

Construction Update

GHILOTTI opens in American Canyon

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AMERICAN CANYON -- GHILOTTI Construction is digging into southern Napa Valley. The Santa Rosa-based engineering general contractor has opened a location in American Canyon to target more jobs in Napa and Solano counties and the East Bay.

The goal is to increase operations east of the Mayacamas Mountains until a quarter of the company's revenues comes from those counties, according to Christer Berglund, estimating manager. Revenues were \$70 million last year, with \$45 million generated by the Santa Rosa office and \$25 million by the San Rafael office.

"There seem to be a lot more opportunities there than in the [U.S.] 101 corridor at this point," he says. "In general, it's not such a no-growth area. Also, the affordability factor, particularly in Solano, means homeowners get more for their money there, and that drives subdivision development."

He points out that rapid home development in Solano County has progressed to demand for retail stores to serve the new residents.

"To keep our [revenue] volume up, we need to expand our horizons geographically, though there still is a fair amount of work in the 101 corridor," Mr. Berglund says.

In the annual Forbes/Milken Institute list of the top 200 places to work, the Vallejo-Napa-Fairfield metropolitan area ranked 17th last year, down two slots from 2002. According to the state Employment Development Department, the number of Solano County jobs unrelated to agriculture will increase 12.9% to 134,000 between 2001 and 2008, compared to projected 15.7% growth in Sonoma County in the same period.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Sonoma County's population increased 18.1% from 1990 through 2000, but growth slowed to 1.8% from 2000 through 2003. Solano's population increased 16.2% from 1990 through 2000, but growth in the last three years was 4.5%. The expectation is that Solano County will lead the Bay Area in job and population growth through 2010.

Currently, GHILOTTI Construction is working at 10 sites in Napa and Solano counties. Those include infrastructure work for Lennar Homes' redevelopment of the former Navy base on Mare Island in Vallejo. Another is earthwork for 60- to 70-home subdivisions in the Hiddenbrooke community of Vallejo for Triad and Western Pacific.

The company has worked on projects in Napa and Solano counties and the East Bay over its 12-year independent history, including Carneros Inn in Napa and three other subdivisions in Hiddenbrooke.

GHILOTTI Construction has opened a four-person office at 600 South Napa Junction Road in American Canyon. Mark Bower is the area manager, and Jay Mitchell is the superintendent.

For more information, call 707-585-1221 (Santa Rosa) or 707-556-9145 (American Canyon), or visit www.GHILOTTI.com.