

# Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce and VISITORS CENTER



**BRINGING BUSINESS & THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER!**

4787 Old Redwood Highway, Suite 101, Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
Office Hours: Tues. - Thurs. 10 am - 3 pm    www.markwest.org

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**The Lark**

February 2016  
Volume XXX Issue 2

## SONOMA COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD REPORTS BUSINESS CONFIDENCE AT AN ALL-TIME HIGH!

Adapted from an Economic Development Board email, February 10, 2016

In Winter 2016, businesses reported a confidence level of 7/10, surpassing all scores since surveying began in 2001.

Business confidence in Sonoma County has been consistently strengthening since hitting a low of 3.2 in the winter of 2008. With confidence exceeding pre-recession levels, businesses are more inclined to increase hiring, make capital investments, and increase production.

In the past 6 months:

- 69% of respondents reported increased production
- 65% reported increased new customer orders
- 48% increased employees, with only 6% decreasing their employees

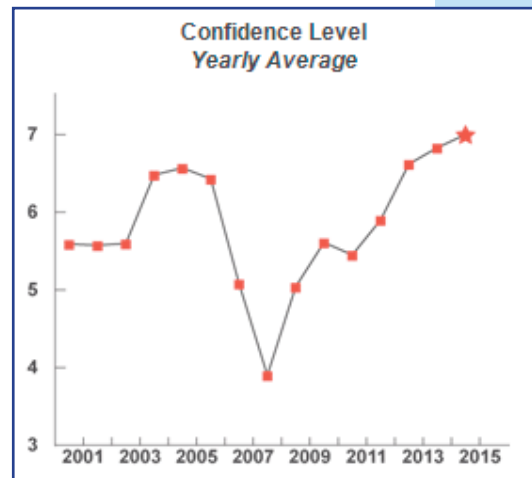
In the next 6 months:

- 44% of respondents expect to hire more employees, with only 4% predicting a decrease
- 55% expect an increase in profits, with only 13% predicting a decrease
- 50% expect to increase investments in locations and equipment, with only 6% expecting a decrease

### Capital Expenditures: Local executives mindful of global trends

The majority of CEOs took a moderate or cautious stance towards capital expenditures, which are important for the continued growth of infrastructure and productivity. Uncertainty regarding global players such as China may postpone expenditures due to concerns about the return on investments. The chart to the right illustrates respondents attitudes toward capital expenditures in Winter 2016.

Reprinted from the Press Democrat Website:  
<http://www.pressdemocrat.com/business/5109793-181/sonoma-countys-42-percent-unemployment>



February Social  
hosted by  
Military Order of  
Purple Heart.  
See p3

**UPCOMING EVENTS: next AFTER HOURS BUSINESS SOCIAL**

Hosted by  
**Mark West Springs Lodge**  
2520 Mark West Springs Rd., Santa Rosa

Thursday March 10, 2016  
5:30 PM - 7:30 PM



Steve Plamann  
Aaction Rents  
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.*

**CHAMBER MEETINGS**

**Board of Directors**

Second Tuesday  
Of Each Month  
11:30 am - 1:00 pm at  
Best Western Plus Wine  
Country Inn & Suites  
870 Hopper Av. S.R.

**Ambassadors Mtg.**

Second Thursday  
Of Each Month  
4:00 pm - 5:00 pm  
At the Chamber offices

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

The Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce appreciates your membership and involvement. If you are like me you can see all the benefits from being a Chamber member. I enjoy the connections I make networking with other members and guests at our monthly Socials. All the other promotional opportunities with the member directory, yearly trade show and the web site bring in new business every week. When I'm talking with a local business owner who is not a Chamber member, I introduce him or her to all the advantages my Chamber membership has given me. I know that if they decide to join the Chamber it will be good for them and it will benefit all the other Chamber members. I would urge all of you to do the same. You will truly be doing a big favor to any business that joins the Chamber and you will be making it stronger and more effective for the community and all our members.

The new Business Directory will be out soon. Take advantage of this inexpensive promotional opportunity. Sign up now for a discount on your ad. Many size options are available. Directories will be distributed throughout the community and will be accessible online.

