



Salinas Valley

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

BUSINESS JOURNAL



Relay for Life
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MST Plans to Ask Voters for
Sales Tax Renewal
page 24



Disney/Christopher Willard.

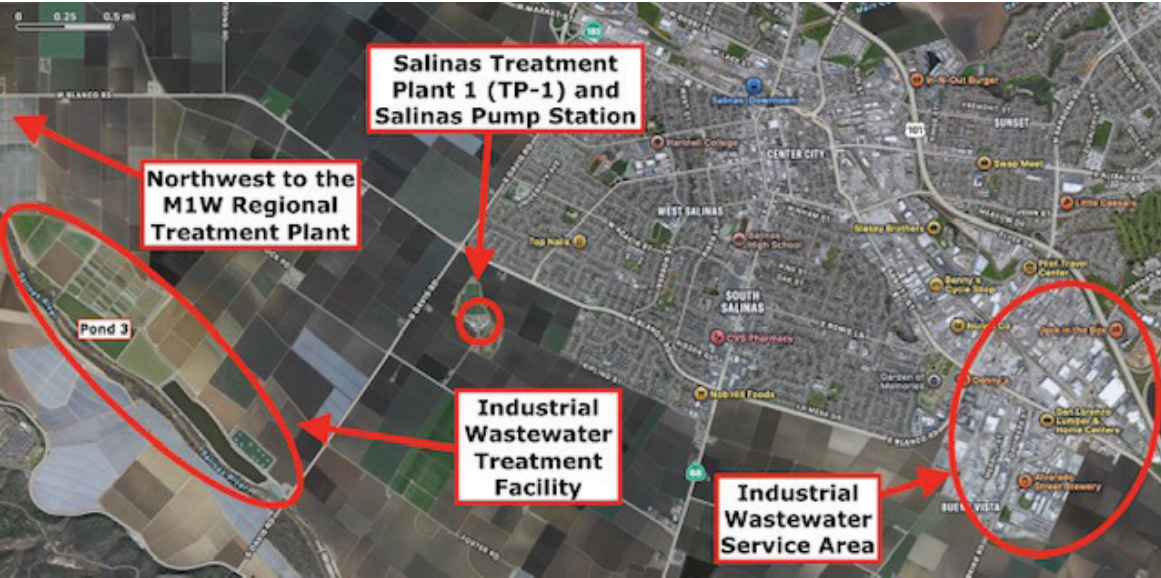
Salinas Greeting Card Entrepreneur Jesus Ruvalcaba Gets a Big Boost from a Billionaire TV Shark

By Mac McDonald, Salinas Valley Business Journal

Back when he was an up-and-coming art director, Jesus Ruvalcaba had no inkling that one day he would be standing in front of four billionaires on national TV making a pitch for funding for his fledgling Spanish-language greeting card company.

Yet there he was on the hit TV show “Shark Tank” April 4 (the segment was recorded months earlier) making his case for \$120,000

RUVALCABA see page 29



The Biggest Local Issue You Don’t Know About: Salinas Industrial Wastewater

By Kevin Dayton, Government Affairs Liaison

Many Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce members admit their struggles to understand local and regional water supply, water flow, and water cost. But Chamber leaders know that members want to learn about it and understand it.

More broadly, among the general public, people routinely tell Chamber leaders they

want to know more. They give credit to the Chamber for its Business Journal articles that attempt to explain complex water issues in plain language, with historical and geographical context.

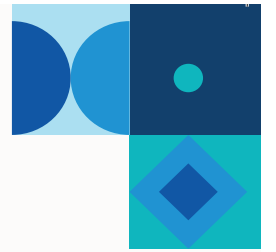
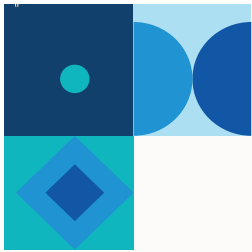
Seeking to Understand City of Salinas Industrial Wastewater

Recently, Chamber members and members of the

public have been asking about City of Salinas “industrial wastewater” and the role it should play in resolving water issues in Monterey County. They hear it referenced as a city priority.

For example, Salinas Mayor Dennis Donohue declared that “industrial wastewater is the highest priority” when he

WASTEWATER see page 12



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Rent Stabilization, an Issue to Divide or Unite Salinas?

By Leonard Batti, SVCC Board Chair

Two years ago, the Salinas City Council took on the task of addressing the rising cost of rental housing in our community and the alleged tenant abuses by unscrupulous landlords. In April of 2023, the Council adopted a Rental Registration Ordinance with an overarching goal to gather accurate records of rental units within the city and to provide a platform for enforcing local and state housing regulations.

Over the course of the following year, the council heard differing points of view from both renters, and property managers and owners. The stories told by renters were heartbreaking and the need to “do something” to help them was strong. In September of 2024, the Council adopted four rent stabilization ordinances aimed at curbing escalating rental costs and safeguarding renters’ rights. Although some in our community thought these rental rights provisions were a move in the right direction and long overdue, others felt that the pendulum had swung too far, unfairly hurting landlords and disincentivizing them to invest in rental properties, potentially reducing supply and inadvertently hurting the people that the city was trying to help.

In listening to renters’ stories of monthly rent increases, substandard housing, and landlord harassment, it was clear that many of the abuses that renters were claiming, are protected under state law. In fact, California has some of the strictest laws protecting renters in the nation. The California Tenant Protection Act covers many renters’



There may be other ideas to address the rental crisis in Salinas that don't unfairly impact the marketplace, but we won't get there if we're not working together as a community and a city council.

rights areas, such as rent control, just-cause eviction, discrimination, security deposit protections, habitability standards, and more.

What seems apparent is that there is a need to better inform renters of their rights under state law and of the resources available to support them when feeling that those rights are being violated. If the tenant has contacted the landlord or the landlord's representative and receives an apparently inadequate, inappropriate, or illegal response, the tenant can file a complaint with the City of Salinas Housing Division. There are also non-profit organizations that can help renters in trouble, including

United Way Monterey County, ECHO Housing (with locations in Salinas and Monterey), California Rural Legal Assistance (with locations in Salinas and Watsonville), the Housing Resource Center of Monterey County (based in Salinas), Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Monterey, and the Salvation Army.

This year, the newly seated city council has heard loud and clear that the ordinances are restricting the rental market. Some property owners are selling their rentals, further reducing supply, and others are requiring much stricter credit ratings, which are making it harder for renters to qualify for housing. At the April 22 city council meeting, council member Barajas made a motion to repeal the ordinances and to bring back a rental assistance program. He also asked that staff present to the council a monthly housing report. The council voted 5 to 2 to accept the motion. Because the motion was not unanimously accepted, the motion now moves to a “second reading” of the repeal ordinances at the June 3, 2025 city council meeting.

During the April meeting, council member Barrera made a poignant comment. He said “When we leave here tonight, some of you are going to be clapping and some of you are going to be very upset; but is that what we want? No. How can we bring the community together?” I happen to agree with Tony. There seems to be a movement to pit one faction of our community against the other, perhaps for political gain. If one really loves this community,

RENT see page 5

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one would never try to drive a wedge between its citizens.

In the April meeting the council directed staff to return to them a report on the establishment of a rental assistance program, something that has proven to bring tangible relief to renters in need. There may be other ideas to address the rental crisis that don't unfairly impact the marketplace, but we won't get there if we're not working together as a community and a city council. Real leadership requires coming together in a non-partisan, civil, and collaborative spirit to develop long-term solutions that benefit our community.

The time for boat rocking is over, let's roll up our sleeves and come up with solutions that work for both renters and landlords. As French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre wrote, "Only the guy who isn't rowing has time to rock the boat." 🌿

Mitigating Retirement Plan Liability

By Bill Hastie, Hastie Financial Group



Over the years, the 401(k) plan has become the retirement plan of choice for many, if not most, companies. Once the employer adopts the plan, however, they accept a myriad of responsibilities (and liabilities) they probably never anticipated. It's commonplace for employers, especially smaller companies, to delegate many of the day-to-day responsibilities of administering the plan.

Regarding plan investments, the Department of Labor (DOL) gives plan sponsors/trustees the fiduciary responsibility of developing and implementing a prudent process to select, monitor and replace (as needed) investments available to plan participants. To assist the plan sponsor in reducing their investment liability, the legislation that governs employer-sponsored retirement plans, The

Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA), affords trustees the ability to offload investment-related risk in one of two ways.

First, the trustee can hire an ERISA 3(21) Investment Advisor. These retirement plan advisors help plan trustees to evaluate, select, and monitor an investment menu suited to the unique needs of their workforce. This service is intended for plan trustees that wish to retain discretion over the investment menu. Here, the plan sponsor shares investment liability with the 3(21) advisor.

The second option allows the plan sponsor to completely relieve themselves of investment-related liability for the plan by hiring an ERISA 3(38) Investment Manager. In this arrangement, the Investment Manager serves as chief investment officer (CIO) to select, monitor, and replace funds without any direction or input from the trustee. Within this arrangement, the plan sponsor delegates all investment oversight to the Investment Manager.

Plan sponsors can go a step further in reducing their liability by hiring an ERISA 3(16) Fiduciary Administrator. The Wagner Law Group, a nationally recognized ERISA law firm, defines a 3(16) fiduciary as "an administrator with ERISA

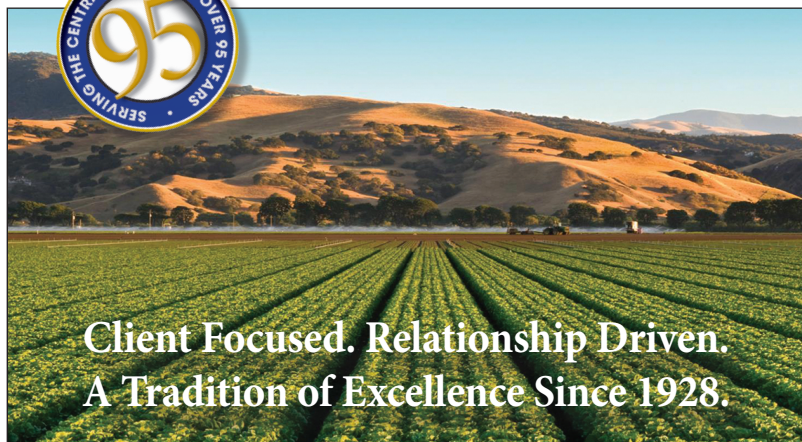
reporting and disclosure duties." Full 3(16) fiduciary services often include accepting the fiduciary responsibility for performing the vast majority of plan administration: maintaining plan documents in accordance with IRS/DOL regulations, tracking employee eligibility, ensuring communications meet DOL requirements, performing nondiscrimination testing, and sending required participant notices.

When a plan sponsor retains the services of an ERISA 3(21)/3(38) and/or 3(16), they are most often left with only three primary responsibilities: deposit employee deferrals on a timely basis, provide an annual employee census and monitor the plan's various service providers.

What plans make the best candidates to retain a 3(16) fiduciary administrator? It's not so much based on plan size as it is based on plan needs. It's true that larger 401(k) plans, those with 100+ participants, are often good candidates simply based on the volume of employee needs and activity. Most often, it is plan sponsors attempting to accomplish one of two objectives: either to maintain a "hands-off" approach to their 401(k) plan as much as possible, to limit their fiduciary liability related to their plan, or both.

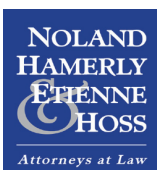
Many plan trustees have found both maximum "hands-off" of plan duties and fiduciary protection by retaining the services of both an ERISA 3(38) Investment Manager and a 3(16) Fiduciary Administrator. 🌿

Bill Hastie, MBA, CFP®, CIMA®, AIFA®, is a Financial Advisor and Managing Partner with locally owned Hastie Financial Group and can be contacted at william.hastie@hastiefg.com.



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The Path to Relief: Management of Leg Pain from Peripheral Artery and Venous Disease

By Chris Haubert, Salinas Valley Health

Living with peripheral artery disease (PAD) or venous disease can feel like navigating a maze of pain and uncertainty. Understanding the condition and effective treatment options is the first step to feeling better and staying active.

