



Salinas Valley
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

BUSINESS JOURNAL



Finding the Positive
in Agriculture

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Leadership Monterey County
Develops Local Leaders

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Winner of the Grower-Shipper Foundation's 2024 Agricultural Woman of the Year award, Colby Pereira, was joined by past winners of the award after the luncheon.

2024 Ag Woman of the Year Award-Winner Colby Pereira Gets the Surprise of a Lifetime at Luncheon

By Mac McDonald, Salinas Valley Business Journal

Colby Pereira got the surprise of her life at the recent Ag Against Hunger luncheon, but not because she had just won the prestigious Grower-Shipper Foundation's 2024 Agricultural Woman of the Year award.

Pereira was stunned to find out that a large group of family, friends and business associates had been hiding behind the scenes to surprise her when she was named the recipient of the award.

"I was completely surprised," says Pereira, Chief Operating Officer for Braga Fresh Family Farms in Soledad and Chamber board member.

AG WOMAN OF THE YEAR see page 6

Are Retail Warehouses Our Unplanned But Inevitable Future? Salinas Valley Economic Development, Revisited

By Kevin Dayton, Government Affairs Liaison

The rumor that "Amazon is coming" was a Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce April Fool's Day joke in 2019. It became a substantiated rumor in 2022. Now, in 2024, it's apparently going to be destiny.

On May 9, 2024, local news media confirmed that Amazon had bought a vacant South Salinas land parcel. Construction and operation of a massive retail warehouse will happen at this site.

Chamber leaders were not completely surprised. We had been recently monitoring rumors and gossip indicating that the warehouse plan abandoned in 2022 was back again in 2024.

Does the Chamber Support the Warehouse Yet?

Two years ago, the Business Journal published an article in its April 2022 edition titled



The planned Amazon retail warehouse, similar to this one in Hollister, is within the City of Salinas Agricultural-Industrial Center Specific Plan jurisdiction, established in 2010 to "promote new and relocating agricultural-related industries for Salinas."

"Salinas Valley Must Focus on Economic Development Plans." It outlined the Chamber's concerns about the lack of public planning, public review, public discussion, or public decisions about introducing a massive retail warehouse to the Salinas Valley.

These concerns from 2022 remain in 2024. For your review, excerpts of the 2022 article, "Salinas Valley Must Focus on Economic Development Plans," are printed below.

Content from April 2022 Business Journal Article

An Indianapolis-based international warehouse developer, Scannell Properties, was negotiating in February 2022 to build a massive Amazon distribution and logistics center in South Salinas. Although city officials were involved in negotiations, "non-disclosure agreements" (NDAs) prevented the public from getting any

RETAIL WAREHOUSES see page 8



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American Cancer Society Fundraiser Relay for Life is a Year-Round Endeavor



By Mac McDonald, Salinas Valley Business Journal

Relay for Life of the Salinas Valley, an annual fundraiser for the American Cancer Society (ACS), may not be until Sept. 21, 2024, but planning, logistics and even fundraising, have been ongoing since the end of last year's event.

"It's an all-year thing, we have 31 teams already registered," said Nancy Valdez, Senior Development Manager for the American Cancer Society's California Guam Hawaii Division. "We have events all year too. We just had the 30th anniversary of the Monterey Fashion Show. We have the 'Paint Your Town Purple' event at the end of August to let people know it's coming. We have the 'Rollout of Cars' event, barbecues, a lobster feast, and luminaria bags can be purchased. So many events take place throughout the year and raise a lot of money."

So much money that the Salinas event, now in its 27th year, is the #1 fundraiser in California and #3 in the entire country, even competing with much-larger municipalities. In fact, Valdez and others representing Salinas, traveled to Nashville to accept an award for their fundraising efforts.

"I was pretty proud to receive the award in Nashville, we're just a little dot on the map," says Valdez. It was awesome."

Across the country, more than 250,000 Relay for Life participants help support the American Cancer Society's mission in countless ways — providing education and advocating for the needs of cancer patients and their families, and providing essential services throughout their cancer journey.

Since 1985, Relay For Life has raised \$6.9 billion, allowing the



American Cancer Society to invest \$3.1 billion in cancer research, contributing to 3.8 million fewer cancer deaths.

But there's good news and bad news on the cancer front. While the latest data has shown that overall cancer mortality has continued to decline, resulting in over 4 million fewer deaths in the United States since 1991, but that progress has been stunted because there is increasing incidence for 6 of the top 10 cancers as the projected number of new diagnoses now tops 2 million (2,001,140) for the first time.

The other alarming data point in the ACS's annual report "Cancer Statistics, 2024," released in January, is that cancer patients are getting younger: the proportion of diagnoses in people who are middle-aged (50-64 years) increased from 25% in 1995 to 30% in 2019-2020, whereas the proportion 65 years and older decreased from 61% to 58%, despite both age groups growing in the general

population (from 13% to 19% for ages 50-64 years and from 13% to 17% for ages 65 and older).

That troubling data points out the importance of funding cancer research on prevention, detection and treatment, which is where Relay for Life comes in. This year's goal is \$550,000, with the event held from 4-9 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 21, at the 100 and 200 blocks of Main Street at the Salinas City Center.

Valdez says there are a few ways to get involved: join a relay team, create your own team or go as an individual; donate to ACS; or just join the festivities on Sept. 21, observe, cheer on the walkers and stroll the streets and check out the vendors.

"Some people just want to go and have fun, just sit and watch (the relay)," says Valdez, who has her own team walking the relay course. "It's the community coming together and having fun. It used to be a 24-hour event, now it's from 4 to 9 p.m., so come down and feel the energy and see people smile! You



see the impact (on people) when you go in person."

Valdez says the reason the event is so successful is a testament to the community, including residents, government and businesses, and the stories of the survivors, caregivers and those who have lost a loved one to cancer.

"It's about the stories and getting involved," she says. "I think that's what drives these events, so many people have been touched by cancer."

To learn more about Relay For Life and how you can get involved, visit RelayForLife.org/SalinasCA. To contact Valdez, email her at nancy.valdez@cancer.org or call her at (831) 621-5554. For more information on the American Cancer Society, go to: www.cancer.org.



The Courage and Conviction to Lead

By Jennifer L. Williams, SVCC Board Chair

By the time this article is in print, the appointment to fill the Salinas City Council vacancy will have been made. We trust that our restored City Council will hear and respond to the special expertise of Chamber members by being vigilant against potential unintended consequences of policies that may stifle prosperity in our community.

Your Chamber continues to advocate for balanced approaches to policies that promote a thriving Salinas Valley. Kevin Dayton, Chamber Government Affairs Director, makes three contributions to this issue, including an in-depth analysis of the downward trend of crime rates in Salinas, the City's Economic Development Element in light of an Amazon warehouse coming to town, and a possible Monterey County sales tax to address an expected budget deficit through revenue enhancements. This Business Journal evaluates potential benefits and risks and outlines a path forward for the Chamber for each of these topics.

This year, your Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce is seeking leaders to serve on the Board of Directors. My role as Board Chair comes to a close at the end of 2024, and in 2025 the Chamber will be under the expert leadership of Leonard Batti, Vice President of Taylor Farms. The Board that will work with Leonard will have nine leaders from the current Board plus an additional six new leaders who will be nominated and approved through the nomination process beginning later this month.

The Chamber's official vision is "a thriving, welcoming Salinas Valley where people, families and businesses succeed via economic growth and opportunity." In pursuit of that vision, your Chamber aims to be a leader, rather

than merely being an organization that responds to someone else's leadership.

But being a leader means that other people and organizations will criticize you. Sometimes those critics have valid arguments.



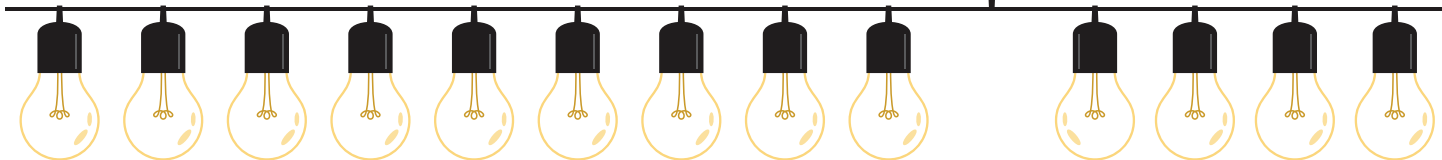
Volunteering your time to serve as a leader on this Chamber Board presents a unique opportunity to help create an environment where businesses thrive, jobs are created, and communities flourish.

Sometimes they are simply trying to silence dissent or opposition. We seek Board members who have courage and conviction that can withstand critics and opponents.

Volunteering your time to serve as a leader on this Chamber Board presents a unique opportunity to help create an environment where businesses thrive, jobs are created, and communities flourish. You can leverage your expertise and insights as a Chamber Board member to foster economic growth and development. Collaborative

efforts with fellow Board and Chamber members allow the Chamber to lend its collective voice to influencing policy decisions and advocating for local businesses. Serving on this Chamber of Commerce Board also provides a platform for networking and building meaningful relationships with business leaders, government officials, and community stakeholders.

Please consider applying to be part of tomorrow's courageous leaders through membership on the 2025 Chamber Board of Directors! 🌱



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AG WOMAN OF THE YEAR

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“Once I realized it was me, I quickly started thinking about what in the world I was going to get up and say in front of all those people! All I can say is that standing amongst family, friends, colleagues and past recipients to receive this award was quite a humbling experience.”

The surprise was orchestrated by Lisa Dobbins, Executive Director of the Grower-Shipper Foundation, with an assist from many of the more than 250 people in attendance. The luncheon was hosted by Ag Against Hunger, Valley Farms Management and Smith Family Wines.

“She was definitely surprised, it was a lovely surprise,” says Dobbins, who added that in addition to family and friends, Braga Fresh CEO Rod Braga, representatives from all the boards she sits on and a dozen former winners of the award (out of 27) joined in to honor her.

The award honors unique leadership qualities held by women working within the agricultural industry in Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito counties. The winner of the award demonstrates a significant contribution to agriculture, is a leader in the community and is an “Ag-Vocate” for agriculture, according to Dobbins.