We had a real fun Social on February 11th at The Best Western plus Wine Country Inn & Suites, co-hosted by the Military Order of the Purple Heart, Chapter #78. Our special thanks go out to Todd Anderson and Walt Smith for being such excellent hosts. We had another great turnout, lots of good food, and plenty to drink. Many great prizes were given away. Our next Social will be March 10th at 5:30PM and is hosted by Mark West Lodge Event Center and Restaurant, 2520 Mark West Springs Road in Santa Rosa. This is an excellent opportunity to see this historic landmark under new ownership. Please join us for food, wine, fun, prizes, and cash giveaways. And you'll have the opportunity to make many business connections with great people.

The annual Rose Parade in Santa Rosa is May 21st. Join us by walking the route while you promote your business to thousands of onlookers. This is a real fun event and a huge promotional opportunity.

A reminder that our yearly Installation Dinner will be held again at Charlie's Grill in Windsor on August 19th. The starting time is 6:00pm.

Our upcoming luncheon with James Gore is scheduled for September 21th at the Best Western Plus Wine Country Inn and Suites. The start time is 11:30. Sign up online and order your food at the same time. The sandwiches are from Molsberry Market and they come with a drink. We have limited seating, so sign up early.

*Steve Plamann, President*



*Socials, Ribbon Cuttings, and other Chamber events are a great way to make new business contacts.*



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707/546-0307**



**David Hartman**

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Santa Rosa, CA 95403

707-546-5717  
FAX 707-546-0902

## FEBRUARY 11 SOCIAL SPONSORED BY MILITARY ORDER OF PURPLE HEART, CHAPTER #78

Walt Smith, Donation Coordinator for Military Order of Purple Heart, Chapter #78, hosted the February Social. This event marked the unveiling of the Wounded Veterans' Thrift Store, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that Walt and other veterans are running to benefit wounded veterans.

I visited the store myself, and Walt is right when he says they have a little of everything: furniture, household goods, clothes, books, and more. They gladly take donations on-site, or you can call Walt and he or one of his partners will come pick it up. The store is at 10 Enterprise Drive in Rohnert Park, 707-536-5154 or 707-479-7356. Hours are 10:00 am - 5:00 pm, seven days a week.

The great thing about the Wounded Veterans' Thrift Store is that all profits after expenses go to support wounded vets. You can be confident your contribution will actually benefit those it's intended for. Walt introduced Danny Gutierrez, who is a major factor in the store's mounting success. Walt and Danny hope to expand to additional locations soon, so let's show them support, and shop and donate there!

This Social was put on with the help of Todd Anderson, General Manager of Best Western Plus Wine Country Inn & Suites where the event was held. It took place in their Breakfast Bar, which is available to their guests when they need a great breakfast and a convenient place to enjoy it.

### Winners for the Evening:

The Pot of Gold was \$80. The winner would have been Desmond Wines but they were not present. The Pot increases to \$100 for March. Be there and win it!

Todd Anderson, Best Western Plus Wine Country Inn & Suites, won the 50/50 drawing and took home \$52.50.

Walt Smith donated several door prizes from the stock of the Wounded Veterans' Thrift Store. These included gift baskets and small household goods like picture frames, wine glasses, and stuffed animals. Winners were Steve Plamann of Action Rents, Todd Anderson of Best Western Wine Country Inn & Suites, Larry Gilbert of Gilbert and Gall - LegalShield Independent Associates, Doug Williams of Central Fire Authority of Sonoma County, Willie Lamberson of Lamberson Tile, Terry Morgan of Loughlin Marketing, Kathleen Phillips of Key Properties, Brian Molsberry of Molsberry Markets, Inc., and Lori Rooney of NorthBay biz Magazine. Margaret DiGenova of California American Water won a gift certificate for an overnight stay at Best Western Plus Wine Country Inn & Suites. John Essman of SonomaCONNECTION took home a bottle of wine donated by Eichler's Auto & Truck Repair.

