

Chamber's new chief wears many hats

By **GEORGE STEWART**
The Tustin News

Allan Browning is a busy man.

Not only is he a family man with his own business to run, he is also the new president of the Tustin Chamber of Commerce and heads up the Veterans Day Parade Committee.

Browning, 35, lives with his wife, Sue, and their 9-year-old son, David, in North Tustin. They moved here six years ago, when Browning relocated his business to Tustin from San Gabriel.

Browning's business is called Vision Quest, which designs and develops network technologies, such as web hosting and web designs.

A member of the Tustin Chamber for four years, he will be president for this year only, but it is a three-year commitment since he served as president-elect last year, and next year he will be past president. Actually, he has been active even longer, since he started out as their chief financial officer.

"I'd like to see the chamber take a leadership role as far as advocating business," Browning said.

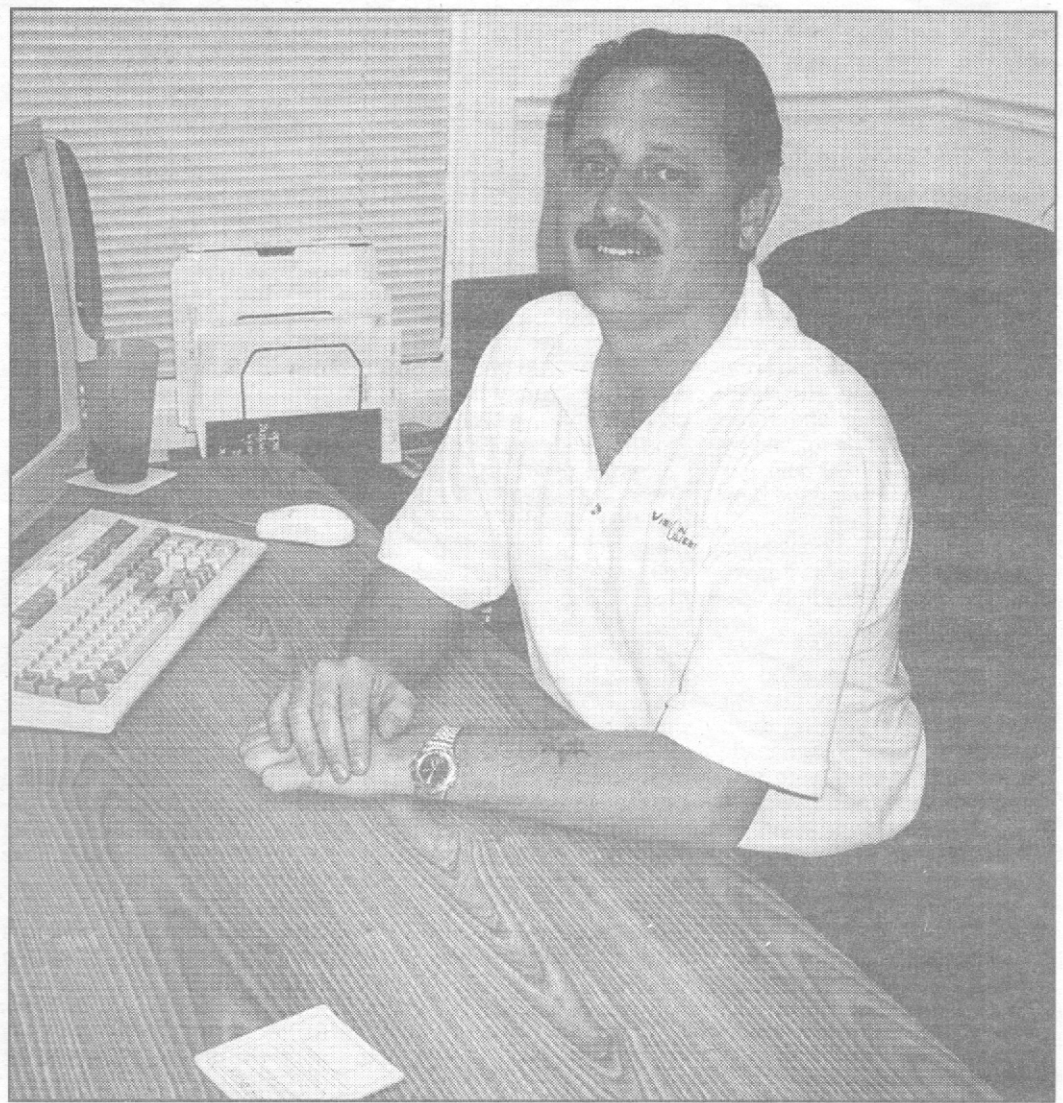
To that end, he said the chamber's bylaws were amended recently to change their economic development, education and government affairs committees into councils. He said that means they can take more action to improve things.

"Our objective is to flesh out the councils, and we've already scheduled meetings," he said. "We hope to be more proactive. If we could just do the fundamentals of what we say we do, that would be just great."

Browning said his first priority is to send a survey to Tustin's 1,400 to 1,800 businesses.

"We want to ask what we are doing or not doing. What can we do to entice them to join? What's their perception of city government services, and what are good business incentives? Do they want us to be more conservative or liberal when we make legislative recommendations?"

The survey will include questions on the kinds of educational backgrounds business owners want from their employees. The chamber is preparing to provide input to the South Coast Community College District on the educational



GEORGE STEWART / The Tustin News

CHAMBER CHIEF: Allan Browning anticipates a dynamic year as new head of the Tustin Chamber of Commerce.

needs of employers to help in the planning of the district's high-tech Learning Village, to be built on the site of the former Tustin Marine base.

"I'd like to see us accomplish a summer intern program sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce," Browning said, "for high school students to get experience in the working world of technology and manufacturing. Because on the base, those kinds of jobs will be emphasized. There will be tax incentives for manufacturers to move in, providing jobs for high school grads."

As a veteran, Browning's latest project - heading up the committee to organize Tustin's second Veterans Day Parade - is especially important to him.

Born in Logan, West Virginia, Browning said that growing up as an Army brat, he moved around the country a lot. His father and brothers

were in the Army so, to be different, he joined the Marine Corps, serving on active duty from 1982 to 1986, then the reserves for another three years.

Last year, in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks, he assisted Ed Alvarez in preparing Tustin's first Veterans Day parade in just six weeks. This year, they switched roles, and Browning said the parade will be as big or bigger than last year's successful event. It will follow the same route, and has been endorsed by the Orange County Veterans Services, one of only two parades in the county to receive this endorsement.

Browning has created a Website, warmemorial.com, which contains a history of the U. S. armed services, and offers free web pages for veterans to tell their stories.

"Involvement with the veterans is so important," he said. "Especially coming up on the

Sept. 11 anniversary, I can't overemphasize it enough that the strength of our armed services is what enables the freedom that we have. Also, the strength of the armed services couldn't exist without a strong country."

Browning said that he and his family have come to love the unique quality of the Tustin community.

"This is a great place to be," he said. "Tustin has a sense of itself. I've lived in a lot of other places where you lived in the city, but you didn't really know anyone there."

"Here, we have the Concerts in the Park, where the city comes together. On the Fourth of July, we have a block party in my neighborhood. There is a real sense of community and people support each other."

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