PAD and venous disease affect millions but are often underdiagnosed. Many people don't recognize their symptoms or know the potential health consequences. Jamil Matthews, MD, a vascular and endovascular surgeon at Salinas Valley Health, has made it his life's work to help patients find a path toward healing from these debilitating diseases.

Key Differences between PAD and Venous Disease

PAD and venous disease both impact blood vessels but affect different systems. Arteries transport oxygenated blood from the heart, while veins return deoxygenated blood. PAD specifically pertains to arterial issues, where atherosclerotic plaque buildup narrows vessels, restricting blood flow to the limbs. Matthews explains, "You can have pain with walking, which we call claudication, and even pain at rest — where the tissue is so choked of blood that even without activity you start to feel pain." In severe cases, this condition can lead to wounds and amputation.



"Venous insufficiency occurs when the valves in the veins fail, causing blood to flow backward," says Matthews. "This disorder, particularly in the lower legs, leads to pooling blood, resulting in swelling, varicose or spider veins, skin discoloration, and in extreme situations, ulcers or amputation."

Important Risk Factors

Smoking is a major risk factor for PAD, as it causes inflammation in blood vessels and promotes plaque formation, which reduces blood flow. Other significant risk factors include high cholesterol, hypertension, diabetes, and end-stage renal disease, as well as age and genetic predisposition. "Often, my patients will

come in and tell me they have family members who have had similar symptoms," says Matthews.

Early Recognition of Symptoms

Recognizing symptoms early is crucial, with claudication — pain in calves, thighs, or buttocks during walking being common in PAD cases. This pain occurs due to insufficient oxygen supply during activity. Symptoms may escalate to pain at rest, underscoring severely reduced blood flow. As Matthews notes, "It's the last stop on the subway train... the last spot where the blood is going to make it to, and that area is being choked of blood, even at rest."

Venous disease symptoms can also vary widely, starting as mild varicose veins and escalating to leg swelling, fatigue, pain, and itching. Advanced cases can lead to skin discoloration and ulcers.

Diagnosis of PAD and Venous Disease

Diagnosis requires a thorough physical examination, and a vascular specialist is essential for proper evaluation. Non-invasive imaging techniques, especially duplex ultrasound, play a crucial role. "This tells us several things," says Matthews. Does this patient have peripheral artery disease? Is it significant? And, it helps us determine if the issue

requires further studies."

Minimally Invasive Treatment Options

Many patients find relief with non-surgical treatments, making it vital to consult a vascular specialist familiar with both conditions. For PAD, quitting smoking and engaging in cardiovascular activity are essential. For persistent symptoms, angiograms or surgery may be necessary.

Venous insufficiency targeted compression therapy can be very effective. As Matthews emphasizes, this can make all the difference, "If you put a patient on a physician-monitored compression trial for three months, a large portion of those patients will not require any further treatment."

Advancements in Vascular Surgery

Major advancements in vascular surgery have reduced the risks and increased the options. In venous disease, minimally invasive techniques such as radiofrequency ablation and medical glue have revolutionized patient care, allowing for outpatient procedures with shorter recovery times. "Ultimately, I think it's important for patients to understand they are their best advocate," says Matthews. "If you notice symptoms... see a vascular specialist immediately." 🌱



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Salinas Valley Health Celebrates National Hospital Week and Hosts Barbecue and Awards Ceremony

By Karina Rusk, Salinas Valley Health

A barbecue and awards ceremony held in May at Salinas Valley Health was the highlight of a weeklong celebration of activities marking National Nurses and Hospital Week. Salinas Valley Health is one of the largest employers in the region with more than 2,100 individuals serving the communities health and medical needs.

"We're honoring some exceptional individuals and departments today, however, this gathering is truly a celebration of our collective efforts at Salinas Valley Health," said Dr. Allen Radner, President/CEO at Salinas Valley Health at the ceremony. "I am amazed every day at the incredible team of professionals we have at this organization and the outstanding care we provide to everyone in our community."

During this annual celebratory occasion, Salinas Valley Health recognizes people in numerous categories reflecting the organizational STAR values of Support, Teamwork, Accountability and Respect and what are called Exemplars in the Magnet Program recognizing nursing excellence. Salinas Valley Health achieved Magnet Recognition in 2021, a status fewer than 10% of hospitals nationwide currently hold. Coincidentally, this month, Salinas Valley Health also received its 14th consecutive "A" Patient Safety rating from The Leapfrog Group.

"As a team, our focus is always on our patients and delivering quality care," said Carla A. Spencer, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, Salinas Valley Health Chief Nursing Officer. "However, as you can tell from all of the emotional speeches today, our work is not a job. Serving the community is a passion and we consider our colleagues as family."



Table of Salinas Valley Health staff members at SVH's barbecue and award ceremonies marking National Nurses and Hospital Week in May. Richard Green Photography



Members of the Mobile Clinic, winners of the Team STAR Award, at Salinas Valley Health's celebration marking National Nurses and Hospital Week. Richard Green Photography

Several awards were presented during a yellow brick road, there's no place like Salinas Valley Health themed ceremony titled "Achieving Excellence Together." The peer-nominated team and individual awards are a highly anticipated secret until the ceremony announcements.

In addition to Employee of the Year, Nurse of the Year and Physician of the Year, the two big team honors for 2025 went to the Emergency Department, which sees an average

of 175 patient visits every day or nearly 64,000 people a year and the Mobile Clinic, which is the longest running service of its kind in Monterey County, logging 30,000 miles, achieving nearly 20,000 patient visits and feeding more than 42,000 through the collaborative with the Food Bank for Monterey County. The Mobile Clinic has been traveling to underserved communities offering free services since its launch in 2020.

The 2025 National Nurses and Hospital Week honorees include the following:

Employee of the Year: Isabel Paredes, Supply Chain Senior Buyer

Nurse of the Year: Laurel Black, MSN, RN, CCRN, Intensive Care Unit/Critical Care Unit

Physician Excellence in Service and Professionalism: Rakesh Singh, MD

Exemplar Award – Heal: Annie Sebolino, MSN, RN, CMSRN, Observation Care Unit

Exemplar Award – Protect: Shannon Hernandez BSN, RNC-MNN, IBCLC, Mother/Baby Unit

Exemplar Award – Empower: Rita "Kristen" Green-Meadows, BSN, RN, CCRN-CSC, Intensive Care Unit/Critical Care Unit

Exemplar Award – Teach: Pamela Yates, RN, CPN, Pediatrics

STAR Award – Support: Jennifer Mendoza, LCSW, PMH-C, Case Management

STAR Award – Teamwork: Jessica Vega, BS, Cancer Resource Center

STAR Award – Accountability: Margarita "Margie" Reyes-Pantoja, Health Promotion

STAR Award – Respect: A Juana Ponce, Environmental Services

Team Daisy Award: Emergency Department

Team STAR Award: Mobile Clinic

Employee of the Year Nominees

John Zaheer; Kristina Vu; Leticia Suarez; Mary Serrano; Emily Saldana Marquez, BA; Gabriela Enriquez, BA; Miguel Puga Jr.; Patricia Torres; Anita Gonzalez; Brandon Patterson, RPh; Duane Griffin, RPh; Olga Volozhina, RPh; Matthew Song, PharmD, MBA, MSBA; Rosana Buslon, PT, DPT;

Julie Koesel; Holly Lombardi, RDMS; Steven Nguyen; Rene Rodriguez; Tracy Da Silva; Valerie Rodriguez; Kelly Flower MSN/MHA, RN, CCRN; Marichu Albarote, CAN; Guillermina "Guille" Becerra; James Lewis, CEP; Rosanelda Robles, CCS, CCS-P; Ana Mendez-Zamora; Deidre Medrano, LCSW; Iren Nicholas, LVN; Evette Alonzo, CMA; Carol Renn, ODS-C; Julie Martin Deeth; Andres Velasquez Gonzalez, BS; and Sandy Cortez, BA.

Nurse of the Year Nominees

Francisco Curiel, BSN, RN; Maria "MJ" Andalio-Angeles, RN; Lisa Garcia, MSN, RN, CNS; Tyler Hays, RN; Ann Buco-Aninzo, MSN, RN, CPHQ; Victoria Beasley, MSN, RN, CEN; Mary Sutliff, BSN, RN; Cyril Sontillano-Davis, BSN, RN; Maureen Felice, BSN, RN, COHN; Rosemarie Fernandez, BSN, RN; Siegrid Evilla, BSN, RN, A-IPC; Aimee Freeman, BSN, RN; April Rose Maniwang, BSN, RN; Christine Lorraine Parreno, BSN, RN; Weronika Paden, BSN, RNC-MNN; Chona Alforque, MSN, RN, CCRN; David Martin, RN; Kimberly Jacobs, BSN, RN, PCCN; Monica Loza-Gonzalez, RN; Claudia Tavares, BSN, RN, PCCN; Gabriela Morales, BSN, RN, PCCN; Katherine Jimenez, BSN, RN, PCCN; Megan Lopez, MSN, RN, VA-BC; Natasha Limosnero, MSN, RN, CMSRN; Christine "Tina" Kerr, RN; Teresa "Terrie" Salah, BSN, RN, OCN; and Ashley Folck, BSN, RN, OCN.

Physician Nominees

Alberto Martinez, MD; Alexandra Shawo, MD; Anastasia Klick, MD; Bert Tardieu, MD; Bruce Kaufman, DO; Carolina Zanevchic, MD; Deepika Chadive, MD; Eric Fajardo, MD; Erica Locke, MD; Eshan Labroo, MD; Geetha Varma, MD; Herjap Janda, MD; Jaime Gonzalez, MD; Joanna Oppenheim, MD; Joshua Tan, DO; Kelsey Gray, MD; Kenneth Jones, MD; Kimberly Moulton, MD; Kristin Leonard, DO; Madison Hunt, MD; Mahendra Poudel, MD; and Yousef Hindi, MD. 🌿



CHAMBER NEW MEMBER PROFILES

Patria on Main

For years, Patria thrived as a beloved restaurant in the community, known for its dedication to quality, hospitality, and unforgettable flavors. Now under new ownership, Ernie Manuel Amorim and Jose Aranda Aguilera have taken the reins, bringing a fresh, dynamic energy to the restaurant while staying true to its rich legacy. Tucked into the heart of Oldtown Salinas, Patria on Main is a vibrant bistro where every dish tells a story of seasonal freshness and culinary passion. Hand-selected local ingredients take center stage, transforming into artfully crafted dishes that celebrate the bounty of Monterey County and beyond. From farm-fresh produce to locally sourced meats and seafood, Patria on Main's menu is a love letter to the changing seasons and the flavors they bring. Patriaonmain.com, patriaonmain@gmail.com, (831) 424-5555



Pasta Mia

Pasta Mia is an Italian quick service restaurant in Northridge Mall Food Court in Salinas. Pasta Mia offers Italian food made with passion and pride. Co-owner/Chef Jose Aranda prepares his own signature dishes as well as classic Italian meals — always made with top quality, fresh ingredients. And you will find our service is prompt and friendly. Prices are competitive and service is fast. Stop by and enjoy your favorite Italian meal before, after or during your shopping at Northridge Mall. Pasta Mia can also cater your parties of up to 1,000 people. We can also serve an unlimited number of guests at an off-premises location. Talk to co-owner Ernie Amorim or Aranda about catering your next special event. Pastamiasalinas.com, (831) 272-3292



The Club at Crazy Horse Ranch

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Floor & Decor is a leading specialty retailer of hard surface flooring, offering the broadest in-stock selection of tile, wood, stone, related tools and flooring accessories at everyday low prices. Founded in 2000 and headquartered in Atlanta, Floor & Decor is one of Fortune's 100 fastest-growing companies. At Floor & Decor, homeowners and professional contractors have access to superstore selection at warehouse prices with showroom quality. Its extensive selection of in-stock product allows customers to get what they need when they need it. And because they source directly from manufacturers or quarries worldwide, our top quality products are priced below those of our competitors. The Floor & Decor brand is also bolstered by a local focus that allows them to create a store experience and mix of products that meet the needs of each market they serve. They empower their store managers, or chief executive merchants, to create a local shopping experience. Flooranddecor.com, Ghazwan.MohammedAll@flooranddecor.com, (408) 713-0202



Relay for Life of the Salinas Valley Returns to Salinas City Center

By Athena Tracey, Relay for Life



Cancer survivor Phil Gomez cuts the ribbon at the 2024 Relay for Life in Salinas. Juan Avila Photography

Relay for Life of The Salinas Valley will be back in the Salinas City Center, Saturday, Sept. 20, 2025, from 4 to 9 p.m. Once again, we will illuminate the Salinas sign in purple (the color purple symbolizes all types of cancer), have banners of hope lining Main Street, celebrate cancer survivors, and remember those lost to cancer or still fighting the battle with luminaria bags.

