

# Four-letter word unites valley cities

One of the most provocative four letter words these days is J-O-B-S. It is also a powerful word, one that has managed to bring together all nine cities of the Coachella Valley in a true collaboration.

A unique valleywide partnership has been established to seek solutions for job development, job expansion and job retention through participation in a comprehensive Business Visitation Survey initiated by the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership as part of its Economic Blueprint Action Plan, with funding through the Riverside County Economic Development Agency.

There is good reason for Coachella Valley cities to join together to seek job solutions.

Riverside County has the dubious distinction of being No. 11 on the "The Top 20 Most Stressed Counties in the Nation" list as reported by the AP Economic Stress Index for November 2009.

In January, the unadjusted unemployment rate in Riverside County as reported by the state's Employment Development Department was 15.1 percent, which is significantly higher than both the statewide rate of 12.5 percent and the national rate of 9.7 percent.

The value of the survey covering the entire Coachella Valley is critical if CVEP, in coordination with its member cities and Riverside County, is to adequately address regional job retention and expansion through improved communication with local and regional businesses.

Working together as a region and being informed is key to minimizing job losses.

Imagine this: A business on



wesley ahlgren

the brink of closing down or laying off workers sets in motion a proactive "early warning system" to allow the county, CVEP and its partners to identify the at-risk business and seek solutions that could possibly prevent the job losses from occurring.

This scenario could become a reality.

The Business Visitation Survey begins the process that could develop such an early warning system of layoff aversion, as well as job retention and recruitment programs. These initiatives would complement and work hand-in-hand with the county's Rapid Response programs already in place.

The Business Visitation Survey will serve to document and provide data to assist in addressing the business conditions that presumably contribute to the valley's current high unemployment rates and address business climate concerns in the valley.

The Economic Index, prepared by Chapman University's A. Gary Anderson Center for Economic Research, indicates improving conditions in the Coachella Valley for the first quarter of 2010, but we're not out of the woods by any means. The index is still below the point where jobs are being created.

## 2,800 businesses to be surveyed

The Business Visitation Survey will collect comprehensive data through one-on-one interviews with a broad cross-section of businesses throughout the valley, including manufacturing, industrial, commercial, health care and hospitality sectors.

A total survey population of about 2,800 businesses is anticipated at this time and the results will be analyzed on several levels.

The information provided by the survey will enable CVEP, its various members and Riverside County to better identify businesses in need of immediate assistance to solve existing problems that contribute to their inability to retain or expand and create new jobs.

The data will identify those at risk of additional job losses or in need of long-term additional services to retain or expand their employee base and help in the future development of specific programs tailored to address these various factors.

CVEP requested funds for the Business Visitation Survey from the Riverside County Economic Development Agency and Workforce Investment Board.

In its request for funding, CVEP partnered with each city to offer a best value for the county. The cities supported and contributed to the application process.

The cities, to their credit, recognized the value of the survey, the importance of working together as a region, and the wisdom of combining resources and funding.

The city of Palm Springs,

which independently applied for the EDA funds to conduct a survey during the county's first selection round, has since offered to pool their funds with CVEP and the other cities to fully embrace the regional effort.

The collaborations do not end with the cities.

CVEP will be working with representatives from the chambers of commerce and College of the Desert in the development, methodology and survey questions.

Business students from across the valley in the CVEP Pathways to Success program will also be part of the process and provided paid summer internships to conduct the questionnaires.

It is anticipated that the Business Visitation Survey development and implementation will be completed during the summer, with the analysis and report finished by the fall.

CVEP is dedicated to expanding the economy of the Coachella Valley desert region while maintaining the area's desirable quality of life.

A focus within CVEP's Economic Blueprint unveiled last October is business retention and expansion.

Among the various economic diversification objectives in the Blueprint are objectives to provide comprehensive data collection and analysis services for regional stakeholder groups and to ensure existing Coachella Valley businesses are retained and expanded. The Business Visitation Survey is a solid step in that direction.

Wesley Ahlgren is director of operations for CVEP and can be reached at wes@cvep.com.



**OPEN SUNDAY**  
12a - 3p

**Cathedral City Cove**  
68670 Sharpless Rd  
4 bedrooms, 3 baths,  
Amazing valley Views,  
pool/spa, solar for pool,  
designer touches.  
This home is move in  
ready and stunning!  
Offered at: **\$359,000**


**Desert Hot Springs**  
3 bedroom, 2 bath,  
Stunning Views  
Offered at: **169,000**

**Rancho Mirage**  
2 bdrm, 2 ba condo  
Offered at: **159,900**

**Outstanding Service every time!**

**Kevin Stern**  
760-250-1977  
CA-DRE # 01376548





**FIRST REPUBLIC BANK**  
It's a privilege to serve you®

**Passbook Savings Account**

**1.00%** APY\*

73-010 El Paseo, (760) 776-8882

For other locations, please call 1-800-392-1400 or visit us at [www.firstrepublic.com](http://www.firstrepublic.com).

