



Insight

FEBRUARY 2005

A NEWSLETTER OF THE CONCORD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

FOCUS ON: Knowledge and Expansion

Concord Monitors and Encourages Business Growth

While America's economy continues to recover, Concord's economic success can't be taken for granted. That's why the City's Economic Development Program continually seeks to strengthen the business community, by learning more about companies' needs, seeking opinions and analyzing what's working – all to encourage business development. This edition of Economic Insight highlights:

- The annual business survey's identification of key business issues and trends
- Focus Group meetings with key Concord business clusters
- Exciting expansions, renovations and new business openings reflecting Concord's pro-business attitude and success in creating a stimulating business environment. ♦

2004 Concord Business Survey Results *Optimism abounds regarding 2005*

Every year, Concord's Economic Development Program surveys the City's business community to better understand local business needs and find new ways to help meet them. The survey also gauges how the City's overall business climate impacts each participant's specific company.

This year the Economic Development Program received 455 responses to the more than 6,000 surveys that were mailed in May. The information was carefully reviewed, and, in many instances, followed up with emails or phone calls, especially to companies considering relocating to Concord or expanding within the City.

Small business remains big

Small business continues to play a big role in Concord.

- The majority of responding companies (71%) were small businesses employing 50 or fewer employees.

- 73% operate out of a single Concord location or Concord headquarters office.
- 68% of surveyed companies have done business in Concord for more than five years.

Our survey revealed a number of positive indicators:

- Over 80% of respondents believe the Bay Area economy will hold steady or improve in the next 12 months.
- Almost a quarter of the companies anticipate expanding their business.
- 84% of respondents are satisfied with the services they receive from the City – 28% rate service as excellent, 45% as good and 12% as fair.

Get complete survey results

As always, comments are welcome.

To contact Concord's Economic Development staff and receive a copy of detailed survey results, please call (925) 671-3048. ♦

Focus Groups Assist Business Clusters

In-person discussions yield common needs – and networking opportunities

Concord completed a comprehensive economic profile of its business community in 2002. Entitled “An Expanding and Transitioning Economy,” the profile identified key existing and emerging industry business clusters. Business clusters have been identified as geographic concentrations of competing, complementary, or interdependent firms and industries that do business with each other and/or have a common need for talent, technology, and infrastructure. Concord’s existing business clusters are Business Support, Healthcare, and Construction/Engineering. Emerging clusters include Information Technology, Environmental Technology, Instrumentation and Biotech/Medical Technology.

Strong business clusters enhance a city’s ability to attract new businesses and retain existing ones. They do so by offering companies important advantages in a single, specific location. These include greater access to pools of qualified employees, proximity to a larger variety of suppliers and the ability to attract more customers.

Many companies in Concord’s business clusters serve regional markets and are themselves part of Bay Area clusters. The variety and growth of Concord’s business clusters indicate just how well Concord’s clusters are integrated into the region. Concord’s Economic Development Program also works regionally to promote Concord’s businesses with regional economic development organizations.

Information up close and personal

Gaining a better understanding of the needs and issues facing business clusters is important. So the City’s Economic Development Program holds “focus groups” with representative companies in selected clusters. Meeting face-to-face enables participants to discuss in depth such topics as:

- Common needs and concerns
- Pressing issues
- Employee recruitment and retention
- Location strengths and weaknesses

Economic Development staff met with representatives from Concord’s engineering cluster in June 2003, and with life science firms in October 2003. Based on issues discussed at these meetings, Economic Development Staff is working to develop a plan to address both short- and long-term concerns specific to each group.

A successful 2004 Capital Improvement Forum

As an example of a specific need, representatives from Concord’s engineering cluster told staff that they would appreciate a local business development and networking forum. They had attended a similar event in Alameda County and saw definite advantages to having one in Concord. So the Economic Development Program planned and hosted the 2004 Capital Improvement Forum this past September.

The breakfast event was well attended by 150 engineering, environmental, construction and design professionals from Concord and other parts of the Bay Area. This was the first event of its kind in Contra Costa County, and it was met with great enthusiasm. Cluster firms learned about upcoming capital improvement projects from the City of Concord, the Contra Costa Transportation Authority, the Central Contra Costa Sanitary District and the Contra Costa Water District. Feedback from attendees was extremely positive.



Bob McCleary, Executive Director of the Contra Costa Transportation Authority, speaks at the 2004 Capital Improvement Forum

Attendees stated that the 2004 Capital Improvement Forum offered them the potential to increase business activity, not only with presenting organizations but also with other attending firms — a definite networking success. Based on their response, the Economic Development Program anticipates holding similar events on a semi-annual basis.

