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## Town bids farewell to retiring Chamber executive director

By Vera Kochan

Anyone who replaces Moraga Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Kathe Nelson will have some very big shoes to fill. Nelson announced her retirement in January, and according to the Chamber's board of directors president, Brandi Ford, the search continues for someone to carry the torch.

Nelson has been with the chamber for 10 years, serving as ambassador for Moraga's businesses. She has promoted the "Shop Moraga First" ideology, helped to create the town's first special Commercial Zoning District, and worked tirelessly on the annual Moraga Community Fair, Moraga's Farmers' Market, the Chamber Golf Tournament, business marketing studies, a Chamber Directory (to aid residents in locating local businesses), and helped to promote a town/gown relationship with Saint Mary's College students by encouraging them to shop locally.

Along with her husband, Walter, the Nelsons plan to move to Oregon to live out their golden years. Making note of that, the members of board recently posted well wishes to Nelson on social media: "Thank you for managing our chamber for the past 10 years, for your work with all the merchants, nonprofits and college here in town. Our best to you and Walter in your retirement."

Mayor Mike McCluer proclaimed Feb. 10 Kathe Nelson Day and joined the other council members and town staff in thanking Nelson and wishing her a happy retirement during the council's meeting.

"Moraga is a very special community," stated Nelson. "It runs on the participation of volunteers and a very loyal, small business base. I'm proud to have been a small part in the development and advantageous changes to the business community through the support of the town and through the council, and for that we are deeply grateful."

"Moraga and the business community will always hold a very special place in my heart," continued Nelson, "and I look forward to checking in and learning about the fruition of the Moraga Specific Plan; the growth and community support of our local businesses; and the continued cooperation of the town and the chamber in making the business community even stronger and more supported by the community."

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