



# CENTRAL COAST

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A BUSINESS TIMES CORRIDOR REPORT

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SARA HAMILTON PHOTO

Suzanne Parker, regional public affairs manager for Chevron, holds up a site plan for the company's Tank Farm property in San Luis Obispo. Chevron is planning to restore the vacant lot by dedicating 250 acres to open space and developing the remaining 53 acres.

## Tank Farm gets a makeover

### *Chevron property to be restored and developed*

BY SARA HAMILTON  
Staff Writer

San Luis Obispo residents may not recognize Tank Farm Road by this time next year. Chevron, owner of the vacant land on either side of the busy street, has extensive development plans for its former crude oil storage facility.

The petroleum giant wants to restore the land, dedicate 250 acres to open space and develop 53 acres for commercial use. The restoration and redevelopment project would widen Tank Farm Road to four lanes and could potentially redraw the city limits.

"We have big goals for this property: annexation into San Luis Obispo, infrastructure improvement, remediation," said Suzanne Parker, regional public affairs manager for Chevron. "We're creating desirable open space and providing an infrastructure that will help generate economic growth — all while cleaning up the environment."

Plans for the restoration and redevelopment project were made public in late July, and Parker said she hasn't encountered much resistance from the community.

"We have been reaching out to a lot of different groups in the city and the

county, just so that people understand what our remediation plans are for the property, what we proposed, and how we have gotten to that point," Parker said.

Chevron has three main goals for the 332 acres that border the San Luis Obispo County Regional Airport: remediation, restoration and eventually development.

"The remediation and restoration pieces are part of the responsible closure of the property," she said. "The name of the game for remediation is

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## Plastics firm moves in on market

BY STEPHEN NELLIS  
Staff Writer

Paso Robles-based Lindamar Industries is angling to become one of the top suppliers of custom-made plastic bags to the California coast's rich agriculture industry.

With 70 employees and a 40,000-square-foot factory, the company cranks out nearly 1.5 million bags each day. Its core customers are agribusinesses from Salinas to Oxnard, and it supplies the kind of plastic

bags used for heads of lettuce, cauliflower or celery in supermarkets. Lindamar also makes bags for baked goods, medical devices, toys and golf tees.

In late September, Lindamar earned a certification from the International Organization for Standardization, or ISO, a group that provides a sort of approval seal for makers of products from camera film to microchips. For a smaller manufacturer like Lindamar, the group's approval signals to potential customers that the com-

pany has strong consistency and quality checks in place and is ready to play in the big leagues.

Getting the certification took a year and a big investment, but it's well worth it, said Anthony Hall, Lindamar's president and chief executive officer. Some industries that Lindamar supplies — such as baked goods — have governing bodies that can provide a seal of approval to Lindamar's bags. But the produce business, a

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## PLASTICS

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big part of Lindamar's revenue stream, has no such body, and the ISO certification can fill that gap.

"It really does help us differentiate ourselves in our space," Hall told the Business Times. "The plastic manufacturing space is really a cottage industry - it's very fragmented."

Lindamar brings in raw plastic pellets, melts them down and extrudes them into thin sheets for pressing into bags. That gives the firm control over every step of the manufacturing process, making it nimble enough to meet custom orders and tight enough with quality to earn FDA approval for its plastics to touch food and syringes.

"A lot of manufacturers have some bags coming from China," Hall said. "That can be a complete nightmare. You really don't know what you're bringing in."

Outside consultants and ISO auditors "turned our business upside down" in the

year-long certification process, but it's started paying off in just a few weeks, Hall said.

"We've received a fair amount of inquiries about our capabilities, and some of those inquiries have already turned into new business," Hall said. "We anticipate that the ISO certification alone will add 10 to 15 growth points over the next three to five years. Within the first year, we anticipate we'll break even on our investment."

Lindamar has been in business for 21 years, but Hall and his wife, who serves as CFO, took the reins about two years ago. Raised and trained in business in the United Kingdom, Hall has spent the last 17 years in the United States, much of it in Atlanta, where he served in executive positions for big firms such as Eastman Kodak.

Lindamar is certified as minority-owned by the Southern California Minority Business Development Council, part of a national group that helps big companies such as Wal-Mart connect with minority-owned suppliers. That puts Lindamar in a growing group of

minority-owned, family-run businesses in the Tri-Counties.

Sales at Lindamar were up last year, Hall said, but the recession has come into view this year. But Lindamar's connection to the food and medical-device industries has helped mitigate the impact.

"We expect we'll come in flat or slightly below flat this year," Hall said. "We're somewhat insulated from changes in the economy. People still have to eat. They still go to the doctor or the hospital. They still buy medical items."

For a plastics company, the price of crude oil also plays a role.

"Our main material is resin," Hall said. "When crude oil prices drop, we have to pass that on to our customers. Some of coming out flat this year is due to having to lower our prices. That creates a new baseline for us."

Unlike many other manufacturing businesses, Lindamar hasn't had to cut jobs or pay to respond to the recession.

"During this past 18 months, we've not laid anybody off. We've not cut anybody's salaries," Hall said. "We've just worked on taking waste out and really focused on bringing in machinery that can improve our productivity."

In fact, Hall said, this year, though flat, has proved a good time to put the company in position to expand going forward.

"We're in a 40,000-square-foot facility. We're basically bursting at the seams," Hall said. "We're going to have to move into a larger facility at some point."

**The plastic manufacturing space is really a cottage industry — it's very fragmented.**

**Anthony Hall**  
*President and CEO,*  
*Lindamar Industries*

## BRIEFS

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### Sierra Vista: Best of SLO

Sierra Vista Regional Medical Center has been selected for the 2009 Best of San Luis Obispo Award in the hospitals category by the U.S. Commerce Association.

Each year, the UCSA, a Washington, D.C.-based organization, identifies companies throughout the country that they believe have achieved exceptional marketing success in their local community and business category.

### Tax volunteers sought

The San Luis Obispo County chapter of AARP seeks volunteers to assist in offering free tax preparation for low- to moderate-income seniors, families and singles. The program operates from February to April 15, and volunteers work one to two days a week using Tax-wise computer software.

Volunteers typically come from a variety of backgrounds, have experience preparing their own taxes and have personal computer skills.

AARP provides local training that covers both software and tax requirements. For more information e-mail Vicki Abrisz-Ryal at vbreez@yahoo.com.

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