



Best of West

June 2006

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Hello Friends,

Based on your responses to our recent survey we have made *Best of West* a quarterly rather than a monthly newsletter. Thanks to Arleen Shippey, Joy Beeler, Kathleen Brigham, Miriam Gruver, Pattie DeMatteo, Ruth and Michael Hunter, Tola Levison and Valerie Plummer, all of whom have made a donation over the last three months. A special *Thanks* to our Best Friends who keep us going with their monthly contributions.

The Business Funding Fairs were a big success. Many thanks to our gold sponsor The Pacific Gas & Electric Company. Thanks also to our bronze and silver sponsors Arcata Economic Development Corporation, Economic Development & Financing Corporation, Fort Bragg Community FCU, Mendo Lake CU, SAFE-BIDCO, Savings Bank of Mendocino County, Washington Mutual, and Wells Fargo Bank. We must have done something right because Mendo Lake CU was kind enough to make an additional \$200 donation after the event.



On April 7th Laurel Street in Fort Bragg welcomed a new business to its fraternity, Toto Zaida specializing in clothing for women of substance. The slogan, *More to love ...* was developed by owner Chriss Zaida as she searched for stylish and affordable clothing on the coast. Finding none in her style or size Chriss determined to use her 25 years of fashion and costume design experience to give the people not just what they want but what they need, fashionable clothing in size 12 and up.

Though Toto Zaida may be new to Laurel Street, Chriss Zaida is not. She is the founder and current President of the Laurel Street Merchants Association. She was appointed by the City Council to the Fort Bragg Promotion Committee. This was during her time as manager of the Wind & Weather store in Fort Bragg. Chriss was among the many workers displaced by Wind & Weather's departure from Mendocino County. She decided to use this opportunity to pursue her dream of business ownership. She attended workshops and met one on one with a business consultant prior to her opening.

Since opening Chriss has continued to seek the support of West Company as she makes her way through the challenges of owning a start-up business. In the past Chriss has shared her costume design talents with Mendocino Theatre Company and various Musical Festival Operas. Though she no longer has the time to devote to local productions that she once did, Chriss is still putting her theatrical talents to work. She was asked to be on a panel for Women in Film at the recent Mendocino Film Festival and will be a guest on an upcoming edition of Taking Care Business (West Company's business news & information show on the 1st & 3rd Wednesdays from 7-8 pm on KZYG & Z -88.1 & 90.7 & 91.5 FM). Next month Chriss will serve as costume designer for a local film productions.

Chriss was fortunate to access West Company services with funding made available by the Mendocino Private Industry Council. West Company is constantly searching for new partners to help us provide business owners with the advice and training they need. To that end we are pleased to announce that the Mendocino Study Club, (founded in 1908 and the oldest service club on the coast), has decided to sponsor two Building a Better Business Scholarships and two E-Commerce Scholarships. The Building a Better Business Scholarships will allow to potential business owners to go through West Company's core curriculum. These workshops will take the attendees through many aspects of business ownership and at a completion will allow them to produce a well-formulated business plan. The E-Commerce Scholarships will allow attendance at West Company's Getting Ready for E-Commerce seminar, which covers what you need to know to allow your business to make use of the internet to increase revenue and customer satisfaction. Scholarships will be available to coastal residents who have a financial need, "Clarity of Goals" and wish to pursue an "Improvement of Status". For more information, contact West Company at (707) 964-7571.

West Company's mission of "Assisting Microenterprises to grow creating self sufficiency and wealth" dovetails nicely with the Study Club's purpose "to promote the highest spiritual, intellectual and cultural opportunities for its members. To provide for the leadership of women in the community and to provide service to the community". The Study Club began its scholarship program in part to address the nursing shortage during WWII. They continue that tradition today by addressing one of the current needs of our community "homegrown" businesses. If you or your business would like to assist in achieving these goals, please complete the form below or call West Company to find out about volunteer opportunities.

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