

OPINION

# Glimmers of hope abound in tough Las Vegas Valley economy

Las Vegas and the nation remain in the throes of the longest recession since the Great Depression. We hear that day in and day out, everywhere we turn. But hidden in the doom and gloom, we find small glimmers of hope if we choose to look for them.

Yes, our housing prices are at pre-2001 levels; however, the small glimmer of hope is that the number of houses in inventory (foreclosures) is dwindling. We've heard that we may be close or at the bottom, although we will drudge along the bottom for quite awhile before we begin to move upward. The glimmer is that we've been hoping to see the bottom for a long time, because we knew that once we hit it, recovery would be on the horizon. Lower home prices and new government programs also make it more attractive for first-time home buyers.

Companies are suffering and some have gone out of

nation, we will rise stronger and better from this test of our resolve.

Unfortunately, thousands of workers have lost their jobs largely through no fault of their own. While it's hard to find any glimmer here, I believe it has made us take stock of our priorities. It's safe to say that for the most part, we lost sight of our priorities. Status came by the amount of money we had and the number of material things we possessed. Even for those still employed, we now are looking to our families, friends, churches, etc. to re-evaluate our priorities.

This brings me to another glimmer of hope. In 2008, the Chamber began its Leadership North Las Vegas program. As apprehensive as we were to kick off an endeavor such as this during a recession, the number of individuals who stepped forward to volunteer as well as the companies that committed money to the program showed all of us that

optimism remains strong in our community.

On April 29, 20 individuals from throughout the valley graduated from the Leadership North Las Vegas program and became known as the alumni of the inaugural class. These business leaders represented various backgrounds and industries. They committed one full Friday each month for the past eight months and learned about not only North Las Vegas but about the challenges and issues facing the Las Vegas Valley. As part of the program, they enhanced and honed their leadership skills and abilities.

They chose as their class project a fundraiser for education at our at-risk schools. Just as important, they will take their newfound knowledge and relationships and help make our communities a better place to live.

*Sharon Powers is president and chief executive officer of the North Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce.*



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Business Lobby

business. Sadly, many of these were well-established businesses in our communities. The glimmer of hope? While it has been extremely painful, it has made everyone re-examine how they were operating from their services and products, to efficiencies in operations, to the quality of their employees. There is an old saying, "what doesn't kill you, makes you stronger." I believe that there will be important lessons learned that hopefully we won't soon forget.

As a community and as a

LEADERSHIP NORTH LAS VEGAS GRADUATES

- Valerie Bailey  
Southwest Gas
- Dave Brown  
Industrial Properties Development
- Leslie Caprow  
Independent Insurance Broker
- Dimitri Dalakas  
Flangis McMillan Law Group
- Darrin Devine  
College of Southern Nevada
- Bruce Evans  
City of North Las Vegas Fire Department
- Brian Fornisano  
Wells Fargo
- Chad Henry  
American Medical Response Ambulance
- Steve Hitchcock  
NW Energy
- Mark Huggert  
1st Commerce Bank
- Ken Kestell  
U.S. Air Force
- Laurie Kuhl  
North Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce
- Carolyn Muse Grant  
Fielden & Partners
- Barrick Neill  
Veolia Transportation, Las Vegas Region
- Shaunell Newsome  
Newsome Marketing
- Amanda Powell  
North Vista Hospital
- Gloria Roblesko  
Wells Fargo
- Gillian Rodis-Silver  
College of Southern Nevada
- Terri Sheridan  
City of North Las Vegas
- Dan Toll  
Merrill Lynch