

## Associate joins Coldwell Banker

Greg Thomas is the newest sales associate at Coldwell Banker's Dixon-Davis office, it has been announced. He will specialize in residential sales in Solano, Yolo and counties.

Thomas' team ranked in the top 1 percent of nationwide Realtors and Top 10 Realtors in the county from 2001 to 2006. They sold 400 homes in the last five years and successfully closed more than \$20 million in sales in five of the past six years.

The Dixon-Davis office is at 1140 Pitt School Road. Thomas can be reached at 678-1615.

## Sutter cardiology earns certification

Sutter Regional Medical Foundation's cardiology laboratory has been granted accreditation by the Intersocietal Commission for the Accreditation of Echocardiography Laboratories (ICAEL) for adult echo and adult stress tests — the only one in Solano County to have such a certification, a foundation spokesman said.

Noninvasive, echocardiographic testing has become one of the standard diagnostic tools in cardiology with an estimated 10 million echocardiograms performed annually in the United States — potentially a helpful tool in the fight against cardiovascular disease.

Accreditation means the facility has been reviewed by an independent agency which recognizes the laboratory's commitment to quality testing for the diagnosis of heart disease.

To learn more, or to find a physician, visit [srmf.org](http://srmf.org).

## Social media conference set

The North Bay SocialBiz Media Conference 2010 will be held on April 30 at the Sheraton Hotel & Marina in Petaluma.

The regional event offers information and tools to create an online social media strategy, jump-start a Web presence, engage with customers and build an online community.

Conference-goers will learn how to choose the right tools for business and how to use them effectively.

The conference will be from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. in the Sheraton Hotel, 745 Baywood Drive, Petaluma.

Costs range from \$85 to \$105 and includes workshops, lunch and evening networking reception.

For more information, visit: [www.socialbiz2010.com](http://www.socialbiz2010.com) or contact [info@socialbiz2010.com](mailto:info@socialbiz2010.com)

## SBDC workshops continue in March

Solano Community College's Small Business Development Center has announced the schedule of its March workshops. They include:

- ABCs of Small Business Development, 10 a.m. to noon Monday, Vallejo Chamber, 427 York St., Vallejo. Cost: \$25.

- Promote Your Business Without Advertising, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesday, Dixon Chamber, 220 N. Jefferson St., Dixon. Cost: \$25.

- How to Use FaceBook, 9 to 11 a.m. March 23, Solano College SBDC, 360 Campus Lane, Suite 102, Fairfield. Cost: \$25.

- Exceptional Customer Service, 9 a.m. to noon March 30, Vacaville Chamber, 300 Main St., Vacaville. Cost: \$35.

- Small Business Clinic — Expert Advice, 5:15 to 8 p.m. March 31, Solano College SBDC, 360 Campus Lane, Suite 102, Fairfield. Free.

Reserve a seat by calling 864-3382 or register at [www.SolanoSBDC.org](http://www.SolanoSBDC.org).

**"The positive thing is that we are helping a lot of people become home owners at affordable prices with good interest rates that are as low as they have been in 50 years."**

— Jim Porter, Solano Mortgage

# First-timers dominate

## Housing report finds many new buyers entering the market

By Reporter Staff

**A**ffordable home prices, tax credits for home buyers, historically low interest rates, and a large number of distressed properties prompted many first-time home buyers to enter the market in 2009, according to the California Association of Realtors' 2009-2010 "State of the California Housing Market" report released last week.

The percent of first-time buyers increased dramatically in 2009, from 35.9 percent in 2008 to 47 percent in 2009, according to the report. The share of first-time buyers exceeded the long-run average of 38.6 percent and was the highest since 1995, when more than half of all buyers were first timers.

"It is clear that the federal tax credit for home buyers worked well in 2009 and is continuing to drive home sales," said C.A.R. President Steve Goddard. "The home buyers' tax credit is arguably the most successful strategy employed by the government's efforts to stimulate the economy."

According to a survey conducted by C.A.R. on the effectiveness of the federal tax credit for home buyers, nearly 40 percent said they would not have purchased a home if the federal tax credit was not offered. On the same note, near-

ly 70 percent of those buyers said the tax credit was either "very important" or "most important" in their decision to buy a home. The large number of distressed properties led to more than half of all first-time buyers purchasing an REO/foreclosure or short sale property.

Statewide, real estate owned/foreclosures and short sales accounted for almost half of all annual sales in 2009, an increase from 35.6 percent in 2008. The median price of distressed properties declined nearly one quarter to \$250,000 in 2009 compared with \$330,000 in 2008. Meanwhile, the statewide median price of non-distressed properties decreased only 10.4 percent to \$485,000 compared with \$541,000 in 2008.

The story is much the same in Solano County, says Jim Porter of Solano Mortgage.

"The dominant part of our business

is really more that they can't find a house!"

Porter said the biggest challenge is a shortage of inventory on the market. "The positive thing is that we are helping a lot of people become home owners at affordable prices with good interest rates that are as low as they have been in 50 years," he said.

Many sellers sold their homes with a loss in 2009, and those who experienced a net cash loss increased for the fifth consecutive year. With one-third of sellers experiencing a net cash loss in 2009, it was the highest level on record since C.A.R. started tracking net cash losses in 1989, and was more than triple the long-run average of 9.3 percent.

Following two consecutive years of significant declines in prices, the median net cash from home sales declined 50 percent last year to \$50,000 from \$100,000 in 2008, the report noted.



right now in Vacaville, Fairfield and Suisun has been those first-time buyers," Porter said.

## Quality repair focus of this shop

### BUSINESS BIO

#### Loose Endz Auto Body

**Address:** 1249 Illinois St., Fairfield

**Phone:** 425-4220

**Hours:** 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mondays to Fridays, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays; closed Sundays

**Date opened:** May 1, 2009

**Owners:** Hank and Joan Dominguez

**Manager:** Hank Dominguez

**No. of employees:** Eight

**Are you hiring?** "Not at this time."

**Is this business a franchise or part of a chain?** No

**What services/items are offered?** Complete auto body, collision repair and painting

**What business did it replace (or what was previously in this location)?** A furniture store

**What was your profession or career before opening this business?** Facilities maintenance manager

**Have/do you own other local businesses?** No

**What is the most unique thing about this new business?** "Our customers appreciate the comfort and cleanliness of our exceptionally clean shop and office. We also provide custom paint services."

**Your company's mission or philosophy?** "To provide quality, professional collision repair coupled with uncompromised customer service. Our goal is to exceed customer expectations."

**How would you describe your management style?** "I'm a go-getter and love to get things done."

**Why did you choose to open this type of business, or become involved with this industry?** "I have been involved with all aspects of car and truck restoration since I was a



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teenager. I have a true passion for the industry."

**What are your least and most favorite things your business/industry?** "I like everything about this business, especially networking with customers, businesses and local organizations."

**What are your company's biggest challenges and how do you plan to tackle them?** "Today's recession presents its challenges; however, we mitigate that with our strong sales and marketing efforts. We continue to network while satisfying our current customer base."

**How would you describe your clients?** "Happy with our shop and customer service. We provide a lifetime warranty on all our work."

**What life experiences best prepared you for this business/job?** "A love for cars and trucks, plus 30 years of business management experience."

**Who do you think is the most savvy business person?** Warren Buffett

**What local business sets an example you'd like to follow?** Gateway Realty and Hearn Construction.