As we have done in the past, we will be partnering with the Salinas Chamber of Commerce on Aug. 28 to "Paint the Town Purple." Leonard Batti, Chamber Chair and Relay Hospitality and Entertainment chair, said, "The community involvement

and spirit for the Relay for Life is amazing."

In the last 27 years, the Salinas Relay has raised over \$16.6 million in the fight against cancer. We have routinely been in the top 10 out of over 3,000 relays nationwide, helping fight against this terrible disease. Last year, we raised \$643,000, and for the first time, we were #1 in the country, all due to the hard work and dedication of our volunteers, team members, and sponsors. Mark Kennedy, Chamber Executive Committee, Relay Logistics Chair, and last year's co-chair, said, "Salinas always shows up, that's what makes our Relay so unique."

Once again, DGDG Salinas

In 2025, there will be more than 2 million new cancers diagnosed in the United States and 618,120 cancer deaths. Relay For Life has raised more than \$6.8 billion to support these efforts since 1985.

Honda, has donated a Honda Civic to be raffled off leading up to and the night of the Relay. It will be located at Salinas City Center Farmers' Market and various locations in the area where raffle tickets can be purchased with all proceeds going to the Relay.

In 2025, there will be more than 2 million new cancers diagnosed

in the United States and 618,120 cancer deaths. Relay For Life has raised more than \$6.8 billion to support these efforts since 1985, and we hope to continue adding to that figure this year, working toward the American Cancer Society's mission to end cancer as we know it, for everyone. Nancy Valdez of the American Cancer Society said, "The Salinas Relay is considered one of the premier Relays in the country that others strive to emulate."

If you would like to participate this year as a team, sponsor, survivor, or volunteer, please visit our site at relayforlife.org/salinasca or contact our American Cancer Society lead, Nancy Valdez, at (831) 578-7630. 🌱

Monterey County Jurisdictions are Assigned Goals for New Housing. What’s Their Progress Toward Those Goals?

By Kevin Dayton, Government Affairs Liaison

**All Monterey County Jurisdictions
Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) Progress Report Through 2024
2023-2031 Housing Element (6th Cycle)
Compiled by Income Level**

Cities + Unincorporated County	Income Level	Goal for Units	2023 Projection Period (6/30 - 12/14)	2023 (12/15 - 12/31)	2024	2025 through 2031	Total Units for Cycle	Shortfall of Units	% of Units Achieved
Median Family Income (100%) for Monterey County in 2024 is \$10,206 annually for a family of four and \$7,230 for one person.									
CARMEL	Very Low (Less than 50% of Area Median Income)	113	0	0	0	-	0	113	0%
DEL REY OAKS		60	0	0	0	-	0	60	0%
GONZALES		173	0	0	0	-	0	173	0%
GREENFIELD		101	28	0	0	-	28	73	28%
KING CITY		97	0	0	0	-	0	97	0%
MARINA		94	0	0	0	-	0	94	0%
MONTEREY		1,177	0	0	0	-	0	1,177	0%
PACIFIC GROVE		302	6	0	1	-	7	355	2%
SALINAS		920	4	0	0	-	4	916	<1%
SAND CITY		29	0	0	0	-	0	29	0%
SEASIDE		86	0	0	0	-	0	86	0%
SOLEDAD		100	0	0	0	-	0	100	0%
UNINCORPORATED COUNTY		1,070	0	0	0	-	0	1,070	0%
TOTAL		4,412	38	0	1	-	39	4,373	1%
CARMEL	Low (50-80% of Area Median Income)	74	0	0	0	-	0	74	0%
DEL REY OAKS		38	0	0	2	-	2	36	5%
GONZALES		115	0	0	0	-	0	115	0%
GREENFIELD		66	72	0	0	-	72	6	109%
KING CITY		63	1	0	4	-	5	58	8%
MARINA		62	0	0	0	-	0	62	0%
MONTEREY		769	0	0	0	-	0	769	0%
PACIFIC GROVE		237	6	0	5	-	11	226	5%
SALINAS		400	2	0	0	-	2	398	<1%
SAND CITY		39	0	0	0	-	0	39	0%
SEASIDE		55	0	0	0	-	0	55	0%
SOLEDAD		65	0	0	0	-	0	65	0%
UNINCORPORATED COUNTY		700	45	0	44	-	89	611	13%
TOTAL		2,883	126	0	55	-	181	2,702	6%
CARMEL	Moderate (80-100% of Area Median Income)	44	0	0	0	-	0	44	0%
DEL REY OAKS		24	1	0	1	-	2	22	8%
GONZALES		321	0	0	0	-	0	321	0%
GREENFIELD		184	15	3	23	-	41	143	22%
KING CITY		178	0	0	0	-	0	178	0%
MARINA		173	0	0	0	-	0	173	0%
MONTEREY		462	0	0	0	-	0	462	0%
PACIFIC GROVE		142	6	0	5	-	11	131	8%
SALINAS		1,692	0	0	0	-	0	1,692	0%
SAND CITY		49	0	0	0	-	0	49	0%
SEASIDE		156	0	0	0	-	0	156	0%
SOLEDAD		183	0	0	0	-	0	183	0%
UNINCORPORATED COUNTY		420	0	0	0	-	0	420	0%
TOTAL		4,028	22	3	29	-	54	3,974	1%
CARMEL	Above Moderate (120% or more of Area Median Income)	118	0	0	22	-	22	96	19%
DEL REY OAKS		62	0	0	0	-	0	62	0%
GONZALES		657	1	0	1	-	2	655	<1%
GREENFIELD		379	0	0	1	-	1	378	<1%
KING CITY		364	29	0	59	-	88	276	24%
MARINA		356	48	7	134	-	189	167	53%
MONTEREY		1,246	6	1	57	-	44	1,202	4%
PACIFIC GROVE		384	2	0	0	-	2	382	1%
SALINAS		3,402	141	1	221	-	363	3,039	11%
SAND CITY		113	1	0	0	-	1	112	<1%
SEASIDE		319	44	0	8	-	52	267	16%
SOLEDAD		376	0	0	12	-	12	364	3%
UNINCORPORATED COUNTY		1,136	68	5	119	-	192	944	17%
TOTAL		8,972	540	14	614	-	968	8,004	11%
GRAND TOTAL	Very Low	4,412	38	0	1	-	39	4,373	1%
	Low	2,883	126	0	55	-	181	2,702	6%
	Moderate	4,028	22	3	29	-	54	3,974	1%
	Above Moderate	8,972	540	14	614	-	968	8,004	11%
TOTAL		20,295	526	17	690	-	1,242	19,053	6%
Prepared on April 9, 2025 by Kevin Dayton for the Monterey Peninsula Chamber of Commerce and Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce.									

**All Monterey County Jurisdictions
Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) Progress Report Through 2024
2023-2031 Housing Element (6th Cycle)
Compiled by Jurisdiction**

Cities + Unincorporated County	Income Category	Goal for Units	2023 Projection Period (6/30 - 12/14)	2023 (12/15 - 12/31)	2024	2025 through 2031	Total Units for Cycle	Shortfall of Units	% of Units Achieved
Median Family Income (100%) for Monterey County in 2024 is \$10,206 annually for a family of four and \$7,230 for one person.									
Very Low Income: Less than 50% of Area Median Income. Low Income: 50-80% of Area Median Income. Moderate Income: 80-120% of Area Median Income.									
CARMEL	Very Low	113	0	0	0	-	0	113	0%
	Low	34	0	0	0	-	0	34	0%
	Moderate	44	0	0	0	-	0	44	0%
	Above Moderate	118	0	0	22	-	22	96	19%
Total		349	0	0	22	-	22	327	6%
DEL REY OAKS	Very Low	60	0	0	0	-	0	60	0%
	Low	38	0	0	2	-	2	36	5%
	Moderate	24	1	0	1	-	2	22	8%
	Above Moderate	62	0	0	0	-	0	62	0%
Total		184	1	0	3	-	4	180	2%
GONZALES	Very Low	173	0	0	0	-	0	173	0%
	Low	115	0	0	0	-	0	115	0%
	Moderate	321	0	0	0	-	0	321	0%
	Above Moderate	657	1	0	1	-	2	655	<1%
Total		1,266	1	0	1	-	2	1,264	<1%
GREENFIELD	Very Low	101	28	0	0	-	28	73	28%
	Low	66	72	0	0	-	72	4	109%
	Moderate	184	15	3	23	-	41	143	22%
	Above Moderate	379	0	0	1	-	1	378	<1%
Total		730	115	3	24	-	142	588	19%
KING CITY	Very Low	97	0	0	0	-	0	97	0%
	Low	63	1	0	4	-	5	58	8%
	Moderate	178	0	0	0	-	0	178	0%
	Above Moderate	364	29	0	59	-	88	276	24%
Total		702	30	0	63	-	93	609	13%
MARINA	Very Low	94	0	0	0	-	0	94	0%
	Low	62	0	0	0	-	0	62	0%
	Moderate	173	0	0	0	-	0	173	0%
	Above Moderate	356	48	7	134	-	189	167	53%
Total		685	48	7	134	-	189	496	26%
MONTEREY	Very Low	1,177	0	0	0	-	0	1,177	0%
	Low	769	0	0	0	-	0	769	0%
	Moderate	462	0	0	0	-	0	462	0%
	Above Moderate	1,346	6	1	57	-	44	1,302	4%
Total		3,694	6	1	57	-	44	3,650	1%
PACIFIC GROVE	Very Low	362	6	0	1	-	7	355	2%
	Low	237	6	0	5	-	11	226	5%
	Moderate	142	6	0	5	-	11	131	8%
	Above Moderate	384	2	0	0	-	2	382	1%
Total		1,125	20	0	11	-	31	1,094	3%
SALINAS	Very Low	920	4	0	0	-	4	916	<1%
	Low	600	2	0	0	-	2	598	<1%
	Moderate	1,692	0	0	0	-	0	1,692	0%
	Above Moderate	3,402	141	1	221	-	363	3,039	11%
Total		6,614	147	1	221	-	369	6,245	6%
SAND CITY	Very Low	59	0	0	0	-	0	59	0%
	Low	39	0	0	0	-	0	39	0%
	Moderate	49	0	0	0	-	0	49	0%
	Above Moderate	113	1	0	0	-	1	112	<1%
Total		260	1	0	0	-	1	259	<1%
SEASIDE	Very Low	86	0	0	0	-	0	86	0%
	Low	55	0	0	0	-	0	55	0%
	Moderate	156	0	0	0	-	0	156	0%
	Above Moderate	319	44	0	8	-	52	267	16%
Total		616	44	0	8	-	52	564	8%
SOLEDAD	Very Low	100	0	0	0	-	0	100	0%
	Low	65	0	0	0	-	0	65	0%
	Moderate	183	0	0	0	-	0	183	0%
	Above Moderate	376	0	0	12	-	12	364	3%
Total		724	0	0	12	-	12	712	2%
UNINCORPORATED COUNTY	Very Low	1,070	0	0	0	-	0	1,070	0%
	Low	700	45	0	44	-	89	611	13%
	Moderate	420	0	0	0	-	0	420	0%
	Above Moderate	1,136	68	5	119	-	192	944	17%
Total		3,326	113	5	163	-	281	3,045	8%
GRAND TOTAL	Very Low	4,412	38	0	1	-	39	4,373	1%
	Low	2,883	126	0	55	-	181	2,702	6%
	Moderate	4,028	22	3	29	-	54	3,974	1%
	Above Moderate	8,972	540	14	614	-	968	8,004	11%
Total		20,295	526	17	690	-	1,242	19,053	6%
Prepared on April 9, 2025 by Kevin Dayton for the Monterey Peninsula Chamber of Commerce and Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce.									