Dobbins said 12 women were nominated and whittled down to three finalists, with the board of directors selecting the winner. She said Pereira was well deserving of the accolade, not only for her rapid rise to COO for Braga, but for her work in the community on various boards and programs.

“A lot of it is her leadership with Braga, but also for her years-long efforts in the community and community at large,” says Dobbins. “She stands for South County and really tries to bring a voice to South County. In addition to all that, she’s



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Colby Pereira, COO of Braga Fresh Family Farms, was the winner of the Grower-Shipper Foundation's 2024 Agricultural Woman of the Year award.

just a lovely human, a really good person.”

For Pereira it all goes back to values and strong character instilled in her from childhood.

“I was fortunate to be taught at an early age the importance of service and volunteerism,” she says. “Such incredible value, as what you invest into one’s community you receive back tenfold. I am filled with gratitude, simply having the opportunity to collaborate with so many wonderful human beings, in both our local community and our wonderful ag industry.”

Pereira, who joined Braga Fresh in 2020 as Vice President of Operations, was promoted to Braga’s Chief Operating Officer in January 2023, making her the company’s first COO as it entered its 95th year in business. In addition to managing the farming, harvesting, shipping and processing operations when she joined, she also led the COVID response team.

“Colby’s family farming background and reasoned, no-nonsense approach to problem-solving are an asset for this new position,” said CEO Braga. “Her leadership

and team-building capabilities are instrumental to our continuous growth and success. She will guide the team in creating a sustainable roadmap for the future.”

Pereira holds a Bachelor of Science degree in agricultural business with a minor in crop science from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. She lives where she was born and raised, in Soledad, also home of Braga Fresh and the company’s brand, Josie’s Organics.

She is active in several professional and community organizations. She served as president to the Salinas Valley Chapter of California Women for Agriculture, representing Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz counties. She served as a Board Member of Ag Against Hunger, the United Way of Monterey County and the Central Coast Ag Task Force.

She is the current board president of the Monterey County Farm Bureau and is a past board member of the Grower Shipper Association of Central California, where she participates on the Food Safety, Land Use and Water Use Committees with both organizations. She also sits on the Leafy Green Marketing Agreement Technical Committee, the California Leafy Greens Research Board, the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce Board, the Hartnell College Foundation Board, is an elected director to the Salinas Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency and an elected member of the Mission Union School District Board of Trustees.

Outside of work, she enjoys volunteering, traveling and spending time with friends and family.

The Grower-Shipper Association Foundation is a nonprofit 501c (3) organization founded in 2003, serving the Central Coast counties of Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz. Its mission is raising community awareness of the positive impact agriculture makes in our lives. Foundation programs include AgKnowledge, Ag Against Hunger, Ag Jobs: Bringing a Greater Vision. 🌱



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RETAIL WAREHOUSES

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information. There were no public notices or public announcements or public meetings.

Referenced as 2.8 million or 2.9 million square feet, the warehouse would be on empty land parcels now owned by Uni-Kool Partners. This land was annexed from Monterey County in 2009 and zoned by the City of Salinas as the “Salinas Agricultural-Industrial Center Specific Plan.”

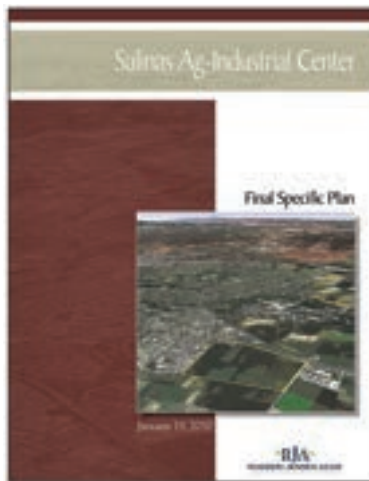
The revelation about the planned Amazon warehouse surprised your Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce leadership. With its valuable farmland, beautiful environment and geographic isolation, the Salinas Valley didn't seem like an ideal place to build one of the largest distribution warehouses in California.

But warehouses have proliferated in places such as San Bernardino County, Riverside County, and San Joaquin County. Closer to Monterey County, warehouse construction is now happening in Morgan Hill, Gilroy, Hollister and Watsonville.

Your Chamber of Commerce Reacts

The Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce tries to promote and advance local and regional economic development trends, rather than reacting to them. Our vision is a thriving, welcoming Salinas Valley where people, families and businesses succeed via economic growth and opportunity.

But the unexpected and private nature of this proposal forced the Chamber into reacting to someone else's initiative — in this case, a Seattle-based huge multinational corporation fulfilling customer demands for efficient delivery at a competitive cost. Some Salinas Valley business and community leaders were taken aback by the sudden shift in the envisioned use of the South Salinas



The Epicenter of AgTech

Salinas, California — also known as the “United Fruit of the World” — is quickly transforming into a global hub for agriculture technology. From drones in the fields to robot-picking lettuce, farms are getting smarter — and Salinas is ripe with opportunity for innovation and investment to match.

site from ag-tech to an e-commerce warehouse.

The Chamber's Government Relations Committee meetings in March and April 2022 examined the positive and negative potential impacts of the Amazon warehouse project for the region. Staff also researched the experience of the Inland Empire region of California (San Bernardino and Riverside counties) in its transition from agriculture to distribution and logistics.

It appeared that an Amazon warehouse could provide a net benefit for the City of Salinas, provided the developer was willing to agree to certain conditions. These could include funding for Abbott Street or Highway 101 improvements, or warehouse decommissioning requirements if the owner stopped using it. There were questions about the nature of the jobs that Amazon would establish, who would fill those jobs, and whether automation would ultimately eliminate those jobs.

Some Chamber members worried that trucks traveling to and from the warehouse (and subsequent neighboring warehouses) would add congestion to Highway 101 (and other local highways) and interfere with the local agriculture and hospitality industries. Other members expressed concern about loss of productive agricultural land if momentum developed for additional warehouse construction.

On the other hand, some Chamber members said that local residents

would appreciate the Amazon job opportunities and the additional tax revenue to fund city services. It was noted that Amazon could turn to the City of Gonzales or City of Soledad to build a massive warehouse site, and thus Salinas would get much of the Highway 101 truck traffic without getting any of the tax benefits.

And there was a philosophical argument that property owners have rights to use their property within reasonable legal standards. If a warehouse is a more profitable use of that land than research and development for agricultural technology, why should the Chamber of Commerce (or the public) interfere in a private investment decision based on that market reality?

On April 13, 2022, when the Chamber was about to submit a letter to the Mayor and City Council asking for more information and a forum for the Chamber to provide input, City of Salinas officials announced the end of negotiations for the warehouse.

Your Chamber of Commerce Tries to Go on Offense

At their April 27, 2022 meeting, your Chamber's Board of Directors asked the Chamber's Government Relations Committee to recommend how to advocate for an economic development vision for the Salinas

Valley. Board members were aware that the Amazon warehouse could have been the first of a series of warehouses built in the Salinas Valley. If no one in the Salinas Valley promotes an alternative vision, the logistics industry is eventually likely to fill the vacuum.

When the Government Relations Committee met on May 11, 2022, committee members recalled that in December 2017, the Salinas City Council had voted 7-0 to institute a comprehensive economic development vision. Called the Economic Development Element, this plan was adopted as an amendment to the existing City of Salinas General Plan. The introduction to the Economic Development Element includes a strong assertion that the economic future of the Salinas Valley will remain closely tied to agriculture:

The City's potential to grow and sustain the local economy is critically tied to its ability to leverage competitive advantages and find new opportunities to overcome current constraints. The City is the geographic epicenter of one of the most valuable agricultural economies in the United States. The City must be primed to capitalize on its position not only to sustain traditional agricultural industry, but to transform

Salinas into a regional and global center for business innovation and development in agricultural technology related sectors such as energy, precision agriculture, technology research and deployment, waste processing and reuse, food analysis and testing and “smart farming.”

An Alternative “Economic Development Element”

Would warehouse and logistics services be a desirable alternative to the proposed agriculture technology vision in the City of Salinas Economic Development Element? Perhaps not.

A Los Angeles Times commentary in 2022 decried how the Inland Empire (San Bernardino and Riverside counties) evolved into becoming the geographical center of one of the most valuable warehouse and logistic economies in the world:

“Over the last 20 years, I’ve watched open land and farmland in the Inland Empire become a gridlocked sea of warehouses. These giant boxes have worsened traffic, air quality, cancer rates and chronic health problems in the region and have cemented poverty here. The industry once touted as a blue-collar miracle is instead filled with temp jobs rife with health and safety issues, wage theft, little job security and a future in which robotic workers are predicted to reign supreme.”

The commentary describes the current economic development of the Inland Empire as an outcome based on an attitude of surrender to challenging community circumstances, rather than anything that was planned as an uplifting and optimistic vision:

“...agriculture was considered a relic industry and the Inland Empire region had been deemed to be ‘dirt cheap.’ The abundance of land combined with a large immigrant population of low educational attainment made for a narrative that warehousing was a natural fit...”

In the end, warehouse and logistics services WAS a natural fit:

“As of 2021, the warehouses of the Inland Empire accounted for more than a billion square feet. There are more than 3,000 warehouses in San Bernardino County and nearly a thousand more in Riverside County. They cover almost 37 contiguous square miles. This growth shows no signs of slowing.”

Is the City’s Economic Development Element Relevant?

In the years since the Salinas City Council unanimously approved it, the Economic Development Element has stalled and rarely gets mentioned as the formal economic development plan for the city’s future. A few pieces of the plan have advanced, typically because of independent promotion as individual initiatives and without reference to the city’s larger comprehensive plan.

