



BUSINESS JOURNAL



A GREEN REVOLUTION FOR A SUSTAINABLE TOMORROW

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A GIVING COMMUNITY: SPREADING SMILES

page 13

Seeking a New City Manager to Serve the People of Salinas

by Chamber Staff

Did you fill out the electronic survey in late November to tell City of Salinas leaders what qualities you want to see in the next City Manager?

As announced in the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce electronic “Word to the Members” on November 21, 2023, “The Mayor and City Councilmembers need to hear from you!” because “the search for Salinas’ next City Manager will begin soon.”

Survey participants were asked to rank the importance of various experience and leadership qualities desirable in a City Manager. The survey questions can be found on Page 24. Answers from the public will give the Mayor and City Council guidance as they recruit potential candidates for City Manager.

What Is a City Manager?

Municipal affairs in the City of Salinas are governed by a Charter, which can be described as the city’s constitution. Section 7.5 of the Charter establishes a “Council-Manager form of government” for the City of Salinas.

Section 7.1 of the Charter states that “The City Council may appoint a City Manager and City Attorney on terms that it specifies to serve at the pleasure of the City Council.” In turn, Section 7.5 gives its City Manager “power to appoint, all such

CITY MANAGER - see page 24

Monterey County Commuter Rail: Progress Continues Toward Vision

by Kevin Dayton, Governmental Affairs Liaison



The ambitious project to connect Monterey County with the San Francisco Bay Area (and beyond) via commuter rail continues to advance.

The Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) is overseeing the long-term “Monterey County Rail Extension Project” in coordination with the City of Salinas, the City of Gilroy, Caltrain (the Peninsula/South Bay commuter rail system between San Francisco and Gilroy), Caltrans, the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), Union Pacific Railroad, and various public utilities such as Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E). Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) and the Salinas City Center Improvement Association



Kimbley Craig, then a Salinas City Councilmember and now Salinas Mayor, speaks at the groundbreaking for the Monterey County Rail Extension Project in August 2018.

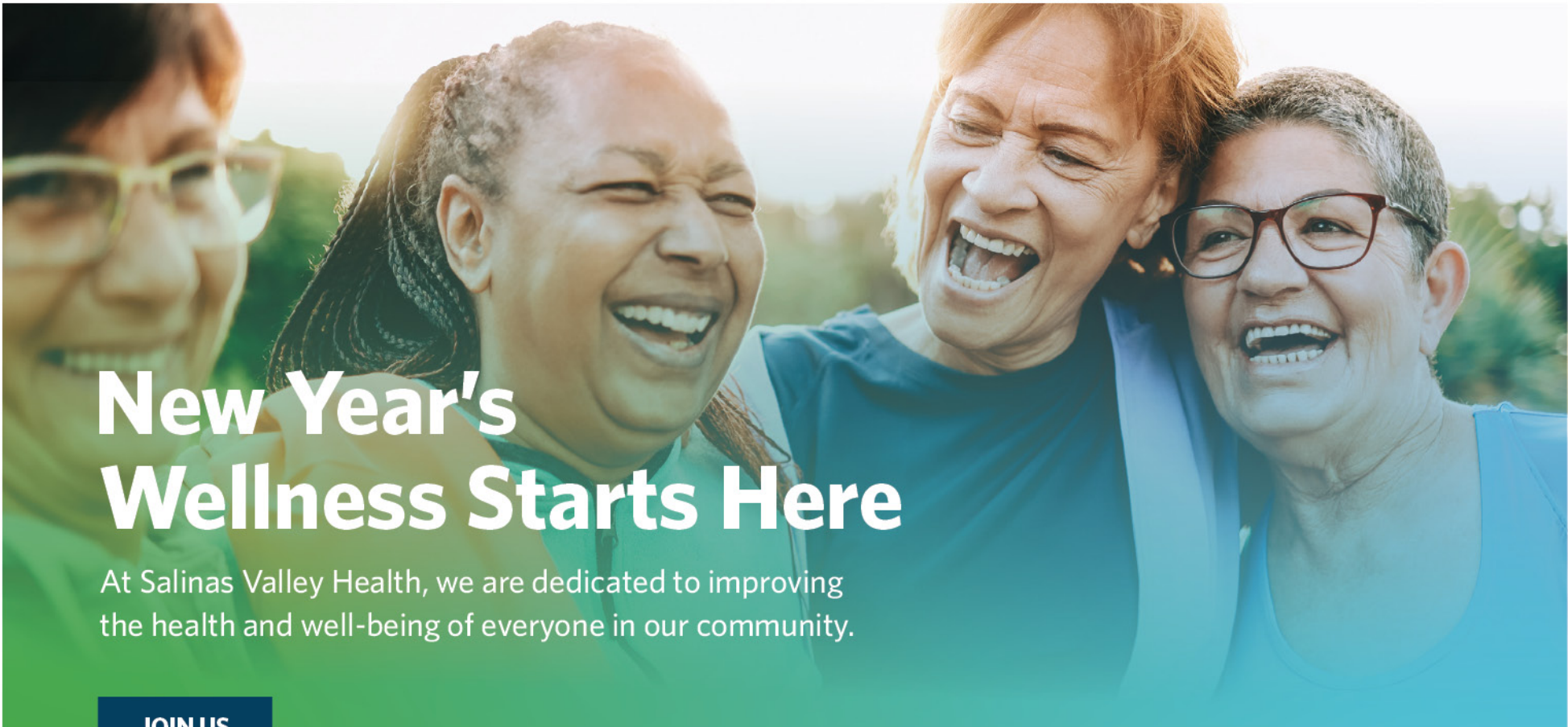
(SCCIA) also have interests in this project.

Pessimism Turns Into Achievement

Preparation for the Monterey County Rail Extension was ongoing in the early and mid-2010s, when TAMC was seeking

funding and working to acquire properties around the Salinas train station for a future Downtown Salinas Intermodal Transportation Center. TAMC was also working with the City of Salinas to design an extension

COMMUTER RAIL - see page 7



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Happy New Year!

by Jennifer L. Williams, SVCC Board Chair



I am humbled and privileged to serve you as the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce Board Chair for 2024.

On behalf of the Chamber Board and membership, thank you, Bill Hastie, Hastie Financial Group, our outgoing Chair, for your consistent leadership and the tremendous amount of time you dedicated to the Chamber. I've learned so much from Bill and several past Board Chairs and Board members over the past few years.

I have served on the Executive Committee for the past four years as the Vice Chair of Government Relations and the Chair-Elect. I've also served as the Chair of the Business Development Committee over the past year.

We are grateful to be starting 2024 with a new, highly experienced CEO, Karin Moss, leading the Chamber. I am confident that she will bring best practices and creative ideas to the organization.

We are also fortunate to have two new board members in 2024, including Tiffany Fournier, Director of Business Development, Slingshot Connections and Chamber Ambassador, and Clement Miller, Chief Operating Officer, Salinas Valley Health.

The 2024 Chair-Elect is Leonard Batti (Vice President, Taylor Farms). Board members Tom Moran (President & CEO, Goodwill Central Coast) will continue as Vice Chair of Finance, and Amy Gibson (Accounting Manager, Central Coast Federal Credit Union) will continue as Vice Chair of Events. Starla Warren (Founder, HDC Affordable Housing) and Aaron Johnson (JRG Attorneys) will join the Executive Committee as Vice Chairs of Membership and Government Relations, respectively. We look forward to building a pipeline of future Executive Committee leaders that expand the organization's skills and diversity.

The Chamber Ambassadors are a gift to all of us. We are

thankful for each of you and look forward to another year of your support with all of the Chamber's events and activities!

The Board continues to focus on its 2023 – 2025 Strategic Plan and will gather later this month to review and refine the priorities for 2024. Your Chamber of Commerce is committed to building a strong local economy by promoting sound government and an informed membership and community. The Chamber envisions "A thriving, welcoming Salinas Valley where People, Families, and Businesses succeed via economic opportunity and growth." I read an article a while back where Richard Vaughn, our County Economic Development Manager, said one of the things he is focused on is helping the county's vulnerable populations better access the economy that exists. That aligns with what we believe: Prosperity and Well-being for ALL.

I often share that I am not a subject matter expert on the issues of significance to our community and the Chamber, such as Water and Housing. I have learned, though, to surround myself with experts and get out of their way. I also earned my National Certification in Professional Mediation in 2023 to help me navigate the different ideas that we are able to pursue as we seek to address these ongoing challenges. I look forward to working with all of you to fulfill our strategies and help everyone thrive in 2024!



2024 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Natividad Medical Foundation
- **Chair Elect - Leonard Batti**
Taylor Farms
- **Vice Chair, Events - Amy Gibson**
Central Coast Federal Credit Union
- **Vice Chair, GRC - Aaron Johnson**
JRG Attorneys
- **Vice Chair, Finance - Tom Moran**
Goodwill Central Coast
- **Vice Chair, Membership - Starla Warren**
Founder, HDC Affordable Housing

2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- **Clint Cowden** - Hartnell College
- **Brent Fogg** - Granite Construction
- **Tiffany Fournier** - Slingshot Communications
- **Brenda Granillo** - California Water Service
- **Mark Kennedy** - Green Rubber Kennedy Ag
- **Clement Miller** - Salinas Valley Health
- **John Narigi** - Laguna Seca Raceway
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- **Matt Huerta** - Monterey Bay Economic Partnership
- **Kevin Dayton** - SCCIA

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- **Toula Hubbard**
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- **Willa Doroy**
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- **Cesar Chavez**
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UPCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday, February 13th, 2024
Business Builders

From funding options and local grants to digital marketing, our presenters will highlight some of the resources available to businesses. Plus, lunch is on us!