Concord Business Expands

Communications, manufacturing and retail grow

Companies look for a number of qualities in deciding whether to relocate or expand their business. These include access to a quality workforce, a central location, affordable employee housing, an active regional retail market and a pro-business attitude on the part of the host city.

Concord offers these business building features, and the Economic Development Program continually promotes them in its attraction and retention/expansion activities. Concord is experiencing new business energy with shopping centers being renovated, new companies locating here and existing businesses expanding. Here are a few examples.

T-Mobile. This national corporation offers voice, text-messaging and high-speed wireless data services. T-Mobile recently leased 33,000 square feet in the Gateway II Tower for its Northern California headquarters.

The company anticipates hiring approximately 100 new employees to work in Concord — in addition to their workforce at their other Concord location on Bisso Lane. Most new employees will hold engineering-related positions.

Clayton Valley Shopping Center, 5400 Ygnacio Valley Road. Renovation of the 243,000 square-foot Clayton Valley Shopping Center is already underway. Located on the southwest corner of Ygnacio Valley and Clayton Road, the facility was recently purchased by Regency Centers. Regency is now negotiating to bring a

Nob Hill Foods grocery store into the vacant space left by Lucky supermarket. Plans include 16,000 square feet of new construction as well as reconfiguring and renovating existing buildings. Additionally, upgrades and improvements will be made to the site, including parking and landscaped areas.

Stedim, Inc. Many Concord businesses and residents may not know about this Concord-based company. Stedim is the world's leading designer and manufacturer of single-use, sterile plastic bag systems for the biotechnology industry. Its customers include Bayer Group, Genentech, Biogen and Amgen. Concord is the company's North American headquarters for manufacturing, marketing and sales. In 2003, Stedim added 20,000 square feet to its lab and office space. The company plans to triple its clean-

room manufacturing space by the end of 2005. Stedim also intends to hire an additional 20 employees, bringing their Concord employee base up to 100.

Salvio Pacheco Square, 2151 Salvio Street. Exciting changes and renovations have occurred at Salvio Pacheco Square, which occupies the front half of the block across from Todos Santos Plaza in downtown Concord. This joint effort between the property owners and the City of Concord Redevelopment Agency has produced a complete facelift for the building. It includes lighting, paint, signage and streetscape areas. Improvements have facilitated the attraction of new tenants, including Panama Bay Coffee, Cold Stone Creamery, House of Bagels and EJ Phair brewery and restaurant.

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Salvio Pacheco Square has undergone an exciting renovation.



Renovation in progress at Olivera Crossing

Olivera Crossing

The shopping center formerly known as Holbrook Plaza is undergoing a major transformation. Located on the corner of Port Chicago Highway and Olivera Road, the center was purchased in fall of 2002 by Mason-McDuffie Financial Corp. Mason-McDuffie bought the property with the idea of enlarging and renovating the center. Once completed, Olivera Crossing will contain 53,050 square feet of retail and commercial space and be a substantial improvement for the neighboring community. The center already contains Bradley Video, Taco Bell and Round Table Pizza. New tenants signed to date include UPS Store, Nextel Cellular, Curves fitness club, Starbucks and Subway.

Heritage Square

New tenants can also be found at Heritage Square, located on the corner of Concord Avenue and John Glenn Drive. The new additions of Trader Joe's, California Closets and Starbucks creates an exciting mix of retailers to go along with Anderson's TV and furniture stores such as Levitz and Drexel Heritage. In addition, interior construction is almost complete on Paradise 33, a Vietnamese restaurant that replaces the former Peppermill.

Willows Shopping Center

1975 Diamond Blvd. This 253,000 square-foot regional center is home to ten specialty retail and apparel shops, eight eateries, three entertainment venues and three service stores. All do business in a pleasant outdoor setting. A successful retail center, the Willows continues to attract new tenants to its mix of industry-leading stores. Recent additions include Jamba Juice and Pasta Roma. Panera Bread bakery-cafe is anticipating to be open by April 2005.

Need an Answer?

www.cityofconcord.org
www.concordfirst.com

Economic Development Program (800) 727-2254

John Montag johnm@ci.concord.ca.us

Dwayne Dalman ddalman@ci.concord.ca.us

CONTACTS

Business License*	(925) 671-3307
Flood Zone Inquiries	(925) 671-3023
Graffiti Hotline	(925) 671-3080
One-Stop Shop/Building Permits	(925) 671-3114
Planning Department	(925) 671-3152
Potholes	(925) 671-3228
Police Services, Information	(925) 671-3232
Redevelopment Agency	(925) 671-3355
Street Trees	(925) 671-3230

*application is available on website above

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Dwayne Dalman	Editor



City of Concord
 1950 Parkside Dr., MS 1B
 Concord, CA 94519-2578