

Downtown ~ Where Everything Comes Together

By Laura Cole-Rowe, Conference Coordinator

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2007 – 2008

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Where do you get a chance to learn the latest trends of downtown revitalization in a thriving downtown, network with your peers and be close to Northern California's fabulous wine country? At the CDA annual statewide conference, of course!

track sponsored by the California Main Street Alliance on all three days. Bigger and stronger than ever, the annual conference is sure to have something for everyone involved in downtown revitalization.

The conference brochure with complete information on all sessions and registration information is online at

www.californiadowntown.com

Further information and links to register online for the conference and the hotel are included.

Sessions will cover a wide variety of downtown revitalization subjects, including case studies in cities both large and small, e-commerce, green and sustainable practices, promotions, organizational management, transportation and parking, branding, economic development, funding, design and more.

Keynote speaker Laurence Haughton will inspire us Thursday morning on strategic execution, organizational velocity, and leadership. Then, Haughton will facilitate the Mayors Forum, back by popular demand from last year. Mayors

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A Message from CDA Board President

Downtowns throughout California are as different and diverse as our geography, and they reflect the unique character and color of our eclectic California culture. This October 1-3, we will explore the heart of our communities — our downtowns — when we convene in Santa Rosa for CDA's Annual Conference,

Downtown ~ Where Everything Comes Together. *There's still time to register for this event that includes listening to some new ideas, sharing with colleagues, attending our popular City Manager and Mayors' forums, as well as fun and camaraderie. We look forward to welcoming you this year in Santa Rosa!*



Mary Coburn

Member Highlights

Brea ... During a recent Board meeting of the Brea Downtown Owners Assoc., Executive Director (and former CDA Board President) Sylvia Bianchi presented two CalFest Celebration Awards. The month-long Brea Jazz Fest received two first-place awards for marketing design: Best Event Brochure and Best T Shirt Design. The 2008 Brea Jazz Festival occurs every Friday and Saturday evenings in September. For more information, visit www.BreaDowntown.com



Concord ... City of Concord Downtown Manager Florence Weiss, also a former president of CDA, reports that Concord breaks Guinness Book World Record largest guitar ensemble. On the evening of July 1, 2,052 registered guitarists plus families and friends joined Country Joe McDonald in playing their way into the record book with a rousing rendition of the Woody Guthrie classic “This Land is Your Land.” The park was filled with participants wearing free “I Was There” t-shirts created for the event that broke the previous record was June 23, 2007, in Leinfelden, Germany, when 1,802 players performed.

What do you consider the top issues/challenges facing downtown development and prosperity?

Recently, we queried a few members, and here’s what they said:

John Lambeth of Downtown Resources: The greatest issue facing downtown development is a lagging economy ... downtown residential units are not selling, offices are not expanding, and retailers are opening few new locations. The best recipe to combat this problem is to proactively reduce barriers to entry, and to actively recruit the users that your downtown seeks. Also, now more than ever, it is critical to ensure that a very high level of management is present in your downtown—it must be cleaner and safer than its ever been...well-managed downtowns that are proactively charting their future will be well positioned to take full advantage of the next rebound in the economy.

Gail Stewart of the City of Burbank: Downtown Burbank faces three overall issues: the general downturn in the economy, a more competitive retail environment, and the challenge of attracting the right kind of street retail that enhances the pedestrian experience and adds to overall synergy. The Downtown Burbank Partnership is very engaged and proactive...we are beefing up our marketing strategy to increase the frequency and quality of our events. We are stepping up our prospect list and actively seeking new tenants. We recognize the importance of aggressively going after tenants we know will work in our district rather than wait for them.

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2008 Annual Conference

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from several California cities will take another hard look at the future of their cities and downtowns, and discuss the California economy, its housing market, and regionalism.

Thursday's luncheon will honor and recognize the outstanding efforts put forth by our 2008 Crystal Eagle Achievement Award winners. The second class of CDA's Professional Certification Program will receive their *Certified Downtown Professional* designation in a short ceremony following the awards. And the "buzz" will be going as we announce the city in Southern California where we will hold next year's conference.

Also on Thursday, our exhibitor and sponsor booths will be available all day. You can visit and find the latest information on products and services designed to support your downtown efforts.

Questions? Please contact Laura Cole-Rowe for more information on the conference and sponsor and exhibitor opportunities by phone (707) 631-5029 or by email conference@californiadowntown.com.

The conference isn't all about work – it's about networking, too! Meet your old downtown friends and new colleagues at two networking events: Wednesday evening at the swank Upper Fourth in downtown Santa Rosa and on Thursday evening at the Exhibitors' and Sponsors' Reception at the hotel. Then, go out to dinner at one of downtown Santa Rosa's 70+ restaurants where you can find a variety of cuisine to meet all tastes and budgets.

Friday morning's plenary breakfast speaker Doug Kevilus will wake us up with his high-energy show, offering unique and original ways to use the "magic of our minds." Then attend our final morning sessions before the conference adjourns at noon. **See you in October!**

Thinking about staying the weekend in wine country? There are plenty of things to do and see in Santa Rosa and Sonoma County to plan your extended stay, visit www.visitsantarosa.com

Scenes from the 2007 Annual Conference in Long Beach

Exhibitors and sponsors



A good time was had by all



Networking and socializing



The popular Mayors Forum



Lots of award winners



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***CDA is the state leader
and champion for the
revitalization of down-
towns and commercial
business districts.***

Top Issues in 2008 (continued from p. 2)

Claire Carpenter of El Cajon CDC: We are facing the same challenges many of our fellow cities are facing, particularly complicated municipal budget issues. On the next ballot, we will see a new State sales tax increase initiative, plus the second proposed sales tax increase for our city in the last 4 years. Merchants are concerned that sales tax increases will send shoppers to other, more “affordable” cities. Merchants also are concerned that reduced city services will affect a safe, clean environment. It is a terrible *Catch 22* because we also face a challenge with undercapitalized businesses in our target area. We offer grants to recruit new businesses, but we find that business plans do not allow for adequate reserves. We are partnering with a Small Business Development Center and private consultants to work with business owners to get in front of the shifting economics of small business. Our educational series shares information on staying ahead of trends, investing for small business, credit management, loan products, and business plan writing.

Editor’s Note:

*I welcome features, articles and, especially, photos submitted by our members. Between printed issues, we will strive to publish brief electronic newsletters. So, please keep your information coming, and we will publish it given the space and time. **Suzanne Strassburger***