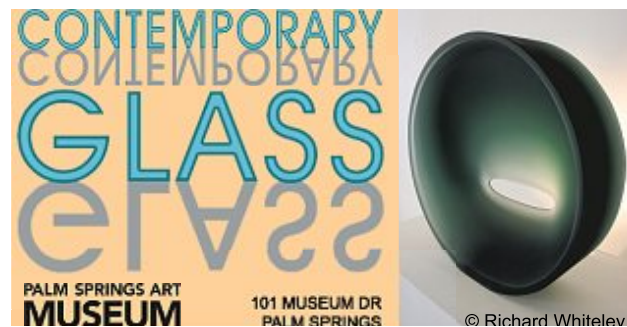


Business Plus



Senior Editor/News: James Meier • (760) 778-4623 • business@thedesertsun.com

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All ABOUT BUSINESS SUNDAYCEO ■ Harold Matzner



debra gruszecki
&
k kaufmann

Local economy finds its Groove

Desert tourism is in full bloom. Private jet activity is up. Car rentals are pumping up. Hotels are booked. Realtors are pounding stakes into lawns to showcase luxury homes at a time tourists chart detours from cold fronts meteorologists dub the Siberian Express.

And golf clubs are being polished for the upcoming **Bob Hope Classic**. With all the sporting action set to begin next week, **Spotlight 29 Casino** and the **Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians** has put the spotlight on the theme for January.

"It's time to get your Groove on!" Boomers take heed: This is one place where tie-dyed shirts and retro-wear won't make you look like a modern-day geek.

Groove, a retro-décor lounge complete with a 6-foot-tall lava lamp and orange lighting, videos and period music from the '60s, '70s and '80s, officially opens Jan. 22 as part of the casino's 16th anniversary celebration.



COURTESY

Real estate listings are popping up that appeal to the masses, and play to different travelers, like Leisureland: A home with Hollywood film-related art.

House hunting

Timing is everything when it comes to selling a home, and so it's no surprise that a home bearing the name, **Leisureland**, would pop up on the screen while the **Palm Springs International Film Festival** is underway.

The \$1.2 million Leisureland listing in the prestigious Vista Las Palmas neighborhood by **Windermere Real Estate** agent **Scott Histed** describes the home as a work of Hollywood art. Like a statue of Hercules from the 1955 film, "Kiss Me Deadly," life-sized figurines from the cult hit "A Clockwork Orange" and original photography from **Mel Roberts** and **Richard Avendon**.

Table tops for local shops

What do you do with a successful event with a slightly clunky name? If you're the **Palm Desert Chamber of Commerce**, you re-brand and kick up the energy — changing the group's longstanding **Table Top Business Expo** to this year's **Shop Local Expo**, set for March 19 at Westfield Palm Desert.

"I'm not even sure everyone knows what a tabletop expo is," said **Katie Slimko**, vice president for membership services and sales, referring to the 12-year-old event that was conceived

Please see **REAL ESTATE, D3**

corrections

We correct errors of fact promptly and courteously. If you have a correction or clarification, please contact Senior Editor for News James Meier at (760) 778-4623 or at james.meier@thedesertsun.com

Have news to share? Contact our reporters by e-mail at business@thedesertsun.com with news of deals you've inked, new products you're unveiling or other moves your business is making.

Humble showman



JAY CALDERON THE DESERT SUN

Harold Matzner, is quick to hand out praise to many who help put on The Palm Springs International Film Festival, but it is those same people who say that Matzner is the reason for their success.

BY DEBRA GRUSZECKI

The Desert Sun

Harold Matzner: The name may be as synonymous to the Palm Springs International Film Festival as one-time MGM Studio chief Louis B. Mayer is to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Matzner, who as CEO of a New Jersey-based branding, advertising and marketing distribution firm divides his time between the East Coast and Palm Springs — the place he calls home — has never given the festival short shrift.

It's his passion. Playing a behind-the-scenes role in its production for 18 years, Matzner is the quintessential chairman of an international event that puts a glint in celebrities' eyes, fills hotels, restaurants and second homes and draws upper-crust corporations the likes of Cartier North America and Mercedes-Benz.

Ask Matzner to talk about the awards gala that puts Palm Springs at the center of the world's cinematic spotlight — the media impressions it creates has been put at \$35 million — and he demurs.