\*\$250,000 minimum balance required to obtain the stated APY of 1.00%. Other balance tiers and applicable APYs for the Passbook Savings Account are: \$150,000+, .90% APY; \$50,000+, .85% APY; \$10,000+, .80% APY; \$5,000+, 0.40% APY; Below \$5,000, 0.20% APY. Minimum \$5,000 to open a Passbook Savings Account. Annual Percentage Yields (APYs) are effective as of the publication date and may change after account is opened. Fees may reduce earnings. 4/11/10 DS

A DIVISION OF BANK OF AMERICA, N.A.

**FDIC INSURED UP TO \$250,000**

## GIVING BACK

# Event raises funds for Desert AIDS Project

BY NINA RONDA  
The Desert Sun

In this weekly feature, The Desert Sun spotlights valley firms performing good deeds.

Here the focus is on the eighth annual Erotic Art Expo and silent auction that raised \$4,300 for Desert AIDS Project in February.

"When we heard that Desert AIDS Project had lost so much state funding when the current budget was passed, I knew we had to do something to help out," said Dennis Cramer, organizer of the event since

its inception.

The works of more than 40 artists, including Keith Haring and photographer Tom Bianchi, were made available for silent auction bidding throughout the show from Feb. 4 to Feb. 15 at the Tool Shed bar in Palm Springs.

The \$4,300 raised at the art show and auction was earmarked specifically to help Desert AIDS Project's commitment to provide free and confidential HIV testing.

Desert AIDS Project provides medical care and com-

prehensive support services to people living with HIV/AIDS in the desert community.

Free, confidential, rapid-result HIV testing is available, as well as counseling, home health services, legal assistance and assistance with housing, medications, food and re-employment.

Prevention and education outreach is available to any group.

"We are so pleased to be able to help Dennis bring this show to the community," said Chris Rees, owner of the Tool Shed.

The Tool Shed planned to host another fundraising event on April 3 to benefit Desert AIDS Project's dental clinic.

Information:  
■ The Tool Shed, 600 E. Sunny Dunes Road, Palm Springs. (760) 320-3299; [www.toolshed-ps.com](http://www.toolshed-ps.com)

■ Desert AIDS Project, 1695 N. Sunrise Way, Palm Springs. (760) 323-2118; [www.desert-aidsproject.org](http://www.desert-aidsproject.org)

What is your business doing to give back to the Coachella Valley? Share your thoughts with us by e-mailing [Nina.Ronda@thedesertsun.com](mailto:Nina.Ronda@thedesertsun.com) for our feature The Business of Giving Back.

## WHO'S COMING TO TOWN

april 10-june 12

**Bikram's Yoga College of India** spring 2010 intensive teacher training program. Desert Springs J.W. Marriott Resort & Spa.

april 12-19

**Smithbucklin** National Fastener Distributors Association 2010 annual spring meeting. Hyatt Grand Champions Resort. Attendees: 250

april 13-18

**Experient** 2010 spring leadership conference. Hotel Zoso. Attendees: 250

april 14-18

**Indian Wells Tennis Garden** 2010 Big West conference tennis tournament. Courtyard by Marriott, Palm Desert. Attendees: 400

april 15-26

**Seena Hamilton & Associates** 2010 Easter Bowl. Rancho Las Palmas Resort & Spa. Attendees: 4,000

april 17-25

**National Cancer Registrars Association** 35th annual education conference. Renaissance Palms Springs Hotel. Attendees: 700

april 17-26

**National Cancer Registrars Association** 2010 annual meeting. Hyatt Regency Suites Palm Springs, Courtyard by Marriott Palm Springs, Spa Resort Casino.

april 20-25

**California Association for Alcohol/Drug Educators** 2010, 22nd annual conference. Doral Desert Princess Resort.

april 25-may 3

**Dittman Incentive Marketing Corp.** 2010 incentive trip. Desert Springs J.W. Marriott Resort & Spa.

april 28-may 3

**California Judges Association** 2010 mid-year meeting. Rancho Las Palmas Resort & Spa.

may 1-7

**Institute of Navigation** 2010 2010 IEEE/ION plans meeting. Renaissance Esmeralda Resort and Spa, Indian Wells.

may 5-7

**ConferenceDirect** 2010 County Counsels Association land use. Hilton Palm Springs Resort.

may 5-9

**U.S. Bakery / Franz Family Bakeries** shareholders & board members spring retreat. La Quinta Resort & Club; PGA West.

may 5-14

**California Fire Chiefs Association** 2010 fire, EMS & disaster conference & expo. Renaissance Palm Springs Hotel.

may 10-14

**California Association Property and Evidence** 2010 annual meeting. Rancho Las Palmas Resort & Spa.

may 14-16

**California Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance** 2010 28th annual Southwest dance, movement & acrosports workshop. Renaissance Palm Springs Hotel. Attendees: 1,000