*Contributed by Peter Loughlin, Loughlin Marketing*



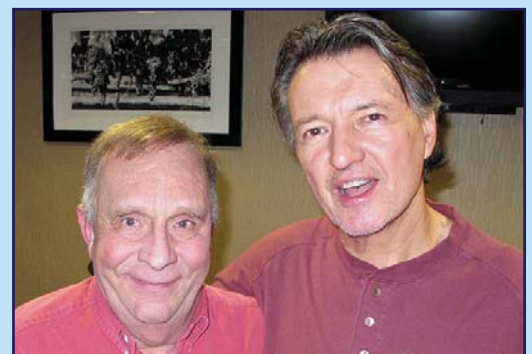
*Co-hosts Walt Smith of Military Order of Purple Heart, Chapter #78 (left) and Todd Anderson of Best Western Plus Wine Country Inn & Suites. Todd is wearing a fetching silk flower from the gift basket prizes donated by Walt.*



*Dan and Patricia Gutierrez, who Walt says are indispensable to running the Wounded Veterans Thrift Store.*



*Ed Whitt of Valley Yellow pages (left) is the Chamber's Head Ambassador and our EmCee at our socials. He is shown here awarding Todd Anderson with his raffle winnings. Come to the next social and you might be the big winner!*



*Guest Tom Eichler of Eichler's Automotive Repair (left) with Steve Plamann of Aaction Rents (right). Chamber socials are a great way to make new business connections!*

## TAX CREDITS AND INCENTIVES AVAILABLE TO SONOMA COUNTY BUSINESSES

*From an email sent by The Sonoma County Economic Development Board (EDB), March 3, 2016*

The Sonoma County Economic Development Board (EDB) would like to help your business take advantage of important tax credits and hiring incentives. Over the past year we have assisted local businesses in obtaining over \$3.5 million in tax credits, exemptions, and training subsidies.



The California Competes Tax Credit is an income tax credit available to businesses who invest and create new jobs in California. The state will be accepting

applications from March 7, 2016, through March 28, 2016 for over \$50 million in tax credits.

Any business can apply for the tax credit and 25% of the credits will be reserved for businesses with revenues of less than \$2 million. The application, and a helpful Tax Credit Application Guide can all be found online here.

Please contact Tim Ricard at 707 565-7257 or [tim.ricard@sonoma-county.org](mailto:tim.ricard@sonoma-county.org) for assistance in applying for the tax credit or to learn more about additional business incentives and how the EDB can help your business with:

- Workforce issues- finding qualified employees, on the job training, and hiring incentives
- Obtaining permits and navigating the regulatory process
- Marketing and demographic research
- Access to capital
- Energy efficiency and other rebate programs

## SONOMA COUNTY RESTAURANT WEEK

The 7th annual Sonoma County Restaurant Week will continue the tradition of celebrating the finest Sonoma County food! From March 7th through March 13th, 2016, participating restaurants will present fantastic food at fantastic prices.



### Two Meals - Three Great Prices

The 2-course prix-fixe lunch option will be offered again in 2016 by participating restaurants, priced at \$10 or \$15. And as always, all restaurants will offer a 3-course prix-fixe dinner menu for \$19, \$29 or \$39.

There are no tickets or passes required. Food lovers can simply dine out at as many participating restaurants as they would like during Sonoma County Restaurant Week, explore new dining opportunities, or enjoy old favorites. Reservations are strongly recommended!

As we get closer to the 2016 event, you can search to see the participating restaurants and what dining options they are offering! Visit <http://www.sonomacounty.com/restaurant-week/restaurants> for a list of participating establishments.

Some of the **112 participating restaurants** include:

- Pub Republic
- Trattoria Cattaneo
- The Girl & the Fig
- Charlies Restaurant
- Bear Republic Brewing Co., Inc.
- Union Hotel
- Cattlemens Restaurant
- John Ash & Co. Restaurant
- Nectar Restaurant & Lounge
- Petaluma Pie Company
- Rustic
- The Steakhouse @ Equus

And Many More!

So Go Local, Dine Local, and support our local businesses.