Register: tinyurl.com/BusinessBuilders2024

Saturday, February 24th, 2024
Black Business Expo

This dynamic event is a celebration of entrepreneurial spirit, innovation, and community empowerment. As we gather under one roof, we showcase and amplify the voices of Black-owned businesses, creating a platform for networking, collaboration, and economic growth.

Register: tinyurl.com/BlackBizExpo



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Goodwill Central Coast: A Green Revolution for a Sustainable Tomorrow

by Goodwill of the Central Coast Staff

In the heart of Central Coast, Goodwill stands not only as a beacon of affordability but also as a champion for environmental sustainability. The green initiatives undertaken by Goodwill Central Coast go beyond providing affordable second-hand treasures; they contribute to a more sustainable and eco-friendly future. 🌱



REDUCING FASHION FOOTPRINT

Goodwill Central Coast is a haven for fashion enthusiasts with a conscience. By offering a wide array of second-hand clothing, shoes, and accessories, Goodwill reduces the demand for new production. This reduction in demand translates to a decreased environmental impact associated with the manufacturing, transportation, and disposal of clothing.



RECYCLING BEYOND CLOTHES

The green philosophy at Goodwill Central Coast extends to more than just clothing. The organization actively promotes using recycled hangers, reducing the demand for new plastic production. This seemingly small change contributes to a significant reduction in plastic waste and aligns with Goodwill's commitment to making sustainable choices at every level.



SHOPPING WITH A PURPOSE

When you shop at Goodwill Central Coast, you're not just making a purchase but contributing to a larger purpose. Your choices support the organization's mission of helping people overcome challenges, build skills, find jobs, and grow their careers through the power of work. It's not just about acquiring things; it's about creating positive change in the community and the environment.



UPCYCLING AND REPURPOSING

Every donation that finds its way to Goodwill is a potential masterpiece. The commitment to upcycling and repurposing items transforms them into unique treasures and prevents them from ending up in landfills. From furniture to fashion, Goodwill breathes new life into items that might have been discarded.



LANDFILL WASTE REDUCTION

The impact of Goodwill's green approach is most evident in its commitment to reducing landfill waste. Items that might have otherwise added to the growing waste in landfills find new homes through the doors of Goodwill. The organization actively works towards extending the life cycle of products, minimizing waste, and creating a more circular economy.



GOODWILL CENTRAL COAST ISN'T JUST A THRIFT STORE

It's a green revolution. With each thrift find, recycling effort, and commitment to sustainability, Goodwill stands as a testament to the positive impact that conscious consumer choices can make on the planet. Join the movement towards a more sustainable tomorrow by embracing the green initiatives of Goodwill Central Coast—one purchase at a time.





COMMUTER RAIL - from page 1

of Lincoln Avenue and improve circulation and parking at the train station on Market Street.

Some Monterey County residents at that time believed the Rail to Monterey County project was a fanciful concept unlikely to get started, let alone be completed. Downtown Salinas was speckled with blighted and vacant buildings, and its infrastructure was drab and outdated. The County of Monterey had shifted much of its workforce from Downtown offices to the former Capital One building on Schilling Place. One of the abandoned buildings on Market Street near the train station was even repurposed in the winter of 2016-2017 as a warming shelter for the homeless.

But on August 9, 2018, TAMC hosted a Monterey County Rail Extension Project groundbreaking ceremony on the crumbling asphalt parking lot at the Salinas train station. Soon afterwards, the blighted buildings near the station were demolished.

TAMC awarded a construction contract for the Monterey County Rail Extension Project Phase 1 (Salinas Kick Start Project) Package 1 of 3 (Salinas Commuter Rail Station) in April 2019. The project was completed in March 2021. An unsightly area around the train station was transformed into an Intermodal Transportation Center.

This project occurred in conjunction with numerous other projects related to implementation of the 2015 Salinas Downtown Vibrancy Plan, including the Main Street Streetscape Project and the West Alisal/Lincoln Avenue Downtown Complete Streets Project. In 2019, the El Charrito burrito purveyor renovated its building nearby on Market Street. Developers responded to City of Salinas requests with proposals for new density housing and commercial development near the Intermodal Transportation Center.

Adjacent to the train station, the historic Southern Pacific Freight Depot was renovated and converted into the Salinas California Welcome Center, with its beautiful museum of Central Coast history. Monterey County residents began promoting a possible "Heritage Park" comprised of the historic buildings at the Intermodal Transportation Center (such as the First Mayor's House).

An area to avoid has become an area with potential.

What's Next?

Package 2 of 3 for the Monterey County Rail Extension Project Phase 1 is a layover facility in Salinas for the commuter trains. As of December

COMMUTER RAIL - see page 22



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New Year, New Laws Seminar

You are invited to Fenton & Keller's highly anticipated "New Year, New Laws" seminar on the morning of January 26th or January 30th, 2024, at Embassy Suites in Seaside.

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Seminar: 8:30 - 11:45 a.m.

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Speakers:

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New Rules from Secure Act 2.0 Affecting Retirement Plans in 2024

by Haley Hitchman, AIF®, CPFA®



The Secure 2.0 Act was established December 29, 2022, in an effort to encourage employers to provide retirement savings options for their employees and lower the obstacles for individuals to save for their retirement. Secure 2.0 builds on the Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement (SECURE) Act originally established in 2019. The Secure 2.0 Act had 92 provisions, so we will be focusing on just a few that have become active in 2024 and that relate to company-sponsored retirement plans.

First, we will discuss Roth features that have changed as of January 1, 2024. Individuals with designated Roth money in their company-sponsored retirement plan have, in the past, been subject to the required minimum distribution (RMD) rules, unlike in a Roth IRA where the RMD rules do not apply. The passing of Secure 2.0 has changed the requirement for participants designated Roth money in retirement plans to coincide with the RMD rules of Roth IRAs and no longer requires those balances to be considered in the RMD calculation.

Other Roth requirements that are changing in Secure 2.0 are the catch-up contribution provisions for those age 50 and older and earning over \$145,000 in compensation for the previous year. Those individuals will be required to designate their catch-up portion as Roth, no longer allowing them the tax deduction of that portion contributed to the plan. Originally this provision would have been effective in 2024, however the IRS announced an administrative delay on this provision which now won't begin until the 2026 plan year to give companies more time to amend their plans if needed to add the Roth option.

Other Secure 2.0 requirements becoming active in 2024 are provisions

that make it easier for participants to take a pre-retirement distribution (prior to age 59 ½) without penalty if needed. Under this provision, participants can take a \$1,000 maximum once per year for emergencies. Self-certification of the emergency is allowed, and the distribution is repayment eligible within 3 years. This provision would not allow additional distributions during the repayment period unless the original amount is repaid in full. Victims of domestic violence can take up to \$10,000 or 50% of their vested amount and can also self-certify.

In addition to the participant distributions, companies can set up an optional plan provision that would allow up to 3% or \$2,500 contribution, whichever is less, to be designated as an emergency savings account. Contributions to these accounts are treated as Roth and held in cash and made available to participants as needed.

Beginning in 2024, companies have the flexibility to utilize any matching contributions for their participants who make student loan payments. This gives the employee the benefit of continuing payments on their student loans, while still saving for retirement.

If you are a company plan sponsor of a retirement plan it is beneficial for you to be in contact with your service providers to ensure you are compliant with these and the other provisions for 2024 and those that will be implemented in the future. 🌱

Haley Hitchman, AIF®, CPFA® is a Financial Advisor with locally-owned Hastie Financial Group and can be contacted at haley.hitchman@hastiefg.com

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NEW CHAMBER BOARD MEMBERS

MEET CHAMBER BOARD MEMBER

CLEMENT MILLER

Clement Miller is the Chief Operating Officer at Salinas Valley Health where he started as the Perioperative Services Director in 2015 following a 20 year nursing career. Clement's prior healthcare experience spanned roles from bedside care to leadership and executive responsibilities and he attributes his professional success to his family's support, educational background, and desire to provide the highest level of care for his patients, staff and community.



Mr. Miller completed his nursing degree at Pacific Union College in Angwin, California and a Masters Degree in Nursing with an emphasis in Healthcare Systems Management from Drexel University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Clement and his wife Jamie are Central Valley natives who recently celebrated 26 years of marriage and have 3 amazing children, Carmen, Sydney and Nicholas.

In addition to Clement's career with Salinas Valley Health and involvement with the SVCC Board of Directors, Clement sits on the boards of the Rancho Cielo Youth Campus and Black Leaders and Allies Collaborative as well as being a member of the Monterey Bay Leukemia and Lymphoma Society Visionary of the Year Leadership Team.