Matzner names names. None, his. But even as Matzner rattles through the list like a row of film credits, those close to the man known for tromping through the desert in his classic tennis shoes and puffy down vest sum up his film festival might with four words.

He helped saved it. "There were a lot of people who came before Harold who were the forefathers of this event," said David Baron, a festival board member and principal with the Palm Springs law firm, Slovak Baron & Empey. "But Harold, in my view, not only kept the film festival from financial ruin, he provided the intellectual and financial energy — and the creative sense — of

what the film festival could really become.

"He made it what it is today." Described as an "immovable force," Matzner juggles a staff of 400 on two coasts and mid-air in a private jet he uses as an office. He works incredibly long hours. He delegates. He doesn't suffer fools.

What's his secret? Those who know him marvel at his aplomb.

Level-headed directness. Wit. Expertise. Team spirit. "It's true, he doesn't like to talk about himself," Baron said. "He prefers to be the doer: He thinks of himself as the CEO's CEO."

Months ago, a few of the very philanthropists the film festival chairman credits for making the festival what it is today — including Jim and Jackie Lee Houston and Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians Chairman Richard Milanovich — feted Matzner

as "Outstanding Philanthropist of the Year."

David Cornstein, a longtime friend from New York, cut to the chase at that awards luncheon. About Matzner, and his score of philanthropic titles, business dealings and chairmanships, Cornstein said he was simply "an all-around good human being."

Some have described you as the grandfather of the film festival. Does that characterization work for you?

It definitely is kind of like that. I developed the awards gala over the last 10 years. It's my primary responsibility. When (the late) Earl Greenburg was partnering the festival with me, I still had the operations responsibility for the gala. And the developing and marketing of it has turned into a tremendous driver of the way we are perceived

Please see **MATZNER, D5**

Clean tech summit set for Indian Wells

BY K KAUFMANN

The Desert Sun

The Coachella Valley Economic Partnership will promote the region's solar, wind and other renewable energy resources at a key gathering of cutting-edge green tech firms, venture capitalists and other energy industry leaders to be held Jan. 19-20 in Indian Wells.

CVPEP is a sponsor of the seventh annual Clean Tech Investor Summit, which is expected to draw about 500 top-level energy investors and executives to the Renaissance Esmeralda Resort & Spa for two days of panels and speakers focusing on emerging trends in the industry.

"The exposure to investors nation-

wide is phenomenal," said Vincent Battaglia, CEO of Renova Energy Corp., a solar firm in Palm Desert, who will use the CVPEP sponsorship to sit in on some conference events.

"I think in our renewable industry, we are much more focused than we were before," he said. "I'll be asking questions on expected returns; I know what kind of fruits my (solar) energy bears."

Wesley Ahlgren, CVPEP's chief operating officer, also sees the summit as a high-level networking opportunity and a chance to showcase the valley's abundant renewable resources.

"We'll be attending looking for the broader picture for investment opportunities," he said. "We're posi-

tioning ourselves as a renewable energy epicenter for the world."

The conference has been held in the desert since its inception in 2005 and is now considered "a seminal event in the clean-tech sector," said Ira Ehrenpreis, the summit's chairman and a general partner with Technology Partners, a Palo Alto venture capital firm.

"The attendees represent the who's-who of the clean-tech sector," he said. "It's not just a high-level conference; it's a high-level event in terms of the interactions."

Conference speakers this year include Cathy Zoi, U.S. assistant secretary for energy efficiency and re-

Please see **SUMMIT, D3**

Tourism Bureau gets smart, app

BY DEBRA GRUSZECKI

The Desert Sun

The Palm Springs Bureau of Tourism is tapping the latest smart phone technology to help out its visitors.

The group created applications and a mobile tag, known as a Quick Response (QR) code, to allow visitors to take advantage of shortcuts to a slimmed-down version of the Bureau of Tourism's website, m.VisitPalmSprings.com. And from there, the guide to stay, play, dine and shop in Palm Springs.

Applications are currently available for the iPhone, Android and BlackBerry and, soon, the iPad.

The QR, a two-dimensional graphic that looks like a woodcut image and acts like a super barcode, is considered cutting edge in the tourism industry.