For more information visit <http://www.sonomacounty.com/restaurant-week>

## UPCOMING BUSINESS SOCIALS

Thursday, March 10, 2016  
Chamber Business After Hours Social 5:30-7:30pm  
Hosted by **Mark West Lodge**  
2520 Mark West Springs Rd., Santa Rosa

Thursday, April 14, 2016  
Chamber Business After Hours Social 5:30-7:30pm  
Hosted by **Postal Plus**  
422 Larkfield Center, Santa Rosa

Thursday, May 12, 2016  
Chamber Business After Hours Social 5:30-7:30pm  
Hosted by **Cloverleaf Ranch & Valley Yellow Pages**  
3892 Old Redwood Hwy., Santa Rosa

Saturday May 21, 2016  
Chamber Float in the **Luther Burbank Rose Parade**  
Parade Steps Off at 12:15 pm  
All members are invited to participate  
Call the Chamber office for more information

Thursday, June 9, 2016  
Chamber Business After Hours Social 5:30-7:30pm  
Hosted by **Central Fire Authority of Sonoma County**  
45 Lark Center Drive, Santa Rosa

Thursday, July 14, 2016  
Chamber Business After Hours Social 5:30-7:30pm  
Hosted by **AJ Printing & Graphics**  
1315 North Dutton Avenue, Santa Rosa

Thursday, August 11, 2016  
Chamber Business After Hours Social 5:30-7:30pm  
**Open Date** - Please contact the Chamber office at 578-7975 or email us at office@markwest.org to host this social

Friday, August 19, 2016  
**Chamber 35th Annual Installation Dinner**  
6:00-9:00pm  
Hosted at Charlie's Restaurant at the Windsor Golf Club  
1320 19th Hole Drive, Windsor

Thursday, September 8, 2016  
Chamber Business After Hours Social 5:30-7:30pm  
**Open Date** - Please contact the Chamber office at 578-7975 or email office@markwest.org to host it

Wednesday September 21, 2016  
**Chamber Business Luncheon** 11:30am-1:00pm  
Topic: State of Sonoma County Report  
Speaker: 4th District Supervisor James Gore  
Hosted at Best Western Plus Wine Country Inn & Suites  
870 Hopper Ave, Santa Rosa

Wednesday, October 5, 2016  
**27th Annual Wine Country Harvest Faire & Business Showcase** 4:00pm-7:00pm

This free event showcases businesses while you enjoy complimentary food and Sonoma County wines and beverages. For information call the Chamber: 707 578-7975 or contact us at <http://www.markwest.org/contactus.cfm>



Thursday, October 13, 2016  
Chamber Business After Hours Social 5:30-7:30pm  
Hosted by **Aaction Rents & Friendly Feed & Supply**  
1000 River Road, Santa Rosa

Thursday, November 10, 2016  
Chamber Business After Hours Social 5:30-7:30pm  
Hosted by **Anytime Fitness**  
490 Larkfield Center, Santa Rosa

Wednesday, December 7, 2016  
Holiday Tree Lighting - Community Event 6:00pm  
Hosted by **Molsberry Markets, Inc.**  
522 Larkfield Center, Santa Rosa

Thursday, December 8, 2016  
Chamber Business After Hours Social 5:30-7:30pm  
Hosted by **Exchange Bank, Larkfield Branch & Molsberry Markets, Inc.**  
500 Larkfield Center, Santa Rosa

*Interested in joining our Ambassador Club?*  
Contact Ed Whitt  
Valley Yellow Pages  
707-322-8770  
[edward.whitt@myyp.com](mailto:edward.whitt@myyp.com)



*To host a Ribbon Cutting, contact...*  
Aggie Maggio  
Realtor @ Coldwell Banker



*Want to keep abreast of important information pertinent to local business issues?*  
Visit: <http://edb.sonoma-county.org/>

## WANT MORE BUSINESS? TRY WEBSITE ANALYTICS

I've been in the marketing field for many years and have been responsible for managing several websites. But only recently have I been asked to analyze website traffic and see if I can help generate more business from it. "Whoah," says I, "that sounds intimidating."