MEET CHAMBER BOARD MEMBER

TIFFANY FOURNIER

Tiffany Fournier is the Director of Business Development & Community Relations at SlingShot Connections, a locally based certified woman-owned staffing solutions company. As an executive in the organization, she is accountable for revenue, profit, and client satisfaction.



Tiffany has 10+ years of HR management, recruiting, and business development experience. She has built a solid reputation developing innovative strategies, creating strong talent pipelines, and building cohesive, impactful teams. Throughout her career, she has assisted hundreds of people with resume creation, interview planning and preparation.

A Bay Area native enthusiastic about supporting her local community, Tiffany is involved with several non-profit organizations including Central Coast Human Resource Association (CCHRA), Rotary Club of Evergreen Valley, Breast Cancer Assistance Group Monterey County & San Benito County. As a survivor, supporting women with breast cancer drives her passion to succeed in business, and in life.

Tiffany was named Volunteer of the Year 2019/2020 by the Silicon Valley Central Chamber of Commerce. The annual Chamber award recognizes individuals and businesses who have performed above and beyond the call of duty and who have contributed to furthering the mission of the Silicon Valley Central Chamber of Commerce. Tiffany is the current Chair for the Women in Business Leadership Group.

When Tiffany isn't visiting clients or attending local networking events, she enjoys hiking with family and friends, wine tasting and listening to music.



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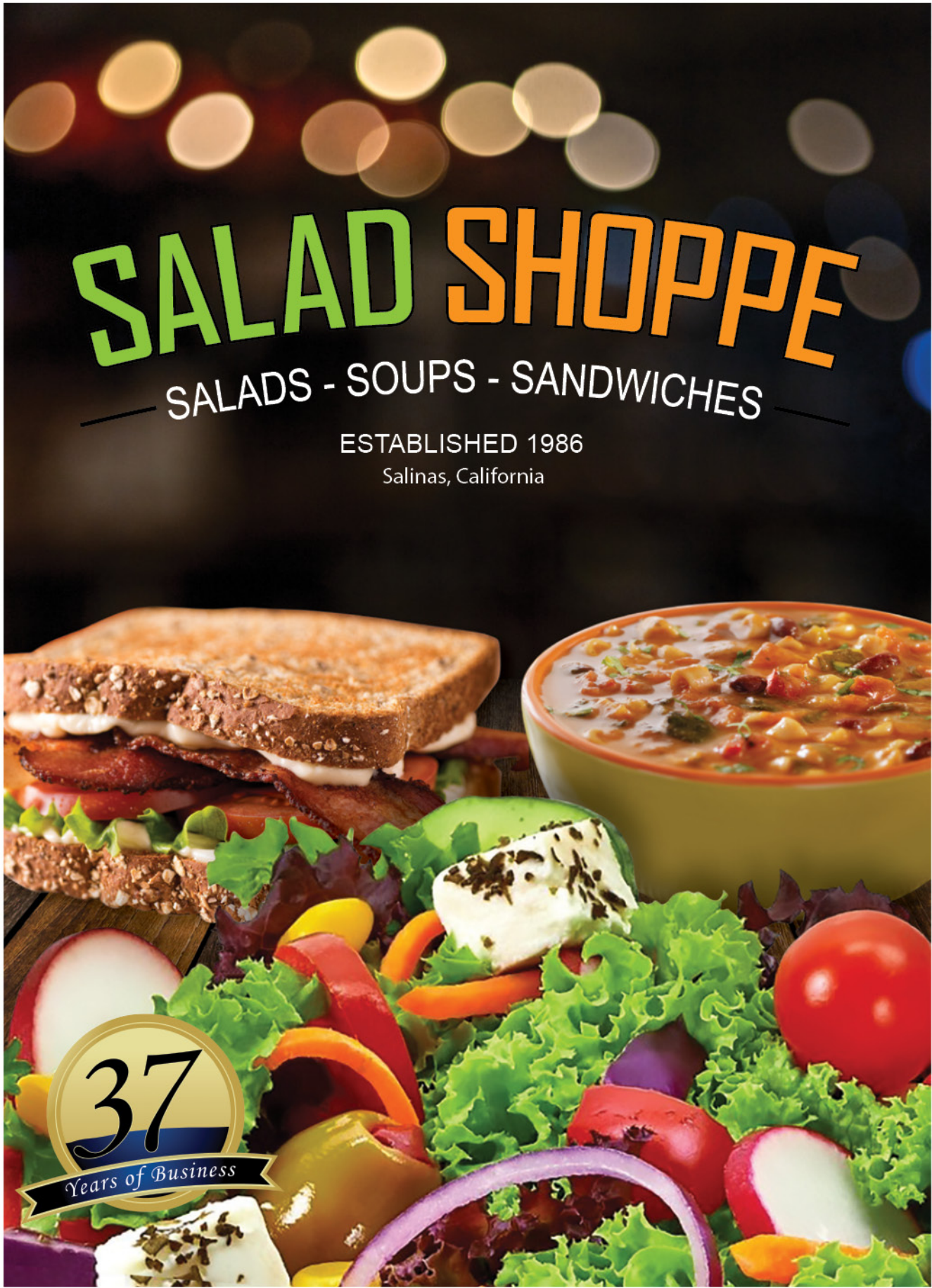
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37
Years of Business

The main image features a collage of food items. At the top, the business name 'SALAD SHOPPE' is written in large, stylized letters, with 'SALAD' in green and 'SHOPPE' in orange. Below it, the menu categories 'SALADS - SOUPS - SANDWICHES' are listed in white. Further down, it says 'ESTABLISHED 1986' and 'Salinas, California'. The bottom half of the image shows a sandwich on whole-grain bread, a bowl of soup, and a large salad with lettuce, tomatoes, onions, and cheese. A circular badge in the bottom left corner of the food collage reads '37 Years of Business'.



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RIBBON CUTTINGS & CHAMBER EVENTS



Monterey County Fair Heritage Foundation Groundbreaking Ceremony

The Monterey County Fair Heritage Foundation officially broke ground on the next chapter in their facility planning. They announced the generous donors who are making the barn a reality and shared exciting details of their capital campaign, which will help bring more projects to life.

Northridge Mall and Chamber Mixer

An incredible evening of connections as guests met the new Northridge Mall team, networked, and learned about exciting plans the mall has for new store hours, leasing opportunities, and enhanced shopping experiences for our community.



SVCC Holiday Reception

The Board celebrated 2023 achievements and aspired to a vibrant 2024 at the Holiday Reception generously sponsored by Chevron. They bid farewell to board members Bill Hastie, Andrea Bailey, Kristy Santiago, and Rodney Meeks, expressing gratitude; and to outgoing Salinas Valley Business Journal Editor, Toulia Hubbard. A warm welcome extended to new President & CEO, Karin Moss, and new board members Tiffany Fournier and Clement Miller.

ALBA Celebrates Two Decades of Cultivating Success: A 20-Year Anniversary Milestone

ALBA hosted a press conference and ribbon cutting with the Salinas Chamber on National Soil Day to mark ALBA's 20 years of cultivating growth, making an impact, and fostering a commitment to sustainable agriculture. They also unveiled their 20-year journey impact report.



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831-751-7725 / Willa@SalinasChamber.com

73rd Annual Children's Shopping Tour Spreading Smiles: A Triumph in Giving

by Chamber Staff

The Salinas Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation proudly hosted the 72nd Annual Children's Shopping Tour on December 9th at Northridge Mall. This cherished event, established decades ago by the Salinas Jaycees, brought together 400 children in 1st through 4th grades for a memorable shopping experience aimed at providing much-needed winter and school clothes.

The success of the Children's Shopping Tour relies on the collaboration of school districts and teachers who identify the neediest children in our community. The event also owes its success to the dedication of hundreds of volunteers and chaperones who showed up to ensure the children had an amazing shopping experience.

"It was a busy few months getting ready for the event! It was amazing to see the incredible turnout of volunteers, and the unwavering support from our sponsors that made it a wonderful experience for the children. As a foundation board member, I am proud to be a part of an organization that continues to make a positive difference in the lives of our local children. After volunteering for the last few years, I can't wait to do it again next year!" said Salinas Foundation Board Member Greg Hamer.

A huge THANK YOU goes to the Children's Shopping Tour committee members: Cynthia Martinez, Evette Selva-Kirby, George Gonzales, Greg Hamer, Cristal Hamer, Armando Soria, Miguel Santamaria, Dexter Farm, David Poulin, Jr., Amy Salmina, Jose Barajas and Jennifer Russell. We also greatly appreciate the Salinas Valley Chamber staff who stepped up and did an incredible job helping to coordinate the event: Willa Doroy, Gabriel Lopez, Jasmine Bhardwaj, Bryan Cabello, Cesar Chavez, and Karin Moss. We also couldn't have done it without the cooperation of Northridge Mall and their marketing manager, Celia Garcia.

Thanks also to our Northridge Mall shopping Partners: JC Penney, Macy's, A Children's Place, Journeys and Old Navy.

The Salinas Chamber Foundation extends its heartfelt gratitude to the sponsors whose generosity made this event a reality. Their support underscores the community's commitment to ensuring that every child has the opportunity to enjoy the holiday season.