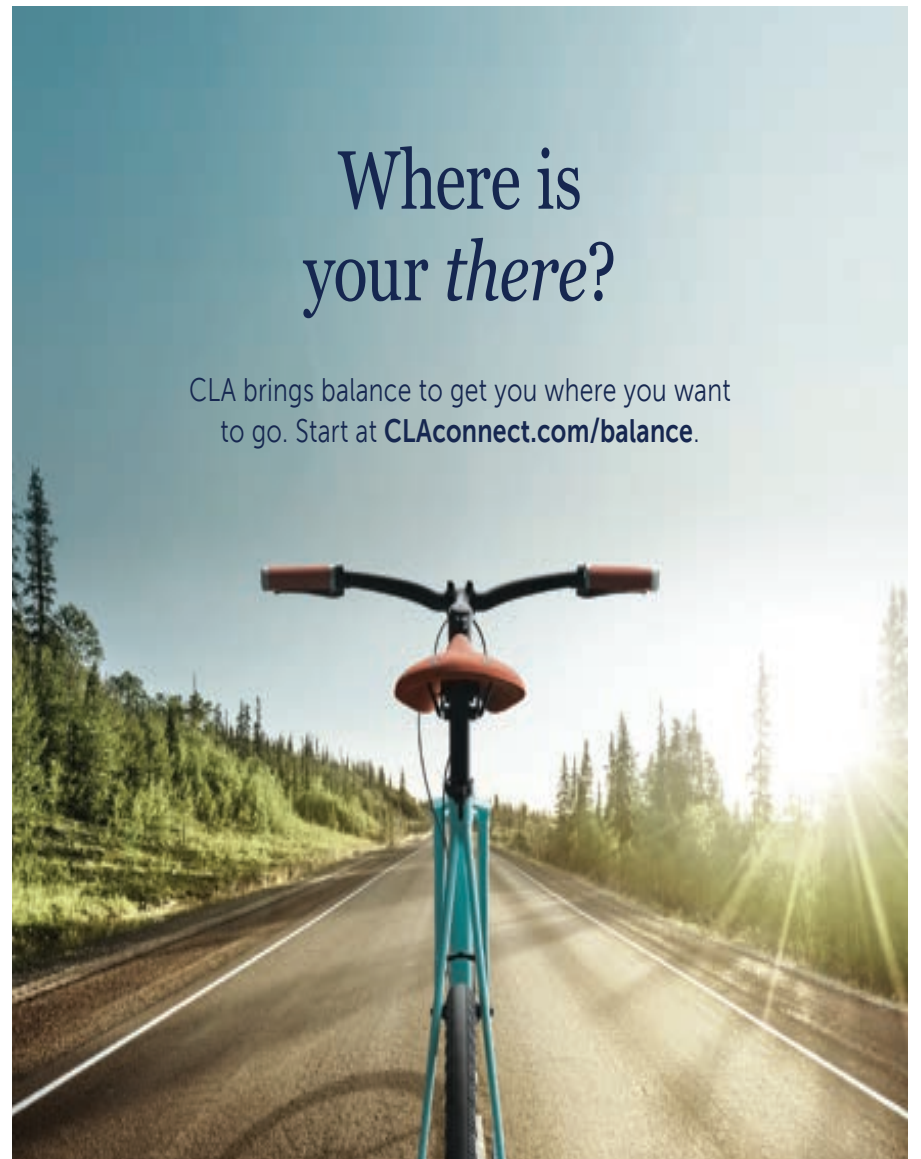
An obvious success related to the City of Salinas Economic Development Element has been the implementation of the Downtown Vibrancy Plan, along with the advancement of the Intermodal Transportation Center Master Plan within the Downtown Salinas Community Benefit District.

One reason why the Downtown piece of the Economic Development Element has advanced is the commitment of city staff and private parties to take responsibility for the plan and focus on achieving it. The Downtown Vibrancy Plan does not “sit on a shelf gathering dust” while outside forces take the initiative to shape the Downtown. In fact, some of the outsiders whose business practices were hindering achievement of the Downtown Vibrancy Plan decided to sell out and move on after the community finally made them accountable for holding back the vision.

Your Chamber of Commerce leadership will consider ways to commit city staff and private parties to be responsible for the Economic Development Element and focus on achieving it. 🌱

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MEMBER NEWS



MC Community Action Partnership Celebrates 60 Years

The Monterey County Community Action Partnership agency is celebrating a milestone with its partner organizations across the county this month: 60 years of improving communities, fighting the impacts of poverty, inspiring a spirit of hope and creating opportunities for residents to be a part of the American Dream. Community Action Agencies may look different in each community. They can be nonprofit agencies or operated publicly through a local government entity but were all established under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s “War on Poverty.” Community Action Agencies were formed to promote self-sufficiency and respond to immediate social and economic needs within their communities. There are now approximately 1,000 Community Action Agencies across the Nation. In the County of Monterey, Community Action is operated publicly under the County of Monterey Department of Social Services as the Monterey County Community Action Partnership (MCCAP) and serves to improve lives and strengthen communities across the county.



Hope, Horses & Kids celebrates its New Rancho Cielo Location

Super Hope, Horses & Kids (HHK) is thrilled to announce the grand opening of its new location at Rancho Cielo and invites the public to join in the celebration on Sunday, May 26, from 10am-3pm. The open house event promises a day filled with fun activities for all ages, including meeting the HHK horses, goats, and mini horses. Guests can also connect with the HHK staff while enjoying coffee, donuts and delicious offerings from a food truck. Scheduled activities include “Equine-Assisted Learning” starting at 11am, followed by “Horse-Powered Reading” at 1pm, providing engaging experiences for attendees of all interests. Hope, Horses & Kids makes horses and horse care available to people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. It serves approximately 50 Rancho students weekly and offers a range of programs, including horsemanship, life skills, and emotional care. The organization’s expansion into Rancho Cielo aligns with its mission to provide enriching experiences and support to the community. Rancho Cielo offers vocational training and high school education in partnership with John Muir Charter Schools. Students can earn a WASC-accredited high school diploma (or equivalent), leave prepared to enter the workforce and/or enroll in post-secondary education. The new location will allow HHK to broaden its reach and introduce its programs to a broader audience.



Monterey Symphony Announces 2024 Summer Concert Series

Monterey Symphony announces its 2024-2025 season with two Love Letter to Hollywood, Vol. 2 performances at the Forest Theater and five weekends at Sunset Center. “These concerts are filled with audience favorites that show the full power and brilliance of the Monterey Symphony. From Dvorák’s ‘New World’ to Brahms’ ‘Symphony No. 1’ to Respighi’s ‘The Pines of Rome,’ each concert is anchored by an iconic masterpiece that is sure to leave you feeling mesmerized and inspired,” says Music Director Jayce Ogren. “We’ve invited a roster of renowned soloists to join our season. We’ll celebrate 100 years of “Rhapsody in Blue” with pianist Adam Golka, collaborate with the dynamic Joyce Yang on Rachmaninoff’s ‘Piano Concerto No. 2,’ and feature Simone Porter in her triumphant return to the Monterey Symphony with Beethoven’s heroic Violin Concerto,” says Ogren. 2024-2025 Season Tickets: Subscriptions on sale now. Single tickets on sale Aug. 15, 2024. For questions, call the Symphony ticket office at (831) 646-8511, Mon-Fri, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Tickets: \$45-\$88, \$12 for students, teachers and active-duty military.



MEMBER NEWS



Chiara Veronesi



Stacey Cheatham Wilson



Melanie Leander

Noland, Hamerly, Etienne, and Hoss Welcome New Attorneys and Executive Director

In April **Chiara Veronesi** joined the firm's Trusts and Estates group; she also provides counsel for business transactions and is based in the firm's Monterey office. Chiara is a native of Italy and also fluent in Spanish. She earned two bachelor's degrees from CSU Chico and her JD is from UC Davis School of Law.

Stacey Cheatham Wilson came on board in May, after clerking at NHEH for a year while completing her JD at Monterey College of Law and passing the Bar. She is in the firm's Salinas office Trusts and Estates group. Stacey is a graduate of CSUMB and has long been active in many Salinas Valley community service organizations.

Melanie Leander has relocated from her hometown of San Diego to become the firm's Executive Director, with responsibility for the 48-person firm's overall administration, including accounting and finance, operations, information technology, human resources, marketing, and facilities management. Melanie is a graduate of San Diego State University.



Bay Federal Credit Union Now Offering Commercial Real Estate Loans

Bay Federal Credit Union announced the addition of Commercial Real Estate Loans to their expanding Business Services line. The addition of Commercial Real Estate loans will open the doors for local companies and commercial property owners to achieve their growth and expansion goals. "We are ready to serve the Central Coast business community with the highly-anticipated Commercial Real Estate loan program. Our local team is familiar with the challenges local businesses face and we created the new offering with our small businesses and commercial property owners in mind," President and CEO, Carrie Birkhofer said. "Bay Federal Credit Union is committed to providing convenient and affordable financing options to help our members succeed." Commercial Real Estate loans are now available to qualifying members and businesses purchasing or refinancing retail or office space, industrial-use properties, farm or agricultural land, or multi-family properties with five or more units. Loan amounts are available up to \$5 million for commercial properties within the state of California. Importantly, Bay Federal Credit Union's Commercial Real Estate Loans feature no pre-payment penalties. "Offering Commercial Real Estate loans with no pre-payment penalties will help businesses and commercial property owners have greater flexibility to reinvest in their properties on their terms," noted the Credit Union's Business Relationship Manager, Jeff Heitmann. "This can save our members thousands of dollars on their Commercial Real Estate Loan. This is one of many ways Bay Federal Credit Union strives to return value to our members and their businesses."



Monterey County Works Announces Employment Webinar in June

Monterey County Works is offering an employment webinar for employers and a multiple employer job fair for jobseekers in the month of June. Monterey County Works brings local employers and jobseekers together through its ongoing workforce programs and services and provides incentives to help local employers hire enrolled candidates. "Our employer services focus on providing employer assistance to find and hire appropriate candidates — whether your business needs one, a few, or several hundred new employees." Next month, employers will have the opportunity participate in a 2024 Mid-Year Labor Law Update webinar on: Wednesday, June 12. Every year, HR subject matter experts digest the new employment laws and provide practical solutions for businesses at our annual Labor Law Update.



