Paxson shares reflections on the chamber's 75th anniversary

The Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce, one of the most engaging and successful chambers in the Bay Area, is celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2021, and is commemorating the occasion with a variety of captivating stories, news articles, and reflections from community leaders. James Paxson, 2015 board chair and current General Manager of Hacienda, shares his experience of being involved with the Pleasanton Chamber.

In 1982, an ordinance was passed approving the first phase of Hacienda.

During the 1980s, Pleasanton experienced tremendous growth, not only in Hacienda, but with chamber membership as well.

"One of my earliest memories of working at Hacienda and in Pleasanton was participating in the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce's Economic Development Committee which, at that time, was being held in Geoff Etnire's office and chaired by Brad Hirst. What was particularly memorable about these meetings was how engaged the community was in issues related to Pleasanton's economic health and vitality. Month after month, the room was packed with people who were clearly committed to the community and to making Pleasanton a better place; all of which made quite an impression on this new arrival. Set against a sweeping backdrop of Pleasanton through the windows, dozens gathered together to engage

James Paxson
General Manager,
Hacienda

in practical problem solving, policy development and the creation of ideas to help make the city function well and to provide its citizenry with the components it needed to thrive: quality infrastructure, great neighborhoods, excellent schools, a stellar environment and first-rate amenities.

Time and time again since, I have repeatedly witnessed this same spirit of commitment to Pleasanton by these people and others that I first met through the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce. This dedication to Pleasanton as a place is not common in my experience and it really speaks to me of a shared set of values that is expressed regularly and in so many ways; an expression that has made working in Pleasanton all

this time a real pleasure. No matter what the circumstance, when there is something that needs to be addressed, the community comes together and sees that it happens. So often, the convening force or common thread to that collective response has been the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce through their active civic engagement and care for those things that make Pleasanton, Pleasanton.

When I finally had the honor of chairing the Chamber's Board of Directors, I was struck with a very strong sense of "standing on the backs of giants". While somewhat daunting, I was also decidedly comforted by the idea that I was taking part in something that was bigger than myself. This spirit of participation in a collective effort has been one of the most rewarding parts of being a Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce

member all these years. Happy Birthday Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce. I am proud to have been with you through much of your seventy-five years and look forward to many more to come!"