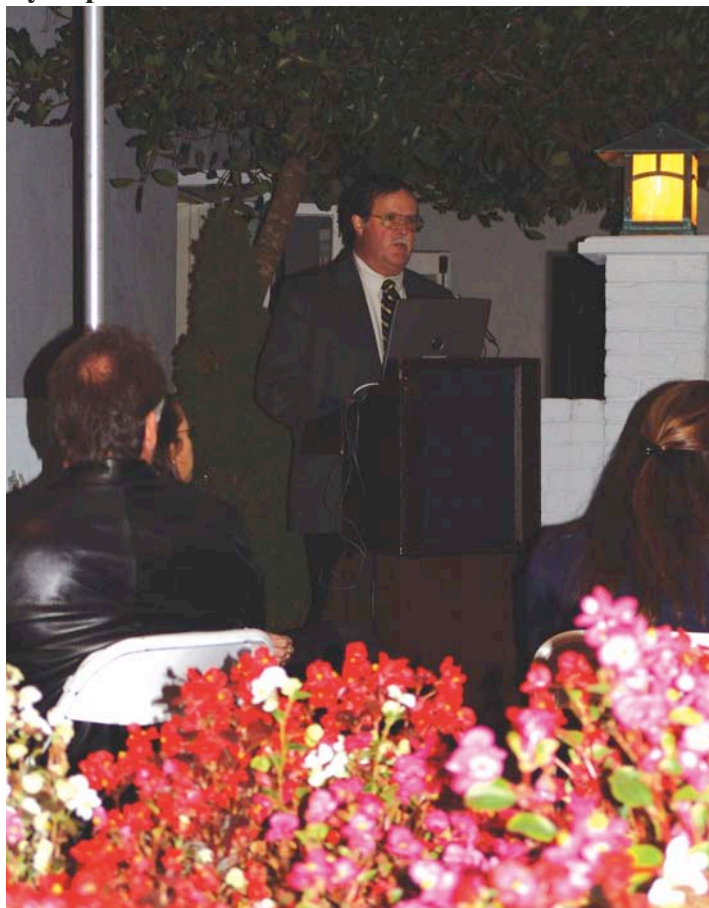


Mayor Gives "State of the Town" Address

By Sophie Braccini



Moraga Mayor Mike Metcalf

Photo Andy Scheck

On November 8th, Mayor Mike Metcalf presented the traditional "State of the Town" address in the bucolic setting of the Hacienda de las Flores. Speaking to the core values of the Town and its goals as laid out in the 2002 General Plan, Metcalf offered the audience both a summary and details of the year past and described the Town's short- and long-range plans for the future.

The hour-long Powerpoint presentation encompassed five general topics: Protection, development, public works, parks/recreation and finance.

Moraga's crime rate has remained consistent, although it is up slightly this year due in part to an increase in residential burglaries. Speeding and driving under the influence remain serious safety issues, and the Moraga Police Department recently dedicated a traffic officer and hired a Community Service Officer to focus on those of the lead-foot persuasion.

In light of two upcoming projects, the EBMUD scheduled re-

placement of aged water pipes along Moraga Road and the renovation of Moraga Way by the City of Orinda, Metcalf suggested this might be a good year to "take that long vacation," however discussions are underway to alleviate some of the anticipated traffic congestion.

Affordable housing is also becoming a major issue, and the Town has been working on preparing guidelines for the two downtown areas, which could become home to multiple-unit housing structures for "low-income" individuals such as students, some of the Town staff and teachers. There are no firm development plans as yet for the Moraga Center or the Rheem Center.

This fall saw the Town resume management of its recreation program, and the first Parks and Rec Plan since 1980 is being finalized. Options are being considered for making the Hacienda de las Flores a self-sustaining resource; a business plan should be completed by March of 2008.

Moragans will soon be able to view meetings of the Town Council from the comfort of their living rooms, as that illustrious body will be moving to La Sala and its meetings will be televised. The date for the Council's cable television debut has not been determined.

Metcalf concluded with a detailed budget presentation. The three major sources of revenue for the town of Moraga are property tax, sales tax and fees. Movements such as "Shop Moraga First" are attempting to address the issue of sales tax "leakage" and keep more tax dollars in town. The Town has generated a slight surplus over the past years and projections indicate that the budget will stay balanced until 2013. After that time, the Town could be facing a structural deficit. \$3,750,000 of the \$17M in fees from the developers of the Palos Colorados housing project has been received, with the remainder to be paid over the next seven years. The Council has spent a small amount of these funds on the library, but has agreed not to undertake any major spending until a comprehensive program is adopted. The Council plans to take up this issue at its meeting on November 28.

To view the Town of Moraga General Plan or the Mayor's State of the Town Powerpoint presentation, go to <http://www.ci.moraga.ca.us>

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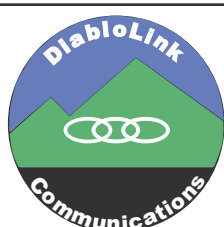
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