The State of California requires all 483 cities and 58 counties to adopt a plan called a “Housing Element” as part of their overall General Plan. This Housing Element is meant to identify opportunities to provide an adequate number of housing units at different income levels to meet the needs of residents and future residents, within a regional context.

As stated in California law, “It is the intent of the Legislature that cities, counties, and cities and counties [San Francisco is a city and a county] should undertake all necessary actions to encourage, promote, and facilitate the development of housing to accommodate

the entire regional housing need, and reasonable actions should be taken by local and regional governments to ensure that future housing production meets, at a minimum, the regional housing need established for planning purposes.”

To quantify the need for new housing, California law requires the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to determine the existing and projected need for housing in each region of the state, in consultation with the state’s regional planning governments. These projected numbers of new residential units are referred to as the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). (The acronym is typically

pronounced as REEN-NAH.)

For the 12 cities and the county’s unincorporated areas (land not within the boundaries of a city), the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) determined the number of needed housing units for the current cycle from 2023 through 2031 (the sixth cycle since 1969).

What has happened since AMBAG adopted those 6th Cycle Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) goals

for Monterey County in October 2022? Your Chamber did the tedious research and compiled the data, for you.

These tables were created for the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce and Monterey Peninsula Chamber of Commerce to reveal the progress through 2024 of the 12 cities and unincorporated parts of Monterey County in permitting new housing units toward their Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) goals. 🌱

listed his 2025 infrastructure priorities at the Chamber’s Annual Legislative Breakfast on Feb. 28. This was an intriguing statement, as most people would assume maintenance of streets, sidewalks, and trees would be the city’s top infrastructure priority.

When the Salinas City Council held their 2025 Strategic Planning Meeting on Feb. 22, staff reported that the City of Salinas was expected to get federal funding for industrial wastewater projects, but now it’s uncertain if the city will receive that funding. At the same strategic planning meeting, the City Manager’s Office listed the “Monterey One Water Conveyance & Treatment Fee” for industrial wastewater on its list of major projects and initiatives. Despite the apparent importance of the city’s industrial wastewater system, it’s likely few people knew the background to these statements.

For example, the federal funding at risk is \$20 million authorized in the Water Resources Development Act of 2024 for improvements to the Salinas Industrial Wastewater Treatment Facility and Conveyance System. While authorization for funding is an important step in the federal budget process, it’s not a guarantee. It needs to be followed by appropriation of funds as an actual budget expenditure. The City of Salinas will need to convince the Trump Administration and the new 119th Congress for 2025-2026 that this expenditure is worthwhile despite a movement for federal budget cuts.

An opportunity to explain the importance of the industrial wastewater system in a public forum occurred at the April 22, 2025 Salinas City Council meeting, with an agenda item to approve “an agreement with Monterey One Water for the temporary diversion of industrial wastewater from the City’s Industrial Wastewater Treatment Facility using the Pond 3 Pump

Short-Term Agreements Approved by Salinas City Council for Diversion of Industrial Wastewater to Monterey One Water (M1W) Regional Treatment Plant

Date Approved by Salinas City Council	Identification of Agreement
October 7, 2014	Industrial Waste Water and Storm Water Multi-Party Agreement
April 4, 2015	Produce Wash Water Recycling MOU Amendment
October 27, 2015	Produce Wash Water Recycling Agreement for Conveyance and Treatment
October 12, 2021	Short-Term Pond 3 Industrial Wastewater Effluent Utilization Agreement
May 24, 2022	Short-Term Pond 3 Industrial Wastewater Effluent Utilization Agreement
August 20, 2024	Temporary Pond 3 Diversion Agreement
April 22, 2025	Interim Agreement With Monterey One Water for Treatment of Pond 3 Industrial Wastewater

Station to Monterey One Water.” Instead, this item was regarded as routine, non-controversial business and approved on the consent calendar, without discussion.

The Public Deserves More Explanation of Industrial Wastewater

The City of Salinas has three wastewater systems: municipal wastewater, stormwater, and industrial wastewater.

Municipal wastewater is obvious. It goes down the drain or gets flushed down the toilet to the sewer (unless your home or business uses a septic system). We know sewage must go to a treatment plant somewhere, as dumping raw sewage into a river or the ocean is frowned upon in our community nowadays. Likewise, stormwater flow is obvious when it rains or when someone washes a car.

But the public does not observe production and flow of the city’s industrial wastewater. And the City of Salinas Industrial Wastewater Treatment Facility, located adjacent to the Salinas River near the intersection of Davis Road and Reservoir Road, is concealed from public roads. A small sign on Davis Road identifies it.

Nevertheless, production, collection, and treatment of industrial wastewater may determine the

future of economic development and housing supply in the City of Salinas, the Salinas Valley, and the Monterey Peninsula. Several multi-agency controversies related to industrial wastewater from Salinas defy easy solutions. In the meantime, local competitors are recognizing an opportunity to displace the City of Salinas as a leader in industrial wastewater processing.

What is the Salinas Industrial Wastewater Conveyance System?

In the areas of South Salinas zoned for industrial use, 23 facilities have active permits to discharge industrial wastewater into the completely separate Salinas Industrial Wastewater Conveyance and Treatment System. At the southern terminus of Airport Road, the “Airport Lift Station” assists in the movement of industrial wastewater from these 23 facilities through pipelines that eventually merge into a single pipeline at Blanco Road. Wastewater in that pipeline flows to the Salinas Pump Station at Salinas Treatment Plant No.1 (TP-1) site, a dormant sewage treatment plant on Hitchcock Road that now serves as a transfer station for the three kinds of wastewater from the City of Salinas.

At this location, industrial wastewater can be diverted one of two directions with a shunt, a mechanism

to allow diversion of wastewater flow in multiple directions. Wastewater can go directly to the interceptor pipeline that connects to the Monterey One Water (M1W) Regional Treatment Plant (RTP) near the City of Marina. Or it can be conveyed through another pipeline to the Salinas Industrial Wastewater Treatment Facility (SIWTF).

What Is the Salinas Industrial Wastewater Treatment Facility (SIWTF)?

The Salinas Industrial Wastewater Treatment Facility (SIWTF) has expanded several times since it was established in 1943 by a company producing dehydrated vegetables for military and civilian purposes. After World War II, the facility was transferred to city ownership under the conditions of the lease.

Today the facility consists of an influent pumping station, a lagoon for treatment through surface aerators and natural anaerobic decomposition, 54 rapid infiltration-drying beds, and three percolation/evaporation ponds. A pump station was completed in 2020 to divert water from Pond 3 to the interceptor pipeline that goes from Salinas to the M1W Regional Treatment Plant.

Here are the three possible destinations for City of Salinas industrial wastewater:

- (1) From the Salinas Pump

- Station to the Salinas Industrial Wastewater Treatment Plant, where it is treated and then evaporates or percolates down into groundwater (13-19 feet below the ground surface), ultimately to infiltrate the 180/400 Foot (“Pressure”) Aquifer.
- (2) From the Salinas Pump Station through the Salinas interceptor pipeline to the M1W Regional Treatment Plant for treatment and possible recycling.
- (3) From Pond 3 of the Salinas Industrial Wastewater Treatment Plant to the Salinas interceptor pipeline to the M1W Regional Treatment Plant for treatment and possible recycling.

The Industrial Wastewater System as a Driver of Economic Development

Most of the 23 users of this system are fresh vegetable processors, packers, and coolers, including salad kit producers that use a saline solution to wash lettuce, broccoli, and other produce. Two users are box companies that manufacture corrugated cardboard containers. One user processes, freezes, and packages seafood such as squid, mackerel, and anchovies. The top individual user (Taylor Fresh Foods) produces about 50% of the wastewater, and the top five users produce about 90% of the wastewater. The City of Salinas describes its industrial wastewater collection and treatment system as “unique.” But competition is coming, as readers of the Business Journal know from the February 2025 article “City of Gonzales Moves Forward With Plans for a Dedicated Industrial Wastewater System.” Is this a legitimate threat to the City of Salinas? Chamber members may remember when Mann Packing decided in 2017 to build a new facility in Gonzales rather than Salinas. The City of Salinas industrial wastewater permit for Del Monte Fresh/Mann Packing Company at

City of Salinas Industrial Wastewater Flow Data 2013-2024									
	Monthly Average of Flows to Industrial Wastewater Treatment Facility (Million Gallons Per Day - MGD)	Industrial Wastewater Treatment Facility Flow Totals (Millions of Gallons - MG)	Industrial Wastewater Treatment Facility Flow Totals (Converted to Acre-Feet - AF)	Influent Flow Diverted to Regional Treatment Plant from Shunt Valve (Millions of Gallons - MG)	Influent Flow Diverted to Regional Treatment Plant from Shunt Valve (Converted to Acre-Feet - AF)	Effluent Flow Diverted to Regional Treatment Plant from Pond 3 Pump Station (Millions of Gallons - MG)	Effluent Flow Diverted to Regional Treatment Plant from Pond 3 Pump Station (Converted to Acre-Feet - AF)	Stormwater Influent Flow Diversion Phases 1A and 1B (Millions of Gallons - MG)	Stormwater Influent Flow Diversion Phases 1A and 1B (Converted to Acre-Feet - AF)
2013	2.88	?	?	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2014	2.32	?	?	1,000	3,068.90	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2015	2.95	?	?	?	?	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2016	2.69	?	?	592.88	1,819.49	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2017	2.90	729	2,237.23	167.1	512.81	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2018	2.76	1009.66	3,098.55	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2019	1.97	716.99	2,200.37	262.5	805.59	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2020	2.62	959.29	2,943.97	6.76	20.75	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2021	2.45	897.1	2,753.11	106.78	327.70	3.54	10.86	0.544	1.67
2022	2.06	753.1	2,311.19	68.3	209.61	198.74	609.91	1.581	4.85
2023	2.00	736.08	2,258.96	139.97	429.55	73.1	224.34	4.83	14.82
2024	2.50	914.02	2,805.04	2.2	6.75	227.94	699.53	0	0
Total/Average	2.51	6,715.24	20,608.40	2,346.49	7,201.14	503.32	1,544.64	6.96	21.34
<div>Sources: City of Salinas Industrial Wastewater Treatment Facility Annual Reports 2013-2024. Acre-Feet is determined by multiplying the reported amount of million gallons by 3.0689.</div> <div>2013-2016 - Some basic flow data provided in City of Salinas Industrial Wastewater Treatment Facility Annual Reports for later years was not included in these years. 2014 - Diversion of industrial wastewater to Monterey One Water Regional Treatment Plant began in April. 2014 - The reported influent flow diverted to the Monterey One Water (M1W) Regional Treatment Plant (one billion gallons) is approximate. 2018 - Monterey One Water (M1W) did not have a permit to accept industrial wastewater. 2021 - Pond 3 diversion and stormwater diversion infrastructure is completed and operational. 2024 - Stormwater diversion is suspended because of reduced capacity in treatment facility ponds resulting from sediment deposits during 2023 flooding.</div>									

1230 Hansen St. was terminated in 2024 after the company relocated its operations. In the early 2020s, Growers Ice prepared for an expansion of its Salinas facility and publicly expressed the need for improvements to the industrial wastewater system. There was discussion of the City of Salinas creating an Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District (EIFD) for this purpose, and the Chamber supported establishment of an EIFD in 2023 with the assumption it would be used as the vehicle for the City of Salinas to fund improvement and expansion of its industrial wastewater system.

