

Businesses in Lafayette

Lafayette Plaza Redesign Completed

Downtown Looking Up

Leigh Greenridge Park Now A Reality

Proposed “Downtown Project” $4.4 Million Project Would Improve Traffic Flow

Library Grand Opening

20 Years of Lafayette VISTAS

LAFAYETTE MERCANTILE:

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Since that time, Vistas covers and articles have alternated between providing hard news, community color, background information, and a sense for the city's history.

The news that we've covered has included articles devoted to major development projects including Town Center, the Oakwood Athletic Club, LaFiesta Square, and the Lafayette Mercantile. We also provided in-depth coverage on big municipal projects including the redevelopment of Buckeye Fields, the Veterans Memorial Building and, of course, the design, fundraising, and construction of the new Lafayette Library and Learning Center.

We've covered the different flavors of the community, with spotlights on the Lafayette Community Foundation, Las Trampas and Futures Explored, and the arrival of classical music to Lafayette via the Gold Coast Chamber Players.

To provide insight to the inner workings of the municipal government, we've run a series of “Gov. 101” articles describing the local land use planning process, the clean water program, and chronicling the vicissitudes of the State and municipal budget. Over the years we've delivered primer after primer on the city's redevelopment agency, culminating in last winter's issue entitled “State Kills Redevelopment.”

And, with the help of the Lafayette Historical Society, we've run several articles describing a Lafayette from a different time. The “historic snapshots” column is one of our favorites, and we've occasionally covered a wide variety of historic topics, including “Who Was Lafayette”, “Elam Brown Arrives”, and the development of the Lafayette Reservoir.

On a half dozen occasions during the life of the Vistas, the City Council has placed tax measures before the voters and, in those instances, we've paid a little bit extra to print, in red ink, a “Special Edition” logo across the masthead at the top of the newsletter. We'd like to think that these issues have become collector's items, but a quick check of EBay suggests that the secondary market for these issues has yet to develop.

What's Worked, What Hasn't

Part of the challenge with Vistas is keeping it relevant and timely. Our design-to-delivery timeline is generally six to eight weeks, so we're not in the position — like newspapers — to deliver the most up to date news. We do, however, try to keep important issues on the face of the Vistas, thus making it relevant to our readers’ lives.

Interestingly, the issue of the newsletter that generated more phone calls and email than any other — by a wide margin — was the one we published way back in summer, 2000. The cover article, “Let's Keep These Secrets” was a compendium of the city staff’s favorite, but secret, things about Lafayette. They included the Reservoir rim trail, the Brook Street Tot Lot, and a fresh, hot glazed from Johnny’s Donuts. We learned from that issue that Lafayette residents are an opinionated but not very secretive bunch, when dozens of people fired off emails detailing their secret Lafayette places. In a follow up issue we listed many of those new secrets for all to enjoy. Perhaps we'll do that again soon.

Keeping and staying fresh is our constant, but fun, challenge. If you have any suggestions regarding themes, articles, or how we might otherwise improve the newsletter, please forward them to Vistas Editor, Tracy Robinson, at trobinson@lovelafayette.org.
In February of 2011, the City of Lafayette set a goal of reaching a 75% waste diversion rate through a collaborative effort working with Sustainable Lafayette, the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, and the Lafayette School District. The waste diversion rate is the percentage of a waste stream that is diverted away from the landfill to recycling, and is based on weight; currently Lafayette diverts around 60% of its waste. By working closely with community partners the city hopes to become the first city in Contra Costa County to achieve a waste diversion rate of 75%.

Sustainable Lafayette spearheaded the effort this past summer by sponsoring a summer internship to study where our waste comes from and where it goes. Since the study, several community groups have started taking steps to help the city achieve its goal. The Chamber started a Business Recycling Initiative; the School District is working hard on lunch recycling; and Sustainable Lafayette recently formed a Waste Diversion Committee that partnered with the City of Lafayette Parks & Rec. Dept. to provide recycling containers and labels for the Lafayette Community Center. CalRecycle, the State’s recycling and diversion agency, is providing partial grant funding for the recycling containers and signage for this purpose. In addition, Sustainable Lafayette is working on a new campaign to educate the community, tentatively called Love Lafayette, Love Recycling.

Efforts can be made across the city and in every household; over 80% of what the average person throws away could be recycled or composted. Therefore, daily decisions made by each individual can help the city achieve its goal. Recycle everything that can be recycled, participate in the food scrap program, compost, and support local businesses that do recycle. For more information on what you can do to help please visit wastediversion.org or sustainablelafayette.org.

GARbage facts

- The average American office worker uses about 500 disposable cups every year.
- Every year, Americans throw away enough paper and plastic cups, forks, and spoons to circle the equator 300 times.
- Americans use approximately 1 billion shopping bags annually, creating 300,000 tons of landfill waste.
- It has been estimated that recycling, re-use, and composting create six to ten times as many jobs as waste incineration and landfills.
- The estimated 2.6 billion holiday cards sold each year in the U.S. could fill a football field 10 stories high.
- The recycling rate of 32.5 percent in 2006 saved the carbon emission equivalent of taking 39.4 million cars off the road, and the energy equivalent of 6.8 million households’ annual energy consumption, or 222.1 million barrels of oil.
- The energy saved by recycling one glass bottle can light a 100-watt light bulb for four hours or run a computer for 30 minutes.

Source: www.cleanair.org
NEW POLICE CHIEF FOR LAFAYETTE

The City is pleased to announce the arrival of Lt. Eric Christensen of the Contra Costa County Sheriff’s Office, who has been chosen to serve as Lafayette’s next Police Chief. Christensen replaces Mike Hubbard, who retired after five years in Lafayette and more than twenty-five years with the Sheriff’s Department. Lt. Christensen is particularly well-qualified for the position. He holds a BS in Criminal Justice Administration from Cal State Hayward, spent three years in the U.S. Army, and seventeen in the Army Reserve. He joined the Contra Costa Sheriff in 1991, and now has twenty years of local law enforcement under his belt. His service has included stints as a patrol deputy and detective for the San Ramon Police Department; patrol supervisor in Oakley; and manager of the Department Emergency Services Support Unit. During his time in the Sheriff’s office, Lt. Christensen has won several Sheriff’s Office awards, including the Custody Services Officer of the Year (1997) and Deputy of the Year (1999). With his extensive background in local law enforcement in suburban communities, Lt. Christensen is well-qualified to serve Lafayette. Given Lafayette’s potential for catastrophic wildland fires, mudslides, earthquakes, and flooding, Christensen’s experience in the Emergency Services Support Unit could be valuable to the community, although we hope to never have to draw on it! We’re fortunate to have him on our team.

If you see him on the street, please give Lt. Eric Christensen a warm welcome.