



**Opportunities for
Technology
Information Careers**

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**PITTSBURG MAYOR NANCY PARENT TO
ADDRESS OPTIC GRADUATES APRIL 1**

ANTIOCH, Calif., March 14, 2005 – Pittsburg Mayor Nancy Parent will be the special guest speaker at the Class 16 Graduation ceremony at Opportunities for Technology Information Careers (OPTIC), 3102 Delta Fair Boulevard in Antioch on April 1 at 6 pm.

Parent is a native of Pittsburg and graduate of Pittsburg High School. She attended the University of California, Berkeley and Hastings College of the Law. After serving as a Deputy City Attorney of San Jose she returned to Pittsburg where she has maintained a private law practice, specializing in family law, for 28 years.

Parent became Pittsburg's first female member of the Pittsburg City Council in 1984 and its first woman Mayor. She retired from elective office in 1992 but returned to service in 2002 is currently serving her third term as Mayor. During her prior service she was a member of the Board of Delta Diablo Sanitation District for 8 years, and she co-founded Delta 2000, an OPTIC partner organization.

The City of Pittsburg supports OPTIC through its Community Development Department, and many Pittsburg residents have launched successful careers following their training and internship at OPTIC. "OPTIC gave me self-confidence and brought out the best in me," says Janet Brown, a Pittsburg resident who is now employed as a Housing Specialist with the Center for Independent Living. "I want to show that a person in a wheelchair can live a normal life like anyone else."

Parent herself has attended many OPTIC graduations as a guest, witnessing what for many graduates is their proudest professional moment. The graduation ceremony will begin at 6 PM and will be followed by an appetizer reception. Attendance is free and open to the public. To RSVP, (appreciated, though not necessary), call (925) 776-1133.

OPTIC's 16th graduating class will be the smallest in over a year and a half, with only seven participants completing the training. "Class members suffered a lot more health problems than usual," notes Alissa Friedman, Executive Director. "We even had one candidate who was hit by a bus on the Sunday before class started."

Friedman adds that OPTIC is recruiting heavily for Class 17, hoping to generate a "deep" waiting list. "We know there are many residents of

East County who are struggling in poverty, often even when working full-time at low-wage jobs," she says. Area residents who are "committed to getting a living-wage job but who doesn't have the experience, confidence or credentials to get there on their own" can apply for OPTIC's full-time, intense program in computer applications and life skills. Applications will be accepted in April for the class starting May 16, and information is available from Natalie Georgia, Program Coordinator, at 925-776-1133.

OPTIC's work is made possible by the investments and partnerships of public and private organizations including the California Consumer Protection Foundation, Calpine Community Fund (Delta Energy Center), Center for Community Change, Dow Chemical, East Bay Community Foundation, Google Grants, Leshner Foundation, Pittsburg Adult Education Center, the California Consumer Protection Foundation, the Community Development Block Grant programs of the City of Antioch, the City of Pittsburg, and Contra Costa County, the Contra Costa Employment and Human Services Department, Keller Canyon Landfill Mitigation Fund, United Way of the Bay Area, Verizon, Vodafone-US Foundation, Waitrovich Fund, Wells Fargo Foundation, and the Women's Foundation of California.

OPTIC's mission is to provide low-income Contra Costa residents with the technology, literacy and life skills that will enable them to become economically self-sufficient. OPTIC also runs the Delta Community Technology Center (Delta CTC), which provides drop-in computer-based adult education and community technology access in the evenings. OPTIC is located at 3102 Delta Fair Boulevard in Antioch, Calif. For more information, please visit <http://www.optic-cc.org> or call (925) 776-1133.

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For media information, to schedule an interview or to request digital images, please contact Alissa Friedman at (925) 776-1133 or alissa@optic-cc.org