Support our Chamber Members

Thank you, to our June 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
KSBW Central Coast ABC-Estrella TV	1970	El Pajaro Community—	2018
Noland, Hamerly, Etienne & Hoss—Salinas	1983	Development Corporation	
Salinas Valley Health	1984	HUB International Insurance Services	2018
Natividad Foundation	1993	Jacks Monterey	2018
Taylor Farms California, Inc	1997	Peter B’s Brewpub & Bar	2018
Costco Wholesale Corp	1999	Portola Hotel & Spa	2018
iHeart Media KDON-KPRC-	1999	Wingstop Salinas	2019
KOCN-KTOM-KION		LAZ Parking	2021
AquaBlue Skin & Body Spa Inc	2003	Mag One Media	2021
Maureen Wruck Planning Consultants	2006	Monterey County for Energy Independence	2021
Windsor Skyline Care Center	2009	Shearwater Tavern	2021
Bay and Basin Insurance Agency	2010	Wonder Wood Ranch	2021
Monterey County Sheriff’s Advisory Council	2009	Boyds Asphalt Services	2022
LuAnn Meador– Hutchinson	2012	Carmel Reality Company	2022
Greenfield Village, LLC	2014	Christians in Commerce-Worklight	2022
Lowell Farms	2015	Orkin Central Coast	2022
Chuckchansi Gold Resort and Casino	2016	Salinas Police Officers Association	2022
Episcopal Diocese of El Camino Real	2016	Universal Staffing Inc.	2022
Taylor Farms Property Management	2016	Agriculture and Land-	2023
Earth Systems Pacific	2017	Based Training Association	
Flying Artichoke Restaurant	2017	Arbon Equipment Corporation	2023
Grupo Flor/East of Eden	2017	Benitez Security Services, Inc.	2023
LC1 Productions	2017	CAL Property Management	2023
Quintes Administrative-	2017	Gomez Auto Repair	2023
& Insurance Services		Jay Nolan Services	2023

A Special Thanks to Our Visionary and Stakeholder Members





NEW MEMBERS

Ghosxt

Ghosxt is your premier Managed Service Provider (MSP) located in the heart of East Salinas. Since our inception, Ghosxt has been driven by a singular mission: "Empowering Innovation Through Technology." We understand that robust IT solutions form the backbone of modern business transformation, and our team of seasoned professionals is devoted to unlocking the boundless potential of technology to steer your business towards unprecedented success. In essence, Ghosxt is more than an MSP; we are a catalyst for technological innovation and business success in Salinas. Our unique blend of local engagement and global IT standards positions us as the preferred IT partner in East Salinas and beyond.

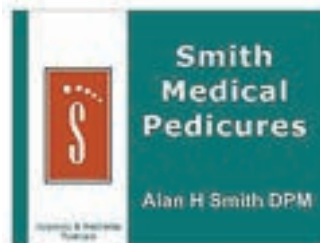
Ghosxt.com, Contact@ghosxt.com, (831) 204-0501



Smith Medical Pedicures

Smith Medical Pedicures was born out of the need for a safe, private, hygienic place for patients to have personalized toenail care. There was a need for toenail care that addressed the concerns for a safe, sanitary environment, nails that were difficult to cut or reach and thick nails that caused pain or embarrassment. Our nail technicians received further training by Dr. Smith to care for our seniors, diabetics and men wanting pedicures in a private medical like setting. Many of us have sensitivity about our feet, our nail technicians are trained to make your visit a pleasure and to give our clients peace of mind. So out of this need, Smith Medical Pedicures was born.

Smithmedicalpedicures.com, Monterey Office: (831) 649-1353, Salinas Office: (831) 676-3790.



Salinas Valley
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

BUSINESSJOURNAL



For more information: www.salinaschamber.com

Alan H. Smith DPM

Smith Medical Pedicures

Stunning Foot Care • Hygienic & Aesthetic Footcare



**LICENSED NAIL TECHNICIANS • INDIVIDUAL TREATMENT ROOMS
ALL INSTRUMENTS AUTOCLAVED**

A Personal Message from Dr. Smith

Smith Medical-Pedicures was born out of the need for a safe, private, hygienic place for patients to have personalized toenail care. There was a need for toe nail care that addressed the concerns for a safe, sanitary environment, nails that were difficult to cut or reach and thick nails that caused pain or embarrassment. Our nail technicians received further training by Dr. Smith to care for our seniors, diabetics and men wanting pedicures in a private medical like setting. Many of us have sensitivity about our feet, our Nail Technicians are trained to make your visit a pleasure and to give our clients peace of mind. So out of this need, Smith Medical Pedicures was born!

"Se habla español"

**Two Locations to Serve Your Footcare Needs &
Home Nail Care Available**

Monterey 831-649-1353 Salinas 831-676-3790

176 Sargent Ct, Monterey, CA

28 Quail Run Circle, Ste A, Salinas, CA

WWW.SMITHMEDICALPEDICURES.COM

#ThriftedTreasures Challenge Underscores the Importance of Sustainability, Creativity and Community

By Goodwill Central Coast Staff

Join Goodwill Central Coast for #ThriftedTreasures: The Sustainable Fashion and Donation Challenge. Celebrate creativity, sustainability, and generosity with Goodwill. Share your thrift finds and donated treasures, showcasing the beauty of sustainable living. Let's make thrifting and donating the trend of the season!

By focusing on both the thrifting and donating aspects, this reworked campaign underscores the importance of sustainability, creativity, and community engagement, encouraging participants to make a positive environmental impact while expressing their unique style.

Why Join the Challenge?

- **Sustainability and Fashion:** Discover the environmental impact of thrifting and donating. Each item you find or give away helps reduce waste and the demand for new production, showcasing fashion that's both stylish and conscientious.
- **Creativity and Personal Style:** Unleash your creativity by assembling unique outfits or home decor from thrifted items. Highlight your individuality while showcasing the versatility of secondhand finds.

- **Generosity and Community Engagement:** Experience the joy of giving through donations. Your contributions support Goodwill's mission, helping to fund job training and employment services for people in your community.

How to Participate in the #ThriftedTreasures Challenge

- **Find and Donate:** Visit Goodwill Central Coast to discover hidden gems and donate items you no longer need. Your donations make a difference, supporting sustainable fashion and our community.
- **Get Creative:** Use your thrifted finds to create stylish outfits or decorate your home. Then, prepare a box of gently used items to donate back, continuing the cycle of generosity.
- **Share on Social Media:** Post your thrifted and donated treasures on Instagram or

Facebook with the hashtag #ThriftedTreasures. Tag @ GoodwillCentralCoast to showcase your sustainable style and the impact of your donations.

- **Inspire and Be Inspired:** Engage with the community by sharing, liking, and commenting on posts. Discover new ways to style thrifted finds, learn about the importance of donations, and connect with like-minded individuals who are making a difference.

Weekly Themes & Community Highlights

From "Retro Revival" to "DIY Upcycling," each week will bring new themes to explore and share. Plus, we'll spotlight community

favorites and stories of impactful donations, celebrating the creativity and generosity that fuel the #ThriftedTreasures challenge.

Make Sustainability and Generosity Trendy with Goodwill Central Coast

Participating in the #ThriftedTreasures Challenge is more than just a way to showcase your style; it's an opportunity to contribute to a more sustainable and compassionate world. Your involvement supports Goodwill's mission to enhance community well-being through environmental responsibility and social generosity.

Visit Goodwill Central Coast today, embrace the thrill of the find, share your story, and become part of a movement that celebrates fashion, creativity, and giving. Together, we can make a difference, one stylish find and generous donation at a time. 🌱

Second hand



#ThriftedTreasures | #SustainableFashion | #GoodwillCentralCoast | #FashionForAGoodCause

Financial Scams Targeting Seniors Increasing

By Haley Hitchman, Hastie Financial Group

Financial scams and elder fraud have become increasingly prevalent throughout the U.S. and the average senior is at risk of being a victim more often of these crimes. In 2022, the Federal Bureau of Investigations issued the Elder Fraud Report, which indicated there was an 82.35% increase in losses reported from those age 60 and older caused by financial scammers than in the previous year.

It is an unfortunate occurrence that seniors are increasingly being targeted by criminals looking to gain access to their personal data or the wealth they have worked so hard accumulating.

Scams targeting seniors tend to be much more prevalent than younger demographics. According to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center, those 60 and older are five times more likely to be impacted by scams and fraud than those in their 20's. Seniors are more likely to be targeted because they have often accumulated more wealth, may be more isolated and tend to be less likely to report crimes for fear of being viewed as losing mental capacity or ability.

The types of scams that seniors need to look out for vary broadly and will frequently have an emotional aspect. One widespread scam on seniors is to impersonate a grandchild in need of immediate help or urgent financial assistance. With the development of technology, these scammers even can change the number on the caller ID to make their targets feel the phone call is coming from a trusted source.

Another recent scam against seniors has been to impersonate a Social Security representative, saying benefits are being suspended. When these criminals call their victims, they ask them to verify their personal



information to gain information to steal their identity. With many seniors being dependent on these benefits, they feel a need to immediately comply with these requests over the phone and don't do any due diligence to see if the request is legitimate.

It is important to always be cautious about requests to urgently send money or give personal information over the phone or by email. Taking the time to investigate these demands will give more transparency into these types of requests and could uncover a potential crime. According to the Social Security

Administration, they will not call if there is a problem and will typically send a letter.

To help prevent fraud against seniors, it is important to have open lines of communication among family, caregivers or advisors. This can be hard for many people as the topic of money and finances has been a private subject for many over the years. According to Fidelity, creating a family financial management plan is not only beneficial for estate planning but also to help communication regarding the finances and can prevent seniors from being taken

advantage of.

Many financial crimes and fraud against seniors go unreported out of fear, embarrassment or not knowing what to do. The Department of Justice Office of Victims of Crime has created a National Elder Fraud Hotline for seniors or loved ones to report any financial exploitation or financial scams. More information about this service can be found on their website at: <https://ovc.ojp.gov>.

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

Violent and Property Crimes in Salinas Continue Long-Term Downward Trend

By Kevin Dayton, Government Affairs Liaison

Is there a public perception that the City of Salinas has a “crime problem?” If so, does that perception hinder economic development and community pride? Regrettably, your Chamber thinks the answer to both questions is “Yes.”

Is the perception accurate? Although no statistics are perfect, fairly reliable data is available to the public through the website “Police Service of Salinas: Statistics” at <https://salinaspd.org/statistics/>.

The Salinas Police Department collects and compiles crime data through the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), established for the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the U.S. Department of Justice. Eight types of crimes are tracked:

- four types of violent crimes: murder and non-negligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault
- four types of property crimes: burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson

Accompanying this article are tables and graphs showing trends since 2015 for the four types of violent crimes and four types of property crimes. Rates for most crimes have dropped significantly since 2015. Most statistics for 2023 are close to or at their lowest levels in the last nine years.