Here's how it works: The QR, personalized for the Palm Springs Bureau, can be placed in print and Internet ads, and be set in place at high traffic locations — from Palm Springs International Airport's baggage claim to check-in kiosks at hotels and display windows of local stores.

When QR-savvy travelers and consumers spot the tag, they can download it on their smart phone with a simple wave.

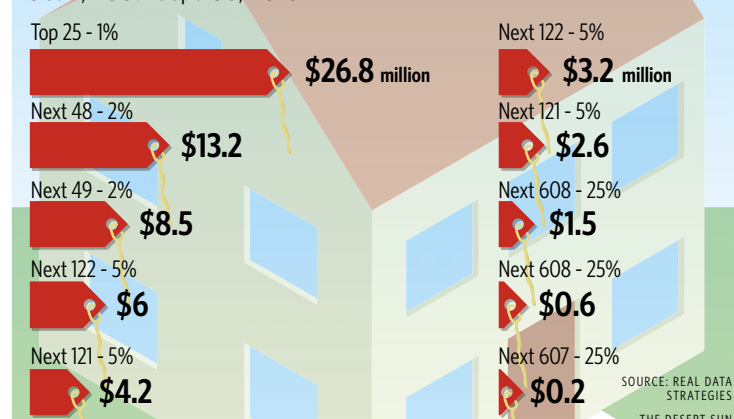
The tag, once tapped, opens the m.VisitPalmSprings.com web page

Please see **APPS, D3**

BUSINESSFACT

Top agents garner lion's share of sales

About 25 real estate agents — or 1 percent of those active in the local market — each closed an average of \$26.8 million in sales from Oct. 1, 2009-Sept. 30, 2010.



INSIDEBUSINESS

Global Economics

Columnist Morris R. Beschloss says a perfect storm of simultaneous events is forming to provide the thrust behind the long-awaited post-recession comeback. One part of it? The Lame Duck Congress, he says. **D3**

Talking Taxes

As tax season returns, so does Palm Desert tax expert Sabby Jonathan, who shares some of the newest federal tax laws and how you may be affected this year. **D3**

Giving Back
Convention Calendar
Weather
Calendar

D4
D2
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Weekend Market Scorecard

Events aligning to trigger recovery

With the stock market's near 8 percent December improvement fulfilling its role of economic prognosticator, a perfect storm of simultaneous events are combining to provide the thrust behind the long-awaited post-recession comeback.

Unexpectedly, the Lame Duck Congress provided the spark that makes 2011 a near certainty for a major recovery.

By maximizing available cash in consumer hands, by retaining the Bush-era tax cuts, cutting the Social Security payroll tax contribution by 33 1/3 percent, and extending the compensation for the unemployed, expanded spending by the consumer is practically guaranteed.

But just as important is the 180-degree turn in the sentiment of privately-held businesses that comprise the backbone of America's 150 million



morris r. beschloss
global economics

employables.

Even though the record percentage of unemployed will continue to hover over an otherwise brightening economic landscape, it's hoped that a major national infrastructure initiative, ignited by a more realistically-oriented Congress, will absorb hundreds of thousands of this seemingly unabsorbable mass early in the year.

Barring the negatives of employment absorption inability

and an explosive national debt, the following factors point to the best economic year since 2007:

■ As previously reported, the American consumer seems to have found a balance between debt-cutting and continued expenditures. This is bound to continue into the New Year.

■ Businesses, large and small, are piling up inventories in unanticipated quantities. Much of this is due to price increases coming down the pike. Also, expansion projects in commercial/industrial construction, power generation, oil and gas development, and renewable energy initiatives are on the verge of a previously held-back breakthrough.

■ The expectation that the new Congress and legal challenges will defang much of the business and consumer-hostile tax aspects of the Obamacare

Beschloss 24/7

Keep up with what Morris Beschloss has to say about current happenings in the finance world by reading his blog at mydesert.com

Health Act, which was due to collect taxes as of January 2011, although not ready for full implementation until 2014.

These and other positive economic elements will help to overcome the pessimistic sentiment inspired by governmental fiat.

Happy New Year to All! Let's hope you'll all share in this predicted inevitability.

