



Home development – yes a home development – gets under way in Rohnert Park

The first significant housing development in Rohnert Park in 24 years is under way. Site preparation has begun and construction on the first three of 12 new neighborhoods within the 260-acre Brookfield Residential Properties, Inc.'s portion of the 300-acre University District Specific Plan, is scheduled to begin in 2015 with a grand opening for these three neighborhoods set for later next year.

SEE PAGE 2

SECOND ANNUAL SURVEY

THE STATE of the SONOMA COUNTY BUSINESS CLIMATE

SEE PAGE 3

Arrow . . .

continued from page 1

consulting and TPA (Third Party Administrator) services involving COBRA, Flex, self-funded dental/vision plans and an umbrella program incorporating the practices and experience of a diverse range of expert health insurance agents that complement Arrow's large brokerage team.

He said benefits are about people's lives and more employers today are taking a holistic view by incorporating their changing needs, hopes, dreams and desires into a comprehensive HR/benefits plan.

"We don't just present a spread sheet of insurance options and rates to our clients, we help them define long-term targets and develop a living benefit model, or blueprint, that addresses the varying needs of workers – some of whom may want flextime, the ability to work from home and other benefits," Mr. Shields said. "We advocate Humanizing HR – a shift in emphasis within our industry toward better care of employees."

Arrow provides an array of employer services related to employee benefits management and compliance including support from a new HR division with 10 experienced human resources consultants.

Broker SSM Group renamed Arrow Benefits

BY GARY QUACKENBUSH
SPECIAL TO THE BUSINESS JOURNAL
PETALUMA – With over 30 years of industry experience, HR advocates and Partners Jordan Shields and Keith McNeil are enhancing their employee benefits insurance brokerage, previously known as the SSM Group, into a full-service HR/benefits firm now called the Arrow Benefits Group.

The name change for the third largest benefits company in the North Bay is indicative of how the firm and its 40 employees help their 900 clients set goals, by targeting a future direction that takes



Complex Questions.
Straight Answers.

employees' needs into consideration.

"When you look at our new logo you see a cluster of arrowheads coming together representing our key focus areas," said Mr. Shields. "We rebranded our company to better tell our story, including the addition of several new divisions."

These six divisions include HR, financial planning, property/casualty, insurance,

See Arrow page 6

Covered California board member Kennedy to keynote Nov. 18 conference

BUSINESS JOURNAL STAFF REPORT
NORTH BAY – Susan Kennedy, a top adviser to two California governors and a member of the board overseeing the state health insurance exchange Covered California, will be the keynote speaker for the Business Journal's annual Health Care Industry Conference on Nov. 18 at the Hyatt Vineyard Creek Hotel & Spa in Santa Rosa.

In addition to Ms. Kennedy, the conference will include a panel of top benefits brokers from the North Bay and leaders from the region's leading health care organizations. The Journal's annual Healthiest Companies Awards will also be part of the event.

Ms. Kennedy worked for two governors – a Republican and a Democrat – building a reputation for getting things done

over more than 15 years at the highest levels of government. She served most recently as Chief of Staff to Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, and before

See Kennedy page 6



Susan Kennedy

Nominations sought for eighth annual Top Real Estate Projects

The deadline for nominations for the Journal's eighth annual Top Real Estate Projects in the North Bay has been extended to Oct. 24.

Nominations are being sought across multiple categories including retail, industrial, medical, multi-use, residential, apartments, affordable

See Top Projects page 2



numerous industry boards. Mr. Shields is also a published author and has written several manuals on his industry including COBRA, FMLA, HIPAA, Health Security Act and is co-authored a manual on the Affordable Care Act.

To accommodate continuing growth, the company relocated its offices in March from Novato and Santa Rosa to 1 Willowbrook Court, Suite 230, in Petaluma with 10,000 square feet of office space.

With an anticipated \$90 million in premium volume and \$8.5 million in commission income in 2014, Arrow is the North Bay office of United Benefits Advisors (UBA), one of the largest benefits consulting and brokerage firms in the country with over 220 offices throughout North America and the United Kingdom.

For more information about Arrow Benefits Group, call 707-992-3780 or go to: www.ArrowBenefitsGroup.Com.