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## Moraga chamber begins economic development plan roll-out

By Sophie Braccini



Some of the participating businesses on the Moraga value card. Photo provided

When Bob Fritzky took the presidency of the Moraga Chamber of Commerce at the beginning of the year he announced several new programs to materially support local economic vitality. The chamber is rolling out a new value card to set in place the first piece of a puzzle to boost local commerce by bringing more visibility and revenue to the local merchants while providing seed money to the chamber to support more local economic development.

The program has initially enrolled 18 local retailers and services that are providing a wide range of interesting promotions to the owners of the \$25 value card. The card includes classic discounts of 10 to 20 percent at places such as Moraga Hardware and Lumber, Rheem Pet shoppe, UPS Store, Spell-It-Out-Photo, Round Table Pizza, Michael's Ristorante, Captain Vineyards, Osh, Glam Palace, Chef Chao and more; while other retailers offer additional or free service such as a free two-month trial membership at 24 Hour Fitness, a free order of wings at Pennini's, a complimentary beverage at Olivia's Nail Bar, a free safety check with regular service at Moraga Motors, a free 30-minute upgrade for a 60-minute massage at Massage Envy, and free long-term insurance and care consultation service with Karen Lew - New York Life. DocuSign is also taking part, although it is not a Moraga business. It offers both a free consultation and a 20 percent discount to new customers.

Kathe Nelson, the chamber's executive director, believes the card is an excellent value to shoppers, noting that the card is valid for an entire year. Vanessa Schneider, who recently opened Olivia's Nail Salon in the Rheem Shopping Center, explains that she first heard about the chamber and the program at the community fair where she had a booth and decided it would be a good way to both promote her new business and contribute to the community.

The chamber is managing the card and will soon offer an electronic version so people do not have to remember to bring the card with them. Lynn McAuliffe with Champagne Design has provided the development for the electronic card as well as all the graphic work for the program pro bono, Nelson says.

Nelson explains that the \$25 per card will go to the chamber to help with its bottom line. The "war chest" will also serve as seed money for other plans. The chamber will initiate a study with Saint Mary's College MBA students to analyze the needs and propose a vision for developing the Rheem Theatre. The chamber is also offering other economic development services by granting of money to business owners who want to update their storefronts. Nelson explains that funds will come from larger local businesses as well as the chamber.

The \$25 card can be purchased at 5A Rent-A- Space, Moraga Country Club or Rheem Valley Pet Shoppe, or online at moragachamber.org.

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[back](#)

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