The Foundation extends its heartfelt gratitude to the



Clockwise from top: The kids had a great time picking out new clothes! Long-time volunteer Dexter Farm hams it up with Elf! A chaperone helps a child with her selections; High School students did a fantastic job at the tag-cutting table!



CHILDREN'S SHOPPING TOUR - see page 14

CHILDREN'S SHOPPING TOUR - from page 13



Left top: CST Committee Members Armando Soria, George Gonzales and Miguel Santamaria; Left bottom: Chamber staff member, Bryan Cabello with his new friends; Below: Shopping thanks to incredible donors. Right: Santa came by to surprise the kids!



the generous community members who also donated to make the Children's Shopping Tour a success. Their commitment to supporting our local kids exemplifies the spirit of kindness that defines Salinas. They are Chris Steinbruner, Mark Kennedy, Marylu and David Mesa, Marilyn Quadros, Chuck Des Roches, Linda Heffner, Dean and Kristin Callender, Steve McShane, Carol Dolleni, Robert Kasavan, Brad and Laurie Martin, Ruby Salazar, Maria Cabrera and Angelica Prado.

As the 72nd Children's Shopping Tour comes to a close, the Foundation is already looking forward to next year, anticipating

even greater community participation and impact. We remain dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of local children and are thankful for the continued support of the community, sponsors, volunteers, and partners.

Presenting sponsors: Alco Water, Chevron, Harden Foundation and Northridge Mall

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<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic/Presenter(s)</u>
8:45am – 9:00am	General Session <i>Welcome and Conference Overview!</i> <i>Melissa Irwin, SPHR, PHRca, SHRM-SCP, TPO Senior Consultant/Training Specialist</i>
9:00am – 10:30am	Littler Employment Update <i>Keeping on the Path to Legal Compliance!</i> <i>Marlene Muraco, Esq., Littler Shareholder & Richard Leasia, Esq., Littler Shareholder</i>
10:45am – 11:45am	HR/Legal Q&A <i>Balancing Both Legal & Leadership!</i> <i>Marlene Muraco, Esq., Littler Shareholder & Melissa Irwin, SPHR, PHRca, SHRM-SCP, TPO Senior Consultant/Training Specialist</i>
1:00pm – 2:00pm	Today's Talent Shortage... <i>Let's Plan to Win!</i> <i>Michaëlle Stanford, PHRca, M.A., Senior Consultant/HR Strategy & Training Specialist</i>
2:15am – 3:15pm	Are Personality Clashes on the Rise... <i>Or Is It Your Imagination?</i> <i>Michaëlle Stanford, PHRca, M.A., Senior Consultant/HR Strategy & Training Specialist</i>

REGISTRATION QUESTIONS?

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The Threat of Flooding Continues

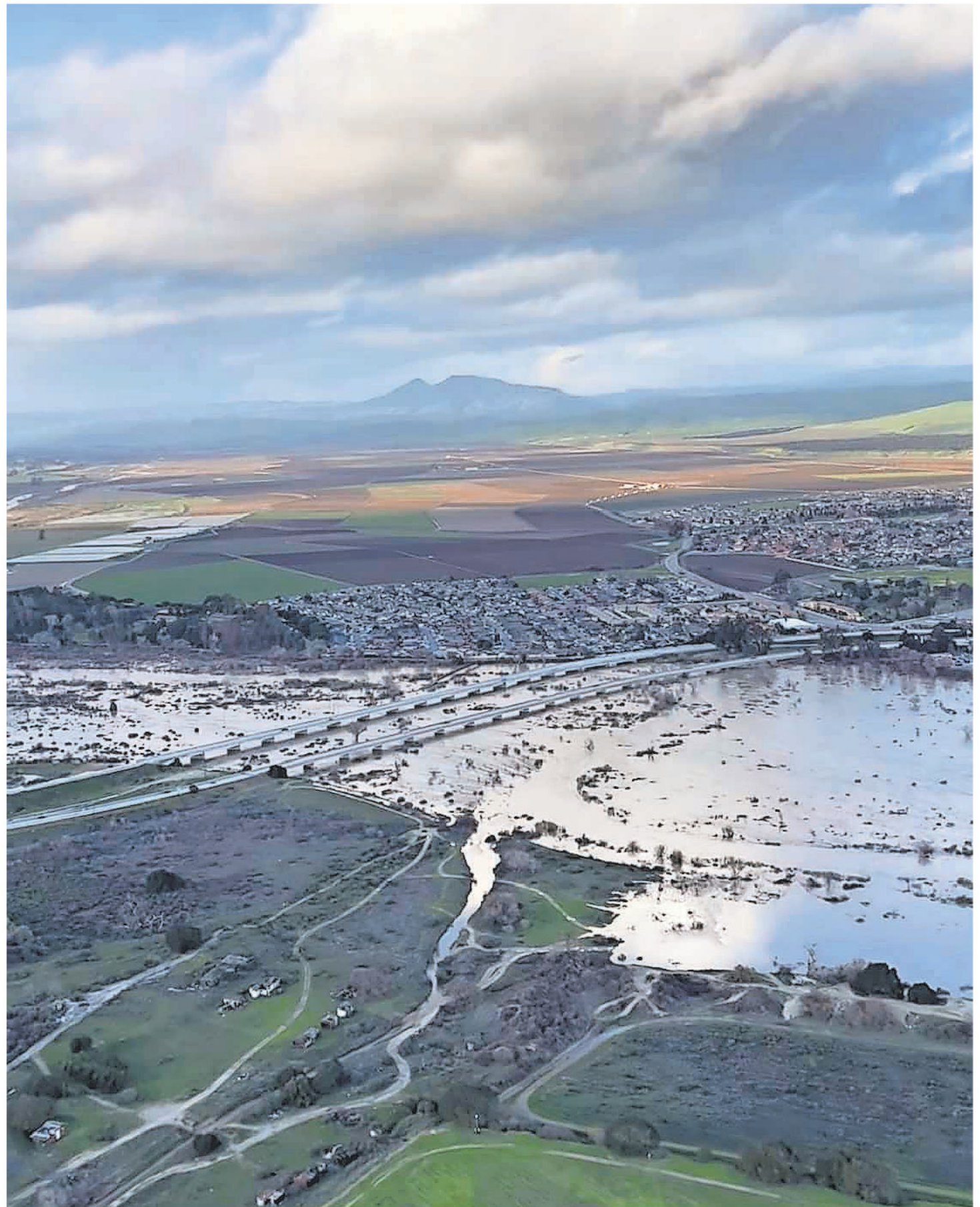
by Monterey County Farm Bureau

During the atmospheric rivers that hit California in January and March of 2023, Monterey County farmland encountered extensive flooding that had not been experienced since 1995. The flood patterns were somewhat similar when compared, even though the actual rainfall amount was nearly 2/3 less than what fell in March 1995.

The damage was extensive; over 20,000 acres of cropland, rangeland, and vineyards went under water, sometimes for weeks before waters could recede off the land and back into the river channel. Damage estimates to crops and agricultural infrastructure exceeded \$600 million, and another \$400 million was spent cleaning up debris, reshaping farmland, rebuilding levees, and replacing damaged infrastructure and buildings. Overall, an impact of over \$1 billion without any meaningful state or federal rescue aid.

Our County suffered over \$50 million in damages due to bridge washouts, roadway flooding, and drainage culverts needing replacement. Highway 101, our main arterial roadway through the County, was flooded and caused roadway damage and traffic nightmares. And our local municipalities suffered damage to their water reclamation systems that provide critical water quality operations for our communities.

What caused all this damage is a diminished flow capacity of the Salinas River after decades of limited maintenance of sediment, sandbars, vegetation, and levee integrity. After the 1995 flood event, landowners were given permission to complete substantial maintenance work in the channel



FLOODING - see page 17

FLOODING - from page 16

to improve capacity flow and direct water away from vulnerable levee systems; this avoided a repeat of the flooding event when 1998 brought another substantial rainfall to our river system. Channel maintenance was proven to be effective in removing most of the flooding risk to farmland and vineyards, as well as protecting vital public infrastructure.

In the successive decades, multiple state and federal agencies have curtailed permit scope for river channel work in the Salinas River watershed region. This has caused an excess of native and non-native vegetation to gain control of the river channel, diverting water flow away from the main flow channel and into secondary channels that may not have existed previously. Additionally, the scouring of the river channel for sediment has been diminished due in part to the excessive vegetation and lack of maintenance in the main flow channel.

Part of the complexity of permitting work in the river channel is that the Salinas River is privately owned and is not a water of the state or federal government. Multiple landowners need to participate in the expensive permitting process each year to obtain permission to work on their own land to protect their farms adjacent to the river channel.

After the winter flooding events, Monterey County Farm Bureau on behalf of the landowners, farm operations, vineyards, and ranches along the river channel, approached all agencies with jurisdiction over the Salinas River watershed. We hoped an open and collaborative process would bring the multiple agency objectives congruent to allow for more concerted work to improve the river channel capacity flow, eliminate the non-native vegetation creating water dams, and remove significant amounts of sediment and sandbars in the main flow channel that cause diversion into secondary channels.

There was some initial recognition by the multiple agencies involved that

the channel and levee systems were inadequate but permitting restrictions stood in the way; mainly, access to do work in the low flow channel was prohibited in all permits.

