



## Press Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **NUT TREE VILLAGE CATERING TO VISITORS'** **APPETITES FOR FLAVOR, FUN AND NOSTALGIA**

With restaurants ranging from a New York-style pizzeria to an ice cream parlor offering custom-made frozen delights and a taste of an earlier era, Vacaville's revitalized landmark is meeting the cravings of hungry visitors

SAN FRANCISCO (September 17, 2007)—Although they've only been open for a few months, restaurants offering everything from sit-down fare to fun, casual snacks are thriving at the newly revitalized Nut Tree at 1621 East Monte Vista Avenue in Vacaville, California. Dining options at the 30-acre, 332,000-square-foot mixed-use power/lifestyle/office center now include Amici's East Coast Pizza, Fenton's Creamery, Panera Bread and Peet's Coffee & Tea.

Developed by Westrust in a joint venture with Snell&Co and Rockwood Capital, the new hybrid lifestyle power center encompasses the site of the legendary Nut Tree road stop that annually once drew millions of Californians traveling along the stretch of I-80 that connects the San Francisco Bay Area with Sacramento. It has been reincarnated as a contemporary, open-air retail, restaurant and office project that preserves the magnetism, as well as a bit of nostalgia, reminiscent of the original Nut Tree retail, dining and family-fun attraction.

Since opening its doors in May, Amici's East Coast Pizzeria has welcomed scores of diners hungry for a "fix" of New York-style brick oven-baked pizza. "We've been very pleased with our new location, as we've really hit the ground running and been very busy since our spring opening," commented owner

Peter Cooperstein, who teamed with fellow East Coast transplant Mike Forter to bring the already popular spot to the Nut Tree. “Unlike many of our other stores, which tend to build business steadily and level off, the Nut Tree location has been busy since the opening.”

Cooperstein attributes the instant popularity of Amici’s to two factors. “First, I think the center is a draw and the name of Nut Tree automatically spurs interest. Second, the demand for restaurants in the area is much higher than the supply,” he concluded.

Equally enthused about its opening at the Nut Tree in June is Scott Whidden, president and “master blender” at The Creamery, the 1940s-style ice cream parlor with a 113-year history. As one of only three Fentons Creamery stores in California, the new location in the Nut Tree’s Market Pavilion combines custom-crafted frozen delights with classic “soda fountain” dishes like grilled sandwiches, burgers and salads. A first-hand look at the process of handcrafting ice cream and sauces whets visitors’ appetites, thanks to a large viewing window into the production room. “Fentons is excited about the opportunity to become a part of the new Nut Tree Village. Business has been constant up to this point and our section of the center, the Market Pavilion, has seen much more traffic since the Grand Opening on August 11,” said Whidden. “Now that the remainder of the tenants have moved in, our business will continue to grow. We are looking forward to seeing success at this magical spot. Going forward, the tenants and unique features of the center will create more than just a shopping center attraction. It is a unique location with a wide variety of things to do.”

“Like all of the specialty tenants at the new Nut Tree, our restaurants offer a special draw for Vacaville residents as well as visitors on their way to vacation destinations in Lake Tahoe, Reno and other Northern California venues,” commented Ricardo Capretta, co-managing partner of Westrust. “We’ve tailored the dining mix to include several unique establishments with a limited number of locations that contribute to the appeal of the Nut Tree as a true destination venue.”

As one of the first restaurants to open at Nut Tree Village, Panera Bread offers testimony to the popularity of casual lunch fare and coffee break-type snacks in Vacaville and beyond. Since March, the

popular bakery-café has met the need for hot-out-of-the-oven bagels, espresso drinks, salads and sandwiches. “Nut Tree Village has a long history, great synergy and is well recognized as a destination point for travelers. Because of the location, many of Panera’s customers come in from out of town. The area was also underserved prior to this development,” said Gregg Lyons, senior real estate manager of Panera LLC. “Panera helped to fill a void in the local restaurant market and is doing extremely well at the Nut Tree location. It is the East Bay’s highest volume location and everyone is happy with its success,” he said.

Also catering to visitors in need of a caffeinated break is Peet’s Coffee & Tea. “Since Peet’s opened at the Nut Tree in late December, we have been delighted to receive both loyal customers already familiar with Peet’s, and new visitors to our quality coffees and teas,” said Erica Hess, community relations manager Peet’s Coffee & Tea. “Whether our guests are local regular Peet’s patrons enjoying their morning brew or travelers stopping by to discover what’s new at the rebirth of the Nut Tree community, everyone is excited to visit and shop at this landmark location,” she said.

Other dining options at the Nut Tree include L & L Hawaiian Barbecue and Mexican restaurant Villa Corona, a family-operated business offering authentic home-cooked Mexican food. Also due to open are Rubio’s Fresh Mexican Grill and Jamba Juice. In addition to restaurants, the Nut Tree’s 21,000-square-foot Market Pavilion features a two-acre, central park shaded by the original hackberry trees planted at The Nut Tree road stop in 1958. Other specialty tenants include confectioner Jelly Belly, Mariani Packing Company, Stonehouse Olive Oil, The Fruit Tree, Potter Family Farms and Made in California.

Seven major retailers with wide consumer appeal anchor the new center: Best Buy, Sport Chalet, Borders, Old Navy, PetSmart, HomeGoods and BevMo. Other tenants include Tilly’s, Justice for Girls-offering trendy clothing for the age 7 to 14 set, Famous Footwear, Barbeques Galore and Top Coat Salon & Spa. Nut Tree Village will feature as many as 75 tenants when fully occupied.

## **About Westrust**

Westrust was founded in 1992 and is in its 16th year of business. The Company is owned by two partners, Ricardo Capretta, who runs the Northern California region and Charles Smith, who runs the Southern California region. Westrust specializes in the development, redevelopment, acquisition, leasing and property management of neighborhood, community and lifestyle retail and mixed-use projects and has regional offices in San Francisco and Los Angeles. Since its inception, Westrust has acquired or developed 49 properties in five different states totaling over \$1.19 billion in value. The Company's experience includes the development and acquisition of 4.2 million square feet of retail, 1.1 million square feet of office and industrial space, and over 1,200 residential units. Westrust is currently developing five projects totaling \$492 million which makes it one of California's most active retail and mixed use developers.

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