

**For Immediate Release:**  
March 10, 2008

**Contact:**  
Helen Duong, (408) 795-1807  
San Jose Redevelopment Agency  
[Helen.duong@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:Helen.duong@sanjoseca.gov)

Annita Waghorn, (707) 664-2381  
Anthropological Studies Center,  
Sonoma State University  
[annita.waghorn@sonoma.edu](mailto:annita.waghorn@sonoma.edu)

## **San Jose Redevelopment Agency, City of San Jose and Sonoma State University Sponsor an Archaeological Excavation Open House**

*Archaeologists to excavate the City of San Jose Corporation Yard*

**SAN JOSE, CALIF.** – For decades, the site of San Jose’s last Chinatown may lay buried under asphalt at the City’s Corporation Yard. On **Saturday, March 15, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.**, the public is invited to an archaeological excavation open house for the site known as the City of San Jose Corporation Yard located in Japantown at Taylor Street (between Sixth and Seventh Streets).

“This archaeological excavation will provide the community an opportunity to learn more about Heinlenville, the last of San Jose’s historic Chinatowns, and the history of the Chinese in our community,” said Mayor Chuck Reed. “The lessons that we learn from our history help make San Jose a place that demonstrates to the world that people from different ethnicities, religions and cultures can live, work, play and prosper together.”

For 10 days, archaeologists will uncover areas of the site in search of clues of daily life in the settlement known as Heinlenville, which was home to as many as 2,000 Chinese immigrants from 1887 to the 1930s. San Jose’s first Chinatown, which was located at Market and San Fernando streets, was destroyed by fire in 1887.

**-more-**

John Heinlen, a German immigrant, helped the Chinese merchants relocate on land he owned at Sixth and Taylor Streets.

“We think that this event will provide an opportunity for the community to learn more about the rich heritage and the cultural history of this area,” said Harry Mavrogenes, Executive Director, San Jose Redevelopment Agency. “I am pleased that we are able to offer the public a glimpse into their history.”

Planned activities include limited guided tours, presentations from local historians and archaeologists, displays of artifacts and an opportunity to watch the crew members at work. Tours of the field laboratory and excavation area will be conducted hourly from 11 until 3 pm. Minors must be accompanied by a parent or guardian in order to visit the site. Groups of 10 or more who want to attend the open house are asked to register by e-mailing [annita.waghorn@sonoma.edu](mailto:annita.waghorn@sonoma.edu) and include the estimated time of arrival. Appropriate attire is recommended. No open-toed shoes or heels will be allowed on the work site.

“Involving the community is an important part of the project,” said Adrian Praetzellis, Anthropologic Studies Center, Sonoma State University director and principal investigator.

In the early years, Heinlenville served as a support center for Chinese farmers and farm workers who shopped for supplies and socialized at the restaurants and gambling parlors. By the early 1900s, Japanese workers in the Santa Clara Valley also found their way to Heinlenville for food, supplies and entertainment. Japanese immigrants gradually began to establish a community on the edge of Heinlenville, along Sixth and Jackson streets. This area became the core of San Jose’s modern-day Japantown.

By the 1920s, families replaced the Heinlenville bachelor society, bringing more shops, a temple and a school. The area flourished in spite of political and public harassment until the 1930s. The population began to dwindle as families found better homes elsewhere. By 1949, the brick buildings were razed, including the Ng Shing Gung temple. The altar, furnishings and part of the facade were found later and used in an exhibit at San Jose’s History Park. Japantown survived the internments of World War II and continues to flourish.

**-more-**

**San Jose Redevelopment Agency, City of San Jose and Sonoma State University  
Sponsor an Archaeological Excavation Open House**

**3-3-3**

The area bounded by Taylor, Jackson, Sixth and Seventh Streets was gradually taken over by the City of San Jose as a Corporation Yard.

**About the Anthropological Studies Center**

The Anthropological Studies Center (ASC) has been assisting environmental firms, non-profit organizations, private property owners and government agency clients with cultural resources issues since 1974. It is located on the Sonoma State University Campus in Rohnert Park, CA. <http://www.sonoma.edu/asc/>

###