

Pleasanton Weekly

Amador and Foothill soccer alumni gather for annual Ryan Gordon Alumni Games » 17

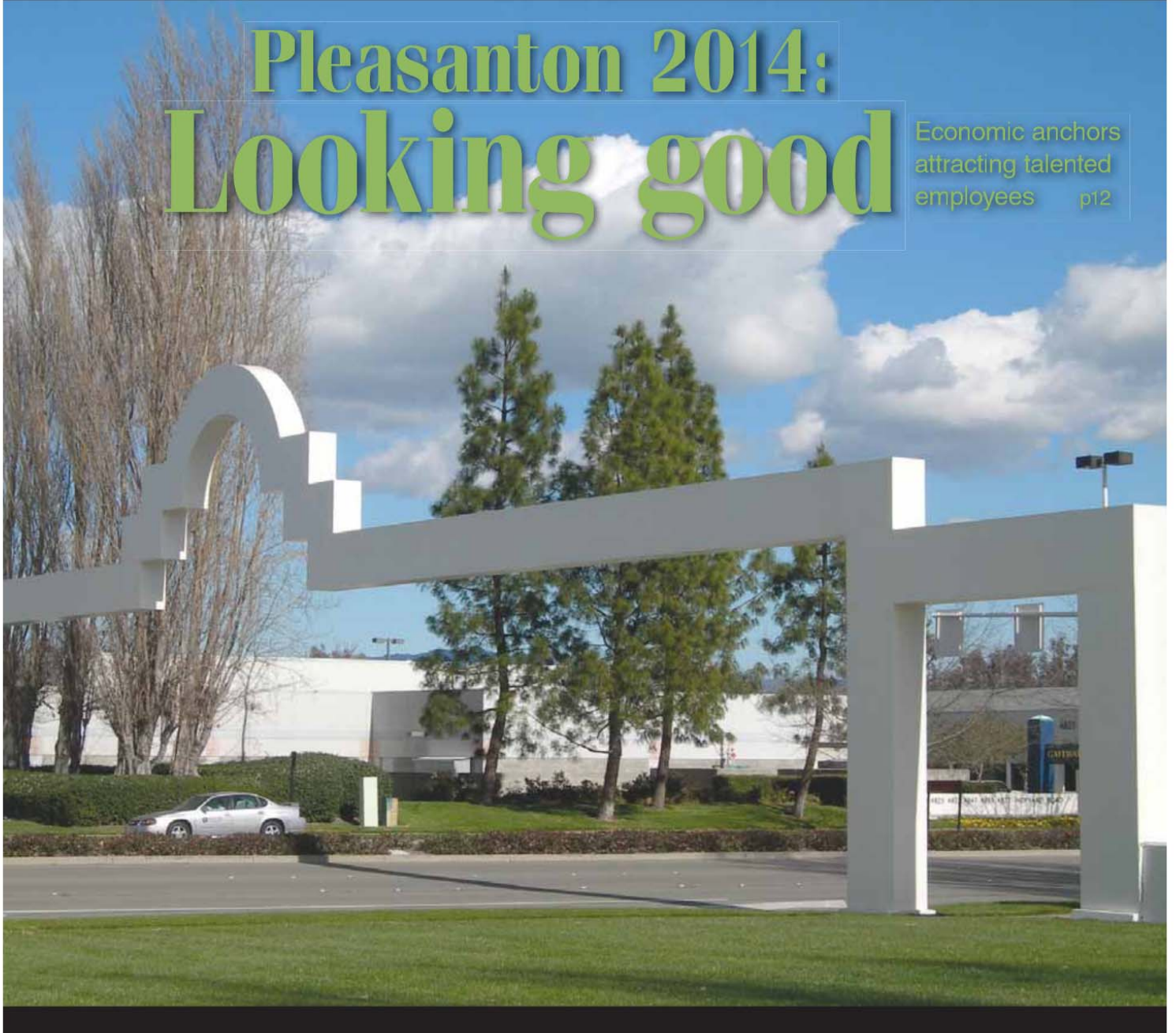


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Pleasanton 2014: Looking good

Economic anchors attracting talented employees p12



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Pleasanton 2014: Looking good

Economic anchors attracting
talented employees

By Jeb Bing

A study just completed by the city's Economic Vitality Committee shows Pleasanton nurturing a strong local economy going into 2014 with 91% of business executives who were surveyed saying the city is a good location for doing business.