Morris R. Beschloss writes a regular blog on mydesert.com. He can be heard on KPSI Radio 920 AM from 8 to 9 a.m. every Friday. He can also be seen on KESQ Channel 3, and on Time Warner Cable TV Channel 111.

talking taxes

Late tax changes by Congress cause IRS delays which will affect taxpayers

BY SABBY JONATHAN

Special to The Desert Sun

January is here and, inevitably, so is the tax-filing season.

What is unique about this year, in addition to all the new laws, old laws and extended laws, is the delay that many taxpayers will incur in filing their tax returns. And through no fault of their own.

The "Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010" (also known as the extension of the Bush tax cuts) was signed into law on Dec. 17. The problem with that is that until the law was passed, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) could not finalize a number of 2010 tax forms.

The process of designing tax forms is much more complicated than most people think. That's because tax forms have to reflect the rules under existing tax laws, which tend to be rather complicated and, at the same time, the forms must be user friendly, meaning simple and easy to use. Not always an easy thing to do.

Once the forms have been finalized, they must go out to print. It is anticipated that more than 150 million individual tax returns will be filed this year.

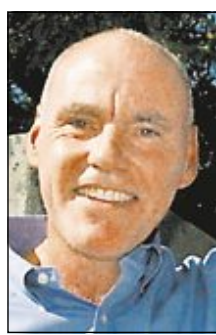
Most of those, probably more than 70 percent, will be filed electronically.

However, that still leaves nearly 50 million returns that will be paper-filed. And that translates into one massive printing job.

To be ready by filing season, tax forms must go to print by the end of September. Congress is aware of this (partly because the IRS keeps reminding them), and yet, the past few years, Congress has fallen into a habit of passing new tax laws past this deadline.

This year was exceptional in that Congress waited until nearly the end of the year to modify tax laws relating to 2010.

On Dec. 23, the IRS announced that certain tax forms will be delayed and that affected taxpayers will likely not be able to file their returns until mid-to late February. If history is any



Sabby Jonathan

indication, that could easily turn into some time in March.

So who's affected?

For the most part, those affected are people who itemize deductions, claim the above-the-line deduction for higher education expenses or deduct out-of-pocket educator expenses of up to \$250.

Itemized Deductions

Congress reinstated the optional deduction for state and local sales tax (in lieu of the deduction for state income tax). This is reported by those who

itemize their deductions on Schedule A.

Higher Education Expenses

Congress also reinstated the deduction for higher education expenses of up to \$4,000. It is claimed on Form 8917, and then transferred to Form 1040.

Educator Expenses

And, finally, Congress reinstated the deduction of up to \$250 for out-of-pocket expenses incurred by educators in kindergarten through grade 12. This expense is deducted directly on Form 1040.

Anyone who takes the deductions listed above is affected, and will be delayed in filing their tax returns. The IRS will make announcements as the forms become available.

To get up to the minute information, though, log onto www.irs.gov.

Sabby Jonathan is the managing partner of Jonathan & Associates, Inc., a Palm Desert CPA firm, and has been in practice in the Coachella Valley for more than 30 years. He can be reached at SabbyJonathanCPA@aol.com.

APPS: Smart phones make merchants money

Continued from D1

and acts as a home page to check out nearly 700 listings of Palm Springs partners who fall under the "Stay/Play/Dine/Shop" category.

Each partner gets their own QR to draw consumers to their business or store.

The personalized tags offer snapshots about the venture. Typically, they list hours, specials, coupons and directions — right down to prime parking spots.

"This is huge for us," said Tammy Perezchica, Palm Springs' downtown administrator.

"It creates an immediacy that's so exciting for business." Mobile phone users had access to the website before, but it was hard to read. This new app makes it easier.

Merchants, hoteliers, restaurants and attractions will no longer have to rely on putting thousands of brochures in rack cards, she said.

"Our guests will be able to stay at places from the Parker and the Viceroy to the Riviera, and know what's happening within a mile," she said. "We can communicate how much there is to do downtown at the touch of a button."

What's a QR?

Businesses are being introduced to the QRs now.

The mobile site and its application rolled out just before Thanksgiving.

"The site's already had almost 9,000 visits to the mobile site," said Mary Jo Ginther, the bureau's director, and that doesn't include visits to the apps.

"What's exciting about it is they're viewing almost five pages and are on the site for nine minutes.

