There are exciting changes taking place throughout our city that will benefit residents, businesses, and visitors. In preparation for new and expanded commercial development in the downtown Project SHAPE commercial business district (Main Street, Broadway and State Streets, 4th to 8th Streets), the City Council recently approved the elimination of the off-street parking space requirements for Main Street, Broadway, and State Streets from 4th to 8th Street. Changes include the elimination of the landscaping requirements in the downtown commercial district, and provide zoning district regulation changes for different types of uses. These changes are listed in Chapter 29 (Zoning) of the City Code which is available online at the City's website.

Lately, if you have traveled north on 8th Street, undoubtedly you have been pleased by the new street improvements, the widening of 8th Street to four lanes, and the opening of the four new lanes heading west on Cruickshank Drive. This project was funded by the Economic Development Administration with $3.1 million dollars and the remainder of the funding coming from the City and two developers (YK America and Chelsea Investment Corporation) along the site location.

In March for the past six years, the City of El Centro has implemented its Business Recognition Program – IMAGINE, where we honor and showcase seven businesses for their outstanding achievements. From December 1st through February 28th each year, businesses are nominated by the public online through the City’s website. El Centro has a lot of outstanding businesses and this year’s award recipients are very deserving of the special recognition. The City is very fortunate to have supportive sponsors that help to make this business recognition program a reality each year.

The City’s Business/Industrial Incubator Facility has acquired two more tenants which translates to more job creation as these businesses grow and expand. If you haven’t visited the business incubator facility, please contact our Economic Development Department and take a tour. You will be impressed by the professional facility that provides affordable rent space, technical and financial assistance and other amenities.

Every month, the Mayor, the Director of Economic Development and I visit with two businesses. We have been making these personal visits for seven years and every visit is eye-opening, creating awareness not only for us at the city, but for the business as well. We come away from each visit better informed as to how we may improve and streamline our processes at the city and more times than not, we come away knowing that we are doing the best we can to assist businesses in whatever way possible.

For more information on any of these programs, please visit www.cityofelcentro.org or contact the Economic Development Department at (760) 337-4543.

Ruben A. Duran, City Manager
El Centro Town Center II Streets Improvement Project

The EDA project consists of infrastructure improvements to 8th Street from North of Bradshaw Avenue, Cruickshank Avenue from 12th Street to 8th Street, and 12th Street in order to accommodate the development of the Chelsea Industrial site, El Centro Town Center II, and the El Centro Town Village Industrial site.

**FACTS AT A GLANCE:**

- **Total Project Cost:** $4,052,951
- **Funding Sources:**
  - $3.1 million Economic Development Administration (EDA)
  - $856,000 City of El Centro
  - $76,127 Chelsea Investment Corporation
  - $99,323 YK America
- **Developer:** City of El Centro
- **Jobs to be created:** 417
- **Date of Completion:** April 19, 2013
City’s Business Recognition Program

The City of El Centro established the Business Recognition - IMAGINE in 2007 for the purpose of giving formal recognition to outstanding El Centro businesses that encompass all seven of the attributes in the acronym IMAGINE. Those attributes include the following categories: innovator, motivator, architect of change, genius, industrious, noble, and entrepreneur.

Each year seven businesses are chosen to receive special recognition in one of the seven categories. The IMAGINE awards nomination process is open to the public from the beginning of December through the end of February.

Every year a new award selection committee (which is made up of 80% private sector business owners) makes the final selections from the public nominations.

Businesses contribute to the economic well-being of the city and each year the award recipients demonstrate a strong commitment to the future of our community. For more information on the IMAGINE Business Recognition Awards Program, please visit www.cityofelcentro.org/economicdevelopment or call the Economic Development Department at (760) 337-4543.

Innovator - Caliber Screenprinting
Oscar Quintero, Owner
Business started: 1998
Best advice: “Make a decision, be firm, and move forward with it.”

Motivator - Childers and Associates
Ryan Childers, Owner
Business started: 2006
Best advice: From the scriptures - “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” “The value instilled in me was that what you do today is going to have an impact on you (and those around you) tomorrow.”

Architect of Change - Imperial Valley Press
Gerard Delaney, Publisher
Business started: 1901
Best advice: “Do a lot of research, know your market, and understand the needs for a product.”
Genius - Sanders Architecture & Engineering
Jimmy Sanders, Owner
Business started: 1972
Best advice: “Work hard, provide good service to your clients, and all the other things will fall into place.”

Industrious - SOBE’s
Sobeida Jackson, Owner
Business started: 2009
Best advice: “Learn from your customers – they tell you & they teach you what they want or need. Give them a quality product.”

Noble - Heart and Hand
Patty McGrew and Jennifer Thomason, Owners
Business started: 2006
Best advice: “Be the best you can be professionally and personally.” “Do what you love to do.”

Entrepreneur - Johnny’s Burritos
Lety Mendez and Richard Palomino, Owners
Business started: 1963
Best advice: “Follow your passion in whatever you do. Love your community and your customers.” “Make a difference in your community.”
City’s Business/Industrial Incubator Facility

Project JOBS
(Joint Opportunities in the Business Sector)

The City of El Centro is looking for prospective tenants that are operating a home-based business or an existing small business that is looking to expand, for its business/industrial incubator facility located within the Centerpoint Industrial Park located at 703 Industry Way in El Centro. There are four service related businesses that lease suites at the facility and there are currently three available suites for rent. The size of each suite ranges from 1,125 sq feet to 1,196 sq ft.

There are several advantages to renting space at the business incubator facility. Project JOBS* is special grant funding that provides new tenants with no security deposit and one to three months free rent. The program also entitles the tenants to apply for a loan up to $20,000 that is either 75% or 90% forgivable. In addition, the Project JOBS program will provide to the tenants at no cost, professional consultations with a Certified Public Accountant, an attorney that specializes in business, Quick Books training, and/or marketing consulting. The City of El Centro also provides the tenants subsidized water, sewer and trash pick-up for their business suite each month.

The City’s Business/Industrial Incubator Facility is intended to encourage the growth and development of local small business entrepreneurs. If you want to start or expand your business, now is the time. Please call us at (760) 337-4543 for more information.

Benefits of a Business Incubation Program

- Professional facilities
- Affordable rent space
- Technical assistance
- Financial assistance
- Visibility

*Project JOBS is funded by the IID Local Entity.
City of El Centro Business Visitation Program

In 2006 the City instituted a Business Visitation Program that is made up of three areas: recognition, appreciation, and technical assistance. The program was developed from the City of El Centro Strategic Planning Program which “provides leadership for the region toward creating a sustainable economic base by encouraging the growth of large and small enterprises.”

Every month for the past seven years, the Mayor, City Manager and Director of Economic Development have made personal visits to two businesses. The purpose of the visits is to discuss business needs, expansion feasibility, and other issues that may impact their immediate business needs. The City is able to provide information to the businesses regarding city services, business loan information, and technical business assistance.

Two out of every three new jobs in the U.S. are created by small business. There are approximately 2,200 businesses that have El Centro business licenses. Small businesses create many opportunities for entrepreneurs and the small business environment is improving and prospering. By visiting local businesses, large or small, the City hopes to create a network that will provide more information, resources, and ongoing assistance that will help businesses expand and grow in the City of El Centro.

For more information about the Business Visitation Program, please call the City of El Centro Economic Development Department at (760) 337-4543.
Thanks to all our IMAGINE 2013 Sponsors