

Livermore Chamber Prospers in 2008, Focuses on Members' Prosperity in 2009

By Livermore Chamber of Commerce

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As the fifth largest chamber in the Bay Area, the Livermore Chamber of Commerce has had many successful programs in 2008. The Chamber is focusing on new programs for 2009 to build successes for its members.

The Livermore Chamber of Commerce has become the fifth largest chamber in the Bay Area in 2008. CEO Dale Kaye points to the Chamber's ability to be "forward-looking" and envisions exciting possibilities, rejecting cookie-cutter thinking as a major reason for the Chamber's success. Also Livermore's growth, its vibrant new downtown and growing wine country all contribute to the Chamber's success. Livermore Mayor Marshall Kamena says, "David Kent, board chairman, CEO Dale Kaye, and the board of directors have worked hand in hand with the city to position our town as the premier destination spot in the county. The synergy between the city and the Chamber has catapulted our vitality enormously."

The Livermore Chamber's growth spurt has made it an ever more effective referral and networking service for its members. Cynthia Walters, Director of Sales at the Hampton Inn reports that with the support of the Livermore Chamber, they have successfully developed a positive relation with a large business account in the area that has already brought over \$22,000.

The Chamber's Livermore Valley Film Commission markets the area for film and television production and has brought in over 300 days of production. The Cities of Pleasanton and Dublin officially joined the commission this year, broadening the area's appeal to production. Producers are discovering the large variety of filming sites in the area from ranches to ultra modern office complexes, from wineries to the VA Hospital. The film office now has a library of over 1,000 photos and is continually working with Discover, PBS and on national commercial for products like Sutter Health Care, PG&E, Chevron, Toyota, Dodge and Wii's Samba de Amigo. According to Wilson Wu, an award winning location manager who has shot for years in Northern California, "The Livermore Valley Film Commission is one of the best, if not the very best, film commission in Northern California. It has friendly, helpful, resourceful people who move on a moment's notice" Livermore Mayor Kamena has not only been a great asset as a member of the Chamber's Board of Director but had the vision to immediately become a key advocate for a film commission in the area.

The Livermore Chamber's Hispanic Business Council was formed to give a voice to Hispanic business owners and to teach the non-Hispanic how to market to the growing Hispanic community. Jose Madriz, owner of El Charro Taqueria a member of the Hispanic Council said, "I am so happy the Chamber started this council. I need to market more to Hispanics and this will help me develop the tools I need. Whatever your business is, you need to discover your target audiences. Hispanics are a huge part of the Livermore area."

2008 also saw the redesign and optimization of the Livermore Chamber of Commerce's Web site (<http://www.livermorechamber.org>). The design of the Web site drew praise from top advertising executives, but more importantly site visits increased 100 percent and the number of pages views increased a whopping 400 percent due to the new easy-to-use structure and search engine optimization. With more advertising done on the Web than any other medium, the redesign gives chamber members the advantage of a cutting-edge marketing tool. Lou DiGuisto, Senior Partner of Louws Management, a consulting company for top ad agencies around the world, praised the site as well as the Chamber's quick use of social networking. "A blog, MySpace and Facebook are a particularly effective way to market members' businesses and a path

advocated for all businesses around the world." In 2009, Livermore Chamber members who have had the resources to build their own Web site will have a remarkable new benefit. For a small fee, members can have a Chamber web page added and search engine optimized by Thomas Petty from WSI (<http://www.wsismartsolutions.com>).

The Chamber's Wine Country Luncheons held in Livermore Valley's beautiful wine country were sellouts. Their popularity is attributed to the impressive speakers as well as the beautiful venues. Each year, the Chamber has been able to raise the bar by featuring impressive speakers and holding the events in wineries around Livermore Valley's beautiful wine country.

During their annual planning retreat the Chamber board determined that the Chamber will work diligently to partner even more with the City. The objective will be to bring in developers and to sell the story of doing business in Livermore, and why it is a good choice. "The city council priorities complement well those of the chamber board. It takes two: the chamber and you," says Mayor Kamena. "Partnerships are the backbones of our success." Additionally, the board has decided to work closely with destination partners to find the resources to have a 24/7 Visitors Center to showcase Livermore's wineries, downtown and other businesses.

"There are businesses that thrive, and there are businesses that wilt in every recession. The health of a community's businesses has a direct impact upon the well-being our schools, our services and infrastructure and our citizens. In 2009, the Livermore Chamber of Commerce will continue to be a positive force that facilitates and ensures the success of our area businesses," said David Kent, chief executive of The Wine Group and chairman-elect of the Chamber.

The Livermore Chamber will work with the two Livermore national Labs, the city's technology companies and our education partners as well as the US Chamber of Commerce and the Department of Commerce on an International Forum in 2009. Chamber leaders believe that many Bay Area businesses depend on international relationships. Most of our business leaders for small and large companies feel that we need to embrace a world perspective as part of our regional economic strategy. It should include the infrastructure that comes with it. Because of this the Chamber will play an important role in advocating for free trade agreements and zones and the loosening of restrictions on visas for foreign talent.

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The Livermore Chamber of Commerce is one of the fastest growing chambers in California. Recognizing the special needs of business, we advocate for members at every level of government from local to Federal.

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