Economic strengths cited in the "Pleasanton Economic Assets" study and accompanying brochure show strong job growth opportunities here in a highly-competitive employment base, with projected long-term growth outpacing both the Tri-Valley and the East Bay.

"Pleasanton's economy features high-technology industry sectors that draw highly-educated workers and form an innovation-based economy," said Pamela Ott, the city's economic development director, who also serves as staff liaison to the Economic Vitality Committee (EVC). "Pleasanton's largest employers reflect the city's major industry sectors and are economic anchors that attract talented employees and additional business activity."

The EVC's Economic Development Strategic Plan, which has been

approved by the City Council, is a policy document that will guide the city's economic priorities and activities over the next three to five years. The new plan updates the 2007 plan and addresses changing conditions since then, including the national recession and recovery.

In terms of economic assets, the study notes that "Pleasanton is home to thriving businesses of all sizes and types, from start-ups to Fortune 500 firms, with especially robust industry clusters in information technology, computer engineering, biomedical, and professional and technical services.

"Almost 80% of the executives surveyed indicated they expected their businesses to be in Pleasanton five years from now," Ott states in the "Economic Assets" report. "Simply put, Pleasanton is an exceptional place to locate and achieve business success."

Starting with location, executives find Pleasanton to be a well-connected Northern California location, with convenient access to all major markets and well-positioned for access to multiple transporta-



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Some of Workday's 1,600 employees head back to their offices at the software company's expanded headquarters building on Stoneridge Mall Road. This fast-growing company expects to employ 4,000 over time.



Students at Amador Valley High School in the Pleasanton school district.

tion modes which help facilitate the movement of goods and people throughout the region. Ideally situated at the intersection of I-580 and I-680, they like the fact that Pleasanton is less than an hour drive time from San Francisco, Silicon Valley and the Central Valley, and only 90 minutes from the state capitol in Sacramento.

It helps, too, that Pleasanton is near three major international airports, San Francisco, San Jose and Oakland, with an FAA-operated

nearby in Livermore. Manufacturers here also cite as a Pleasanton asset the key U.S. port operations in nearby San Francisco, Oakland and Stockton.

As a hub for the San Francisco East Bay's key industry sectors, Pleasanton is a highly competitive employment center, with an environment that fosters business success, Ott and the EVC say in their report. Consider that Pleasanton's long-term growth of 63% outpaced the East Bay region's 20%

growth over a 14-year period, and that Pleasanton companies demonstrated growth of more than 25% across all business sizes.

While the city is home to a diversity of business sectors, Pleasanton's economy is particularly specialized in innovation and knowledge-based industry clusters including information technology, computer engineering, biomedical technology and devices, and professional and technical services. Indicative of this innovation culture, collectively Pleasanton companies have been the top recipient of venture capital investment in the East Bay, surpassing the larger cities of Fremont and Oakland, and since 2006 have received more than \$1.3 billion in venture capital funding.

Complementing this local innovation climate, the report notes that the East Bay is the only region in the country with three national laboratories: Lawrence Livermore and Sandia National Laboratories are only 12 miles from Pleasanton and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory is 35 miles to the north.

"This proximity to cutting-edge research and development, and the network of companies it cultivates, makes Pleasanton an excellent location for entrepreneurs and start-ups that are bringing lab-developed ideas and products to the commercial market," Ott said.

Businesses of all sizes, from small offices to regional operations centers to large company headquarters, position the city as a regional employment center with more than 53,000 jobs. This breadth and diversity of companies adds to the strength of Pleasanton's economy by building a local supply chain



STONERIDGE SHOPPING CENTER/SIMON

Spacious seating area is a popular meeting center at Stoneridge Shopping Center, a 1.3-million-square-foot upscale regional mall that opened in Pleasanton Sept. 4, 1980.