may 16-23

**Smithbucklin** International Reprographic Association 2010 convention and trade show. Hilton Palms Springs; Renaissance Palm Springs Hotel. Attendees: 600

may 18-24

**Park-Way Meetings** 2010 Accessories resource team. The Westin Mission Hills Resort & Spa.

may 20-28

**Accent on Meetings** NAIIA 73rd annual conference.

Renaissance Esmeralda Resort and Spa.

may 21-28

**USC Weil Symposium on Critical Care and Emergency Medicine** 48th annual meeting. The Westin Mission Hills Resort & Spa.

**California State Division International Association for Identification** 2010 annual conference. Rancho Las Palmas Resort & Spa.

may 27-31

**Helms Briscoe** 2010 SCMAGA annual golf tournament. Embassy Suites La Quinta Hotel & Spa.

june 1-7

**North American Special Interest Groups** 2010 conference. Rancho Las Palmas Resort & Spa. Attendees: 550

june 3-5

**Experient** C4 Recovery Solutions 2010 West Coast symposium. La Quinta resort & Club; PGA West.

june 10-13

**American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association Southern California** 2010 district convention. Hotel Zoso.

june 12-june 17

**Cranial Academy** 2010 basic course and annual conference. La Quinta Resort & Club; PGA West.

june 24-28

**Grace Community Church** 2010 resolve. Renaissance Palm Springs Hotel. Attendees: 4,000

june 25-27

**Spectacular Events** 2010 Annual Singles Safari. Hyatt Grand Champions Resort, Villas & Spa.

july 15-19

**Erin Adams Events** 2010 Yogafit conference. Riviera Resort &

Spa. Attendees: 100

july 15-24

**Sigma Gamma RHO Sorority** 2010 Boule. Renaissance Esmeralda Resort and Spa.

july 16-18

**Conferenceworks** 2010 The Eden Workshop. Hyatt Regency Suites Palm Springs. Attendees: 300

july 17-24

**National Association of School Resource Officers** 2010 national conference. La Quinta Resort & Club; PGA West. Attendance 900

july 20-25

**Experient** 2010 Sweet Adelines. The Westin Mission Hills Resort & Spa.

aug. 1-10

**Miss American Starlet** 2010 Grand National finals. La Quinta Resort & Club PGA West.

aug. 5-8

**People Who Dance** 2010 Summer swing dance camp. Renaissance Palm Springs Hotel.

aug. 12-aug. 15

**People Who Dance** 2010 salsa extravaganza. Renaissance Palm Springs Hotel.

aug. 26-29

**Cala (Cocaine Anonymous)** 2010 annual convention. Desert Springs JW Marriott Resort & Spa. Attendees: 350

aug. 27-sept. 3

**Association for Commuter Transportation** Renaissance Esmeralda Resort and Spa.

sept. 6-14

**California Nevada Moose Association** 2010 77th annual convention. Renaissance Palm Springs Hotel. Attendees: 1,000

sept. 8-12

**Hot N Dry** 2010 roundup meeting. Riviera Resort & Spa.

**Eric David & Larry Allen**  
Realtor Associates



[www.LarryAllenHomes.com](http://www.LarryAllenHomes.com)  
**Motivated Seller - Price Reduced Again**

**PGA WEST® Stadium**  
16<sup>th</sup> Fairway

**Santa Rosas**  
Expansive NW & SW Fairway & Mountain Views


**Legend 20**  
2596 sf  
\$425,000

**Furnished**  
Grand Flow Throughout, 3br/3.5ba Dual Masters

**ERIC DAVID**  
(760) 574-9805  
dre 01247772

**Windermere**  
REAL ESTATE  
Coachella Valley



## THE VINTAGE

# SHORT SALE

### LENDER APPROVED



**6,300+ S.F.**

**Was \$8,000,000**

**Now \$4,430,000**

This is an unheard of opportunity in one of the finest clubs in the United States. This custom built home offers quality, privacy, a theatre room, a guest house, master craftsmen stone and wooden details. The bank is ready for a QUICK CLOSING, too!

**OPEN HOUSE Sun. 1 - 4**

For Directions and Access you must call...

**Mike Smith**  
(760) 399-6244

ClassicLIVING™ REALTY  
Lic # 01752691 (760) 296-1824