"Our intent is to get visitors who love using their phone

interested in Palm Springs, and keep pulling them in until you say, 'I have to go to that place,'" Ginther said. "Imagine standing at the airport: You spot the bar code; wave your phone over it. And while you're waiting for luggage, you figure out where to go to dinner tonight."

David Janes, president of Toronto-based Discovery Anywhere Mobile, the firm that developed the mobile site, apps and QR codes, said the technology is moving rapidly toward mainstream America.

The reason is simple, he said. "You want to meet people where they are," Janes said.

Destinations in places such as Toronto, Boston and Baltimore have or soon will have QRs in place.

"Mobile marketing is coming into vogue very, very quickly," Ginther said. "We plan to get on board as quickly as we can."

The Palm Springs Desert Resort Communities CVA is also taking steps to move in this direction — the first being an overhaul of its website.

"The QR is a nice feature," said Mark Graves, CVA's marketing and communications director. "People who use it and are on the go can see what's right around them. It is an added-value for a tourist destination."

More information about the QR code will roll out soon, as will statistics from yet another tourism promotion involving this new technology.

The super barcode was embedded in an in-flight magazine advertisement for Palm Springs that American Airlines carried in its aircraft in December. Those who swiped the code got a chance to enter a contest for a trip to Palm Springs.

"It's a call to action," Ginther said. "We can't wait to learn more about the results."

SUMMIT: Go clean tech

Continued from D1

newable energy; Elon Musk, chairman and CEO of Tesla Motors; and Thomas Steyer, the Silicon Valley asset manager who partly funded and led the successful campaign against Proposition 23 in the November election.

If passed, Prop. 23 would have put an indefinite hold on California's aggressive climate change programs — a key driver for the clean-tech industry.

The defeat of the ballot initiative is one of many signals that make the coming year "a renaissance time for clean tech," Ehrenpreis said.

"We have more interest from

the public, from the corporations, the political arena and across the globe than we've ever had in history."

Among the key trends he sees going forward are the emergence of multiple renewable energy centers, including the Coachella Valley, and an increasing focus on clean tech as one of the main economic drivers of the 21st century.

"Perhaps the most fundamental change we've seen in the sector is the human capital," he said. "Today, the best and brightest are focused on clean tech as the next chapter of their lives."

"This sector has gone from niche to mainstream."

BUSINESSCALENDAR

jan. 12

The American Advertising Federation luncheon, with panel discussion on tourism and the snowbird market. RSVP. 11 a.m., Agua Caliente Casino Resort and Spa, 32250 Bob Hope Drive, Rancho Mirage. \$35-\$45. (760) 325-2882 or www.DesertAdFed.com

www.DesertAdFed.com

jan. 18

Rancho Mirage Chamber of Commerce January 2011 mixer, RSVP. 5:30 p.m., Applebee's Restaurant, 71740 Highway 111, Rancho Mirage. \$5-\$10. (760) 568-9351 or www.RanchoMirage.org

Submit calendar event information at least two weeks in advance to www.mydesert.com/calendar

REAL ESTATE: Retro club, runway designer, women's conference and music dazzle

COURTESY OF CORD MEDIA.

Groove at Spotlight 29 Casino is a throwback to the 1960s and '70s, decorated with lava lamps and retro décor with music from the same era.



Continued from D1

as a showcase for area small businesses.

Each business got a table — with top — to display their sales materials.

The event will remain essentially the same, but to find a new focus, Slimko said, "We did a lot of asking members and finding out what would grab people's attention. Shopping local was it."

The new twist is getting strong response. The day after the announcement, 18 businesses had registered for one of the 80 tables up for grabs. It also sparked some new features, including a networking breakfast for participants before the mall opens.

To keep it green, bring a canvas bag and stop over early. Westfield will give out \$10 gift cards for the mall to the first 100 customers.

He's everywhere

Palm Springs designer **Michael Costello** may have lost on **Project Runway**, but the hometown favorite is fast becoming the absolute must-have accessory for any fashion-related event or fundraiser.

Costello's designs will head-

line the **ninth annual Heart of Fashion** fundraiser for the **Visiting Nurse Association** on Feb. 10 in Palm Desert. He also will have a featured runway show of evening wear as part of **Fashion Week El Paseo** in March.