There are unsubstantiated

arguments that this City of Salinas crime data understates the amount of crime because an increasing number of crimes are not reported by victims or recorded by police. It might be useful for the Salinas City Council to review this data and determine its accuracy. Note that murder is a crime that is likely to be accurately reported

and recorded, and that annual data shows a significant and enduring decline.

In the meantime, please share this information with residents, workers, visitors, and supporters of the City of Salinas — especially people who says they avoid Salinas because it has a perceived “crime problem.” 🌿

Crime Trends in City of Salinas Through 2023

Crime	Trend	Time Period
Burglaries	Down 76%	2017 to 2023
Murder	Down 75%	2015 to 2023
Motor Vehicle Thefts	Down 74%	2015 to 2023
Serious "Part 1" Crimes	Down 74%	2015 to 2023
Forcible Rapes	Down 58%	2018 to 2023
Larcenies/Thefts	Down 54%	2017 to 2023
Total Crimes (includes non-aggravated assaults)	Down 51%	2015 to 2023
Arson	Down 50%	2022 to 2023
Robberies	Down 37%	2015 to 2023
Aggravated Assaults	Down 24%	2015 to 2023

Annual Crimes in City of Salinas 2015-2023 with Population and Police Budget Trends

	Murders	Forcible Rape	Arson	Robberies	Burglaries	Aggravated Assault	Larcenies-Theft	Motor Vehicle Theft	"Part 1" Crimes	Total Including Non-Aggravated Assault	Population at Start of Year	Percentage Change for Population	Adopted Police Department Budget	Amended Police Department Budget	Percentage Change for Police Department Budget
2015	40	72	19	369	679	613	1,534	1,932	6,346	7,430	157,206	N/A	\$44,548,900	\$45,024,381	N/A
2016	36	84	11	325	695	559	2,484	1,563	5,759	6,835	158,973	1.12%	\$45,694,745	\$45,424,345	1.49%
2017	29	69	24	358	964	564	2,589	1,242	5,841	6,933	159,708	0.46%	\$50,091,227	\$49,636,278	10.27%
2018	19	99	31	321	897	541	2,180	1,227	5,316	6,547	159,846	0.09%	\$51,247,420	\$51,790,726	3.25%
2019	8	65	25	241	742	467	1,709	1,081	4,340	5,576	160,522	0.42%	\$52,247,657	\$52,997,357	0.88%
2020	8	68	33	233	790	556	1,779	912	4,380	5,470	160,387	-0.08%	\$52,694,683	\$53,248,983	-0.57%
2021	16	70	30	235	694	563	1,820	732	4,160	5,291	160,206	-0.11%	\$53,028,645	\$53,028,645	-0.41%
2022	13	62	42	222	328	461	1,665	683	3,476	4,288	159,932	-0.17%	\$57,452,491	\$57,882,491	8.34%
2023	10	42	21	234	232	468	1,202	505	1,668	3,607	159,475	-0.29%	\$60,085,120	\$60,085,120	3.81%



RIBBON CUTTINGS & CHAMBER EVENTS

by Chamber Staff



All-Chamber Mixer hosted by WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca

Members from the Salinas Valley, Monterey Peninsula, Pacific Grove, and Carmel Chambers of Commerce kicked off the 2024 race season in style at WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca. From networking opportunities to enjoying street tacos and drinks, to exhilarating rides around the historic WeatherTech Raceway Track, it was an unforgettable start to an action-packed season.



Grand Opening of Hijos Del Sol Arts Productions

Hijos Del Sol Arts Production celebrated the grand opening of their first independent studio space as well as its 30th anniversary. With this new space, Hijos Del Sol Arts Productions will continue to create opportunities for fostering creativity and community engagement through visual and multicultural arts education, experiences and mentorship.



Fireworks, Freedom, Family and Faith Celebrate America on July 4 at the California Rodeo Grounds

By Pastor Todd Anderson, Compass Church

July 4 is almost here and there is a lot being done for our community to make it one to remember.

It's been a few years since Salinas has had big, professional fireworks and we want to change this. America is something to be celebrated and freedom is what makes this country special. That's why Compass Church has rallied the business community to put on one of the greatest Independence Day celebrations Monterey County has ever seen.

On July 4, at the California Rodeo Grounds in Salinas, there will be epic fireworks, a medal ceremony to honor all veterans in attendance, a family fun-zone, patriotic music synched with the fireworks show, food trucks and classic cars; and it is all free because of great businesses and benefactors who love our community, the freedoms we enjoy, and celebrating them with great fanfare. Even the parking is free!

Not only is Celebrate America free, but the benefactors of any money raised will be children in our public schools. In Monterey County there are over 10,000 children who will not have proper school supplies when the school year starts. Unless we step-up and fill the gap, this group of children will be starting the school year behind and may not be able to keep pace with their



fellow classmates.

Compass Church, other community organizations, and generous individuals are ready to meet this need. For a small amount you will be able to help give a backpack stuffed with school supplies to help a child start the school year well. Let's embrace this responsibility with great effort to address this need.

So, I invite you and your family to spend the evening of July 4 with our community enjoying a great, patriotic show and celebrating this incredible country. God has blessed us with a great place to live, wonderful neighbors, and a great hometown.

In an election year when politics make things more contentious, let's pause for an evening and come together to cheer on the freedoms that set America apart as a land of hope and endless opportunity. Let's celebrate the veterans who have sacrificed so much to secure those freedoms. Let's cherish the next generation who will carry this great legacy of freedom to their children.

With all the differences that exist in America, we have so much more in common than we have to disagree about. Join the community on July 4 to Celebrate America! 🇺🇸



Finding the Positive in Agriculture

By Norm Groot, Monterey County Farm Bureau

There is way too much rhetoric in the public domain about how farms and ranches operate, mainly about their impacts on the environment and resources uses, and the constant negative attitude towards the use of water to grow the food that ends up on dinner tables each night. With social media passing along constant criticism about our domestic food production, the avalanche of information is daunting for anyone to sort through, let alone understand.

It's a common thread that the American agriculture industry is poor at telling its story to the greater public. With less than 2% of the population raising food, fiber and flowers, the other 98% rarely realizes what it takes to get food into their local supermarkets — and the risks that farmers and ranchers face each day to make sure that product is safely produced and handled, fresh and

convenient, and still affordable.

Certainly, there are brighter informational items that can be shared on what is happening in the agricultural sector — some of this sizzle just isn't strong enough to make it into the mainstream media channels. Many in farming and ranching remain encouraged that the average food consumer will realize that domestic agriculture has a place in our society and those seeking to tear it apart need to be ignored, or at least marginalized.

Let's start with a resurgence in the local Young Farmers & Ranchers program; there is renewed interest in producing food by the younger generations! These are college-educated, articulate individuals who want to grow food responsibly, using newer agronomics and practices. The integration of technology into many facets of farming and ranching has changed the perception of agricultural production and offers an enticement

for more tech-savvy generations.

And while we're talking Ag technology, the Hartnell College Agricultural Technology program is blossoming (pardon the pun) with great new class offerings and technology trainings. In addition to diesel mechanics and welding, there are now programs focusing on food processing automation and other technologies related to harvesting. Food safety science is another area receiving increased instructional programs. A recent tour of the Hartnell College facilities displays an investment of nearly \$3 million in new equipment that students can train and learn from — yes, toys for our students to master for future careers here in the Salinas Valley.

This year's applications for Farm Bureau scholarships came with well-thought-out essays on how farmers and ranchers have been challenged to share their stories of success in managing

their working environments with younger generations that have never seen a farm. This year's crop of college-bound students (again, pardon the pun) formulated some excellent strategies that best tell the Agricultural perspective and the importance of local food production within their generation, using social media and other forms of 'modern' communication. It is very impressive to read these insightful essays from those who desire to develop a career in local agricultural production.

There are many bright stories to tell in local agriculture that reflect positive benefits of farming and ranching in our community, well beyond the noise of the detractors. We, as a community, need to learn better how to tell our story and share the lifestyle of modern farming and ranching, dispelling those old stereotypes that persist because detractors continue to scream the loudest. 🌱

The Future of Water Uncertainty Isn't Just About Scarcity

By Norm Groot, Monterey County Farm Bureau

About 10 years ago, the state enacted the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, which requires all groundwater basins in California to be managed to equilibrium by 2042. What this essentially means is that all water extracted for all beneficial uses must be equal to water recharge in the same basin, thereby achieving equilibrium of groundwater use.

This may seem like simple common sense, but it will be very difficult for many groundwater basins in the state to achieve this balance. Some very tough policy decisions will need to be made concerning how water is used, where it is used, and most importantly, how much will be available for food crop production.

Here in the Salinas Valley area, our water challenges are quite different than other parts of the state. We operate a “closed-loop” system, meaning that we capture our own water supply for our own use. Monterey County is solely dependent on its own water supplies; we don't import water from any other source or area, unlike most of the other regions of California.

That puts us solely in control of our own water supply each year, and how we achieve this equilibrium in our groundwater supplies is a decision of local policy makers and our farms, residents, and other businesses.

Yet, we do have many challenges on the pathway to sustainability. Our biggest threat is saltwater intrusion in the coastal zone area of the basin (west of Salinas); over the next 18 years we must make efforts to halt and even reverse the saltwater intrusion barrier line. We also have some sub-basin deficits that must



be resolved, which will address the distribution issue in our groundwater basin. We are fortunate to have a good, reliable, and well-managed water supply in our basin; we must figure out how to move that water around to solve sub-basin impacts in the Salinas area.

Our local economy is dependent on the success of farming and ranching each and every year — we are a rural county driven by an intensive agricultural sector. Impacts to farms and ranches if water use is curtailed could mean loss of jobs, reduced tax revenues and economic challenges for our local municipalities.

A few facts: over the past 26 years, irrigation water use has been

reduced by 20%, fully 115,000-acre feet of less water used to grow food crops. In that same time, there was an added 5% in irrigated acres and yields have increased each year. The agricultural sector has made dramatic strides to reduce groundwater use while producing more fresh food crops. Further reductions in irrigation water use will require more technology and be increasingly more expensive to implement.

