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## SMC SEBA Case Competition utilizes Painted Rock as this year's focus

By Vera Kochan



Prize winning teams and the judges Photo Vera Kochan

The Moraga Chamber of Commerce and Saint Mary's College have once again partnered for the second annual case competition. The School of Economics and Business Administration was tasked with developing a strategy for making Moraga a prime hiking destination in the East Bay thanks to the recent acquisition by John Muir Land Trust of the 84-acre Painted Rock area. This year's competition also included possible strategies for boosting retail within Moraga's shopping centers thereby creating an influx of sales tax dollars.

The 100% community funded event was held Nov. 12 at SMC's Soda Center and once again involved Professor Marco Aponte-Moreno's Strategic Management class.

The five teams in the competition were tasked with overcoming five criteria with regards to a five-year strategy: competitive advantage, market need, potential for success, financial needs and presentation.

Throughout the course of the semester Moraga Town Manager Cynthia Battenberg, EBMUD Board Member Dee Rosario, JMLT Executive Director Linus Eukel, JLL Leasing Company's (Rheem Center) Jeff Badstubner, Parks and Recreation Director Breyana Brandt, Dover Saddlery Manager Madeline Appel and Vicki Von Arx, who represented the local horse community, spoke to the class offering their expertise.

Team 1 members Sarah Gonzalez, Noah Greene, Javier Landaverde, Byron Scott and Roman Zamora titled their presentation "Hidden Masterpiece of the East Bay." They suggested a Community of Colors Art Festival that could be inexpensively marketed through word-of-mouth and flyers; entice a store such as Sports Basement to move into town and provide sporting goods as well as offer guided tours to Painted Rock involving hiking, biking and skill testing through their on-sight equipment; partner with SMC for a capstone community project to "paint the rock"; and invite retail stores such as Michaels, BLICK art supplies, The Vitamin Shoppe and Panera Bread to open stores that would appeal to art enthusiasts and the health conscious.

Team 2 members Alexander Banks, Logan Bradeson, Ryan Connolly, Brandon Talavera and Greg Platner's presentation, titled "Family-Friendly Hiking Capital of the East Bay," suggested a partnership with The Taylor Family Foundation known for their nature-driven youth camp. TTF is a well-established organization whose donors could add an influx of cash to the Painted Rock hiking vision. Other suggestions included: "A Day at Painted Rock" in July with activities for kids and evening concerts for adults; creating a dog park; bathrooms; water fountains; log benches; natural surface trails and signage. Promotion for the facility would be through Snapchat Geotag that would spread awareness of Painted Rock. On the retail side a Mexican restaurant and Homegrown eatery along with a GNC vitamin store were possibilities.

Team 3 members Logan Bockhahn, Eric Harrelson, Anthony Hudson, Nicholas Lloren and Felix Song promoted "Moraga, A Dog Owners Paradise." Their target market was dog owners where two options for a fenced or unfenced area were discussed. A secondary market was aimed at the general public including multi-use trails that could also be utilized by SMC and Campolindo's athletic departments. On the retail side it was noted that Rheem already has a pet shop and any additional eateries should be of the health conscious variety.

Team 4 members Miles Campbell, Kaitlyn Fong, Matthew Ouellet, Katina Biggers and Anthony Tucci promoted the theme "Walk the Rock." Their presentation stressed the desire to keep Moraga "rustic" and basically unchanged. Striving to remain cost effective their suggestion was to take advantage of partnering with East Bay Regional Parks known for its well-maintained park system, while offering natural surface trails, a parking lot, Bocce Ball courts, a nine-hole disc course and dog park. The goal for low-cost implementation is to open the area as soon as possible for the public's use. Marketing strategy relies heavily on word-of-mouth.

Team 5 members Alondra Barajas, Tom Moise, William Cooper, Casey Weider and Kaleigh Wright's theme was "Small Town, Big Adventure." An autumn "Paint the Rocks" Festival held at the Rheem Shopping Center would focus on local food and beverage vendors. The stress would be on art and music from local bands and artists. Additions to Painted Rock itself include color-coded trails, rustic benches, unisex restrooms and water stations for humans and dogs. On the retail side, suggestions were to add an athletic clothing store,

healthy eateries and a vitamin shop. Marketing would depend on using the town's and EBRP's websites. Publicizing the festival would extend to news media sources.

The evening's judges were AcelRx Pharmaceuticals, Inc. Chief Engineering Officer Anil Dasu, Moraga Town Manager Cynthia Battenberg, US Realty Partners Principal Tina Colacino, John Muir Land Trust Executive Director Linus Eukel, PGIM Real Estate Managing Director Tim Hennessey, Moraga Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Kathe Nelson and Neighborhood Computers Owner (SMC Alum '07) Grant Stubblefield.

The winners were announced by Saint Mary's College SEBA Dean Elizabeth Davis and certificates of recognition were presented by Matthew Wright, field representative for California State Assembly Member Rebecca Bauer-Kahan.

Team 2 was awarded third place, sharing the \$1,500 prize; Team 5 took second place, with a \$3,500 prize; and Team 4 won first place with a \$5,000 prize.

"It was a great project for the students and a lot of people are invested in them to have a real world experience," Battenberg stated. "The students had a unique perspective." Professor Aponte-Moreno was excited when the chamber first proposed Painted Rock adding, "I'm so proud. They all did great. The students were all on the same level."

When asked how many of the proposals will be looked into Nelson replied, "Bits and pieces of the winners' presentations could be utilized. The Chamber will get together with JMLT to make any decisions, which could later go before the town council. The college did a great job organizing all the details."

Reach the reporter at: [vera@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:vera@lamorindaweekly.com)

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