Then, Governor Newsom issued an executive order that allowed state agencies more flexibility for flood mitigation work in those rivers that experienced catastrophic flooding. This helped somewhat ease the permitting restrictions by state agencies, but not the federal agencies. We asked those federal agencies to match the Governor's executive order strategy and were turned down flatly; the existing permits would stay in place, prohibiting work in the most critical part of the river channel for flow capacity.

If federal permits for channel work were to be expanded, a new river survey was needed, hydrologic analysis of flow capacity had to be studied, and each individual parcel (ownership) of the river channel would need to provide detailed work plans and environmental impacts to the river channel. Clearly, this would take years to complete and with a predicted El Niño event coming this winter, not in time to save our farm, ranch, and vineyard lands from further flood risk and exposure.

This all demonstrates that government agency objectives come first before protecting vital food production from flood exposure, and that our public infrastructure remains at risk simply because the river channel cannot be maintained for proper flow capacity.

We are certainly not advocating for environmental destruction of our river channel to improve flow capacity; indeed, our work calls for enhancing the channel for fish passage, native habitat, and a reasonable balance between flood mitigation and a healthy river system. Landowners and farm operations are willing to pay for this maintenance work, not impacting any public dollars or budgets.

Too bad the agencies involved cannot see the bigger picture and would rather mandate that flood recovery prevails over prevention efforts. 🌱

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Did You Know?

During the month December, local farm fields will not be producing lettuce but not for the reason you may think! In order to break the cycles of pests and diseases, mainly in the soils, all farmers agree to not grow lettuce for most of December. Fields will sit idle, allowing the soil to rest and absorb moisture from precipitation; come spring, when new crops are planted, there will be less exposure to diseases and pests that impact lettuce quality and yields.

During the winter months, lettuce is grown in southeast California and southwestern Arizona, where the climate is favorable for cooler season production. Lettuce production will resume in the Salinas Valley in early spring 2024.



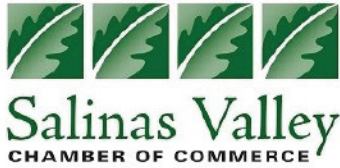
Support our Chamber Members

Thank you, to our January renewing Members. Please help keep the Salinas Valley strong by doing business with companies that support the Chamber.

Member Name	Member Since	Member Name	Member Since
The Californian	1922	Commercial Services Company -	1988
Struve & Laporte Funeral Home	1927	Key & Young, INC	
Timmins & Sorensen CPAs	1954	Kirkorian Enterprise, LLC, dba, -	1988
McGilloway, Ray, Brown, & Kaufman	1956	Kirkwood Plaza	
JM Electric	1958	Green Rubber—Kennedy Ag, Inc.	1991
Granite Construction Company Inc	1959	Garden of Memories Memorial Park	1992
Andrews Blueprint	1962	Round Table Pizza—North Salinas	1993
Scarr Moving & Storage, Inc.	1962	Vilmorin—Mikado USA, Inc.	1993
Star Market	1963	Axiom Engineers	1995
Pan American Insurance Services	1968	Belli Architectural Group Inc	1995
Brandon & Tibbs Accountants	1970	L. Nielsen Enterprises, Inc.	1998
Matsui Nursery	1972	Palma School	1998
Chicago Title Company	1974	Triangle Farms, Inc.	1998
Vegetable Growers Supply Company	1974	Tovar Strategies, INC.—DBA TMD	1999
Central Coast Builders Association	1976	TriCord Tradeshow Services	1999
Mechanics Bank—Salinas Financial-	1983	Backus Property Management Inc	2000
Service Center		Patane Gumberg Avila, LLP	2000
Central Coast Federal Credit Union	1984	Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority-	2000
Meals On Wheels of the Salinas Valley	1986	DBA Salinas Valley Recycles	
West Coast Self-Storage Salinas	1987		

A Special Thanks to Our Visionary and Stakeholder Members





Support our Chamber Members

Thank you, to our January renewing Members. Please help keep the Salinas Valley strong by doing business with companies that support the Chamber.

Member Name	Member Since	Member Name	Member Since
Monterey Plaza Hotel and Spa	2002	Grand Canyon Education	2018
Salinas Mattress Company	2004	Monterey County Pops!	2018
Foundation for Monterey County— Free Libraries	2006	AgroThrive Inc	2019
Pizza Factory / Amorim - Enterprises Inc	2006	Contreras Financial	2020
Coastal Kids Home Care	2007	Pacific Valley Bank	2021
EMC Planning Group Inc.	2009	TTC Bookkeeping & Tax Preparation	2021
Hartnell College Foundation	2009	10-8 Uniforms, LLC	2022
International Paper	2010	Compass Church	2022
York School	2011	La Cantina Brewing Co.	2022
Chilton and House Attorneys	2012	Max Fit Meals and Nutrition	2022
Edward Jones Investments	2013	Monterey Fish Company	2022
Chevron	2014	Scale Microgrid Solutions	2022
Geisler3	2014	Splash Car Wash	2022
ACTS—Alliance Career- Training Solutions	2015	Treasure Hunt furniture Gallery	2022
American Takii Inc	2015	Working Solutions CDFI	2022
ProSource Wholesale Floorcoverings	2016	Blue Adobe Mortgage	2023
The YWCA Monterey County	2017	Leal's Bakery	2023
Artistic HangUps	2018	Max's Helping Paws Foundation	2023
Black Bear Diner—Salinas	2018	Monterey County Historical Society	2023
		Organicgirl	2023
		Platinum Auto Glass LLC	2023
		Salad Shoppe	2023
		The Monterey Symphony	2023

A Special Thanks to Our Visionary and Stakeholder Members





Coastal Roots Hospitality Launches Heartfelt Fundraising Campaign to Support Task Force Antal

Demonstrating their unwavering commitment to community welfare, Coastal Roots Hospitality (CRH), the proud owners of renowned establishments including Rio Grill, Tarpys, Montrio, and Coastal Roots Events & Catering has initiated a fundraising plan to generate up to \$50,000 in support of the humanitarian organization Task Force Antal. Under the stewardship of co-owners Ken and Mona Donkersloot, CRH has donated \$25,000 as a challenge to match all public donations, up to \$25,000, until the culmination of 2023. Task Force Antal (TFA), a non-profit volunteer organization, specializes in crisis management and evacuation support for U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents, allies, and their families, primarily focusing on Afghanistan. In 2021, under a similar initiative over \$51,000 was raised for TFA. In the spirit of community engagement, CRH has been a steadfast supporter of local nonprofits through initiatives like the Pick It Up-Pay It Forward program. This program, which has been operational since 2020, donates 10 percent of all proceeds from carry-out orders from CRH's three restaurants to local charities. During the pandemic's peak, CRH collaborated with various local charities, contributing over \$300,000 to support crucial community initiatives.

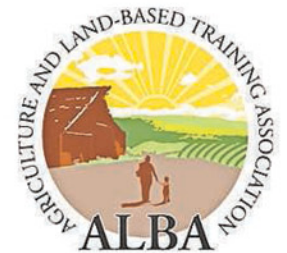


ALBA Celebrates Two Decades of Cultivating Success: A 20-Year Anniversary Milestone

ALBA, a trailblazing nonprofit dedicated to fostering organic farming among limited-resource farmers, proudly marks its 20th year of empowering aspiring agricultural entrepreneurs in the Salinas Valley, releasing a report Oct. 18 showcasing its accomplishments.

Impact Assessment Report Highlights:

- Overall, 77 of 181 alumni surveyed are now operating their own farm business, which is 43% of those surveyed.
- Mexican immigrants comprised 58% of respondents, of whom 56% are currently operating a farm business. At 16 acres, they have a larger average farm size than other demographic groups, and more than 60% rely on farming for the majority of household income.
- U.S. born Latinos were the only other group that came close, with 37% operating farms of an average of 12 acres.
- Other respondent groups (e.g. Whites, and immigrants from 10 other countries) had both a lower farm ownership rate (17%) and average farm size (3 acres).
- Despite farming on relatively small plots, nearly 70% of independent Latino-owned farms surveyed are in the top quartile of American farms in terms of sales, and nearly 20% are in the top decile.
- Among those who returned to the workforce, nearly 60% have jobs strongly related to organic farming and food.



