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Try Lafayette First Goes Up A Gear

By Sophie Braccini



Jay Lifson, CEO Lafayette Chamber of Commerce
Photo Andy Scheck

The Lafayette Chamber of Commerce would like residents to, "Put Your Money Where Your House Is." After the launch, a year ago, of the Try Lafayette First Campaign, the Chamber has asked merchants to step up and actively participate. In a few days, shoppers who want to support Lafayette can carry with them a "key" to the commercial vitality of the city. The key will unlock special deals at all participating retailers and service providers. Just look for the posters, show your key and ask for the exclusive offer.

"Try Lafayette First' was a big success, with more than a 1000 residents pledging to participate," says Jay Lifson, the Chamber's CEO, "it created a new awareness in the population and the merchants. But to keep the momentum going we are now asking our businesses to become even more active and give specific offers to customers who will be in possession of a 'Put Your Money Where Your House Is' card."

Dave Simpson, who owns the Lafayette Book Store, is a big believer in this type of campaign and discussed the concept with Lifson. He presented success stories from Boulder and Austin. "We believe in the loyalty of the residents," said Simpson, "people understand that they are investing in their own community, its vitality, and that they will see the returns in term of sales tax revenue and healthy businesses giving to their schools and foundations."

The card, that Lifson calls "the key to the city," can be attached to a key chain or held in a wallet.

It will be available at the Chamber of Commerce at the beginning of December. The success of the "key" will depend of the number of merchants and service providers that participate with an attractive offer. "For myself, I will give \$3 off any used book to card-holders,"

says Simpson.

Many businesses are planning to participate and are working on the offer that will go with it. "We are 100% behind this program and will promote it to our clients," says Debbie Cooper from Mechanics Bank. She confirmed that the bank will find a way to reward card-holders.

Anthony Ruiz from Lafayette Fast Frame is considered to be the cheerleader of the program. "I have a passion for educating and talking to business owners," says Ruiz, adding that he does not hesitate to take a day off and 'walk-the-town' to meet all the business owners. "They already understand the importance of giving back to the community; there is not one business who hasn't given to a school at some point. We need to help each other as a community, together we will fare much better," explains Ruiz, who plans to give 15% off the first order to card-holders.

The Chamber is updating its web site (<http://www.lafayettechamber.org/>) with information about the participating businesses, their description, their services and special offers. Chamber members are shooting videos of business owners that will be uploaded to the site. The Chamber is also preparing a stock of new features that will enhance the shopping experience. "We are working on a search engine that will allow users to look for specials before going out shopping or dining," says Lifson.



Marcia and Garth Jacober, owners of Mt Diablo Nursery in Lafayette, participate in the "Put Your Money Where Your House Is" campaign Photo Sophie Braccini

Reach the reporter at: sophie@lamorindaweekly.com

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