

Business

STOCKTON

NEW WEBSITE AIMS TO LURE BUSINESSES

By **Reed Fujii**
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STOCKTON - The city of Stockton has launched a new website that officials say offers business owners, developers and others quick and easy access to available commercial properties, along with tools to compare sites by demographic, labor and industry data.

AdvantageStockton.com, recently revamped at a cost of \$12,000, allows users to search for specific types of buildings or facilities, particular businesses or types of businesses, or community characteristics. Results can be filtered by geographic location, demographics, labor statistics or other factors.

It's a very powerful tool for both businesses and the city, which hopes it will help attract new companies to town, economic development program manager Janice Miller said.

"Visitors to AdvantageStockton.com can pick any point on the map and find data they need on our work force, building inventory, buying power and neighboring businesses," she said.

AdvantageStockton was launched in 2002 but had gone largely unused because its technology was outdated and slow.

With support from area commercial property brokers - who are key users and have more than 200 detailed property descriptions posted on the site - AdvantageStockton was rebuilt to provide more in-depth information while being easier and faster to use, Miller said.

"There's probably about 15 or 16 brokers at this point that have their listings on AdvantageStockton," she said.

Mahala Burns of The Cort Cos. in Stockton is one.

"We entered our property information and have already had a showing that ended in a lease," she said Wednesday. "It's a nice, easy-to-use site, and it's got a lot of information."

The timing is good, Burns said, because news about the city's bankruptcy, crime problems and other issues has drawn attention from contrarian investors, those who look for opportunities where most other people run for the doors.

"People are calling from all over the place because they think it's a gold rush going on in Stockton," she said.

After an April 16 presentation of the revamped website to the City Council, Councilwoman Kathy was wowed. "It just is amazing to me," she said.

Mayor Anthony Silva also praised the improvements.

"This is very impressive and just a wonderful economic tool," he said.

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