

From the San Francisco Business Times:

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5 people to know in Walnut Creek

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The Business Times is continuing our Hot Spots trek around the region, exploring the regions, cities and neighborhoods that are going strong. (Check out the Tri-Valley, Hayward, South San Francisco and Alameda.) This week we stop in South San Francisco.

This week we stop in Walnut Creek — a city, a suburb and an exurb all rolled into one. The city sits about 16 miles east of Oakland at the crossroads of state Route 24 and Interstate 680, nestled in valleys in the shadow of Mount Diablo in Contra Costa County.

The highway juncture and the Walnut Creek and Pleasant Hill BART stations make it ideal for commuters to Oakland and San Francisco, and a major transit-oriented development at the Walnut Creek station is set to deliver.

The city is home to Del Monte, CSAA Insurance and John Muir Medical Center and boasts a thriving downtown retail, restaurant and cultural scene. Here are five people to know in the East Bay city.

Collette Hanna

Economic development manager, Walnut Creek

Collette Hanna brings deep experience in the economic development world and tech marketing to her role as Walnut

Creek's Economic Development Manager. She also chairs the city's internal DEI task force. The Southern California native took the job in the teeth of the pandemic – April 2020 — and came north. Now she's focused on helping the city's downtown and its retail corridors emerge from the economic ravages of Covid era, while enhancing Walnut Creek as a destination for office headquarters and satellite office operations. "As economic developers we know and see the issues our communities face," she posted on LinkedIn, "and it's our duty to address many of the socio-economic issues — because we have the toolbox to do so."

Thomas Troy

CEO and president, CSAA Insurance Group

Troy arrived in his role at CSAA in March 2019 with an impressive insurance pedigree — stints at Allstate, Liberty Mutual, Kemper National and other industry giants in a career stretching more than 30 years. Now he steers one of the East Bay's largest employers (CSAA has more than 800 Walnut Creek employees) and an insurance empire that includes a workforce of 3,500 across most of the West Coast, while he holds board seats on the Bay Area Council, the California Chamber of Commerce and the American Property Casualty Insurance Association.

Bob Linscheid

President and CEO, Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce

Bob Linscheid had previously served as president of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, advocating for economic and workforce development, but stepped down after his wife was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's. Now in his role commanding a smaller arena chamber, he is helping Walnut Creek's business community thrive through community partnerships and local events. Linscheid founded and ran Linscheid Enterprises, a public relation firm, for almost 30 years.

Edward Del Beccaro

San Francisco Bay Manager, TRI Commercial; chair, Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce

Throughout his 40-year career in the real estate industry, Edward Del Beccaro has leased or sold over 2 million square feet of real estate across the Bay Area with clients including UCSF, Wells Fargo and California Bank & Trust. He started his career at Grubb & Ellis and even ran his own development company for 10 years. Del Beccaro was promoted to his current job just one year after joining TRI as executive vice president and manager of the company's East Bay offices.

Greg Longstreet

CEO, Del Monte Foods

Greg Longstreet has a storied career in the packaged food industry, being tapped as the CEO of Walnut Creek-based Del Monte after serving in executive roles at Dole and Hormel. At Del Monte, Longstreet has led climate initiatives to reduce water usage at its farms and launch a line of upcycled products, which help prevent food waste by canning excess produce. He also pushed the company into new sales channels like foodservice and convenience, along with new markets in Latin America.