those planning a birthday party are advised to book it as far in advance as possible by telephoning (510) 932-8966.

Correction

The name of the city's Economic Development/Redevelopment Manager Lori Treviño was left off last month's list of Chamber of Commerce Directors who were re-elected to new two-year terms. We're sorry for the error, Lori, but delighted you're still on the Board.



El Cerrito
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
Linking Business and Community Since 1936

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February Business Luncheon

Wednesday, February 11 • 12-1:30 p.m.

Mira Vista Golf & Country Club
7901 Cutting Blvd., El Cerrito • \$18 per person

**Guest Speaker: Erik Ridley,
Field Representative for
Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher**

Reservations required by February 9th.
RSVP to info@elcerritochamber.org or
phone (510) 233-7040.

Chamber Officers

President	Baylan Megino, White Light Associates
First Vice President	John C. Stashik, Premier Graphics
Second Vice President	Michelle Blackwell, EBMUD
Secretary-Treasurer	Charlie Weaver, Certified Public Accountant
Past President	John C. Stashik, Premier Graphics

Staff

Manager	Mark L. Scott
Secretary	Pat Berndt

Thank you!

Our deep appreciation is extended to Chamber member
Bill Kerber of the Freeway Motel,
for support in co-sponsoring the expense of printing
and mailing this *Byline*.

11645 San Pablo Avenue • El Cerrito, CA 94530
Telephone (510) 234-5581

Calendar of Events

- Feb. 2 City Council meeting, 7:30 p.m., City Hall.
- 4 Chamber Board of Directors meets, 8:30 a.m., Coldwell Banker Bartels Realty.
- 6 "Nine" opens at the Contra Costa Civic Theatre, 8 p.m. (Through March 8.) www.ccct.org
- 7 Free Internet class at the EC Public Library, 10-11 a.m. *Health and Medical Information*. Sign up: (510) 526-7512.
- 11 Chamber luncheon meeting; see box this page.
- 16 Presidents Day holiday
- 17 City Council meeting, 7:30 p.m., City Hall.
- 21 Free Internet class at the EC Public Library, 10-11 a.m. *Share Photos On-Line*. Sign up: (510) 526-7512.
- 26 *The Beatles* at the El Cerrito Public Library. Richie Unterberger will present rare recordings and film clips, 7 p.m.
- 28 Free Internet class at the EC Public Library, 10-11 a.m. *Create Your Own On-Line Documents*. Sign up: (510) 526-7512.

Byline

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