Housing Matters Named Bank of America's 2023 Neighborhood Champion

Bank of America announced Housing Matters as the 2023 Neighborhood Champion® awardee for their work advancing economic mobility and building up underserved neighborhoods in Santa Cruz County. Through a multi-year \$50,000 grant and leadership training for its executive director and an emerging leader within its organization, Housing Matters' programs and services will help more people experiencing homelessness gain stability. The program is part of the bank's Neighborhood Builders program, one of the largest philanthropic investments into nonprofit leadership development in the nation, with leadership training delivered by experts in the nonprofit sector on topics like human capital management, increasing financial sustainability, and storytelling. The invitation-only program is highly competitive, and honorees are selected by a committee comprised of community leaders and past awardees. Santa Cruz County has seen a 21.5 percent drop in the homeless population - the lowest in more than a decade - Santa Cruz continues to have the most homeless people in California per capita. Helping to address this ongoing issue, Housing Matters began 37 years ago and today is the largest provider of services to those experiencing homelessness in Santa Cruz County, hosting 175 individuals on any given night in one of three emergency shelters, and another 350 individuals county-wide. It provides comprehensive case management at its shelters as well as to 350 individuals around Santa Cruz County, offering emergency shelter, day services such as showers and dental care, and personal coaching. They will use the Neighborhood Champion grant to expand its community engagement efforts. "Housing Matters is grateful to be recognized by Bank of America as a Neighborhood Champion," said Mer Stafford, chief impact officer for Housing Matters. "This generous gift will help move our community engagement efforts forward in Santa Cruz County to dispel myths and educate the public about solutions to homelessness - education is the key to growing a whole new generation of Neighborhood Champions!" "Nonprofits are vital to solving social challenges, improving communities, and promoting economic advancement," said Jennifer Dacquisto, president, Bank of America Monterey Bay. "Providing Housing Matters with flexible funding and leadership training not only positions them for sustainable, long-term success but demonstrates our commitment to creating real change in the places where we live and work."



Salinas Valley Health and Anthem Blue Cross Reach New Contract Agreement

Salinas Valley Health and Anthem Blue Cross (Anthem) announced today that they have successfully reached agreement on a new contract that focuses on new care delivery models designed to lower costs and increase value for Anthem members in Monterey County. The new contract provides those in Monterey County insured by Anthem, the reassurance, comfort and convenience of in-network access to Salinas Valley Health, consisting of the Hospital, Salinas Valley Medical Clinics, Taylor Farms Family Health & Wellness Center and Doctors on Duty Medical Group. In addition to supporting access to valuable patient care options, the new contract aligns reimbursement rates with improved health outcomes and quality-of-care indicators, reflecting Salinas Valley Health's ongoing commitment to delivering high-quality care.





Alliance on Aging Seeking Volunteers for Its Tax Counseling Service for Seniors

Do you have a nose for numbers and a head for the tax code? Then the Alliance on Aging has position for you as a tax volunteer to help seniors navigate their taxes in 2024. The Alliance on Aging is seeking Monterey County residents to volunteer for the 2024 Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) program. Each year the Alliance partners with the IRS and the California Franchise Tax Board in providing free assistance to hundreds of Monterey County seniors in the preparation of their Federal and State income tax returns. AOA tax volunteers have prepared more than 1,800 tax returns amounting to more than \$1.14 million in refunds.

If interested:

- Tax preparation experience is required, however additional training will be provided by AOA, the IRS and the California Franchise Tax Board
- Sites and schedules are available throughout Monterey County
- Volunteer weekdays from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

For information, contact Rita Hill, TCE Program Coordinator at rhill@allianceonaging.org or call (831) 655-4242.



Salinas Valley Health Earns Ninth Consecutive 'A' Hospital Safety Grade

Salinas Valley Health is demonstrating a constant focus on patient and hospital safety earning its ninth consecutive "A" letter grade from a leading independent, third-party watchdog organization. The Leapfrog Group, a national nonprofit sets standard for excellence in patient care. Leapfrog assigns grades to general hospitals across the county on a scale from "A" to "F" based on over 30 national performance measures. "We have built a reputation of excellence," says Pete Delgado, president/CEO of Salinas Valley Health. "The cornerstone of the community's high regard for our quality services is our attention to detail when it comes to patient safety. Safety is the strongest foundation for healthcare delivery and is pivotal to the e additional quality and patient care success we achieve on a national level. I'm proud of our team for their consistent and unwavering commitment to safety." The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade is the only hospital ratings program exclusively based on hospital prevention of medical errors, infections, and injuries. The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade is peer-reviewed, fully transparent, and free to the public. Grades are updated twice annually in the fall and spring. "Earning an 'A' Grade means Salinas Valley Health made a true commitment to put patients first," said Leah Binder, resident and CEO of The Leapfrog Group. "We congratulate the leadership, Board, clinicians, staff and volunteers that all had a role to play in this achievement." To see details of Salinas Valley Health's full grade and to access patient tips for staying safe in the hospital, visit HospitalSafetyGrade.org. Salinas Valley Health offers a list of major awards and recognition at SalinasValleyHealth.com/Awards.



WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca Cars & Coffee Gives in 2023 to Local Charities

In December, WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca marked the culmination of its Cars & Coffee season with a festive twist, transforming the event into a fundraiser and toy drive for CASA of Monterey County. Over 400 cars rolled in filled with holiday spirit, resulting in an impressive \$2,500 in donations, and three carloads of donated toys to CASA, adding a touch of magic to the season for children in need. Coastal Roots Hospitality warmed visitors with complimentary hot coffee and cocoa, while also offering tamales for sale. Sabor Kustoms took the spotlight as the featured marque, showcasing stunning custom vehicles primarily from the '50s and '60s, in vibrant candy colors. It was the fourth and final event of the 2023 season and garnered overwhelming community support. Each Cars & Coffee gathering has become not only a celebration of automotive passion but also a platform for giving back to the community. This season's events transformed into fundraising activities, raising over \$10,000 for local causes including the SPCA and a relief fund for the community of Pajaro, highlighting the track's commitment to making a positive impact locally. Anthony Jimenez from Monterey Cars & Coffee played a crucial role this year, rallying volunteers to help park and direct traffic at each of the track's four events. WeatherTech Raceway staff is also grateful for the help of their incredible sponsors Coastal Roots, Good Boy Bob Coffee, Monterey Touring Vehicles, Tanimura & Antle, and My Chevrolet who helped to make the Cars & Coffee events possible and often came out in support for each cause.



COMMUTER RAIL - from page 7

2023, the Salinas Layover Facility is in final design, and TAMC has acquired the property for it. Package 3 of 3 for Phase 1 - improvements at the Gilroy station and on the track between Salinas and Gilroy - is also in final design.

Meanwhile, TAMC and numerous agency partners are obtaining funding and making plans for the Monterey County Rail Extension Project Phase 2: development of a Pajaro/Watsonville Multimodal Transit Hub. This will be the connection point for rail commuters on a Santa Cruz Branch light rail line to go to Salinas and then to the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond. In April 2023, TAMC received a state grant to complete environmental review for this station. It's an opportunity to bring hope to the beleaguered unincorporated Monterey County community of Pajaro.

Phase 3 of the Monterey County Rail Extension Project will be a multi-modal station in Castroville to serve as the connection point for rail commuters from the Monterey Peninsula. Far in the future is the dream of a Monterey Branch light rail line that would connect this station with stations on the Monterey Peninsula.

If This Plan Works, What Will Happen?

Once rail commuters from Monterey County get to Gilroy, they can continue on the Caltrain commuter rail all the way to San Francisco. Along the way they can transfer to the Capitol Corridor line, Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), Amtrak, and a future Valley Link to Northern San Joaquin County. A California High-Speed Rail station is planned at the Gilroy train station.

After all of this government money is spent to create these train networks, will people ride them? How will new public transportation connections affect economic development, urban revitalization, housing availability, and traffic congestion in Monterey County?

Some Monterey County residents are skeptical and cynical about the benefits of the project in relation to the costs to taxpayers. Others are wary of how their communities would change if the commuter rail actually becomes popular.

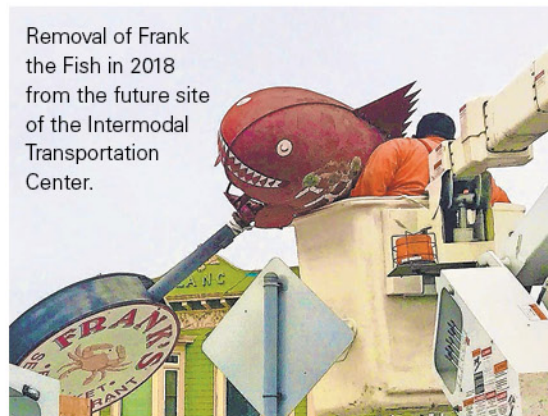
Changes bring challenges; however, your Chamber of Commerce believes the Monterey County Rail Extension Project will help advance the Chamber's official vision of "a thriving, welcoming Salinas Valley where people, families and businesses succeed via economic growth and opportunity."



Salinas Train Station today.

Multi-story density housing will likely sprout up around the three new train stations in Salinas, Pajaro, and Castroville. Agriculture-related technology in Salinas may get a boost with a commuter rail connection to Silicon Valley. New jobs and new urban housing supply may give young people who grew up in Monterey County an incentive to stay in Monterey County. Some local residents may even choose to forgo personal vehicle ownership and exclusively use public transportation, thus reducing traffic congestion and surface parking demands.

The Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce appreciates the diligence and persistence of the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) and its partners as it advances the Monterey County Rail Extension Project. 🌱



Removal of Frank the Fish in 2018 from the future site of the Intermodal Transportation Center.

