

Central Coast Venture Forum Set for June 14

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The **Central Coast Venture Forum** will hold its sixth annual investor conference on Friday, **June 14, 2002** at **Fess Parker's Doubletree Resort** in **Santa Barbara**. The day-long conference is the largest of its kind on California's Central Coast, a technology corridor encompassing northern Los Angeles, Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties. The law firm of **Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP** is the **senior founding sponsor and chief organizer of the Venture Forum**.

"The companies presenting this year will offer the strongest group of business plans we've ever had," said **Joseph Nida**, an original sponsor of the event with his law firm Nida & Maloney, which joined with Sheppard Mullin last September. "It's exciting to see the event continue to grow and provide opportunities for entrepreneurs throughout this region."

The Venture Forum brings together venture capitalists, angel investors and corporate sponsor attendees who gather to listen as the region's best entrepreneurs showcase their business plans and demonstrate their products/services to the investor audience. **Twenty companies**, carefully screened and selected, **have been chosen as qualified to participate in this year's Venture Forum**. This diverse group represents industries ranging from technology to consumer products and includes many later-stage companies (including two that are publicly traded).

The Central Coast Venture Forum was founded in 1996 by a group of 100 central coast business executives to support the formation and rapid growth of new, fast-track companies in **Santa Barbara, Ventura, San Luis Obispo, and Northern Los Angeles counties**. The Venture Forum has reviewed the business plans of more than 500 private companies, and has helped a number of these new ventures raise **more than \$100 million in new capital** from professional investors.

Sheppard Mullin is at the forefront in providing legal counsel for businesses in the region. At this year's conference, Sheppard Mullin attorney **Brette Simon**, special counsel in the firm's Corporate practice group, will moderate a panel discussion on the current state of venture capital and angel investing. Her practice experience includes **mergers and acquisitions, corporate finance, emerging companies/venture capital and joint venture transactions**.

Former Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan will give the keynote address at the event's luncheon, beginning at 11:45 a.m. Riordan was elected as the city's 39th Mayor in 1993 and was overwhelmingly reelected in 1997. Under Riordan, Los Angeles led the U.S. in manufacturing jobs, surpassed New York City in fashion jobs and had more multimedia companies than Silicon Valley and New York City combined. His Los Angeles Business Team has worked with more than 3,000 companies representing 300,000 jobs and more than \$20 billion in private investment since its formation in 1995.

Limited spaces at the Venture Forum remain available for accredited investors and business executives. **For information on the Venture Forum**, or to register, visit www.ccvf.org. To contact Executive Director Diana Wilson, call (805) 560-0508, ext. 223 or e-mail her at diana@impossible.com. Fess Parker's Doubletree Resort is located at 633 East Cabrillo Boulevard in Santa Barbara. A cocktail reception will precede the Forum on Thursday evening, June 13, at 6:00 p.m., also at the Resort.

Sheppard Mullin has more than **330 attorneys** among its **seven offices** in Los Angeles, West Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, San Francisco, San Diego, Del Mar Heights, and Orange County. The **full-service firm** provides counsel in Corporate, Trial Practice, Finance, Bankruptcy, Labor and Employment, Intellectual Property, Real Estate, Environmental, Construction, Tax, Employee Benefits, Trusts & Estates, Antitrust & Trade Regulation, Government Contracts, and Business Crimes. **The firm is celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2002.**