

NEWS RELEASE

Tuesday, November 25, 2003
J. Michael Gonzales, Public Communication Manager
650.330.6618

“ CITY TO LAUNCH SALES TAX AWARENESS CAMPAIGN ”

Menlo Park, CA - The City of Menlo Park is launching a sales tax awareness campaign this week designed to inform Menlo Park residents of the critical city services that local sales tax revenue supports. The city is launching the campaign in recognition that sales tax revenues for the city have declined due to the lingering recession, increasing competition for retail shoppers from adjacent communities and growth in online sales.

The campaign, called “Shop Menlo Park,” links common purchases to city services such as Parks and Recreation, the Library, shuttle buses, Arts programs, and Public Safety. “The idea is to educate our residents that when you buy your gift items, furniture, your office equipment or gasoline in Menlo Park you help to support city programs that contribute to our high quality of life here,” said David Johnson, Menlo Park’s Business Development Manager. “Our intent is to develop a motivational message that encourages residents to shop in town.”

“The timing of the start of the campaign is crucial because holiday shopping really gets going after Thanksgiving Day.” Johnson said. “However, our main focus is on day-to-day purchases, so the peak of the campaign will come later on. We want to build long-term shopping habits focusing purchasing behavior locally in order to achieve a sustainable revenue source for the City.”

Campaign components include posters and banners at key locations around town, advertising spots in various the Menlo Park oriented publications, as well as a utility bill

insert. The “Shop Menlo Park” message also will appear in other publications covering Menlo Park.

Sales tax provides 26% of the revenue that supports Menlo Park services. This is the largest single funding category for the city, followed by property tax at 22% and charges for services at 15%. The city will spend no money in consultant fees to develop or produce the “Shop Menlo Park” campaign.

“The campaign is one component of the Menlo Park City Council’s organizational goal to ensure the city’s economic viability,” says David Boesch, Menlo Park City Manager. “The primary facets of this Council goal are to form strategic partnerships between the public and private sectors, develop and diversify our tax base, keep abreast of local business composition and direction with the overall aim of increasing sales tax revenues for the city,” he added.

An important part of the Council’s strategy to meet its economic vitality objective was to hire a new Business Development Manager to coordinate the tasks cited above. In September the City hired David Johnson, formerly with the City of Sunnyvale, to fill this position. Mr. Johnson has extensive private sector experience in site selection, market research, project management and marketing.

For more information about the City’s program you can contact David Johnson at (650) 330-6610.

####