While we must achieve groundwater sustainability, as required by state law, it will be quite costly for the local community to fund the various infrastructure projects to make this a reality. The numbers become quite large when considering these multiple projects (think

mid-nine figures) and could stress the agricultural sector into financial instability. A cautious approach to the expenditures for these projects will be needed; spending a large sum of funding on water infrastructure projects could outstrip the ability of the community to pay for the sustainability mandate.

We all desire to have sufficient water supply for consumptive uses, including domestic water supplies. It is time we start looking for alternative solutions that involve not only creating additional water, but move that water into the right places to balance the groundwater basin. This will become a big lift for the community to manage as we seek to secure our water supply future. 🌱

Monterey County Tax Increases May Be on November 2024 Ballot

By Kevin Dayton, Government Affairs Liaison

On May 7, 2024, the Monterey County Board of Supervisors received a report from staff that presented some “potential revenue enhancement options.” You probably refer to these options as “higher taxes.”

After the report, the Board voted 5-0 to direct staff to investigate options for raising the sales tax and/or the hotel transient occupancy tax (TOT) in unincorporated county areas (outside of incorporated city limits). This investigation will include outreach to residents and polling.

Why does Monterey County need more money from taxpayers? Like many local governments throughout the State of California, Monterey County will soon spend more money than it collects.

County staff identify “rising pension contributions, increased salaries, increased employee health insurance costs, higher workers’ compensation and general liability program expenditures, and formulaic increases in general fund subsidies” as major reasons for the projected deficit.

The Board of Supervisors has been considering its options for a couple of months. On April 2, the Board held a budget workshop to plan for Fiscal Year 2024-2025. At that meeting, the Board received a memo outlining “Options to Enhance the County’s Financial Condition in FY 2024-25 and Future Fiscal Years.” Here were the proposed options:

- Transaction (“Sales”) Tax Rate increase
- Enact a new Utility User Tax
- Increase the Existing Transient Occupancy Tax
- Change Contribution Policy for the Development Set-Aside Program for promotion of economic development, tourism, filmmaking, and cultural arts

- activities
- Suspend or lower the supplemental unfunded accrued liability contribution program for county employees
- Redirect funds from the Compensated Absences Assignment

Staff was directed to “bring a

report back to the Board to focus on the most feasible revenue options for the earliest implementation possible.”

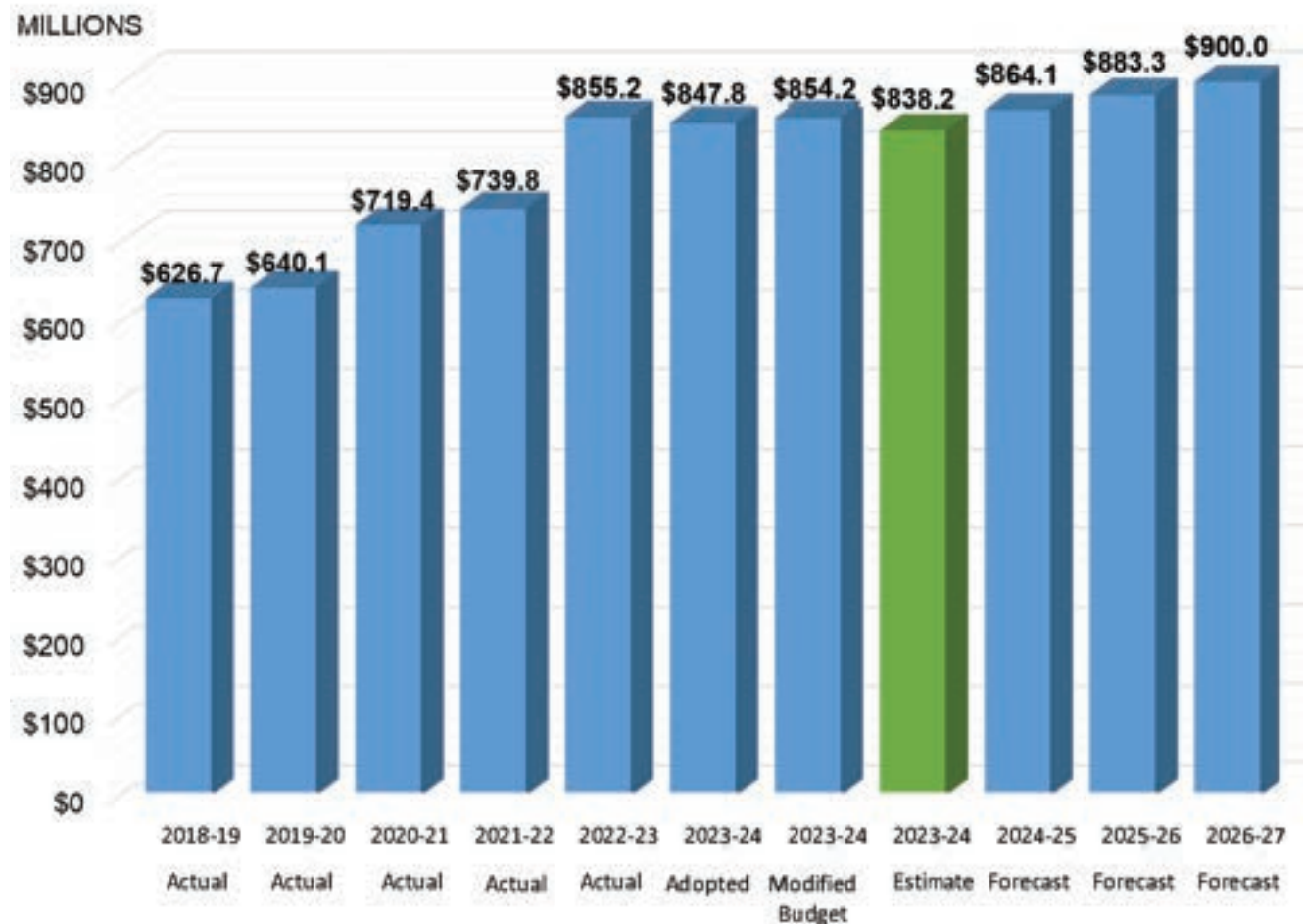
Obviously all of the options to “enhance the County’s financial condition” have opposition. No one wants to pay more taxes. And no one wants to cut government services either.

Unlike the federal government, California local governments can’t print or borrow money to pay the bills. Their budgets must be balanced.

Your Chamber of Commerce Government Relations Committee will be discussing these proposed tax increases for Monterey County — and for all of our local governments — in the coming months. 🌱

Fiscal Year	Revenue	Expenditures	Surplus/Deficit
2022-2023	\$969.3 million	\$956.0 million	\$13.3 million surplus
2023-2024	\$849.6 million	\$838.2 million	\$11.4 million surplus
2024-2025	\$831.2 million	\$857.5 million	\$26.3 million deficit
2025-2026	\$839.3 million	\$876.6 million	\$37.3 million deficit
2026-2027	\$852.9 million	\$893.2 million	\$40.3 million deficit

Monterey County General Fund Expenditure Trend



Plans for an Arts-Historic District in East Garrison Slowly Coming to Fruition

By Kevin Dayton, Government Affairs Liaison

Between the City of Salinas and the City of Marina is East Garrison, a mostly completed new neighborhood in unincorporated Monterey County that was once part of Fort Ord. It is a 225-acre development located on a bluff overlooking the Salinas Valley, south of Reservation Road and north of Watkins Gate Road, at what was once the East Garrison gate. Spectacular views of the Salinas Valley from East Garrison are accessible to the public, especially from the Officers Tent Area of the Arts-Historic District.

Development Approved, 11 Years After Base Closure

In 1994, the U.S. Army closed Fort Ord. The 1997 Fort Ord Reuse Plan, subsequently incorporated into the County of Monterey General Plan and Housing Element, proposed individual, compact, walkable mixed-use villages built on the former base. These villages would be linked by transit routes crossing open-space corridors.

East Garrison would be one of these villages, located within walking and biking distance of the planned campus of the University of California Monterey Bay Education Science and Technology Center (MBEST) and the campus of the newly founded California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB).

On Oct. 4, 2005, the Monterey County Board of Supervisors approved a three-phase proposal for a new development at the East Garrison site. It included up to 1,470 residential units, a town center with 75,000 square feet of commercial space, 11,000 square feet of civic space, 37 acres of

open space with a trail system, 12.7 acres of public park land, and related infrastructure. Monterey County allocated 470 acre-feet per year (AFY) of water supply to East Garrison out of its 560 AFY allocation from the now-defunct Fort Ord Reuse Agency (FORA). Marina Coast Water District would supply that water to the new development.

The Arts-Historic District Concept Explained

Perhaps the most interesting element of the proposal was an “Arts-Historic District.” Planned from the beginning but scheduled for the third, final phase of the development, the Arts-Historic District would include 65 new, affordable (deed-restricted) live/work units for artists on two sides of a long, thin village green area (the Arts Park). Festivals, gatherings, and concerts would occur in the park.

In addition, 23 historic Fort Ord buildings — concrete warehouse buildings with clay tile roofs — would be retained and renovated. These would provide 100,000 square feet of artist studios and 75,000 square feet of commercial space for galleries and other art-related businesses.

Arts-Historic District Still Planned, Three Decades After Base Closure

In 2024, the first two phases of East Garrison are nearly finished, and the third, final phase is 70% complete. The Arts-Historic District is among the few elements that the Master Developer has not built, although the Arts Park now exists. Fort Ord buildings in the Arts-Historic District not identified for

preservation and reuse have been demolished.

Century Communities — the current Master Developer — asked the County of Monterey to authorize changes to the remaining work in the third phase of the development. As noted in a 2023 staff report to the Monterey County Board of Supervisors regarding the changes, “The current development environment is very different now compared to 2005 when the East Garrison Project was approved.” The developer wanted changes in part to improve its position to get tax credit funding for affordable housing.

Among the changes are the Arts-Historic District. The two sides of the Arts Park originally planned for 65 new, affordable (deed restricted) live/work units for artists will instead become lots for 20 of 66 planned compact two-story single-family houses. Meanwhile, those 65 artist live/work units are being relocated to the upper floors of a four-story mixed-use Town Center building. In addition, the 75,000 square feet of commercial space for arts-related activities will now be reduced to a maximum of 30,000 square feet on the ground floor of the Town Center building.