Costello is one of a growing coterie of marquee designers now lined up for the yearly retail and design extravaganza on Palm Desert's increasingly chic and fashion-forward shopping street.

Also on the bill — Los Angeles and Palm Springs designer **Trina Turk** and Hollywood designer **Oliver Tolentino**.

And **Susan Stein**, fashion coordinator for the event, promises more surprises as the week approaches. Start planning your wardrobes.

Inspiring Women

Author **Tammy Coia** is sharpening her pencil for the Women Inspiring Women Conference on Jan. 28 and 29 at the **Miramonte Resort** in Indian Wells.

The conference, costing \$100, will include panel discussions and feature speakers such as **Dr. Virginia Simpson** on the topic "Treasure in Adversity," **Zoe Fitzgerald Carter**, author of

"Imperfect Endings," **Lorna Shelveland** and **Bill Blazek** on "Love after 50."

The conference will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. There will be a no-host bar cocktail reception from 5:30 to 9 p.m. on Friday.

On a final note

Get that musical score and trumpet out.

The search is on for Riverside County's best young bands to be featured at the second annual Battle of the Bands during the **2011 Riverside County Fair & National Date Fest**.

Residents between 16 and 26 have until Jan. 21 to submit an application. Seven of the county's top bands will be chosen to perform from noon to 4 p.m. on the fair's opening day, Feb. 18, at the **Magic Carpet Stage**.

Supervisor **John J. Benoit's** youth advisory council will check all application. They must include a demo CD, stage plot, lyrics for the songs that will be played, one of which is a cover song, and a photo of the band.

The winning band also walks off with more than a chance to be discovered: Fender music equipment is part of the mix.

Valley libraries

Cathedral City: 33-520 Date Palm Drive

Coachella: 1538 Seventh St.

Desert Hot Springs: 11-691 West Drive

Indio: 200 Civic Center Mall

La Quinta: 78-275 Calle Tampico

Mecca: 65-250A Cahuilla St.

Palm Desert: 73-300 Fred Waring

Palm Springs: 300 S. Sunrise Way

Rancho Mirage: 71-100 Highway 111

Thousand Palms: Art Samson Community Library of Thousand Palms, 31-189 Robert Road

Crime tips

Crime Stoppers is a nonprofit organization that gives cash rewards to informants whose tips lead to the arrest of crime suspects. The program is run by volunteers. Informants remain anonymous. (760) 341-7867.

PAID ADVERTISING

Home Owner Bail Out

Short Sales are the solution for solving today's real estate problems. The banks were bailed out, now it is your turn.

When we purchased our homes we had the idea that we could sell or refinance them as needed. Since home prices have fallen, refinancing or selling may be impossible. Lenders are denying requests for modifications and not reducing balances. If you find yourself in this predicament, a "Short Sale" is the solution, and can be obtained through Steve Spiro, a Certified Short Sale Specialist and Principal Broker of Asset Liquidators.

In a "Short Sale" arranged by Asset Liquidators there is no cost to you. It will allow you to sell your home for less than you owe on it. The bank will waive the portion of your loan that does not get paid off at close of escrow. At Asset Liquidators, this procedure takes two to six months to complete. Steve will design a custom solution for your situation. This may include a sale and lease back so you can stay in your home and don't have to move and/or cash back for relocation expenses.

He can also arrange for you to qualify for and purchase or lease a new home before or after the Short Sale. The benefits for the home owner also include avoiding foreclosure and deficiency judgements. It may have little impact to your credit compared to a foreclosure or bankruptcy. It will postpone the foreclosure sale date allowing the homeowner more time to stay in their property without making payments.

With a properly handled Short Sale, your loans, secured taxes, HOA dues and all cost of sale will be paid by the lender. There are no fees to you, the bank pays for everything. Consider a Short Sale as the free solution to dispose of your upside down real estate. A Short Sale must be handled by an expert. Don't trust your Short Sale to just anyone.

For a custom solution, call Steve Spiro, a Palm Springs real estate broker with 30 years of real estate and lending experience and a Certified Short Sale Specialist. He can be reached at 760-207-6611.

e-mail: Steve@Asset-Liquidators.net
Web: www.FreeShortSaleService.Net

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