

Environmental error?

Groups threaten to sue over Staples Ranch > **page 5**

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Remembering Dunakin

Fallen Oakland officer
was Pleasanton native

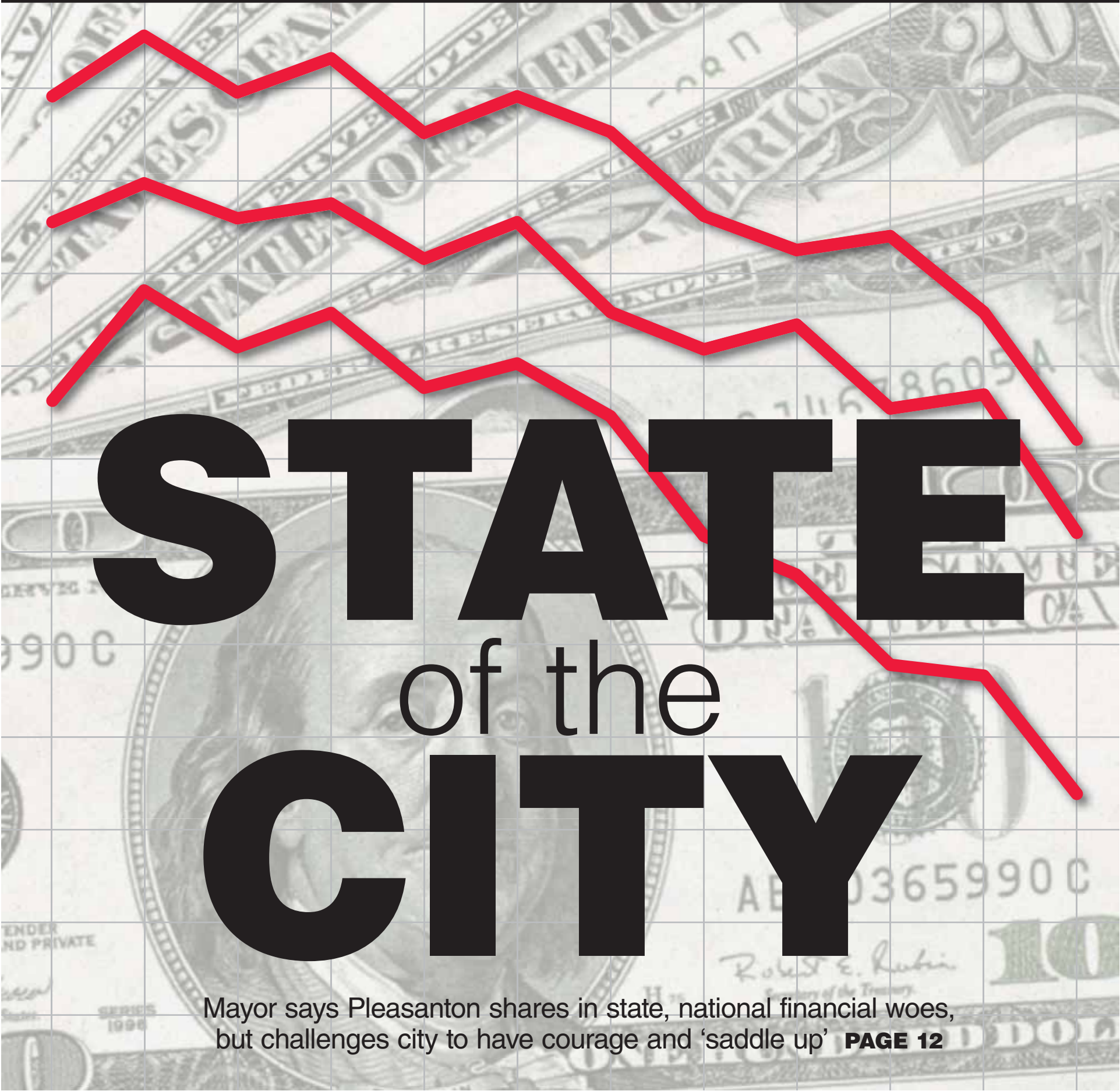
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PLEASANTON WEEKLY

Buying & Selling

Learn about the local
real estate market
inside this edition

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STATE of the CITY

Mayor says Pleasanton shares in state, national financial woes,
but challenges city to have courage and 'saddle up' **PAGE 12**

Living



photos by Michael Soo

Casa Real at Ruby Hill Winery in Pleasanton will be the scene for a custom, luxury proposal for one lucky couple.

A PERFECT PROPOSAL

Contest helps a lucky couple pop the question in style

by Emily West

The florist, baker, photographer, videographer, venue and jeweler have been booked. The only thing missing is a couple ready to have their dream proposal come to life.

The nationwide contest will bring a lucky couple to the Bay Area, with an elaborately planned and decorated proposal to be held at Pleasanton's own Casa Real event center at Ruby Hill Winery.

Lea McIntosh, who has hospitality experience ranging from catering to event planning, is coordinating the winning proposal to custom fit the couple. After helping several brides, she started Ready to Propose, a service where she helps grooms create a memorable proposal. Until now, McIntosh said there isn't much industry attention given to popping the big question, which is a major milestone for many.

The key to popping the question, she says, is building anticipation.

"I wanted the person to think that the proposal was coming and then be thrown off," she said, referencing the mock proposal that was filmed for the contest. "She pulled the Tahitian pearls out of the cake and she thought a ring was coming. When he puts the pearls on her, he asked to see. When she turns around, he's already on one knee."

In order to enter the contest, the future groom—or bride, for those bucking tradition—submits their love story and proposal idea at www.readytopropose.com. Once the deadline is up April



Proposal planner Lea McIntosh said the key to popping the question is building anticipation.

30, McIntosh will peruse the entries and select a lucky winner.

"Several [entries] are going to be regurgitations," McIntosh said, "stuff that's been done before. What's definitely going to catch my eye are the stories where they talk about their dream proposal that would reflect each other."

From the idea, McIntosh will put her creative gears to work alongside 15 area professionals with a sampling of services

including videography, photography, transportation, cake, invitations and lighting design. The end results promise to be a magical moment.

"Casa Real has the ability to be a blank canvas," McIntosh said, adding that she could transform the space into anything from Tahiti to Paris.

Michelle Pangrazio, marketing director for Casa Real, said the site has been mostly booked when it comes to weddings since the event center opened last spring, but never for a proposal.

"We are always there when people get married," she said. "It's fun to be a part of beginning process. It will be a luxury proposal."

Andrew Hsu of VSM Videography in San Ramon, who is also lending his services for the contest, said he's done a proposal video in the past, and it's an idea that is likely to gain popularity.

"The proposal is one of the most emotional and dramatic events leading up to the actual vows on the wedding day," he said. "It's typically not very well documented."

"People always ask the newly engaged couple who it happened and they have to recount it," he added. "Often, they can't remember exactly what was said."

Recording a proposal is another way to spread the message, as anyone can upload a video online and share it with family across the globe.

The deadline for entries is April 30, with the proposal taking place Nov. 10. ■