GROUNDBREAKING NOTICE



SPEAKERS:

ASSEMBLYMEMBER
ANNA CABALLERO

MONTEREY COUNTY
SUPERVISOR
TAMC BOARD CHAIR
JOHN PHILLIPS

SALINAS COUNCILMEMBER
TAMC RAIL POLICY CHAIR
KIMBLEY CRAIG

SOCIA PRESIDENT
CATHERINE
KOBRIŃSKY EVANS

TAMC
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
DEBBIE HALE

CALIFORNIA STATE
TRANSPORTATION AGENCY
SECRETARY
BRIAN ANNIS (INVITED)

THURSDAY, AUGUST 9, 2018
SALINAS RAIL EXTENSION PROJECT
11:00 A.M. GROUND BREAKING CEREMONY

Salinas Train Station, 18 Station Place, Salinas

The Transportation Agency for Monterey County invites you to join community members, elected officials, and business leaders to commemorate the groundbreaking of this project to bring more passenger rail service to connect Monterey County and the San Francisco Bay Area.

Please send your RSVP for the ceremony to
maria@tamcmonterey.org.



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Maisonlaw.com/salinas, Bridget@maisonlaw.com, 866-383-8922



Salinas Valley Speech Pathology

I'm Eileen Domalaog. I'm a medical Speech Pathologist and the owner of Salinas Valley Speech Pathology. I've been a Speech Pathologist for 7 years and started my private practice 2 years ago. I'm a native of Salinas and the Salinas Valley and have a passion to serve all members of this community. This community deserves access to the best medical care and I am dedicated to providing the most advanced treatment for our patients. At Salinas Valley Speech Pathology we specialize in the treatment of adults with speech, cognitive, language, swallowing, and voice impairments. Our mission is to rehabilitate individuals to their fullest potential, especially those who have had strokes, have Parkinson's, or Head and Neck Cancer.

Svspeechpathology.com, Eileendomalaog@svspeechpathology.com, 831-998-7554



Rosita's Armory Café & Bar

Established in 1972, Rosita's Armory Café & Bar is the oldest Mexican restaurant in Salinas. The restaurant offers a menu with family Mexican recipes and fresh ingredients, which remind many of their home and origins. Located on 231 Salinas St., come down for a friendly game of Pool and enjoy a drink.

Rositasarmorycafeandbar@gmail.com, 831-424-7039



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CITY MANAGER - from page 1

subordinate City employees, except lawyers and paralegals in the City Attorney's department, who shall be appointed by the City Attorney."

The next level of city law - below the Charter - is the Municipal Code, which consists of laws enacted by the City Council through ordinances. The City of Salinas Municipal Code includes additional requirements for the City Manager.

In the Municipal Code, Section 2-02.03 lists "powers and duties of the City Manager." Section 2-02.01 prohibits the City Council from interfering with administrative matters assigned to the City Manager. It states that "except for the purpose of inquiry, the council and its members shall deal with the administrative service solely through the city manager, and neither the council nor any member thereof shall give orders to any of the subordinates of the city manager."

And Section 2-02.05 declares that "All department directors are appointed by the city manager and hold and serve at the pleasure of the city manager and shall be deemed at-will employees." Throughout the Municipal Code are other references to duties of the City Manager in specific cases.

City Manager is a Tough Job to Keep

As you might guess, a major challenge for a City Manager is working with the Mayor and City Council. There's a natural tension between elected officials who seek to fulfill the demands of their resident constituents and an appointed professional manager who wants to deliver city services to the people in an efficient manner. In addition, the Mayor and City Council have their own goals and ambitions, and so does the City Manager. For a list of recent Salinas City Managers, see Figure 1.

A City Manager with the highest degree of competence, integrity, and humility is unlikely to withstand an elected official or a faction of elected officials who want to usurp the role of administrator while also serving on the governing board. Likewise, elected officials will get frustrated with a City Manager whom they feel is not listening to them or not communicating effectively.

The League of California Cities (an association of cities) has produced material explaining the functions and roles of the City Manager and the ideal relationship of a City Manager to the Mayor and City Council. As stated in one of its white papers, "Unfortunately, there are many forces at work making unity and a team approach difficult for a city council to achieve. This can be especially true in district cities in which individual council members view their district as a first priority."

Survey Questions

Here are the questions that the Mayor and City Council are using as guidance from the public about the ideal City Manager for the City of Salinas.

What experience areas are most important for the next City Manager of Salinas to have? Organize [Rank] the options below beginning with the most important first to the least important last.

Your Rank	Experience Area	Description
<input type="checkbox"/>	Budget / Finance	Government budget processes and management.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Engagement	Connecting with the whole community in multiple ways to increase participation of all demographics and stakeholder groups.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	Practices that are inclusive of all people of various backgrounds that are used to create equitable policies and services for the community and staff.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Economic Development	Allocation of resources in a way that has a positive effect on the level of business activity, employment, and a healthy economy.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Emergency Management / Preparedness	Involvement in managing or preparing to protect life and property during an emergency.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Employee / Labor Relations	Building positive relationships with employees and labor groups.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Environmental Sustainability	Improving quality of life without putting unnecessary strain on the environment.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Housing / Homelessness	Affordable housing and services for unhoused communities.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovation	Staying informed on current trends within local government to streamline and improve services for the community, including new technology, programs, and services.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Safety	Police and fire services.

What leadership qualities are most important for the next City Manager of Salinas to have? Organize [Rank] the options below beginning with the most important first to the least important last.

Your Rank	Leadership Area	Description
<input type="checkbox"/>	Accountability	Creating a culture of ownership and transparency.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Change Leadership	Ability to proactively approach the need for change, influence and inspire action in others, and adapt during periods of transition and societal change.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Effective Communication & Transparency	Sharing public information and exchanging ideas with clarity and purpose to improve services, engagement, and relationships with the community and staff.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Empathy	Ability to be aware of and sensitive to the experiences and feelings of others.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ethics & Integrity	Being honest and having strong moral principles.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Learning & Development	Creating a culture of organizational learning and growth to improve services and facilitate opportunities for leadership development.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Operational Effectiveness	Using resources (time, people, equipment, and money) to provide quality services through efficient and effective operations.

Your Chamber's Involvement in City Manager Selection

As a preeminent Salinas Valley business organization, your Chamber of Commerce will take

Salinas Municipal Code Section 2-02.03. Powers and duties.

The powers and the duties of the city manager are as follows:

- Administer the day-to-day affairs of the city;
- To employ, discipline, or remove city employees, including department heads, with the exception of the city attorney and the attorneys and paralegals in the city attorney's office;
- To exercise supervision and control over all departments of the city, except the city attorney's office; and
- To advise the city council on the city's budgets, finances, and fiscal condition; and
- To perform such other functions as the city council chooses to authorize by ordinance.

The city manager shall have such administrative authority as is necessary for carrying out the provisions of this article.

opportunities when available to provide important input to the Mayor, the City Council, and the public about the ideal City Manager.

An emphasis on economic development will be a major priority for the Chamber, as business growth and job creation can lead to improvement in many other areas of importance to the community. Housing and public safety will also be important priorities.

Our official vision is "a thriving, welcoming Salinas Valley where people, families and businesses succeed via economic growth and opportunity." Not everyone agrees with this vision, and we seek a City Manager who regards commerce as an asset and an opportunity for the Salinas Valley, rather than a problem that needs to be addressed with onerous new government regulations and higher taxes and fees. 🌱

Figure 1: Recent Salinas City Managers

City Manager	Years of Service	Previous Position	Next Position
Dave Mora	1990-2008	City Manager in Oxnard	Retired.
Artie Fields	2008-2011	Assistant City Manager in West Covina	Became City Manager in Inglewood (retired from that position in 2023).
Ray Corpuz	2011-2020	City Manager in Seaside	Retired.
Steve Carrigan	2021-2023	City Manager in Merced	Applied for and then declined the City Manager position in San Bernardino. City Council then terminated him.



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Leadership Monterey County Develops Local Leaders

by Mitchell Friedman, LMC Facilitator



The pandemic clearly raised the profile of healthcare systems in the County of Monterey, specifically the people and organizations that play major roles in them. This profile remains high even as time marches on. The increasing importance attached to mental health adds to the seemingly never-ending list of challenges faced by nurses, doctors, and healthcare administrators alike.

Meeting the people and learning more about the key organizations involved in the local healthcare industry was the focus of Leadership Monterey County (LMC) 2023's final session. Participants visited Salinas Valley Health (see attached photo) and Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula (CHOMP). Meetings with both medical staff and administrators illuminated the complex web of issues these organizations must tackle as they not only manage current medical, financial, and related challenges, but also plan for future ones in an increasingly complex and uncertain environment. The day culminated with a presentation by Dr. Steven Packer, President and CEO of CHOMP, during which he shed light on the myths and realities of healthcare in the County of Monterey (see attached photo). After the conclusion of the day's



presentations, LMC participants participated in a graduation ceremony held at Tonkin House at CHOMP, which was attended by friends, family, LMC board members, and LMC program sponsors. Jackie Cruz, Vice President, Office of Institutional Advancement, Hartnell College and Executive Director, The Hartnell College Foundation, was the guest speaker (see attached photo).

The LMC program is grateful to Salinas Valley Health for sponsoring the lunch at its recent program, and to CHOMP for sponsoring the reception held in conjunction with the graduation ceremony.

Applications are now being accepted for the 2024 LMC program. To apply, go here. 🌱

AMBASSADOR SPOTLIGHT KEITH CHUA BUSINESS SPECIALIST DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION

Keith Chua earned his Bachelor's in Business Administration in the Philippines before embarking on a journey that led him to the United States.



