

Chamber offers a boost

E. Palo Alto establishes Chamber of Commerce

By Chris Kenrick
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LOS ALTOS — Santa Clara County Municipal Court Judge LaDoris H. Cordell told members of the newly established East Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce they can combine to become a powerful force in the community if they provide "educated and sincere leadership."

Cordell, a former assistant dean at Stanford Law School who was sworn in as a judge earlier this month, spoke Thursday at the installation banquet for the East Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce.

The new group is the first Chamber of Commerce East Palo Alto has had since an earlier chapter went defunct in the 1960s. Several efforts to re-establish an East Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce in the 1970s were unsuccessful.

This time, however, the attempt to organize East Palo Alto's business community appears to be headed for success.

More than 150 members and friends of the fledgling chamber — including representatives from the chambers of commerce in Los Altos and Sunnyvale — turned out Thursday night to install the new officers at a banquet held at the Balkan Village restaurant. The crowd was so large that organizers were unable to find an East Palo Alto banquet hall big enough to accommodate everybody, according to Kate Gundunas, an officer in the new chamber. Gundunas' in-laws are the former owners of the Balkan Village.

Noting that East Palo Alto is an unincorporated area "on the brink of cityhood," Cordell said the business group could play a vital role in the success of a new city if it can successfully "relate to all segments of the community."

"History teaches us that in this society, those who wield the most influence are those who wield the most money," Cordell said. "In most communities, that money lies within the business sector.

"You have an obligation to provide educated and sincere leadership."

Cordell suggested the chamber could provide such leadership by funding a weekly community newspaper.