

LO ALTO DAILY NEWS

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April 20, 2002

COMBINED DAILY NEWS CIRCULATION: 47,500

Volume 7, Number 112

City's revival takes shape

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For the first time in what seems a long time, a mayor of East Palo Alto will have more good news than bad to report in the annual state of the city address on Monday.

Mayor Duane Bay isn't giving many clues about what he'll say in the address Monday, but evidence of East Palo Alto's revival is everywhere.

For example:

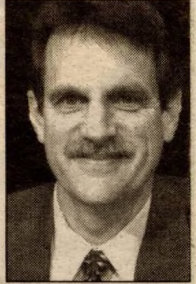
► The University Circle project has taken shape at the intersection of Highway 101 and University Avenue, replacing the Whiskey Gulch neighborhood. The office towers in the project have opened and construction continues on a Four Seasons hotel.

► East Palo Alto finally has a bank. California Bank & Trust, the first bank the city has seen since the 1980s, has

opened in the Ravenswood 101 Shopping Center.

► And, next door to the bank, a Starbucks coffee house opened in January. While Starbucks seem to litter the American landscape, that's the first one in East Palo Alto.

► While we're talking coffee, don't overlook the Latte Dah coffee drive-through that is thriving at the corner of



BAY

See REVIVAL, page 54

REVIVAL

FROM PAGE 1

Bay Road and University Avenue.

► The Highway 101 on- and off-ramps at University Avenue were widened to ease some of the traffic flowing into the city.

► Voters last month approved a 300,000-square-foot Ikea furniture store that will yield a minimum of \$1 million in sales taxes for the city government and another \$800,000 in property taxes. How big is that? The city's current annual budget is \$13 million. The store is also promising to create 550 jobs.

The Ikea vote was close, and the campaign polarized pro- and anti-development factions. Both sides are expected to have candidates in this November's election.

When it comes to crime, Police Chief Wes Bowling said that after getting over a bad stretch earlier in the year — a homicide and a string of domestic abuse cases started off 2002 — the city's crime rate has leveled off.

However, as the Daily News reported yesterday, there has been a string of robberies of the city's small "mom and pop" grocery stores over the past month and a half that the

police department is working to curb. A forum on violence and law enforcement, sponsored by the city, East Palo Alto YMCA and One East Palo Alto, is scheduled to take place today from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Ronald McNair School, 2033 Pulgas Ave.

While Bay isn't saying what subjects he'll bring up in Monday's speech, he promised he'll be brief.

"I'm shooting for 20 minutes," Bay said. Asked if he'll begin the speech with a joke, Bay laughed and said his jokes have gotten him in trouble before, or people don't realize when he's making a joke.

"My sense of humor is a bit dry," he said.

What Bay will say is that he is planning on talking about the city's accomplishments and discussing "areas for improvement and trust."

The theme of this year's address will be "Keeping Promises," said Bay, who is up for re-election in November.

The state of the city address is slated to run from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. in City Council chambers, 2415 University Ave. Refreshments will be served.