Challenge for the Industrial Wastewater System: Avoiding Overflow into the Salinas River

In the past, excess water from the Salinas Industrial Wastewater Treatment Facility went into the Salinas River. Over time, federal and state governments restricted this undesirable overflow. In 2002, the City of Salinas chose

to apply to the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (part of the California State Water Resources Control Board) for a permit that would regulate discharge of waste onto land (adjacent to the Salinas River) rather than a permit that would regulate discharge of waste into surface waters (the Salinas River itself). This change from a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit to a Waste Discharge Requirements (WDR) permit resulted in significant savings for the City of Salinas, but ended any ability of the city to discharge overflow treated water into the river. Trying to prevent overflow has been a chief concern of the City of Salinas in recent years. In the early 2010s, changes in agricultural practices and innovations caused an increase in industrial wastewater production. For example, salad kits became increasingly popular among consumers, and companies began processing produce in Salinas during the winter rather than in the growing areas of Yuma, Arizona.

At the same time, percolation rates into the ground at the Salinas Industrial Wastewater Treatment Facility (SIWTF) slowed down. This may have been related to the 2010 start of operations for the Salinas River Diversion Facility (SRDF). This project features a rubber dam that impounds water discharged into the Salinas River during the dry months from the Nacimiento and San Antonio reservoirs in southern Monterey County. Stored in the river upstream from the dam, this water is a supplemental source of irrigation water for the Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project (CSIP) from May to October.

Solution: Salinas Industrial Wastewater Leaves the Salinas Valley

While the City of Salinas considered strategies to prevent potential overflow of industrial wastewater from its treatment facility, an opportunity arose for the city to dispose of some of that water. A regional multi-agency

water recycling program called the Pure Water Monterey/Groundwater Replenishment Project (PWM/GWR) would provide drinking water for the Monterey Peninsula. It would also produce more recycled water for the Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project (CSIP).

In September 2013, the Salinas City Council approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Monterey One Water (then called the Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency) to develop an agreement to use wastewater from the Industrial Wastewater Treatment Facility as new source water for the Pure Water Monterey/Groundwater Replenishment Project.

Since then, the City of Salinas has entered short-term agreements in some years with Monterey One Water (M1W) and the Monterey County Water Resources Agency (MCWRA) to divert industrial wastewater to the Regional Treatment Plant for recycling purposes.

Water Cooperation Evolves into Strained Water Relationships

A long-term agreement for industrial wastewater transfer has never been negotiated, for reasons that the Salinas City Council has never examined in a public meeting. In addition, Monterey One Water has never recycled industrial wastewater under the authority of the 2015 Amended and Restated Water Recycling Agreement (ARWRA) between the Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency (now Monterey One Water - M1W) and the Monterey County Water Resources Agency (MCWRA). In 2022, MCWRA exercised a provision of the 2015 agreement and withdrew from it after one of the conditions was not satisfied.

That 2015 agreement had been established following the 2014 establishment of the so-called “Five Party Agreement”—a “Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Source Waters and Water Recycling.” The five parties

were the Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency (now Monterey One Water - M1W), the Monterey County Water Resources Agency (MCWRA), the City of Salinas, the Marina Coast Water District (MCWD), and the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District (MPWMD).

The complex arrangements for water recycling developed under the authority of such agreements are creative, even ingenious. It isn’t a surprise that this project has won many water industry awards. But it also isn’t a surprise that few people outside of the water industry know how the water flows.

The 2015 Amended and Restated Water Recycling Agreement (ARWRA) was supposed to enable the California American Water Company (Cal Am) to reduce its diversions from the Carmel River system by up to 3,500 acre-feet per year by injecting the same amount of purified recycled water into the Seaside Basin. This was accomplished.

But that 2015 agreement was also supposed to produce “additional recycled water for agricultural irrigation in northern Salinas Valley...It is anticipated that in normal and wet years approximately 4,500 to 4,750 acre-feet per year of additional recycled water supply could be created for agricultural irrigation purposes.” This promised supply of irrigation water has not happened. In fact, CSIP significantly increased its annual use of supplemental wells from 3,173 acre-feet (AF) in 2019 to 4,055 AF in 2020 to 6,964 AF in 2021. This continued into 2022, when on two occasions the Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project (CSIP) could not supply water to farmers as a result of drought conditions. Farmers within the CSIP area were even advised to begin using their own private dormant wells.

Use of CSIP supplemental wells and private wells undermined the effort to stop seawater intrusion within the 180/400 Foot (“Pressure”) Aquifer and increased pumping from the Deep Aquifer. It also led to

claims that the Monterey Peninsula was “taking” water from Salinas at the expense of the Salinas Valley.

Another Challenge for the Industrial Wastewater System: Flooding

In 1995, Salinas River flooding damaged the pond levees and deposited river silt into the infiltration-drying beds and three percolation/evaporation ponds of the Salinas Industrial Wastewater Treatment Facility. Repairs were not completed until 2002.

Again, Salinas River flooding inundated the Industrial Wastewater Treatment Facility in 2023 and deposited silt in the percolation ponds, thus reducing their capacity. This condition continued through 2024 and up to today.

How Can the City of Salinas Resolve Industrial Wastewater Issues?

Here are questions the Salinas City Council could consider at a future study session focused on the Salinas Industrial Wastewater Conveyance and Treatment System:

1. How can the City of Salinas obtain funding (actual cash on hand, not theoretical promises) from public and/or private sources to improve and expand the industrial wastewater system?
2. Is there a way to store additional industrial wastewater, perhaps even at another location?
3. How should the City of Salinas respond to the looming threat of competition for economic development when the City of Gonzales begins operating its industrial wastewater system? Are there other municipalities considering development of an industrial wastewater system?
4. How can the City of Salinas protect the Industrial Wastewater Treatment Facility from Salinas River flooding?
5. What are the terms and conditions that each party is proposing in a long-term agreement for use of City of Salinas industrial

wastewater that gets diverted to the Monterey One Water Regional Treatment Plant? What are the issues in negotiations that could be resolved with mediation and compromise? Are the negotiating parties intractable on any issues?

6. How much industrial wastewater went to various sources under previous short-term agreements, and how much did the City of Salinas have to pay for these conveyances, if anything?
7. If the City of Salinas withdrew its industrial wastewater as a source for the Pure Water Monterey/Groundwater Replenishment Program, would the Monterey Peninsula continue to store enough water in the Seaside Groundwater Basin to fulfill demand?
8. Are farmers treated unfairly when City of Salinas industrial wastewater ends up recycled and conveyed to the Seaside Groundwater Basin, while farmers within the jurisdiction of the Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project have to use supplemental wells and private wells?
9. Can the City of Salinas seek another partner to recycle industrial wastewater, at least as a tactic to put additional pressure on other parties negotiating for a long-term agreement? Is it feasible to proceed with an actual alternative industrial wastewater recycling program?
10. Will there ever be public release of information related to Monterey One Water flow meter failures from 2018 to 2022?
11. Is it wise to avoid saying anything about any of these issues at public meetings, to avoid “water wars” that undermine the cooperative relationships necessary to provide water in Northern Monterey County? Or is openness, transparency, and accountability for the public a better approach at this time? 🌱

Third Annual Monterey Motorsports Festival Offers Car Fans ‘What Car Week Has Been Missing’

By Mac McDonald, Salinas Valley Business Journal

If you don't think the jam-packed weeklong extravaganza called Car Week in August is lacking something, think again.

Consider the third Monterey Motorsports Festival, a multi-event, one night-celebration of car culture whose motto is “This is What Car Week Has Been Missing.” A lofty claim yes, but backed by some solid evidence.

It's a six-hour evening event that has a little bit of everything; has been priced to be affordable and accessible to even the casual car buff; it's family-friendly (how many Car Week events can you say that about?); it offers everything from high-end luxury cars to classic cars, muscle cars, race cars, EVs, supercars, hypercars, off-road vehicles, and even motorcycles; it features interactive and virtual reality exhibits; live music from a variety of bands, DJs and other activities; gourmet food and drinks from street food to fine cuisine; and it serves as the only closing night event of Car Week. Oh, and you can also enter your own vehicle if you believe it deserves to be seen.

There's also a nonprofit angle to the event with three partners: the Monterey County Heritage Foundation, the Monterey County Family Justice Center, and the Law Enforcement Torch Run benefiting Special Olympics Northern California. The permanent booths lining the outside of the main arena will be offered to more than a dozen local nonprofits. The 2025 event will kick off with a ceremonial Torch Run to honor unity, perseverance and purpose.

“It's what Car Week has been

MOTORSPORTS see page 21



The Outlaw Mariachi



Sensory Tribe



The Outlaw Mariachi





A PROFILE IN LEADERSHIP

Councilmember Gloria de la Rosa: A Seasoned Voice for Collaborative Leadership in Salinas

By Colleen Bailey, SVCC CEO

Although recently elected to the Salinas City Council, Gloria de la Rosa is no stranger to public service or city governance. First elected in 1994, she brings over two decades of experience on the Council, coupled with an enduring passion for the well-being of the Salinas community. Her long-standing service has not dimmed her commitment — instead, it has deepened her resolve to foster inclusive, respectful, and effective civic engagement.

“It’s not about me — it’s about us,” de la Rosa says. This ethos underscores her vision of community as a shared endeavor, where government, businesses, and residents must work collaboratively to confront challenges and create opportunities. For de la Rosa, mutual respect remains foundational: “We don’t have to agree on every issue, but we must always treat one another with respect. Some of my closest friends don’t share my views on certain policies, but we still love each other.”

De la Rosa expresses concern over the rise in public divisiveness, which she believes has been amplified by social media. In contrast, she champions a return to direct, personal interaction. Her leadership style is grounded in grassroots engagement — walking neighborhoods, listening to residents’ concerns, and building trust through face-to-face conversations. “That’s how real understanding and real



It’s not about me — it’s about us. We don’t have to agree on every issue, but we must always treat one another with respect.

Some of my closest friends don’t share my views on certain policies, but we still love each other.

change begins,” she says.

As a public servant, de la Rosa is acutely aware of the city’s most pressing issues — public safety, housing, infrastructure, economic development, and workforce readiness. She believes that responsive governance begins with a clear strategic plan and full transparency from all departments regarding their progress. With a keen interest in fiscal responsibility, she is eager to examine the city’s budget

to ensure resources are being directed to the areas of greatest need. She is equally committed to strengthening the culture of customer service throughout all city departments.

One of her top priorities is addressing homelessness, particularly in District 4, which includes the Chinatown neighborhood. Drawing on her background in public health, de la Rosa advocates for persistent outreach and strong partnerships — especially with Monterey County agencies. “We need to be present every day to earn trust and show that we’re here to help,” she emphasizes. Her perspective is informed by personal experience, having supported friends and family through homelessness and witnessing the transformative impact of recovery services, such as those offered by the Sun Street Center.

During our conversation, a glimpse of her grassroots connection was evident as she warmly greeted a passing young man. Upon learning he was studying to become a city planner at Hartnell College, she expressed genuine interest and encouragement. It is through such relationships — nurtured over years of public service — that Gloria de la Rosa continues to be a unifying force for Salinas. Her leadership is rooted not only in experience but in a deep and abiding commitment to building a more equitable, connected, and forward-looking city. 🌱

AMBASSADOR SPOTLIGHT DEBBIE BIELSKER



Debbie Bielsker moved to Northern California in 2012 when her husband began working for Monterey-Salinas Transit. Using the Monterey County Weekly as a road map for places to shop, get involved in the community, and find volunteer opportunities, Debbie discovered the City of Salinas. It was love at first sight after she and her husband attended the Christmas Parade on Main Street in Salinas.

Debbie describes herself as a volunteer and says she feels honored to be a part of the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce. She enjoys sharing the awesomeness of Salinas with anyone who will give her a minute of their time.

She is a freelance photographer for the American Public Transportation Association’s International Bus Rodeo Committee, holds an office in the Coast Guard Auxiliary (Santa Cruz), and volunteers for ITN in Salinas.



