



Supervisor Alice Lai-Bitker Newsletter

December 2006

Alameda County, District 3

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Special Events/Save the Date

**Thursday, January 25 –
3rd Annual State of the
County, District 3**

**7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
San Leandro Library**

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San Lorenzo Business Tour

As your County Supervisor I have committed myself to work to expand opportunities not only for businesses in Alameda County but also our local businesses. In particular I have been very focused on the economic development in the unincorporated area and recently I took a tour to visit some businesses in the San Lorenzo industrial area, the only industrial area in unincorporated Alameda County! The tour focused on the Grant Avenue area which includes 30 businesses. Joining me were county staff from redevelopment and economic development.

Our tour included stops at Tharco, Sara Lee, and Too Good Gourmet. Tharco makes boxes for a wide variety of companies including Shutterfly and the Wine Club. Their headquarters are based in San Lorenzo where they employ 700 people. Their plant has over 500,000 square feet of space, stretches 3 city blocks and operates 24 hours, 7 days a week. Tharco is interested in getting the County's assistance with employee training, waste reduction, and façade improvement.

In San Lorenzo, Sara Lee makes Gallo salami, pepperoni and other meat products which are distributed nationwide. They employ 170 people and also operate 24/7. I'm hoping to work with them in improving the conditions of streets near Grant Avenue, waste reduction, and assistance when people dump large items on their property.

Last but not least is Too Good Gourmet, a mother/daughter owned business. This eight year old company moved to San Lorenzo three years ago from Santa Cruz. They make high end gourmet products (cookies, dips, pretzels) in brightly colored gift boxes. The cookies are made at their San Lorenzo plant and sold through Trader Joe's, Target and gift stores. They are interested in County assistance for industrial bonds and façade improvements.

In addition, some weeks ago I met with representatives from New United Motor Manufacturing Inc., more commonly known as NUMMI. I discussed exploring opportunities for creating a supply cluster in Grant Avenue area.

I enjoyed meeting these businesses and look forward to addressing some of the issues that they raised. Soon Alameda County will finish its economic plan for the unincorporated area and I am committed to continuing to assist our local businesses.

Monitoring Health Risks at Crown Beach

One of the many natural treasures in my district is the beautiful Alameda Crown Beach. Many people use it to picnic, exercise, or windsurf. That's why in the past when I read a newspaper article about bacteria at the beach I wanted to get involved.

I'm happy to report that in conjunction with Save the Bay, the East Bay Regional Park District and the Alameda County Environmental Health Department, we have achieved dramatic improvements in the beach bacteria monitoring program at Crown Beach. This behind-the-scenes program protects public health by testing the beach water for bacteria that can make people sick. When high bacteria levels are found, warning signs are posted to let beachgoers know that there is a health risk. Bay and coastal beaches are monitored for bacteria, and it's always a good idea to check whether warning signs are posted before you go in the water. Children in particular have a higher chance of getting sick from beach water bacteria.

The testing method and signage at Crown Beach are both being upgraded by the East Bay Regional Park District, which does the water testing at the Beach. The old monitoring method took 3-5 days to return results. With funding from my office the Park district piloted a new method of obtaining results. With the new method results are given in just 24 hours, getting information out to the beachgoers up to 4 days faster. Beachgoers will also see new warning signage with a "stoplight" symbol: Red means Keep Out, known problem; Yellow means Warning, high bacteria levels; and Green means Low Risk. These signs replace older text-based signs, which showed columns of raw test result data that were hard to understand. Next time you're at Crown Beach, check the bacteria levels at one of the 5 permanent sign kiosks along the beach.

Medicare Part D: Deadline coming up soon

For existing Medicare beneficiaries or those that are new to Medicare, the deadline to re-enroll or enroll for 2007 is December 31, 2006. Existing beneficiaries who are satisfied with their plans do not have to re-enroll - plans are carried over into 2007.

For new Medicare beneficiaries, you may want to enroll in Medicare Part D if you require prescription medications. If you foresee a requirement for prescription medications in the future, you may want to sign up now- if you are eligible to sign up now, but you choose to wait, you may receive costly penalties in the future. If you have questions, please use the information below to evaluate your specific situation to see if Medicare Part D is for you.

For existing Medicare Part D beneficiaries, there is still time to evaluate your specific situation to see if there are any new financial impacts or medication impacts to your prescription drug plans. Plan premium costs for 2007 may have increased and the medications that are covered may have changed as well. Please evaluate your plans to see if it is still the best plan for you.

DID YOU KNOW?

Alameda County has a Façade Improvement Program?

The Program is funded by the Alameda County Redevelopment Agency and provides forgivable loans to tenants and property owners for the improvement of commercial structures within redevelopment sub-areas including Ashland and San Lorenzo.

For additional information and to obtain an application to apply go to:

www.acgov.org/cda (click on Redevelopment the left and then Programs) Find out about how the funding can be used, eligibility and view before and after photos of previous applicants!

Evaluating your plans may save you money and problems with medications next year! You can get help with evaluating your Medicare Part D plans through the following ways:

* Internet users can go to my website for Medicare Part D assistance at www.acgov.org/board/district3/medicareD.htm

* Call Legal Assistance for Seniors/Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program at (510) 839-0393 or visit www.lashicap.org.

* Visit the Medicare website at www.medicare.gov or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).

* Call my office at 272-6693 for any other questions.

Community Events / Announcements

Bay Area Vendor Fair – Mark your calendar to attend the 2007 Bay Area Vendor Fair to be held in Oakland on Thursday, May 24, 2007. Tap into billions of dollars in contracting opportunities, meet buyers and contracting officers from various Bay Area public agencies, and benefit from meeting and interacting with procurement officers from various private and public sectors. For additional information contact Lee Davis, Committee Chairman at 510-464-6950 or www.bayareavendorfair.com

Health care Interpreter Training – Asian Health Services is offering “Connecting Worlds” health care interpreter training to be held Jan – Feb 2007. This training is offered for bilingual speakers in Spanish, Cantonese, Korean, Cambodian, and Vietnamese. Download and complete an application at www.ahschc.org/language.htm. Applications are due Jan. 10, 2007. Questions at 510-986-1153 x 206.

Low income seniors’ home renovation – Rebuilding Oakland Together is looking for low income seniors, age 62 or older, whose homes need renovation. Projects range from a fresh coat of paint or debris removal to weather stripping or plumbing repairs. Work is free. Call (510) 625-0316 for an application or visit www.rtoakland.org.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS! **From the Supervisorial District 3 Team**

We want to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a very happy and safe holiday this month. See you next year!