Community meetings about the proposed changes to the final phase were held in East Garrison in 2021 and 2022. On Jan. 24, 2023, the Monterey County Board of Supervisors reviewed the proposed changes. On April 10, 2024, the Monterey County Planning Commission approved the changes. The developer now identifies the changes as part of a new fourth phase.

When Will East Garrison Get the Artists?

A Monterey County organization called Arts Habitat is working in partnership with ArtSpace, “America’s leading real estate developer for the workforce housing + the arts” on the future of the Arts-Historic District. They will be the operators and owners of the renovated historic buildings. In addition, ArtSpace will design and build the Town Center building in conjunction with Century Communities and serve as the primary owner, using a professional property management company. Century Communities will retain ownership of the ground floor commercial space for potential sale.

In June 2023, the Arts Habitat/ArtSpace partnership attracted 25 residents from East Garrison to two Homeowner Association Member/Resident focus groups. It also attracted 26 residents of East Garrison and outside of East Garrison (Monterey County) to two Artist/Arts Organization focus groups. Focus groups had the following objectives:

- Gather input on what creative spaces are needed in East Garrison and Monterey County
- Better understand how these buildings can address creative space needs to serve East Garrison and Monterey County
- Begin identifying potential future tenants and users who would be interested in renting, owning, operating, or programming these spaces

In October 2023, the partnership released an “ArtSpace Community Engagement - Creative Space Needs Analysis,” prepared at the



Map of the Final Phase of the Arts-Historic District at East Garrison, which is 70% complete.

request of Monterey County and Century Communities. It identified “artists & creative pursuits” of East Garrison residents in the fields of craft arts, dance, experimental sound arts, fiber arts, literary arts, mosaics, music, painting, perfumery, photography, theater, and wine-making. Suggestions for building use in the Arts-Historic District included culinary space, performance/rehearsal space (dance studios, music practice rooms, a small recital hall, and a theater), and classroom space.

The report also acknowledged its outreach failed to attract renters who live in the affordable housing in East Garrison — specifically, in the 66-unit Manzanita Place affordable housing project built and operated by Mid-Pen Housing. Since the time of the focus groups, Community Housing Improvement Systems and Planning Associates (CHISPA) has completed another affordable housing project in East Garrison — the 66-unit Alfred Diaz-Infante Apartments.

Your Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce will keep you informed as this Arts-Historic District moves toward reality. 🌱

A sign at the site of former Fort Ord warehouses that will be renovated for reuse as artist studios explains the buildings: The Works Progress Administration (WPA) completed the eight concrete East Garrison warehouses in the fall of 1940 for \$3,799 each. When the United States declared war on Japan and Germany in December of 1941, the buildings were used as warehouses. As the war progressed, their use changed. After the D-Day invasion on June 6, 1944, many German soldiers were taken prisoner by the Armed Forces and were shipped to facilities in the United States. At Fort Ord, the East Garrison Warehouses were converted from storehouses to barracks for German prisoners of war.

Fort Ord officers’ mess halls and latrines will be renovated for reuse as artist studios. A sign at the site explains the buildings: An “Officers Tent Area” was located northeast of Tent Area 1. It overlooked the bluff and the Salinas Valley below. This area and several others in Tent Area 1 were stabilized with rock retaining walls built by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Smaller concrete buildings, which functioned as Officers Latrines and Mess Halls, were symmetrically placed along Ord Avenue parallel to the tent encampment. Officers tents were located behind their Mess Halls and Latrines, in lines parallel to the main encampment.



These Fort Ord warehouses in the Arts-Historic District at East Garrison will be renovated for reuse as artist studios. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) completed the eight concrete East Garrison warehouses in the fall of 1940, and after 1944, these warehouses were converted from storehouses to barracks for German prisoners of war during World War II.



Fort Ord officers’ mess halls and latrines, built in the 1940s by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), will be renovated for reuse as artist studios for the Arts-Historic District in the East Garrison neighborhood at the former Fort Ord.

Leadership Monterey County Develops Local Leaders

By Mitchell Friedman, Leadership Monterey County

According to statistics compiled by the County of Monterey, agriculture supplies most of the jobs locally and makes our county the third largest agricultural county in California. As you enter the Salinas Valley, one cannot help but notice agriculture's importance, yet few go behind the scenes, and into the fields, to hear from industry leaders about the challenges they face and how they grapple with them every day.

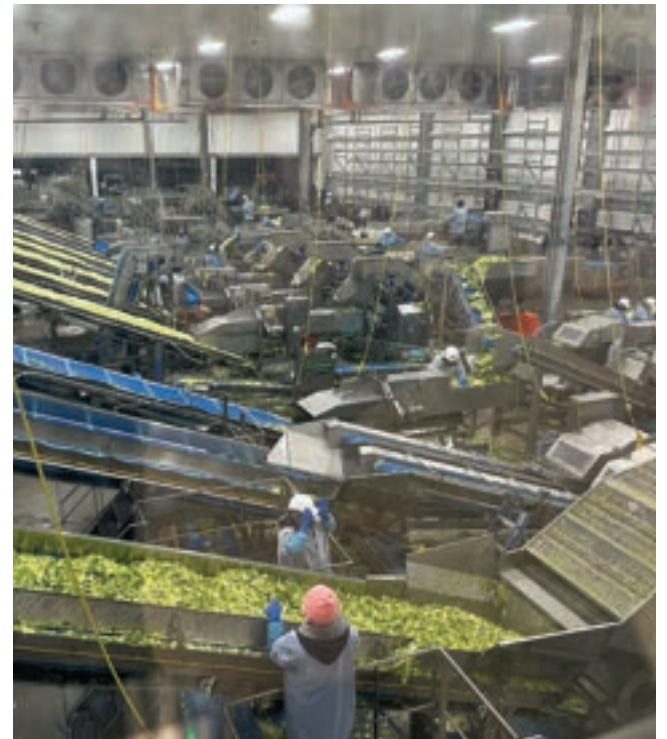
Leadership Monterey County (LMC) offers such an opportunity, as it engages up-and-coming leaders with local issues and the people working to solve them. At a recent program, for example, that meant program participants visited the Salinas Valley to connect with representatives from local organizations intimately involved in agriculture business.

Program participants met with staff and explored the operations of two major providers of produce. A visit to Taylor Farms Foodservice provided a first-hand view of how local agricultural products are processed and packaged, and subsequently shipped to retailers throughout the U.S. Later that day, at Tanimura & Antle (photos three and four), LMC participants toured romaine lettuce fields and facilities where produce is washed, cooled, and stored after being picked from the fields.

In addition, the group met with Norm Groot, Executive Director of the Monterey County Farm Bureau, a private, nonprofit association of farmers and ranchers. He spoke to the group about the past, present, and possible futures for local agriculture and the individuals who work in the industry.

In short, LMC participants gained unique insight into the local agriculture industry. To learn more about their experiences, and the LMC program in general, visit <https://www.leadershipmc.org>.

Mitchell Friedman, EdD, APR, is a Facilitator for Leadership Monterey County. He can be reached at mfriedman@mcbc.biz.



A Leadership Monterey County visit to Taylor Farms Foodservice provided a first-hand view of how local agricultural products are processed and packaged, and subsequently shipped to retailers throughout the U.S.



At Tanimura & Antle, Leadership Monterey County participants toured romaine lettuce fields and facilities where produce is washed, cooled, and stored after being picked from the fields.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Grand Opening and Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony with Milla Legal Document Services**

Thursday, June 6, 5:00 - 6:30 p.m., 90 W. Alisal St., Salinas

Milla Legal Document Services is thrilled to invite you to celebrate their grand opening in partnership with the Salinas Valley Chamber. They cordially invite you to witness the official ribbon-cutting ceremony and indulge in an evening of networking and community connection. Enjoy complimentary drinks and appetizers as you mingle and celebrate. Enter to win a sleek Yeti cooler. Milla Legal Document Services specializes in providing self-help services to the public, offering expert assistance in various legal matters. Their services include Living Wills and Trusts, Trust Amendments, Deed Preparation, Name Changes, Divorces, Family Law Cases, and more. The team looks forward to meeting you and sharing this special occasion!

- **United Way Monterey County Community Impact Center's 2nd Anniversary & Legacy Donor Wall Unveiling**

Tuesday, June 25, 5:00–7:00 p.m., 232 Monterey St., Suite 200, Salinas

Join us in celebrating United Way Monterey County Community Impact Center's second anniversary and ribbon-cutting event, a joyous occasion that marks the milestones achieved through the collective efforts of our community in downtown Salinas. At this event, UWMC is proud to unveil its Legacy Donor Wall, a heartfelt tribute to the exceptional individuals whose unwavering support has shaped the organization's legacy and fueled its transformative journey.

- **California Rodeo Salinas & Monterey Regional Airport Chamber Mixer**

Thursday, June 27, 5:30–7:00 p.m., 200 Fred Kane Drive, Suite 200, Monterey

Join us for the annual California Rodeo Salinas and Monterey Regional Airport Chamber Mixer with the Salinas Valley and Monterey Peninsula Chambers of Commerce as we gear up for the California Rodeo Salinas in July. The Rodeo promises thrills, spills, and good old-fashioned fun. The Rodeo is a beloved tradition in Salinas, embodying the city's rich Western heritage and bringing together residents and visitors for a fun time. Dust off your boots, throw on your cowboy hats, and join us for a fun evening in celebration of one of Salinas' most-loved events. Tickets cost \$10 for members and \$20 for non-members.

- **Salinas Valley Food and Wine Festival Kickoff & Chamber Mixer**

Thursday, July 25, 5:30–7:00 p.m., California Welcome Center Salinas, 1 Station Place, Salinas

Are you a lover of food and wine? Join us for the Salinas Valley Food and Wine Festival Kickoff & Chamber mixer that is a kickoff to the main event taking place on Saturday, Aug. 3. It is an event for people to meet, network, and enjoy a glass of wine or one of your local brews before the main celebration. Invite your friends, coworkers, and clients. The Salinas Valley Food and Wine Festival is embedded deep into the Salinas Valley culture and brings our community and visitors together to participate, experience, and appreciate the sights, sounds, and tastes of the Salinas Valley. Stay tuned for more information at SalinasChamber.com.