TONY DENNIS

se computers as part of STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) pathways program implemented by the Pleas-



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Home to the University of San Francisco East Bay campus just off Stoneridge Mall Road, Pleasanton campus offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs.

and robust business-to-business activity. Some of the Bay Area's largest firms that have a strong presence in Pleasanton include Kaiser Permanente, Safeway, Workday, Clorox, Oracle, Roche Molecular Systems, Life Technologies, Thoratec, Veeva Systems and Gap.com.

As Pleasanton's largest business center, Hacienda Business Park covers 875 acres and comprises nearly 60% of Pleasanton's office and flex building inventory. Hacienda combines 7.5 million square feet of office and flex space with nearly 900,000 square feet of retail serving workers and residents alike.

The economic study also showed that Pleasanton offers high value, cost competitive commercial space, with a variety of commercial real estate offerings. These meet the needs of a mixture of established and emergent industry clusters, conveniently located near freeways, BART and ACE transit systems. Premium office space is cost competitive compared to other Bay Area locations, such as San Francisco, downtown Oakland or San Jose, as well as within the Tri-Valley region, making Pleasanton a high-value location.

High-speed Internet and other infrastructure are in place to support the needs of businesses. Substantial investment in Hacienda's fiber optics allows tenants access to connectivity while a free municipal wi-fi network covers Pleasanton's downtown district. Hacienda's electrical service is ranked highly in reliability statewide.

For business travelers coming to Pleasanton, the city offers an inventory of 1,800 hotel rooms, including a number of extended stay properties for longer-term lodging. Larger

corporate events, including company gatherings, trade shows, festivals and the nationally popular Good Guys classic autos shows are held regularly at the Alameda County Fairgrounds, a 267-acre site located in the heart of Pleasanton.

According to the "Economic Assets" report, Pleasanton's central location also enables businesses to draw from the Bay Area's large and diverse labor pool. Pleasanton companies have access to the highly educated, highly skilled workers desired by the innovative and sustaining industry clusters in the community, attracting workers from the Tri-Valley, the East Bay, Silicon Valley and beyond. In addition to two freeways that pass through Pleasanton, the city also offers commuter rail and bus transit systems.

In terms of education, the economic study reports that the city's well-educated and skilled talent is a hallmark of Pleasanton and the Tri-Valley, with 56% of the residents having a bachelor's or advanced degree.

"Employees and their families are drawn to Pleasanton for the great schools we have here," Ott said.

The Pleasanton Unified School District serves approximately 14,800 students across 15 school sites with one of the highest Academic Performance Index (API) scores in California. Last year, 95% of the district's high school graduates continued on to higher education.

With STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) accounting for 7 out of 10 jobs, the school district has implemented new STEM pathways, partnering with Project Lead the Way to offer classes in en-

gineering and biomedical sciences for developing critical-reasoning and problem-solving skills.

Pleasanton is also home to the University of San Francisco East Bay campus, which offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs with courses specifically designed for today's workforce.

In describing Pleasanton's economic assets, Ott and the EVC also reported on quality of life attributes that attract businesses and their employees to Pleasanton.

These include Stoneridge Shopping Center, a historic downtown district, recreational activities, and arts and cultural events.

"Pleasanton maintains 42 parks throughout the city, and an additional 24 miles of trails available for recreational use by residents and company employees alike," Ott said.

These include the Augustin Bernal Park, a 237-acre natural jewel along the ridgeline in the middle of the East Bay Regional park system, Alviso Adobe Park with its interpretive

history center, the Firehouse Arts Center, and award-winning Callippe Preserve Golf Course.

"To all this, add festivals, parades, a weekly farmers market, and an outdoor summertime concert series and you'll see that Pleasanton has a unique charm that is welcoming to all," Ott said. "It's this small town ambiance combined with a sophisticated metropolitan edge that makes Pleasanton an exceptional place to locate and achieve business success." N



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Pleasanton's historic downtown offers good dining as well as a free municipal Wi-Fi network.