

Thornberg to give Napa County economic forecast

Posted By [Jeff Quackenbush, Business Journal Staff Reporter](#) On July 12, 2010 @ 4:30 am In [Cities and Counties](#), [Events](#), [Industry News](#), [Upcoming Events](#) | [No Comments](#)

NAPA — Economist Chris Thornberg, Ph.D., a prominent predictor of the recent recession who is now warning of an economic “double dip” next year, will be examining Napa County’s cogs of commerce at the *Business Journal’s* Impact Napa conference Aug. 18.

[Register for the event online](#) ^[1].

Dr. Thornberg, co-founding principal of four-year-old Beacon Economics of San Rafael, has been performing detailed economic analyses for the East Bay, South Bay, San Francisco and other areas of California since his work with the influential UCLA Andersen Forecast.

Gauging the direction of the Napa County economy has been challenging since the dissolution of the Napa Valley Economic Development Corp. several years ago, according to Lisa Batto, president and chief executive officer of the Napa Chamber of Commerce.

Differing local government philosophies also complicate the process of developing strong local economic intelligence, she said.

“The city of Napa works really hard in bringing in new businesses, but the county not so much,” she said. “The county is slow growth and wants businesses to complement the wine industry rather than compete with it.”

City government and the county Workforce Investment Board have been providing the chamber with details on sales and hotel tax data. On top of that, there are 2006 and 2008 studies on the economic impact of the county’s dominant industry – wine – commissioned by the trade group Napa Valley Vintners. The chamber has an economic forecast event set for October.

Dr. Thornberg’s Napa County economic forecast is set to focus on metrics such as industry employment, taxable sales, building permits and median home prices. He will be comparing the county’s current and projected economic health with those of the Bay Area, state and nation.

Clients include state and local governments as well as businesses. Dr. Thornberg became the chief economist for state Controller John Chiang in 2008 and became chairman of his Council of Economic Advisors. Dr. Thornberg also has served on the advisory board of Paulson & Co.

Impact Napa will be held at the Meritage Resort in south Napa from 7:30 to 10:30 a.m. Tickets cost \$45 a person.

In addition to Dr. Thornberg’s presentation, the conference also will feature a panel of local experts from leading parts of the economy, such as tourism and wine.

To register, call 707-521-5264 or [use the online form](#) ^[1].

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