RSVP at salinaschamber.com



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Oscar has lived in Monterey County for over 40 years and has been in the mortgage business for over 20 in the Salinas Valley. Oscar is bilingual and bi-literate and has used his skills to help hundreds of families in the Hispanic community to become homeowners. He was recently ranked on Scottman's Guide & Mortgage Executive as one of the top 1% mortgage loan officers in America. A wonderful family man, he and his wife Sheila have been married for over 28 years. They have three children and a granddaughter, Myla. Oscar was part of the first graduating class at CSUMB and earned a bachelor's degree in business. He has had great leadership training in programs such as Rapport Leadership, The CORE Training, and Certified Mortgage Advisors.

Thinking About Hiring a Minor for the Summer?

By Gladys Rodriguez-Morales, Fenton & Keller

School is out and summer is here which means some teens may be looking for a summer job. Employers who plan on hiring minors during the summer should be aware there are certain requirements concerning the employment of minors, which is defined as a person under 18 years old who is required to attend school, and a child under the age of 6.

Work Permits

Child labor laws require minors, except under limited circumstances, to have a work permit before being permitted to work. Therefore, employers should not employ a minor, including emancipated minors, until the minor has been issued a work permit. A minor who has graduated from high school or has been awarded a certificate of proficiency is not required to obtain a work permit.

Once an employer agrees to hire a minor, the minor must obtain a "Statement of Intent to Employ Minor and Request for Work Permit" form from their school, which needs to be completed by the minor and employer and signed by the employer and a parent or guardian of the minor. Once the completed and signed form is returned to the school, the school or district will issue the work permit, formally titled "Permit to Employ and Work."

When school is not in session, like during the summer, the work permit is obtained from the school district's superintendent. If a minor is visiting from another state or another country (if authorized to work in the United States), the minor can obtain the work permit from the school or superintendent of the school district where the minor is residing during their visit. Work permits issued during the school



year expire five days after the opening of the next succeeding school year; therefore, work permits must be renewed.

Prohibited Jobs

Under federal and California law, minors are prohibited from working certain jobs. For example, minors who are 17 years old and younger are prohibited from working in occupations declared hazardous by federal and state law and are prohibited from being employed in a position that requires them to sell or serve alcohol.

Furthermore, there are restrictions on which occupations a minor can hold which are dependent on the industry and the minor's age. For example, at gasoline service stations, no one younger than 16 years old is permitted to dispense gas, or clean, wash or polish cars. At a fast-food restaurant, no one younger than 16 years old is permitted to prepare food items out of plain sight of the customers.

Minimum Wages and Maximum Allowable Hours of Work

Employers must pay minors at least the minimum wage in effect at the

time of their employment and must pay overtime pursuant to the applicable Industrial Welfare Commission Wage Order.

Minors are also subject to certain working hour limitations, depending on their age and whether school is in session or not. There are work hour exceptions for minors, but in general during the summer, from June 1 to Labor Day, minors who are between 12 and 15 years old can work up to eight (8) hours per day and forty (40) hours per week, and their work shifts can end as late as 9:00 p.m. Minors who are 16 and 17 years old can work up to eight (8) hours per day and forty-eight (48) per week, and their work shifts can end as late as 12:30 a.m. on any evening preceding a non-school day.

When school is back in session, minors who are between 14 and 17 years old cannot work as many hours. Minors who are 12 and 13 years are prohibited from working on a school day, and can only work during school holidays and vacations, and weekends.

Record Keeping

Employers must maintain records for at least three years showing the names, ages (dates of birth), and

addresses of all minors employed, the minor's time and payroll records, and all Permits to Employ and Work.

Mandated Reporting Requirements Concerning Child Abuse or Neglect

The Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act ("CANRA") requires certain individuals like teachers, therapists, attorneys, physicians, and clergy members to report any known or reasonably suspected case of child abuse or neglect to law enforcement or the county welfare department.

In 2020, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed Assembly Bill 1963, which amended CANRA. The amendment expanded the list of individuals designated as mandated reporters to include Human Resource employees if the employer has at least five employees and employs minors. A Human Resource employee is defined as anyone who is (1) designated by the employer to accept any complaint of employee misconduct; or (2) an adult whose duties require direct contact with and supervision of a minor in the performance of the minor's work duties.

Employers with five or more employees and who employ minors must provide training to all mandated reporters in their business on identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect. Upon hiring a minor, the employer should identify the employee(s) who are mandated reporters to ensure compliance with CANRA.

For more information on employing minors, visit the Department of Industrial Relations at <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/DLSE-CL.htm> and the Labor Commissioner's Child Labor Law Pamphlet at <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/ChildLaborLawPamphlet.pdf>. 🌿

Gladys Rodriguez-Morales is a lawyer with the Fenton & Keller law firm in Monterey. This article is intended to address topics of general interest and should not be construed as legal advice. For more information, please visit www.fentonkeller.com.



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NON-PROFIT EVENTS

Alzheimer's Association Salinas Caregiver Support Group

June 6, 12:30 – 2:00 p.m., 1130 San Vicente Ave., Salinas

If you have a family member who has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia disorder, a caregiver support group can offer you an opportunity to find out more about available community resources, learn from others who are going through similar experiences, and obtain additional educational materials. Our Salinas caregiver support group meets monthly, on the first Wednesday of each month, without a fee. In partnership with the Harden Foundation, this program is funded in part by Hospice Giving Foundation, Community Foundation for Monterey County and the Monterey Peninsula Foundation, host of the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am.

2024 Virtual Recovery Run & Free Community Celebration

June 8, 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., 1034 N Main St., Salinas

Join us as we bring our local Salinas and greater Monterey County communities together to promote prevention, offer resources for intervention and rehabilitation for individuals struggling with substance use challenges. All are welcome to participate in the 2024 Virtual Recovery Run & Free Community Celebration on June 8. Run and celebratory reception are hosted by Door to Hope in partnership with Central Coast Overdose Prevention. Visit our event page for more information and links to our event app where you can register to participate in the run, sign up to volunteer, host a resource table or become a sponsor!

Inaugural Junior Rodeo Rides Into Salinas Sports Complex

June 9, 9:00 a.m., Salinas Sports Complex, 1034 North Main St. Salinas

Howdy, young cowboys and cowgirls! Get ready to lasso some excitement at the inaugural Junior Rodeo, happening on Sunday, June 9 at the Salinas Sports Complex in Salinas. Brought to you by MYCars.com and hosted by the California Rodeo Salinas, this event is all about celebrating our Western heritage and nurturing the next generation of rodeo stars. This Junior Rodeo isn't just about competition — it's a chance for young riders and ropers to learn, grow, and connect with the spirit of the Wild West. From stick horse races to barrel racing and team roping, there's an event for every age and skill level. Check-in from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. Competitions start at 9 a.m.

Blue Zones Project Monterey County Father's Day Hike

June 15, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m., Fort Ord National Monument, Highway 68, Salinas

Join Blue Zones Project Monterey County on a fun trail day! Start your day by moving naturally with your loved ones. The free, educational and interactive hike is moderate (incline) and approximately 3.6 miles. Hikers of all ages welcome. This hike is not stroller-friendly! We will be celebrating all the wonderful fathers! All pre-registered participants will receive a Blue Zones Project T-shirt. Location: Creekside Terrace Trailhead, Salinas. Free parking available. Any question, please contact Paola.Delgado@sharecare.com

Kiddie Kapers Parade Kicks Off Big Week Festivities

July 14, 3:00 – 3:45 p.m., Salinas City Center, Salinas

Thousands of people line the streets of the Salinas City Center to watch over 1,200 children ride on floats, bikes, in wagons and more as a kick off to Big Week and the California Rodeo Salinas. The children in the parade are grouped into eight divisions for judging. The divisions are Playground Floats, Cowboys and Cowgirls, Strollers & Wagons, Community Groups, Costumed Kids & Pets, Dance & Drill Teams, Group Floats and Rolling Riders (skates, rollerblades, scooters, skateboards, bikes and trikes-helmets required). Everyone is encouraged to wear western clothing. Judging for Kiddie Kapers Parade is done by Parade volunteers and there is a first-to-third place awarded in each category. At the Parade's announcing stand, the division winners are recognized. The first-place winner in each Division receives a cash prize. There are two first-place winners in the Cowboys & Cowgirls Division, one boy and one girl. These two winners get to ride at the front of the Parade in special cars. All other division winners walk at the front of their division behind a huge banner. First-place winners in each division receive a handsome award ribbon. Each entrant gets a commemorative ribbon, a crisp \$1 bill and coupons from local merchants.

Rancho Cielo's Annual Veggie Box & BBQ Fundraiser

Aug. 19 – 23, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., 710 Old Stage Road, Salinas

Rancho Cielo's Veggie Box & BBQ fundraiser makes a huge impact in helping sustain the vocational training for its students while also feeding families in need. Purchase boxes for yourself or donate boxes to families in need via the Boys & Girls Clubs of Monterey County, Salvation Army Salinas, the Food Bank of Monterey County and Second Harvest Food Bank. The week-long event concludes with a delicious barbecue lunch prepared on-site by volunteers and Rancho Cielo culinary team. Lunches are available by pre-order only and sell out fast. Enjoy the beautiful grounds, or take it to go. Veggie Boxes and BBQ Fundraiser has grown bigger than ever thanks to the support of the generous community — from local business sponsors and agricultural donors to individuals and groups volunteering to help.

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— John Bonano, MD

John Bonano, MD was raised in Salinas and attended Palma School. He was a three-sport athlete and valedictorian of his class. He continued his athletic pursuits at the University of Arizona, where he was the starting field goal kicker on the football team. Attending medical school at the University of California, San Francisco, Dr. Bonano completed his orthopaedic surgery residency at Stanford University, followed by an adult reconstruction surgery fellowship at New England Baptist Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts.

He joins us at Salinas Valley Health Orthopedics as an orthopaedic surgeon specializing in hip and knee replacement surgery. Dr. Bonano is accepting new patients.



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HOW TO JOIN:

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Share: Post on social media with #ThriftedTreasures & tag @GoodwillCentralCoast.

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Share & Inspire: See how the community & influencers style their finds.

Make an Impact: Your participation supports Goodwill's mission for a sustainable future.

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