RIBBON CUTTINGS & CHAMBER EVENTS

by Chamber Staff



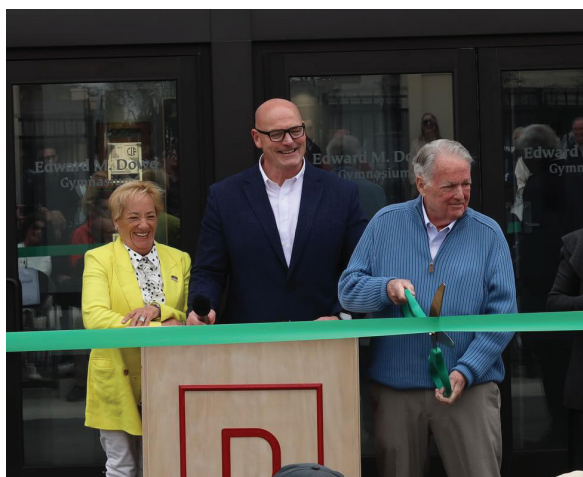
Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting of Goldberg & Ibarra, APLC

Chamber members, dignitaries, and ambassadors were on hand to congratulate David Ibarra, a Salinas resident who returned to open the second location of his law office. His practice supports clients and residents of the Salinas Valley, specializing in workers' compensation, personal injury, and Social Security cases.



ARCpoint Labs Mixer

The Chamber had a fantastic evening celebrating Medical Laboratory Professionals Week with ARCpoint Labs of Monterey Bay, through a joint event alongside the Monterey Peninsula Chamber. Guests enjoyed delicious bites from Chamber members Pizza Factory, Pasta Mia, and Crumbl Cookies, while connecting with fellow professionals and touring ARCpoint's cutting-edge lab.



Palma School's Ribbon Cutting of Edward M. Dowd Gymnasium

Palma celebrated the grand opening of the new Edward M. Dowd Gymnasium. The iconic Palma School gymnasium, built in 1951, has long stood as a symbol of tradition and school spirit. Located at the heart of campus, this remarkable project preserves a cherished part of Palma School's history while creating a renewed space for students and families to gather, celebrate, and build community for generations to come.



Lunch and Learn with Salinas Valley Health

Attendees joined Salinas Valley Health for an insightful presentation on "The Vital Role of Hydration in Urinary Tract Infection Prevention for Women and Prostate Health for Men," led by Dr. Lior Taich, MD, Urology and Urologic Oncology. Taich shared expert knowledge and explained common myths, key symptoms to watch for, and discussed risk factors, medications, and preventative care strategies.



Lunch Connect at The Valley Restaurant and Catering

The Salinas Valley Chamber hosted the first Lunch Connect event of the year. Chamber members networked with fellow members, supported a member restaurant, and enjoyed a delicious meal. Thomas Xirum shared a few words about the restaurant's offerings, including private events and catering services. We also celebrated a special birthday — Chris Harris of Blue Adobe Mortgage.

Salinas' Jennifer Torres and Team Making Impact with City's Homeless Outreach Program

By Mac McDonald, Salinas Valley Business Journal

This year is shaping up to be a very eventful period for Salinas native Jennifer Torres, who works for the City of Salinas as a Community Outreach Assistant, part of the Street Outreach and Response Team (SORT) working with the city's homeless population.

She's in her fourth year with the city, initially as a part-timer working with housing issues at the Community Development Department, now as an outreach assistant leading a staff of six, in which she's "considered one of the OGs" of the department.

Then just recently she was awarded the Beyond Government Award by The Coalition of Homeless Service Providers at the Lead Me Home Summit on Homelessness, an award given to a government employee who goes above and beyond in the line of the duties.

"That was awesome, but it was a little shocking to me because I don't do this work for the recognition or the paycheck, I just love talking to people," says the, well, talkative 24-year-old Salinas native. "I did a lot of community work in high school and I had a Christian-based upbringing which emphasizes love and compassion. That's why they chose me, it was a good match. I guess I'm doing something right. I just love helping people, I feel passionate about it."

In addition to her full-time work with the city, she's also taking classes at Hartnell College with the goal of graduating in the fall of 2026. Oh, and she's getting married in July. No pressure.

As part of her duties, she spends about 20 hours out on the streets

of Salinas, personally interacting with the homeless population and working with other agencies, both government and nonprofit, in addressing the homeless issue. While she's seeing "way more" homeless than when she started four years ago, she's also seeing some progress through her outreach committee and networking efforts.

"Homelessness has been around for ages and it's never going to be gone completely," she says. "But I'm seeing a lot of progress, for example, there's now better communications between various agencies and the shelters. It's a matter of making relationships."

She admits it's a lot of work and progress is incremental, but she's seeing forward movement. Working with homeless individuals is a matter of personal contact with compassion and trust.

"It's a lot of work, but you truly have to want to care," she says. "They just need someone to acknowledge them. The main thing for me is trust. They just need someone to trust."

While she has made an impact in her current career, she hopes to, perhaps after graduating Hartnell, to go into business, either opening a coffee shop or a boutique. She feels she'll be leaving the team in a good place.

"The team is really solid now, super-involved, people with a lot of passion," she says. "I just want to inspire other people to have compassion. I was there at one point in my life. I was depressed and hit rock bottom and someone was there for me to talk to."

The way she's going, she'll never be without someone to talk to. Or to help. 🌱



Jennifer Torres with City's Community Outreach Committee.



City of Salinas Community Outreach Assistant Jennifer Torres.



Community Outreach Team Member speaking to homeless encampment near the highway.



Jennifer Torres speaking with homeless man at Carr Lake encampment.



Jennifer Torres speaking with a man at homeless encampment near Chinatown.



What's Your Chamber's Government Relations Committee Talking About This Month?

JUNE 2025

By Kevin Dayton, Government Affairs Liaison

Your Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce Government Relations Committee had 21 members at its meeting on Wednesday, May 14 as it continues to pursue your Chamber's official vision of "a thriving, welcoming Salinas Valley where people, families and businesses succeed via economic growth and opportunity." Here's what they discussed:

1 At its May 14 meeting, the Salinas City Council voted 5-2 to repeal, in their entirety, the 2023 rental registration ordinance and the three 2024 rent stabilization/tenant protection ordinances. This follows a 5-2 vote on April 29 to direct staff to prepare the repeal ordinances. A city council "second reading" for final approval of the repeal is scheduled for the June 3 meeting, and then the repeal will take affect after 30 days.

2 As a substitute policy for rental registration and rent stabilization/tenant protection ordinances, the Salinas City Council wants to adopt a rental assistance program, perhaps modeled after the existing City of Monterey program. Some committee members expressed their belief that the City of Salinas will be more effective and more reasonable in addressing housing concerns by focusing the city's rental programs on helping low-income households experiencing financial hardship, with eligibility requirements and proof of need.

3 Committee members were concerned about the lack of clarity on expenditures of the City of Salinas rental registry program. This concern of the Chamber has been ongoing for more than a year. The Committee asked Chamber staff to obtain records from the City of Salinas that clearly indicate how much has been collected in rental registration fees, how much has been spent to date (and on what), and the amount of obligations that remain to be paid (and to whom).

Claims about the amount of money available from the existing rental registry program are \$55,000 or \$873,000 out of \$1.4 million collected to date.

4 The City of Salinas may need \$800,000 to establish a credible rental assistance program. Committee members don't want the city's General Fund to subsidize the rental assistance program — it should initially be funded from fees already collected from the soon-to-be-terminated rental registry program. In the meantime, the City of Salinas should continue trying to collect the first rental registration fee from the many rental property owners who never complied with the law and paid the fee.

Committee members contended that the City of Salinas can negotiate existing contracts related to implementation of rental property ordinances and apply them to a new rental assistance program instead. It was noted that rental property owners who have evaded their legal responsibility to pay the rental registration fee should be deemed ineligible to participate in the rental assistance program.

5 Committee members discussed whether rental property owners would object to having their rental registration fees diverted to a rental assistance program. Some may instead demand that the city refund their fees directly back to them. It was the consensus of the committee that the Chamber remains concerned about the high cost of housing and would rather see the city establish a rental assistance program and divert the funds originally collected for rental registration.

6 Committee members discussed the public reaction of organizations that support the rental registration and rent stabilization/tenant protection ordinances. Some reactions were thoughtful;



some reactions were highly emotional; some reactions were ideological. As usual, many of the complaints against landlords cited by speakers defending the ordinances relate to practices already prohibited in state law.

It was noteworthy that the crowd left the city council chamber after the vote to repeal the four ordinances. People didn't stay at the meeting to hear about and comment on the following agenda item to discuss rental assistance programs and tracking of housing production through the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) process.

7 There was public discussion at the May 14 Salinas City Council meeting about the city's removal of the Chamber's Government Affairs Director from the city's Housing Technical Advisory Committee in May 2024 when the committee began in earnest to generate a recommendation for rent stabilization. The Chamber remains interested in restoring a Chamber representative to the Technical Advisory Committee. (Note: the Government Affairs Director's reaction to this move was simply "that's politics," and he has not made a public statement about it.)

8 Meanwhile, a Monterey County Superior Court judge overseeing an eviction case ruled on May 5 that the City of Salinas provision requiring notice to tenants of ten days before eviction is unconstitutional, as it illegally pre-empts state law requiring notice to tenants of three days before eviction.

9 A Salinas City Council member broached the subject of a possible ordinance that would set the minimum wage paid to workers in Salinas at a rate higher than the State of California minimum wage. It appears that 39 California cities and counties have established a high minimum wage in some circumstances. The current minimum wage in California is \$16.50 per hour, except fast food restaurants must pay workers a minimum of \$20 and healthcare facilities must pay workers a minimum of \$18 to \$23 per hour, depending on various conditions.

10 A meeting was held on May 1 between representatives of Amazon and representatives of South Salinas businesses regarding a traffic management plan related to the Amazon distribution facility, now under construction. Representatives of the County of Monterey and Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) were present, but the City of Salinas did not send a representative, for unknown reasons. Amazon says it has invested more than \$700 million for land acquisition, construction, and infrastructure/road improvements at and immediately around the distribution center, but responsibility falls elsewhere for improvements to Abbott Street and Harkins Road and for improvements to the Highway 101 entrances and exits for Airport Boulevard and Abbott Street.

Amazon representatives referred to possible establishment of off-site parking and shuttles for Amazon and other businesses. A representative of Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) reported that the agency had a vanpool program and other options to help with this.

Attendees of the May 1 meeting were reportedly flabbergasted to hear an Amazon representative claim that the company has already paid more than \$11 million in traffic impact fees to the City of Salinas. No one in at the meeting indicated any awareness of this payment or how the city plans to spend that money for traffic management improvements.

Following the May 1 meeting, the Monterey County Farm Bureau sent a letter to Amazon, the City of Salinas, the County of Monterey, and Transportation Agency for Monterey

County (TAMC) outlining the traffic management challenges and possible solutions discussed at the meeting.

The Chamber's Government Affairs Director noted that the Salinas City Council has yet to schedule a meeting agenda item that explicitly acknowledges the existence of the Amazon facility, although the sales tax budget impact of Amazon operations from 2026 onward is cited in staff reports for the Finance Committee. The distribution facility received ministerial approval for permits through a letter from the former city manager — not offered for public review — that relied on traffic analysis from the 2009 environmental impact report for the Salinas Ag-Industrial Specific Plan area. This decision was reported in multiple issues of the Business Journal in 2024 following its discovery through a Chamber public records request.

11 The Chamber continues to fail to obtain data from the City of Salinas on the ultimate destination and cost of wastewater flow in 2024 to the Monterey One Water (M1W) Regional Treatment Plant from Pond 3 of the Salinas Industrial Wastewater Treatment Facility. At the request of the Chamber, the city council had asked the city in August 2024 to provide that information after the short-term effluent agreement concluded at the end of in 2024.

Meanwhile, the mystery will continue. On April 17, 2025, the Salinas City Council voted on the consent calendar to approve a new short-term wastewater effluent agreement for 2025, with no direction for staff to provide a report on the outcome of the agreement.

12 Amy Salmina, chair of the Government Relations Committee and Vice Chair of the City of Salinas Measure G Oversight Committee, reported that she and other committee members have met with City of Salinas Finance Department staff on how the city can report on the status of city positions funded by Measure G.

