

# New chamber chief: It's about networking

✓ *Chamber of Commerce*  
By JONDI GUMZ

SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

If the name of the new Santa Cruz Chamber of Commerce chief sounds familiar, it should.

Consultant Bill Tysseling chaired the chamber's economic development committee for almost a decade, serving a term as president, then worked at UC Santa Cruz Extension before taking a job in Iowa.

Now he's back, taking over the chamber's top post for Greg Carter, who left to practice law.

"My first charge is to hold on to what Greg accomplished," said Tysseling.

Chamber membership stands at 866 businesses, nearing the dot-com peak of 940 businesses. The membership retention rate is 89 percent, better than the 82 percent statewide average.

Tysseling's job carries a salary of \$76,000, with bonuses for meeting performance targets and a commission on net income in excess of projections. More than 20 people applied, and three men and three women were interviewed.

"We had a number of highly qualified candidates, so it was not an easy selection process," said new chamber President Charlie Eadie, a land-use consultant with Hamilton-Swift and former campus planner at UCSC.



Dan Coyro/Sentinel

Bill Tysseling is the new director of Santa Cruz Chamber of Commerce.

The search committee looked for someone with political deftness, and someone familiar with nonprofits and for-profit business.

"We're looking at quality of life in the community as a priority, not just the health of businesses," Eadie

said. "We believe the two are intertwined."

Carolyn Staico-Smith, who owns Tonic Salon & Spa downtown, hasn't met Tysseling yet but joined the chamber after attending an event for women in business last year.

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"I learned a lot, met wonderful women and received many contacts to follow up for my business," she said.

She suggested that Tysseling follow Carter's practice of asking for input and looking for ways the chamber and the Downtown Association can work together.

Tysseling, 59, is an affable guy sporting a salt-and-pepper beard and a burgundy sweater vest under his suit to ward off the morning chill. Walking down Pacific Avenue, he remembers the demolition of the Cooper House and ponders how the chamber should adapt to the age of the Internet.

For the past three years, he split his time between here and the Corn State (where he earned a law degree in 1972) to be the director of distance education for Iowa State University. Iowa is "connected," he said, citing a few examples:

- T-1 lines for online delivery of university courses statewide.

- Joint degree programs with other countries, like one in civil engineering in China.

- E-Extension, an online partnership of universities delivering specific information to specific audiences.

With businesses becoming more specialized and focusing on a narrower customer base, Tysseling anticipates changes in networking.

## William 'Bill' Tysseling

**POSITION:** Executive director, Santa Cruz Chamber of Commerce.

**CAREER:** Director of continuing education and communication services, Iowa State University; continuing education administrator and international programs developer, UC Santa Cruz; economic development and business consultant; executive director, Democratic Management Services, a nonprofit; attorney, faculty lecturer and magistrate.

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor's degree in economics, DePauw University, Greencastle, Ind.; law degree, University of Iowa College of Law.

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:** Board member, Santa Cruz Chamber of Commerce, 1992-2002, president, 1999, chair of economic development committee; board member, Santa Cruz Community Housing Corp. (which merged with Mercy Housing California); consultant to Economic Policy Council of Santa Cruz County Council of Chambers of Commerce; member, Central Coast Small Business Development board; participant, Monterey Bay Futures Network, Joint Venture Silicon Valley.

**FAMILY:** Married, three grown stepchildren, five step-grandchildren

**WHAT HE'S READING:** 'Ambient Findability' by Peter Norville, 'Simplicity: The New Competitive Advantage in a World of More, Better, Faster' by Bill Jensen, and 'The Wealth of Networks' by Yochai Benkler.

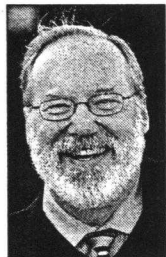
See **TYSSELING** on **PAGE D2**



# Tysseling

Continued from Page D1

"A flashy packaging or merchandising to a broad base of customers isn't going to work in the knowledge economy," he said. "What would benefit most is finding ways to mutually support each other."



**TYSSELING**

While some may view Santa Cruz as a less-than-friendly, and perhaps hostile, environment for business, Tysseling's assessment is: "Some segments may have conflicting interests, so you need an ongoing process to resolve them."

Manufacturers that were in the city when Tysseling arrived before the earthquake in 1989, such as Wrigley, Lipton and Texas Instruments, are gone, and so are the well-paying jobs they provided.

"That's not unique to Santa Cruz, but other communities have found ways to replace them," Tysseling said.

Each of the remaining economic sectors — retail, tourism, education and tech — has different needs, such as better transportation, affordable housing and a safe environment for shoppers. Tysseling said the city must balance priorities and respond if not adapt entirely, adding, "It's always a problem to choose well."

He sees opportunities in the coastal marine campus proposed by UCSC at Terrace Point, which has yet to be approved by the California Coastal Commission, and in the idea of an oceanfront conference center and hotel, although community opposition

## Upcoming Chamber Events

**JAN. 31:** Networking mixer, 5-7 p.m.

**WHERE:** Georgiana Bruce Kirby Preparatory School, 425 Encinal St., Santa Cruz

**COST:** \$5 for chamber members, \$10 for nonmembers.

**FEB. 8:** Outlook 2007 luncheon, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** Cocoanut Grove, Santa Cruz.

**COST:** \$30, reservations required, call 457-3719.

**FEB. 28:** Networking mixer, 5-7 p.m.

**WHERE:** University Inn & Conference Center, 611 Ocean St., Santa Cruz.

**COST:** \$5 for chamber members, \$10 for nonmembers.

**MARCH 8:** Women in Business Luncheon, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** Cocoanut Grove, Santa Cruz.

**COST:** \$25 for chamber members, \$50 for nonmembers. Reservations required, call 457-3715.

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killed a \$100 million makeover of the Coast Santa Cruz Hotel in 2005.

"It's such a unique location, at the beach and close to downtown," Tysseling said. "It's a natural marketing opportunity. Whether someone will come in is an open question."

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