Fifteen years ago, his journey brought him to Salinas, where he transitioned into the role of Assistant Administrator at a care facility dedicated to serving adults with disabilities. Over eight years in the Adult Residential Facility setting, Keith discovered a deep-seated passion for assisting individuals with disabilities. This realization prompted a shift in his career path, leading him to explore the realm of education.

Venturing into the field of special education, Keith spent five fulfilling years as a long-term substitute teacher. During this time, Keith recognized his calling to advocate for and empower people with disabilities. This revelation paved the way for Keith's transition to the Department of Rehabilitation, where Keith's been contributing to the betterment of lives for almost three years.

In Keith's current role as a Business Specialist, Keith is tasked with establishing connections with local businesses, providing job coaching, and delivering training sessions to businesses and organizations on disability awareness. Witnessing individuals with disabilities gain confidence and secure employment through the support of the Department of Rehabilitation is the most rewarding aspect of his job.

Keith takes pride in knowing that the work he does not only facilitates professional growth but also empowers individuals to achieve their aspirations, knowing that the Department of Rehabilitation stands firmly behind them.



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A Pastor's Perspective on the Art of Failing Forward

by Pastor Todd Anderson

As a pastor, I have often witnessed the transformative power of failure. It is a teacher like no other, shaping us into more resilient, empathetic, and wise individuals. In the world of business, this lesson is especially pertinent. As we enter 2024, I urge you who lead a business and are entrepreneurs, to embrace the art of failure: fail often, fail fast, and fail forward.

Failing often may seem counterintuitive in a culture that prizes success above all else. However, frequent failures indicate taking risks and pushing boundaries, which is essential for innovation and growth. Each failure is a stepping stone, an opportunity to glean insights that only experience can provide. In the scriptures, we are reminded that perseverance through trials builds character. Similarly, the fortitude to continue in the face of failure paves the way for business success.

Failing fast is equally important. In today's fast-paced business environment, agility is key. The quicker you recognize and respond to a failure, the less costly it will be in terms of resources and time. This approach encourages a mindset of constant learning and adaptation. It aligns with the biblical principle of wisdom, which is simply learning from every situation and using that knowledge to make better decisions in the future.

But most importantly, we must learn to fail forward. This means



using failure as a catalyst for progress rather than a setback. When a project or idea fails, it's not just an end—it's the beginning of a new understanding. Failing forward involves analyzing what went wrong, adjusting strategies, and applying these lessons to future endeavors. It's about owning mistakes and maintaining a forward trajectory, even when the path involves unexpected detours.

In 2024, as we continue to navigate uncertainties and challenges. Change your perspective on failure. Don't see it as a stain on our record but as a badge of courage—a sign that you are pushing the limits, daring to innovate, and committed to growth. As leaders in business, our response to failure can inspire and motivate our teams, fostering a culture of resilience and continuous improvement.

My prayer for you this year is that you will embrace failure while not lowering your standards. And that you would raise your resilience. Ask God to help you learn from each misstep and quickly move forward with greater insight and determination. This community needs you. It needs humble, gracious, determined leaders who learn from failure and build better families, businesses, churches, and a community that is a great place to live. Amen.

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NON-PROFIT EVENTS

Alzheimer's Association - Salinas Dementia Family Caregiver Support Group

January 3, 12:30 - 2:00 PM, 1130 San Vicente Avenue, Salinas

Support groups create a safe, confidential, supportive environment or community and a chance for participants to develop informal mutual support and social relationships. They also educate and inform participants about dementia and help participants develop methods and skills to solve problems. Join us for our in-person meeting. You can also call the 24/7 helpline at (800) 272-3900.

SCCIA - 1st Fridays Art Walk

January 5, 5:00 PM – Salinas City Center, Salinas

Every first Friday of the month, numerous downtown establishments extend their operating hours, featuring live music, showcasing local art, hosting book signings, conducting wine tastings, poetry readings, and presenting special promotions. We invite you to join us in celebrating these vibrant cultural and other offerings. Come out and celebrate!

Active Seniors, Inc - Monthly Luncheon

January 11, 11:45AM-1:30PM, 100 Harvest Street, Salinas

\$12 for members and nonmembers. The lunch is prepared by our professional chef, Michael Gaines, and his crew of volunteers. There is always a program following lunch. Lunch is served at noon but come early and have a social time with friends. Please call 831-424-5066, email asi@activeseniors.org, or come in to make a reservation. Our website, activeseniors.org, will have a link to the newsletter where the menu and program are listed.

Notre Dame High School – Crab & Pasta Feed

January 13, 5:30 PM, 455 Palma Drive Norte Dame Gym, Salinas,

Join us for a mouthwatering feast at Notre Dame High School and eat delicious, fresh crab served cold, pasta, salad, bread, and dessert. A bar is available to complement the evening. Select raffles and bid on silent auction and live auction items. You can purchase tickets on our website notredamesalinas.org. Mark your calendars and come hungry! See you there!

Salinas Valley Speech Pathology – Power Over Parkinsons

January 17, 5:00 PM, 450 E. Romie Lane, Salinas SVH Conference Room

Power over Parkinson's is a new resource in Salinas for those with Parkinson's and their families. Each month we will have a speaker who will provide information including the latest research about Parkinson's. The speaker at the January meeting will be Dr John Morgan, MD. He is a neurologist who specializes in movement and has Parkinson's himself. Dr Morgan is a professor at the Medical College of Medicine in Augusta, Georgia, and is the director of the college's Parkinson Foundation Center of Excellence. Join us and empower yourself over Parkinson's! Conference Room the SVH parking structure.

Jacob's Heart Children's Cancer Support Services - Spanish Speaking Parent Support Group

January 23, 6:30 – 8:00 PM, 567 Auto Center Drive, Watsonville

Join a Spanish language support group for parents led by Dr. Sherri Anselmi. When your child has cancer, no one understands your life better than another parent going through the same experience. Connecting with other parents can be one of the best ways to deal with the emotional, physical, and spiritual challenges that can come with a child's cancer diagnosis.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Monterey County 36th Annual Golf for Kids Jim Griggs Tournament

January 29, 8:30 AM – The Dunes Golf Course - 3000 Club Road, Pebble Beach

Founded by Jim Griggs in 1988, and renamed in his memory in 2019, the Golf for Kids tournament has played a vital role in supporting the success of thousands of youth in Monterey County. You are invited to take advantage of this great tradition – it is an excellent opportunity to host clients, colleagues and friends for a world-class round of golf, socialize with professional golfers and receive prominent recognition as a sponsor of this prestigious tournament. Your participation provides much-needed scholarship funds for deserving teens through the Davis Love III Family Scholarship Fund, which has awarded to over 70 Club members. These life changing scholarships would not be possible without the generous support and commitment of our sponsors, players, and pros. Please join us in helping children and teens further their education and claim their future.

Alliance on Aging's Trashion Show in King City: Transforming Waste into Innovation

February, 22, 5:30 PM, Salinas Valley Fairgrounds, Orradre Building, King City

Alliance on Aging is thrilled to announce the much-anticipated Trashion Show in King City, a pioneering event to redefine waste through innovation and creativity. Scheduled for February 22nd, 2024, this remarkable exhibition brings together artists, environmentalists, and community members to showcase innovative ways of repurposing and transforming discarded materials. Attendees will witness a dynamic fashion show with ideas born from reimagining waste, all to inspire sustainable practices. The Trashion Show promises a platform for engagement, education, and inspiration, fostering a community-driven approach to waste management and sustainability. For more information or to participate in the Trashion Show, please contact Nicki Pasculli Npasculli@allianceonaging.org.

Rancho Cielo's 14th Annual Culinary Round Up

February 25, 4:00 – 7:30 PM, Two Portola Plaza, Monterey

Our 14th Annual Culinary Round Up will be held on Sunday, February 25, 2024, with more time to taste, sip, and mingle at the Portola Hotel & Spa. This event is an exclusive evening of delicious culinary delights and fabulous wine. It also provides a unique opportunity to meet our Drummond Culinary Academy students and see them in action. The evening has a western flair with a strolling dinner atmosphere. Visit Ranchocieloyc.org/events for sponsorship opportunities and purchasing tickets.

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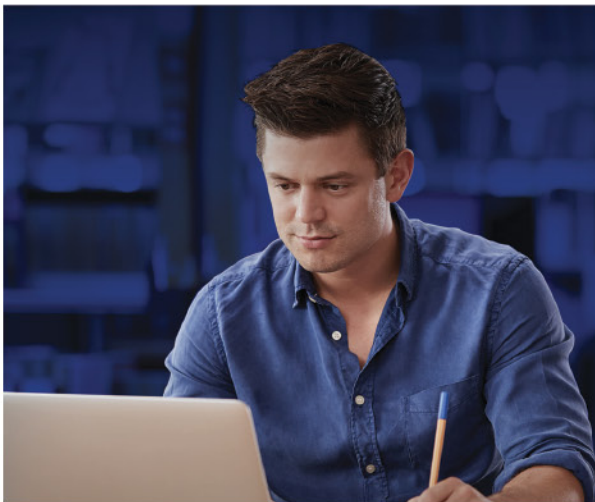
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