13 Chamber staff reported not receiving any comments from Chamber members in response to the April 2025 Business Journal article about the plan for the City of Salinas to triple sewer fees for residents and businesses. This could mean people understand the need for the fee increase, but it's also possible that complaints will explode after the first bill arrives with the new rates in effect. The City of Salinas will soon send a Proposition 218 notice about the rate increase to sewer ratepayers.

14 The Chamber and other business associations continue to monitor the status of the proposed County of Monterey Community Climate Action Plan.

15 The Chamber continues to monitor possible city revisions to the City of Salinas Economic Development Element of its General Plan. This was enacted in 2017.

16 After discussion, the Committee recommended to the Board of Directors that the Chamber oppose Assembly Bill 353 (AB 353), which would require California internet service providers (with some exceptions) to offer affordable home internet service that meets minimum speed requirements to eligible households in their California service area. Committee members expressed concern about the legislature and governor imposing price controls and targeting specific industries.

17 The Committee received a report from Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) about Assembly Bill 761 (AB 761), which would authorize MST, upon the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its board of directors, to submit to Monterey County voters a measure proposing a sales tax to replace the existing but soon-to-expire Measure Q sales tax.

Measure Q was approved by 72.56% of Monterey County voters in November 2014. It expires in 2030. The tax rate is 0.125%. MST is required to use Measure Q tax revenue exclusively to provide services and equipment that support transportation programs for veterans, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities.

AB 761 also authorizes MST to impose a sales tax of 0.25% (double the current tax rate). In combination with other transactions and use taxes, this higher rate could end up causing Monterey County local jurisdictions to exceed the state-imposed sales tax local cap of 2% (on top of the 7.25% state sales tax). Within the past four years, the California legislature has authorized twelve local governments to enact sales taxes that exceed the 2% transactions and use tax cap. The Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association and California Taxpayers Association have criticized the practice of targeted exemptions from the standard cap on sales taxes, and they are opposing AB 761.

The Chamber's Government Affairs Director has served on the Measure Q Oversight Committee since March 2019 and reports that all MST expenditures of Measure Q revenue have complied with the criteria approved by voters.

18 After discussion, the Committee recommended to the Board of Directors that the Chamber oppose Assembly Bill 747 (AB 747), which would require certain medical groups and health care service plans to report to the California Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) their compensation to behavioral health employees and medical-surgical employees. DIR would then work with other state agencies to incorporate the data into a final report that identifies “compensation disparities” between behavioral health employees and similarly situated medical-surgical employees. SB 747 is sponsored by the National Union of Health Workers, which represents behavioral health employees and collectively bargains with such medical groups and health care service plans.

Committee members objected to the idea that targeted employers would need to provide their compensation information to a state government agency, which would presumably examine it and then release a report agreeing with labor unions that it isn’t high enough. Also, committee members did not appreciate how state legislators introduce and advance punitive state legislation targeted at specific industries as a strategy to give unions a stronger position in ongoing collective bargaining. 🌿

MOTORSPORTS - from page 15

waiting for, a closing evening that allows people to celebrate a well-spent week,” said festival Managing Director Adam Langsbard. “We aim to provide a venue for the underserved portion of the automotive community.”

The festival takes place from 5 - 11 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 16, 2025, at the Monterey County Fairgrounds and Event Center.

The gates open at 5 p.m., but the live action starts at 7 p.m., when four bands are slated to play, including DSB, one of the top Journey tribute bands in the country; The OutLaw Mariachi, L.A.’s premiere rock mariachi band; Monterey County’s own The Latin Jazz Collective a versatile seven-piece Afro-Cuban Latin jazz ensemble; and Monterey-based Sensory Tribe, a vibrant reggae, soul and dance group.

Founder/owner of the event



is Paolo Manca, owner of PM Landscaping, who launched the festival three years ago and has guided it into one of the premier events during Car Week.

“He has always wanted to have a Car Week event that does a better job of servicing the community, not only the attendees, but small local businesses,” said Langsbard.

Tickets are available online at <https://montereymotorsportsfestival.com/get-tickets/>. Tickets are \$129 general admission; \$49 for juniors (13-17); \$69 for seniors; and free for children up to 12 years old. Tickets are also available at the gate on the day of.

montereymotorsportsfestival.com/get-tickets/. Tickets are \$129 general admission; \$49 for juniors (13-17); \$69 for seniors; and free for children up to 12 years old. Tickets are also available at the gate on the day of.

Additionally, visitors can upgrade to the Vino & Vibes option at \$189, which includes general admission, access to a curated selection of top wineries, and views of the event and exclusive winery access. 🌿



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As we hurtle towards the 2040 mandate of being water sustainable, the biggest question will be how the community will pay for these projects, either to move water around to solve our plumbing problem, or to push saltwater back towards the ocean.



Building Our Water Infrastructure for the Future

By Norm Groot, Executive Director, Monterey County Farm Bureau

As you have probably heard or read, the Salinas Valley communities are under a deadline to sustainably manage our water resources, specifically our groundwater basin, by 2040 — a short 15 years from now!

But what will it take to balance that sustainable groundwater equation, where we are replacing groundwater into the basin as we extract for irrigation and consumptive uses?

Most would agree that we have a plumbing problem in the Salinas Valley groundwater basin, meaning that

some areas have a sufficient supply and others have a deficit. Moving water from one part of the Valley to another seems like a good idea to solve the deficit problem areas, but it's not as easy as it sounds.

Water projects, just like all other development projects, require a LOT of review (environmental, engineering, diversion rights, and approvals from many different state and local agencies). It takes a lot of planning, a lot of modeling, and a lot of discussion to get to a place where any water resource project seems ideal

and viable — and is affordable for the community to build.

But plumbing may not be our most challenging issue to achieve groundwater sustainability; for decades, saltwater intrusion has advanced into the aquifers near the coast, making wells in that area salty (and too salty to grow crops). Regardless of the causes of saltwater intrusion, we must work as a community to resolve this problem as it is one of the six requirements of groundwater unsustainability.

And how might that be accomplished? One of the project proposals is to design and develop a saltwater extraction barrier (or brackish water reclamation project). A series of wells would pump out the bad water, it would then be treated to remove the salts (desalination), and then when clean, injected back into the basin or used for other purposes, such as municipal consumption.

Sounds easy when reasoning out the process, but in reality, the project is unproven at this scale, difficult to properly engineer, and, above all, very expensive — well over \$1 billion expensive.

As we hurtle towards the 2040 mandate of being water sustainable, the biggest question will be how the community will pay for these projects, either to move water around to solve our plumbing problem, or to push saltwater back towards the ocean. With agriculture using 90% of the groundwater extracted each year for irrigation, the majority of that financial burden will most likely fall to farms and their landowners.

Can we afford a billion-dollar project? Does it make sense to look at a suite of smaller projects that have a lower price tag? Where will the best bang for buck result in achieving sustainability?

The community has some big decisions to make this year related to projects, including a \$200 million project to fix our dams and reservoirs; what can we build (and afford) that will keep local control over our water supplies by 2040? 🌱

Uncertainty Is the New Daily Normal

By Norm Groot, Executive Director, Monterey County Farm Bureau

Much has been hashed out in the media about the big changes in Washington, D.C. and how those changes will impact our local economy, particularly our local Ag and Tourism sectors. It is an era of constant change, even from day to day, and every crystal ball that may predict the future continues to get cloudier.

First, our workforce in both Ag and Tourism is feeling the strain of all the rhetoric about enforcement actions. The importance of our domestic food supply includes the realization that it takes immigrant hands to harvest our crops in Monterey County. It hopefully resonates in Washington, D.C. that fresh food products cannot harvest themselves, and a domestic food supply is critical to our nation's security. We all watch and wait for the next day's pronouncements on this issue.

Monterey County has moved to support our immigrant residents, and Ag is supporting the efforts to

inform residents of their rights under the law. Our healthy economy depends on a workforce that feels secure in their own communities.

And then there are the reciprocal tariffs that continue to change almost daily, putting additional pressure on our exports of fresh food

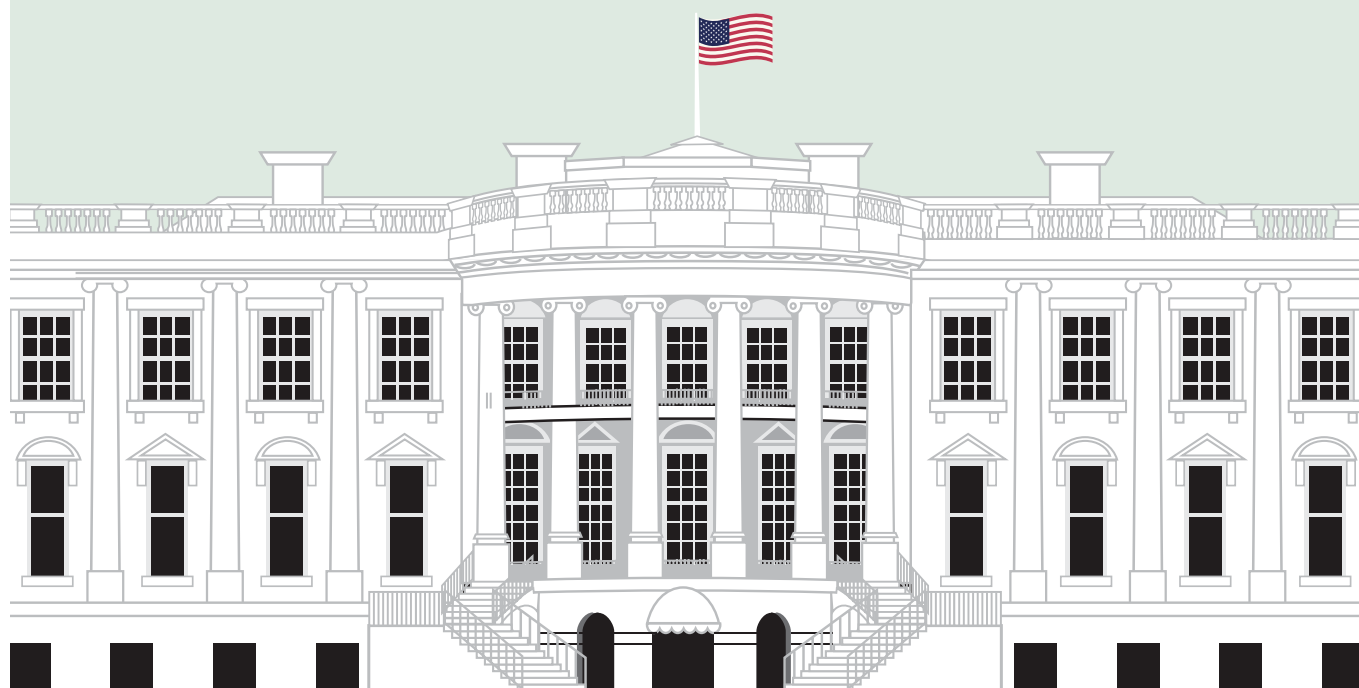
The chaos of funding cuts, along with personnel reductions, in agencies that our farmers depend on is not unnoticed; cuts to research programs, local staff personnel, and uncertainty of USDA, FSA, and NRCS operations in our region cause

Monterey County has moved to support our immigrant residents, and Ag is supporting the efforts to inform residents of their rights under the law. Our healthy economy depends on a workforce that feels secure in their own communities.

products from Monterey County. While we have yet to feel any drastic impacts, there are some changes already occurring in our marketplaces. We can maybe predict that the domestic marketplace will adjust to manage the supply, but the real impacts may be on the imports needed to grow our crops (fertilizer, potash, Ag chemicals, etc.). Additional increases to the costs of crop inputs will thin out the bottom line for many farming operations even more.

more angst amongst the grower community. These are long-term impacts that will take important research projects for pests and diseases away from our local region.

