

Economy, Gov't Hit Preschools

By Chinayera Black-Hardaman, Executive Director First 5 Madera County

Research shows that a child's brain begins developing at birth and grows rapidly for the first five years of life. Studies demonstrate that the care and opportunities children receive during these years are crucial in shaping their ability to grow, learn and succeed in life. However, in today's economy, as unemployment rates rise and housing prices plummet, families face an increasingly difficult time providing for their children on all levels.

During these challenging economic times, more and more families are turning to local services to make ends meet. But as state lawmakers continue to grapple with a solution to the unprecedented budget shortfall, many of these services are at risk of disappearing.

In 1998, California voters approved Proposition 10, adding a 50 cent tax on cigarettes to generate the first-ever funding stream dedicated to the state's children age 0 to 5. First 5 Madera County invests nearly \$2 million of these funds annually to provide essential programs and services to families throughout the county – and they're having a positive impact.

In 2007-2008, more than 5,700 children and parents benefited from 26,000 services made possible by First 5 Madera County, with the following highlights:

- 96% of children involved in the school readiness program developed skills to help them enter school ready to learn
- With efforts supported in part by First 5 Madera, access to public preschool programming increased by 80%
- 64% of families receiving individual case management services showed marked decreases in exposure to risk factors
- 97% of first-time mothers participating in the home visitation program reported breastfeeding their babies
- 94% of parents who participated in parenting programs demonstrated increased knowledge of appropriate parenting techniques and 92% reported improved parenting behaviors

Leading economists, including Nobel Laureate Dr. James Heckman, have extensively

researched the value of early childhood programs and found each dollar invested in young children can yield up to \$17 in return and can improve children's performance in school and can reduce dropout rates and juvenile delinquency – which can prevent incurring costs associated with remedial education and welfare services.

Eliminating these funds during our current economic downturn would create a vacuum of unmet needs for families most at risk, further deepening our state's financial trouble. In the current fiscal crisis, it's more important than ever to continue to invest in programs that demonstrate the ability to offset costs in the long run.

For more information on available local children's services and other First 5 Madera County programs, call (559) 661-5155.

Business Profile

Bedrock Surveys the Future



The brains behind the business at Bedrock Engineering are, from left, Mike Hartley, Pete Mayne and Dave Hartley

By Randy Bailey

Most people would say that this is not exactly the best time to start a new business. So why did the Hartley brothers, Mike and Dave, along with partner Pete Mayne, open the doors on their engineering firm, Bedrock Engineering?

"This is certainly not the economic climate I envisioned for our new company, but we are genuinely excited about the future and the opportunities that lie ahead," said Mike Hartley. Mike likes what Donald Rumsfeld said when he was preparing to go to war in Iraq. "As you know, you go to war with the army you have. They're not the Army you might want or wish to have at a later time." Mike says that often doing the right thing requires action now even

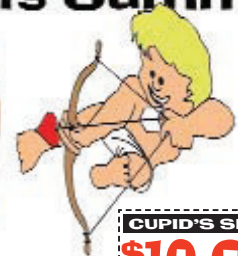
though the circumstances may not be completely favorable.

The name for the company, Bedrock Engineering, was borne out of frustration trying to describe what they intended the company to do.

"We considered hundreds of names, spent countless hours brainstorming and talked about it for months," Mike said. "We knew the right name was critical. We wanted a name we could be proud of and we wanted a name that identified us. Frustrated, I remember talking to Pete one night saying, '... we need something solid ... something people can count on ... something firm like ... bedrock.'"

"That's it - Bedrock!" said partner Pete Maynes. "Bedrock Engineering." From there the slogan "A solid founda-

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tion for your next project" was born.

What Bedrock does is surveying and engineering services. These services can be used for grading and draining projects on your property or proving to your insurance company that you're not in a flood plain so that you don't have to pay for costly flood insurance. Their services are also essential if you're involved in a property dispute with a neighbor.

Pete does all the field surveying which is where the process begins. After he gathers the important information in the field he turns it over to Mike who prepares elevation certificates, draws maps for splitting property, adjusting lot lines - in other words graphically showing the results of the survey.

The process can end with Mike or, if necessary, will continue on with Dave who determines elevations for actually building everything from houses and parking lots to curbs, gutters and storm drains.

Combined, the three partners have nearly 50 years of experience doing what

they do. In addition, they grew up in the Ranchos and still live here to this day.

"Our kids play with our clints' kids," Mike said.

All three stressed that there is still construction going on, in spite of what you hear on the news, and what makes Bedrock so competitive is keeping their overhead low and being super competitive in their bidding.

"Usually the lowest bid is someone who forgot something," the partners laughed in unison. The say their key difference is they bid low BUT they get the job done.

The other positive element for using Bedrock is their genuine concern and affection for the Ranchos.

"We're here to serve the community," Dave said.

"We want people in the community to know that they can rely on us and the services we provide," Mike said. "Whether we are surveying their property, designing a drainage plan or merely giving advice, we want people to know they can count on Bedrock. Dave and I grew up in the Ranchos. We own homes

here. Our kids go to school and play here. And even though Pete lives in Clovis, he has a vested interest in the Ranchos. Pete and I have worked in this area since 1990 and Dave started in 1995. We are also committed to, and eager to see, a Ranchos Community Center and Ranchos Library. When the time comes, we will gladly donate the surveying and engineering services needed for these two projects."

The Hartley brothers and Pete Mayne are what you look for in business people who work in our community. They're not here just to suck money out of the rest of us and then disappear into the night when all of the fat pigs have been stuck. They have a connection to the land, to the community and the people of the Ranchos.

If you have a surveying or engineering project coming up in the future, give the guys at Bedrock a call at 645-4849.

"This is a great place to live and we want to give back to our community. It's the right thing to do," Mike said as we wrapped up our interview.

I couldn't have said it better myself.

Another Scam Targets Seniors

Despite Sheriff John Anderson's warning to the public regarding a rising tide of moneygram scams that are targeting our senior citizens community, the department continues to receive calls for service from people with moneygram complaints.

Victims are being told that a grandchild is behind bars and money must be wired to bail the child out. How can Grandparents be sure that a loved has really been jailed? First: The call won't come from someone claiming to be a correctional officer, arresting officer or a bail bondsman. That seems to be the recent game these folks are playing.

Sheriff's Detectives have launched an investigation working with law enforcement in Canada where the calls started originating. Two websites address the latest moneygram scams: www.moneygram.com and www.phonebusters.com.

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