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A sampling of notable women making a mark

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More than a fourth of the businesses in San Joaquin and Stanislaus Counties are owned by women.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2007 women owned 7.8 million non-farm businesses in the United States, an increase of 20 percent from 2002. Women-owned businesses accounted for nearly 29 percent of all non-farm businesses in the United States. A woman-owned business is when a woman owns at least 51 percent of the stock or equity of the business, according to the Survey of Business Owners.

California had the most women-owned firms, which accounted for 1 million according to the U.S. Census Bureau website. In 2002, there were 34,534 businesses in San Joaquin County and 28 percent of those businesses were owned by women, according to the U.S. Census Bureau website. The site also reports that in Stanislaus County there were 27,310 business with 27 percent being owned by women.

The following women business owners responded to a questionnaire that was sent out to women-owned businesses by the Central Valley Business Journal. The women listed do not represent all of the women-owned business in San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties.

Rachelle Souza & Suzanne Candini - Manzanita Ventures, Inc.

Souza and Candini opened Manzanita Ventures in 2009, a business which offers five different services; residential resale, property management, commercial brokerage, interior design/space planning and custom building/remodeling.

Souza said they decided to open up their own business because they saw a lack of customer service from real estate agents. Souza and Candini wanted to give clients the higher level of customer service they deserve, said Souza.

The uncertainty is the hardest part of owning a business, said Souza.

“When you own a business you have to get out there and generate your business, you can’t just wait for business to come to you, you have to work for it,” said Souza.

An advantage that comes with owning your own business is being able to be creative and, Souza said, they encourage their team to come up with new ways of doing things.

In a year Souza said she hopes their business is growing and that they are meeting the needs of their clients and potential customers.

“Our customers’ needs are the main focus for our business,” she said.

