



EXPERIENCE MATTERS

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Moraga Chamber's new executive director works to get businesses back on track

By Vera Kochan

After nearly a year without anyone in the executive director's position at the Moraga Chamber of Commerce, Katie Bidstrup has agreed to take the reigns following a trial period when her title was preceded by the word "interim."

"There was a lot to consider when taking on the role," replied Bidstrup. "It is a part-time position, and I didn't know that I had the time it was going to need to bring it up to speed, nor the time to get everything done in a part-time capacity." During the interim period she donated her time with the expectation that the chamber board would hire someone else permanently.

Having been a small business owner for several years herself, Bidstrup was aware of the struggles involved. Originally working in the field of marketing and public relations for 15 years, she purchased Lango Kids (a program that teaches Spanish, French and Mandarin to kids ages 18 months - 12 years). The classes were held in schools, community centers or privately, which allowed her to remain home with her young son. The business was a success and allowed her the opportunity to purchase a second business, Gym-boree Play & Music. She acquired three locations which she owned and operated for five years: Oakland, El Cerrito and one in her hometown of Lafayette.

Bidstrup was a chamber member in Lafayette and appreciated the services that were provided to small businesses. When she heard that

Moraga was looking for an executive director she thought it would be a great opportunity to give back.

One of the first improvements Bidstrup made was to have a phone line installed. "It's silly, but it's one of the most important things," she said. "While the board had created a new email address, there was not an alternative method for anyone to contact the Chamber." She's also thrilled about new changes coming to the website. There are plans to include a job board, an updated directory, and a calendar of events that will not only contain Chamber business, but public as well.

It has not been an easy return to business as usual for the Chamber. "Since it was in the middle of COVID, and a new director was not on-hand, there was not a formal hand-off from director to director," recalled Bidstrup. "Information was dispersed to and handled by the board for nearly a year. Duties, access, accounts were split amongst board members. Collecting and organizing that information has taken time and is still occurring as things come up. Some access and information has unfortunately been lost, so recreating those have been challenging."

Collecting Chamber dues was one of the first orders of business in trying to get things back to normal. Several businesses didn't feel supported through the pandemic and were reluctant to pay their dues. Without the full accounting of dues to support Chamber operations, services and event financing, the all-volunteer board of directors began to discuss the feasibility of con-

tinuing within Moraga.

Additional hurdles included "addressing taxes and filing; upgrading our CRM system; advocating for ARPA funds at the town council; getting to know the business owners and their needs; learning in what events the Chamber participates; and sorting which person or organization handles which item," Bidstrup added. As if all of that wasn't enough, in February the Chamber office was burglarized and suffered the loss of a laptop and check-books.

The Chamber is striving to become involved in liaison meetings and community programs, but is still in the process of maneuvering its way through its "to-do list." The pandemic was the catalyst for so many difficulties the Chamber has had to deal with. Besides losing a longtime executive director, seven of 12 board members left. There's been an outreach effort to fill the vacated positions on the board. "We would love to have additional representation from doctor offices, professional services, marketing, technology, the service industry, etc.," stated Bidstrup. In the meantime, it is hoped that Moraga's businesses, whether Chamber members or not, reach out for help.

"I love meeting the business owners," Bidstrup said. "I love hearing their stories and finding ways we can help. It's not easy out there at any time to own a business, pandemic or no."

... continued on Page A10

Town council briefed on Local Roadway Safety Plan

... continued from Page A4

The high injury intersections are: Moraga Road/Lucas Drive; Moraga Way/Moraga Valley Lane; Moraga Road/Campolindo Drive; Moraga Road/St. Mary's Road; Moraga Road/Alta Mesa; Camino Pablo/Sanders Ranch Road; Moraga Road/Ascot Drive; Moraga Road/Donald Drive; Rheem Boulevard/St. Mary's Road; Moraga Way/School Street; and Moraga Road/Corliss Drive.

Intersection collisions were the most common with regards to high injuries at 73%, with three out of five in the fatal or serious category. Additional analysis revealed that 31% of the collisions were broadside (turning movements), 47% involved pedestrians or cyclists and 42% took place on Moraga Road. Of any nighttime collisions, 38% involved alcohol; 27% were improper turning violations; and 36% involved a pedestrian or bike.

The eight high injury roadway segments involve: Moraga Way (Town Limit to Moraga Road); Canyon Road (300 feet east of Valle Vista Staging Area to Town Limit - east); Moraga Road/Canyon Road (Larch Avenue to Town Limit - north); Rheem Boulevard (La Salle Drive to Moraga Road); Corliss Drive/Sullivan Drive (Hardie Drive to Moraga Road); Country Club Drive (Vader Drive to 875 feet east of Southard Court); Larch Avenue (Canyon Road to Baitx Av-

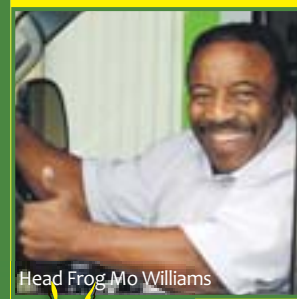
enue); and St. Mary's Road (500 feet east of Stafford Road to Town Limit).

TJKM has created five project plans involving all of the problem intersections and segments. Each project entails different forms of safety countermeasures. TJKM is under contract with the town to develop two of the projects and recommended to the council that Moraga proceed with Project 1: Non-signalized intersections (install/upgrade larger stop signs or other intersection regulatory warning signs, flashing beacon as advance warning, and install rectangular rapid flashing beacon); and Project 2: Pedestrian set aside application (install/upgrade pedestrian crossing - with enhanced safety features and install/upgrade pedestrian crossing at uncontrolled locations - with enhanced safety features).

While the purpose of this second presentation to the council was for members to provide feedback to staff on the recommended priority emphasis areas, countermeasure toolbox and proposed safety projects, they relied on Knapp's final input confirming that projects 1 and 2 were a good first step to take.

The town is still interested in public feedback and urges residents to complete the Local Roadway Safety Plan survey at: <https://www.moraga.ca.us/localroadwaysafetyplan>. Scroll down and click onto: Moraga LRSP Information and Feedback.

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**TOWN OF MORAGA
FOURTH OF JULY
CELEBRATION**

IN THE COMMONS
11:00 am
Dog Parade
(Registration at the Bandshell)
11:00 am - 5:00 pm
Community Booths
11:00 am - 5:00 pm
Inflatable Jumpies
11:00 am - 8:00 pm
Food, Wine, & Beer Booths
12:00 pm - 3:00 pm
Family Activities
(Throughout the park)

ON STAGE AT THE BANDSHELL
6:45 pm
7:00 pm
9:30 pm
National Anthem & Mayor's Welcome
House Rockers (Concert)
FIREWORKS (Start time is estimated)

SUPPORT THE FIREWORKS
Donate to the Buy-A-Rocket Fireworks fundraising campaign and keep this patriotic Moraga tradition! Help reach the \$30,000 goal by donating at moragarec.com

MONDAY, JULY 4, 2022
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