

**CONTRA COSTA TIMES**

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## Home Builders' Bjerke to take on Antioch post

By Sarah Krupp  
CONTRA COSTA TIMES

ANTIOCH - Longtime Northern California Home Builders Association chief Guy Bjerke has been named the city of Antioch's economic development director.

City Manager Jim Jakel appointed Bjerke to the position at an annual salary of \$127,000. He starts Jan. 17.

"It was a bit of a coup," said Councilman Arne Simonsen, of Bjerke's hire. "He has a serious Rolodex."

Bjerke acknowledged that he has many contacts that will be useful in his new job. He will head efforts to attract companies to the area and begin to transform the bedroom community into an employment hub. With Highway 4's widening edging closer to Antioch, Bjerke said that bringing larger businesses to the city will become easier.

"Antioch is really poised to take off in the next five or six years and I want to participate and make that happen," he said.

Bjerke, who is also a Concord planning commissioner, said he would start by finding out where large numbers of Antioch residents work and then recruit those companies or businesses like them.

"He has the right approach, style and knowledge base for us to attract businesses that will bring local jobs and the retailers," Jakel said.

The economic development director post was eliminated nearly a year ago. Donna Uriyu served in the job for just six months, from January to June 2004, when the city announced that her position would be cut in 2005. Officials said that they needed to trim spending.

Since then, the city manager and assistant city manager have assumed the responsibilities of an economic development director. Assistant City Manager Linda Pappas Diaz will remain the coordinator for Antioch's plans for a massive downtown makeover, but Bjerke will also play a critical role in the project, Jakel said.

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