

Morgan Hill Times

Chamber of Commerce Honors Volunteers

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By Tony Burchyns (tburchyns@morganhilltimes.com)

Morgan Hill - Ramona Etchebarne, 67, and Ida Williams, 76, have been named "Volunteers of the Year" by the Morgan Hill Chamber of Commerce.

The women share the honors for their hard work and dedication in the eyes of their peers and the chamber itself, a group supporting local businesses.

Each year the chamber's staff recognizes its top volunteers.

Whether it's collating the monthly newsletter or doing other tasks, the ladies have distinguished themselves as "volunteers on call" who always lend a hand.

Neither one is a stranger to wider community involvement, having each earned "Woman of the Year" honors previously from the chamber. Etchebarne won in 1999 and Williams did the same in 2000.

For Williams, a longtime Morgan Hill businesswoman who plans to move to Danville later this month, the repeated attention is a bit of a surprise.

"There are so many people who do things for the community," she said cheerfully.

Williams herself has been active in the business community for 25 years.

She opened Ida's Tea Room about 20 years ago near the corner of Monterey Road and Third Street, where Rosy's at the Beach is located today.

Next door was the old chamber of commerce.

"I used to bake cookies and cakes and bring them to the girls who worked there," Williams laughed. "They were my guinea pigs."

Williams also operated Ida's restaurant in the same spot. Today she runs the Shadowbrook Gardens Senior Town Homes off Warren Avenue, home to 32 residents.

Etchebarne also is no stranger around town.

She's a member of the Morgan Hill Rotary Club and a past chair of the chamber's



Volunteers of the Year Ramona Etchebarne, left, and Ida Williams pictured with Garrie Bryant, information technology/office manager of the Morgan Hill Chamber of Commerce.

Photo by: Special to The Times

board of directors.

She used to run the Best Western Country Inn on Condit Road.

"She's been active and involved for several years," said Lou Mirviss, president of the Rotary Club. "She's a great person, always willing to help and do things."

Etchebarne continues work as a volunteer at fund-raising events for the Morgan Hill Police Department and Live Oak High School.

She said members of the community are trying to raise money for a police dog.

"You got to do things," Etchebarne said. "It keeps me busy."

The women will be honored with others winners of the chamber of commerce's annual community service awards, commonly known as the Salute Morgan Hill awards, at a Feb. 3 dinner at the Morgan Hill Community and Cultural Center.

The dinner starts at 6pm and costs \$80 to attend.

Other Salute Morgan Hill winners include Gene Guglielmo and Carol O'Hare, Man and Woman of the Year; Donna Walton, Educator of the Year; Isela Banuelos, Student of the Year; and Johnson Lumber, Business of the Year.