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## Mayor Gives State of the City

By Andrea A. Firth



Victoria Smith Photos Andy Scheck

In a word, the state of Orinda today is "challenged," said Mayor Victoria Smith in her address to the members of Orinda's Chamber of Commerce and local Rotary Club on Wednesday, April 20th. Property tax revenue, which represents over half of the City's budget, is projected to be flat this year for the first time, and sales tax and investment income were both down last year, according to Smith. She acknowledged that this austere financial forecast would make it difficult to fund City services and make a significant dent in the City's \$100 million infrastructure problem. However, Smith did point out that Orinda would not be negatively affected by the Governor's proposal to pull funding for re-development agencies, because Orinda does not have one, and that the City does not have any unfunded pension liabilities, because City staff participate in 410K program, not a defined benefit program.

Audience questions to the Mayor mostly centered around what could and would be done about Orinda's failing roads. The idea of residents contributing to tax-deductible fund for road repairs was raised by a few members of the audience, and City Manager Janet Keeter explained that the City had explored this idea, and while interesting in concept, it did not pass legal scrutiny. Smith stated that in addition to the annual roads repair budget allotment the City would

continue to seek state and federal grants and support the neighborhood road repair program. The full Council will engage in a discussion of Orinda's infrastructure issue at the May 3rd Council meeting.



Orinda Taxi owner Julian Juricevic (on left) recently accepted the award for Business of the Year from the Orinda Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber also gave special recognitions to Sally Hogarty (center), the Editor of the Orinda News, and Valerie Hotz (on right), Orinda News Business Buzz columnist. Juricevic, Hogarty, and Hotz also received special recognitions from Contra Costa Board Supervisor Gayle Uilkema and Sate Assemblymember Nancy Skinner.

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