

### Objectives of the article:

- Expand awareness of the unifying campaign concept
- Educate people about the Economic Vitality Committee
- Highlight the leadership of the Chamber
- Encourage merchants (others?) to post a sign

### Possible subtext on ad graphic and title of article

What makes us unique?

Why shop Sebastopol?

What does this mean?



### You may have noticed these signs in the windows of local merchants. What do they mean?

Sebastopol is a unique place to shop, live and work. It has a unique town spirit and needs a way to express that.

Rather than bumper stickers or street banners, a voluntary collaborative of local economic organizations—the Economic Vitality Committee—came upon the idea of expressing that spirit via window signs throughout the town. Once every two months, they pick a new theme.

"Sebastopol has several shopping districts," notes Linda Collins, Executive Director of the **Chamber of Commerce** and facilitator of the Economic Vitality Committee. "With these themed signs we are making a statement about our unity as a town: north and south, the Barlow and Main Street."

### Abundance

The theme for September and October is "Abundance". From apples to pumpkins, grapes to tomatoes, Sebastopol is truly blessed with abundance. Our agricultural strengths were recognized long ago by our famed local botanist, Luther Burbank, who established his Experiment Farm here, declaring Sebastopol "the chosen spot of all the earth as far as nature is concerned."

### Rotating themes

Sebastopol has more than one flavor. By rotating the theme, the Economic Vitality Committee hopes to get input from others for possible future themes.

"The opportunity here is to allow merchants and community members to take 60 days to celebrate an aspect of our town that we enjoy," says Tasha Beauchamp, Co-Chair of Cittaslow Sebastopol. "By rotating the themes, we allow for a diversity of expression."

**Other theme ideas include:**

- Gratitude
- Friendly
- Creative
- Independent

**Want to suggest a theme?**

Email your suggestion to Linda Collins of the Sebastopol Chamber of Commerce at [linda@sebastopol.org](mailto:linda@sebastopol.org).

**Want to post a sign?**

Contact **Debbie Ramirez** ([jbug@sonic.net](mailto:jbug@sonic.net)) of Jitterbug Communications.

**The Economic Vitality Committee**

In April 2018, Carla Rosin, Manager of the Sebastopol Farmers Market called a meeting of organizations interested in the economic health of the city. The meeting was held at City Hall, with the idea that we could do more together and collaboratively than each of us alone in our silos. The group has evolved now to include:

- The Sebastopol Area Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center
- The City of Sebastopol
- The Sebastopol Farmers Market
- Cittaslow Sebastopol
- Sebastopol Downtown Association
- The Barlow
- Sonoma West Times and News
- Jitterbug Communications

This group meets monthly to discuss ways to work together to promote Sebastopol's economic vitality.

"The unifying theme idea is a perfect example of what a group like this can do," says City Manager, Larry McLaughlin. "For instance, space for street banners is limited and reserved long in advance. This grassroots signs-in-the-windows idea is a perfect solution."

**Other projects**

In addition to the unifying themes, other initiatives born from the group include

- a business-oriented article in the City's newsletter which comes with the water bill;
- a focus on coordinating activities around local events to build momentum;
- collaborative advertising supported by the Chamber so local merchants can place ads more affordably.

To propose an initiative or to learn more about the Economic Vitality Committee, Linda Collins at the Sebastopol Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center, [linda@sebastopol.org](mailto:linda@sebastopol.org).