Getting a grip, I went to Google and started researching the leading tool for studying website traffic, Google Analytics. It's easy for even a moderately experienced site manager to install and best of all, it's **totally free**. No kidding.

### **"But I don't sell online so I don't need analytics."**

If you've ever said this, allow me to politely correct you. First, if you have a website at all, you are selling online because your site is one big sales pitch for your business. Second, visitor activity on a purely informational website can tell you a lot about how your potential customers see your business and whether your site succeeds in captivating them.

Most importantly, a little analysis will reveal where your site visitors came from and what they did on your site. From that, you can infer how they liked the experience and what you should do to improve it.

### **An Example from a Small Business**

Suppose you run a small business. One rainy afternoon with nothing better to do, you dip into Google Analytics and look at the "Referrals" report. This lists all the websites where people found and clicked links to your site. You discover that a large number of people came from [www.billysdirectory.com](http://www.billysdirectory.com), a website called "Billy Joe's Business Directory". You've never heard of them, but you go there and find out that Billy Joe listed you for free some years ago. Lots of people find your business there. What a great surprise!

This is hugely valuable information. You now know you should go about finding other sites like Billy Joe's, and see if they will list you too. Or maybe you should pay Billy Joe for a "Premium" listing with a longer description and your logo.

But this is just the beginning. Google Analytics lets you see what people do once they reach your site. You see that referrals from Billy Joe's site landed on your "About Us" page but left immediately without engaging any more deeply. What's the problem? You look at your About Us page, and realize that although it has a very nice photo of you and your dog, it doesn't really say anything about your business. So you update or "optimize" it by re-writing your copy and adding prominent link buttons to all your key offerings. Next week you go back to Google Analytics and find that people clicking through from the Billy Joe site are now following your links and eventually clicking on the "Contact Us" page! No wonder business seems to have picked up!

Though this example may seem simple, it is a very realistic depiction of how web analytics builds business. It enables you to start a continual cycle of discovery and improvement. The extent to which you can analyze your site traffic and start building your business is really unlimited and you can start simple -- as I have -- and get more sophisticated as your skills improve -- as I intend to!

*Contributed by Peter Loughlin, Loughlin Marketing*



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**MARK WEST AREA COMMUNITY INFORMATION**

AREA POPULATION - within a 3 mile radius - 20,000  
 ELEVATION - 160 feet above sea level  
 BOUNDARIES - Area approximately bounded by:  
 Shiloh Road - North Piner Road - South  
 West Olivet Road - West Lodge on Mark West Springs Rd - East

*The Lark Newsletter is published monthly under the direction of:*  
 The Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Center  
 4787 Old Redwood Hiwy, Suite 101, Santa Rosa, CA 95403

ADVERTISING: 6 months \$107.50; 1 year \$200  
 FLYER INSERTION: \$35 per issue.  
 You supply a .pdf version of your 8.5" x 11" flyer to info@markwest.org  
 You can pay online at <http://markwest.org/payment>

The Lark Newsletter is emailed to member businesses each month.  
 For more information, contact the Chamber office at 578-7975.

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Deadline for publication is the 3rd Wednesday of the month.  
 Please email your materials to info@markwest.org

*Promote your business with  
 your flyer in the Chamber newsletter.  
 You supply the flyers - We do the work!*

**CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP DUES**  
 Effective May 1, 2006

Standard Dues		Non-Profit Dues
\$125.00	Business (1-5 Personnel)	\$110.00
\$175.00	Business (6-10 Personnel)	\$155.00
\$245.00	Business (11+ Personnel)	\$215.00
\$625.00	Corporate Sponsor	
\$ 95.00	Individual (no business affiliation)	

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## AFTER HOURS BUSINESS SOCIAL

Thursday  
March 10, 2016  
5:30 - 7:30 pm

## MARK WEST SPRINGS LODGE

2520 Mark West  
Springs Road, Santa Rosa

**BRINGING BUSINESS & THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER!**

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THE WINDSOR TIMES



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