Shop Moraga First Launches Website

By Sophie Braccini

After the Shop Moraga First campaign started early 2007 and the Art, Wine, and Merchants' Faire came and went, the Shop Moraga First committee turned its attention finding other ways to promote awareness of Moraga businesses and the benefits of shopping locally.

Grant Stubblefield, who has been a member of the community almost all his life, had an idea. "We thought of a website with all Moraga businesses on it," says the young man. "It was obvious, however, that it was one of those things that needed to be done but no one was going to do, since everyone in the group is a volunteer with limited time available." Stubblefield decided to develop it himself through his new company, the Community Marketing Group. He created a resource that anyone can use to explore what Moraga's business community has to offer.

By October 2007, he had most of the businesses on a map. Stubblefield's idea was that the site should be a community-building tool as well as a Chamber building site; a way of showing the potential of people coming together for better community.

"The Shopmoragafirst.com website is just what the Town of Moraga needs to improve communication between residents and the business community," says Edy Schwartz, President of the Moraga Chamber of Commerce. "Before you can shop in town, you need to know what's available. Grant has created websites for Moraga businesses that make them more than a storefront that one just walks past. It gives details that surprise residents with what is available in their Town."

The site has over 100 visitors per day. Most of them are searching specific businesses and are coming from either Yahoo or Google. All the businesses are indexed in both Yahoo and Google. Simple listing is free for all Moraga Businesses; Chamber members get a free link to their professional sites. For $15 a year, Chamber members get pictures, logo and a map to their location; non-members pay $55 for a premium listing. Over 250 businesses are already present, in both shopping centers and office buildings; home businesses can be included in the directory by calling Stubblefield at 408-5428.

Stubblefield is a St Mary's alumnus who's always wanted to see a better synergy between campus and town, so a special section has been added to Shopmoragafirst.com where Saint Mary's students can find discounts and promotions. "The Town of Moraga has tried for many years to connect more with the Saint Mary's College community," adds Schwartz. "This is definitely a step in that direction." "Bridging this gap between those who live, work, and support Moraga, will create a union," hopes Stubblefield, "and together we can strive towards a stronger, more sustainable community."

Grant Stubblefield wearing the Shop Moraga First button
Photo Sophie Braccini