As we all watch and wait for the next proclamation or public policy shift, we can hope that the economy of Monterey County adjusts to these changes without interruption to our residents and those who eat our fresh food products daily. 🌱



Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) Plans to Ask Monterey County Voters for Sales Tax Renewal

By Kevin Dayton, Government Affairs Liaison

In November 2014, 72.56% of Monterey County voters approved Measure Q, which established a countywide sales tax exclusively for Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) to support transportation programs for veterans, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities. The sales tax rate is 0.125% — that is, \$0.00125 or one-eighth of a cent in tax per dollar spent. The tax took effect on April 1, 2015.

It was the first sales tax adopted countywide in Monterey County for public transit purposes. (Two years later, Monterey County voters approved Measure X, a sales tax of 0.375% for TAMC — the Transportation Agency for Monterey County. Expenditures for public transit capital projects and transit programs for seniors and persons with disabilities comprise 7% of all Measure X expenditures.)

Measure Q has a 15-year term, so the MST sales tax expires on April 1, 2030. To maintain the sales tax without a break in revenue collection, Monterey County voters would have to renew Measure Q during an election in 2026 or 2028.

State Legislation Would Establish How the Sales Tax Is Placed on the Ballot

As a transit agency created through the authority of the State of California, Monterey-Salinas Transit must get authorization in state law to place a ballot measure for a sales tax. According to the original 2009 law establishing the agency, a majority of member jurisdictions (currently,



MONTEREY-SALINAS TRANSIT DISTRICT MEASURE Q OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

all 12 Monterey County cities and the County of Monterey) must approve putting a sales tax on the ballot. This process, set up for a new agency, is more cumbersome than a single vote by the board of directors that represents those jurisdictions.

Therefore, Assemblywoman Dawn Addis has introduced Assembly Bill 761 (AB 761). This bill would authorize MST, upon the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its board of directors, to submit a ballot measure to Monterey County voters proposing a sales tax.

The Same State Legislation Would Allow a Higher Sales Tax

In addition to simplifying the methodology for putting a sales tax on the ballot, AB 761 also includes a more controversial provision. It authorizes MST to impose a sales tax rate of 0.25%, or one-fourth of a cent per dollar — double the current Measure Q tax rate.

But if voters approved this higher rate, the cumulative sales tax rate for some of the MST member jurisdictions could exceed the current state-imposed cap for cumulative local sales taxes of 2% (on top of the 7.25% state sales tax). AB 761 allows the cap to be exceeded for the MST sales tax.



MST Deputy CEO Lisa Rheinheimer speaks at the Measure Q tenth anniversary celebration in downtown Salinas on May 21, 2025.

Within the past four years, the California Legislature has authorized 12 local governments to enact sales taxes that exceed the 2% transactions and use local tax cap. The Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association and California Taxpayers Association have criticized the practice of targeted exemptions from the standard cap on sales taxes, and they are opposing AB 761.

Public Sentiment Seems Strong for Renewal of the MST Sales Tax

In 2024, MST conducted a survey of Monterey County voters about their potential support for extending the Measure Q sales tax past its 2030 expiration. The survey found that 81% of likely voters would vote to extend Measure Q indefinitely, and 74% would support a Measure Q extension at one-fourth of a cent, double the current rate of one-eighth of a cent.

Generally, people appear to recognize a need for a public agency to provide mobility programs for people who may have transportation challenges. Programs funded by Measure Q include MST RIDES paratransit for people with disabilities, taxi vouchers, senior shuttles, and a Transportation Reimbursement Incentive Program (TRIP). Measure Q also pays for a Special Medical Trips program for residents who need to travel to San Jose or San Francisco for specialized medical care not available in Monterey County. MST staff reports that many medical trips funded by Measure Q are related to dialysis treatment.

In the MST operating budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025, Measure Q revenues are projected at \$13.2 million. Beyond the \$180,000 in

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Pictured from left to right: **Mike Millett**—Director of Business Development, **Jessica Perez**—Senior Relationship Manager, **Ramon Castro**—Business Development Officer, **Mirna Hills**—Director of Treasury Management, **Robert Mina**—Senior Relationship Manager, **Glenna Datta**—EVP Regional Executive, **Scott Gillett**—Senior Relationship Manager, **Dana Hart**—Relationship Manager, **Jim Scattini**—Business Development Officer, Not pictured: **Sue Storm**—Market President and **Jefferson Suruiz**—Relationship Manager.

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SCAN ME

Pathways to Independence: How Goodwill Central Coast Transforms Lives Through Community Support

By Goodwill Central Coast Staff

Every piece of clothing, book, or piece of furniture donated to Goodwill Central Coast carries with it more than just the promise of reuse — it carries the potential to change lives. Through a combination of job training, employment placement, and wraparound support services, GCC helps thousands of individuals each year overcome personal and professional challenges and achieve independence.

As a leading regional nonprofit serving Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Luis Obispo counties, Goodwill Central Coast is a beacon of opportunity for people facing barriers to employment. These barriers may include disabilities, economic hardship, unstable housing, or limited access to education. Yet through programs funded entirely by community donations and thrift store revenue, Goodwill creates real, lasting change — one person at a time.

A Legacy of Empowerment

The story of Goodwill began with the vision of Dr. Edgar J. Helms, a social innovator who, more than a century ago, dreamed of a world where everyone had the opportunity to work and support themselves. His idea — to collect donated goods, employ people in need to refurbish them, and sell them to support community services — sparked a movement that now spans the globe. Today, Goodwill is the largest private-sector employer of people with disabilities and other barriers to employment, and the mission continues with strong momentum along California's Central Coast.

In 2024 alone, GCC served more than 23,000 individuals, marking a 34-percent increase from the

previous year. Among the 152 Goodwill organizations worldwide, GCC ranks sixth in donations per household and fourth in sales per household — a testament to both the community's generosity and the nonprofit's effective stewardship of resources.

How Donations Drive Change

Many people don't realize that when they donate gently used items to Goodwill, they're funding programs that go far beyond resale shops. Every donation fuels a cycle of opportunity:

Job readiness: Participants receive coaching in resume writing, interview skills, and workplace expectations to prepare for meaningful employment. **Digital literacy:** With technology playing an essential role in today's job market, Goodwill offers training in digital literacy to help individuals navigate online job applications, email communication, digital scheduling, and other essential computer skills. These courses empower job seekers to confidently enter a technology-driven workforce.

Career training: In partnership with agencies such as the Department of Rehabilitation Employment Services, Goodwill provides industry-specific training and real-world experience tailored to participants' interests and regional workforce needs. **Beyond employment:** Goodwill supports long-term success with financial literacy training, goal setting, and ongoing mentorship. It's not just about landing a job — it's about building a sustainable future.

Additionally, Goodwill provides free access to its Opportunity Platform, a powerful tool that connects individuals with trained

resource specialists and a wide network of support organizations.

A Community Effort

None of this impact would be possible without the Central Coast community. Every donation — whether a single book or a truckload of furniture — contributes directly to these life-changing programs.

"We believe in the power of second chances — not just for items, but for people," said Alan Martinson Goodwill Central Coast's Vice President of Retail and Marketing. "Our stores are just one part of what we do. The real heart of our work lies in the lives we help rebuild."

Donors can drop off items at any of the many Donation Centers across the Central Coast, or schedule home pickups for larger items in Monterey and Santa Cruz counties. The organization gladly accepts clothing, small household appliances, furniture, electronics, books, art, and other gently used items in good condition. More than just spring cleaning, each donation is an investment in someone's future.

Lasting Impact, Local Results

Goodwill Central Coast's mission

is clear: to eliminate barriers to employment and empower individuals to reach their fullest potential. Through a unique blend of community generosity and programmatic support, that mission is fulfilled daily — in classrooms, homes, and workplaces across the region.

When someone donates to Goodwill, they're not just passing on items — they're passing on dignity, opportunity, and hope.

To learn more about Goodwill Central Coast's mission, programs, or donation process, visit www.ccgoodwill.org. 🌱



Celebrating Faith, Family, Freedom and Belonging

By Pastor T.K. Anderson, Compass Church

At Compass Church, we believe strong communities are built on strong relationships. That's why we are thrilled to invite you and your family to two upcoming events designed not just for fun and entertainment, but to bring people together, build friendships, and create a sense of belonging across our vibrant and diverse community.

First up, mark your calendars for Father's Day Weekend on Sunday, June 15th. We have an incredible morning planned to celebrate dads, grandfathers, father figures, and the entire family. Both services will feature special guest speaker Bryce Kenny, driver of the world-famous Monster Jam Mohawk Warrior truck. Bryce is not only an elite driver, but also an inspiring speaker who shares powerful lessons on courage, faith, and perseverance. Joining us for worship will be national recording artist Alexander Pappas, whose heartfelt music has touched audiences around the world.

But the fun doesn't stop there. Immediately following both services, we invite you to stroll through one of the largest Father's Day car shows in the region. From classic muscle cars to custom hot rods, there will be something for everyone. It's a perfect way for families to celebrate together.

Then, on Friday, July 4, head over to the Salinas Rodeo Grounds for "Celebrate America 2025," an event that has become a signature gathering for the entire Monterey County and beyond. This year,



we are preparing for a crowd of over 15,000 attendees.

This full day of fun includes carnival rides, family games, food trucks, and community vendors. The evening features an unforgettable patriotic service led

by Emmy Award-winning composer and musician John Wineglass, alongside renowned worship artist Charles Billingsley. Prepare to be moved by stirring music that celebrates the spirit of America and honors those who have served.

A highlight of the evening is our powerful skydiving flag ceremony and our special medal presentation for all active-duty military personnel and veterans in attendance. It's a small but meaningful way to thank the brave men and women who have sacrificed for our freedoms. The night will end in spectacular fashion with the largest fireworks display in the Tri-County area. And the best part? Everything is completely free to the public, thanks to the generosity of our incredible community and business sponsors.

While these events offer world-class entertainment, the real reason behind them goes much deeper. At Compass Church, our mission is to "Help People Find and Follow Jesus," and we do that by promoting community, family connection, and a sense of belonging. We understand that in today's fast-paced world, many individuals and families long for meaningful connection. Events like Father's Day and "Celebrate

Faith, Family, Freedom see page 28

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UPCOMING EVENTS

RSVP at salinaschamber.com

- **Free Workshop — Business Boost with APEX**

Wednesday, June 4, 12:00 – 1:00 p.m., 119 East Alisal St., Salinas

Join the Chamber for Business Boost, a free workshop designed to help local businesses and entrepreneurs start, grow, and thrive with expert guidance and no-cost support services. Hosted by the Central Coast SBDC and Monterey Bay APEX Accelerator, in partnership with the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce, this hybrid workshop will provide valuable insights into: Business Advising & Growth Strategies – Learn how the SBDC's expert advisors can help you develop a business plan, secure funding, increase your revenue, attract more clients, and expand your operations; Government Contracting Opportunities – Discover how the APEX Accelerator can guide you through the process of securing local, state, and federal contracts to grow your business; Live Q&A with Experts – Get your questions answered by experienced business advisors and contracting specialists. Whether you're just getting started or looking to scale your business, Business Boost will equip you with the tools and knowledge to succeed—all at no cost to you.

- **Sun Street Centers' Huntington Recovery Center Ribbon Cutting**

Thursday, June 5, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m., 284 Calle Cebu, Salinas

Join the Chamber for the official ribbon cutting of Sun Street Centers' brand-new Huntington Recovery Center, a vital new facility built to support the health and recovery of our community. In just one year, Avila Construction and Wald, Runhke & Dost Architects brought this vision to life — an 8,000-square-foot center offering Outpatient Substance Use Disorder treatment for both teens and adults, as well as temporary sober living apartments for adults in early recovery. Come celebrate this milestone as Sun Street opens the doors to a brighter future for those on the path to recovery. Enjoy light refreshments, tours of the facility, and the chance to meet the dedicated team behind this incredible project.

- **Grand Opening of Integris Wealth Management, LLC**

Tuesday, June 10, 5:00– 6:30 p.m., 60 W. Alisal St., Salinas

The grand opening of Integris Wealth Management's second location, which is in the heart of the Salinas Valley, takes place June 10/ Proudly serving Monterey County since 1997, Integris brings 28 years of experience in helping individuals, families,

business owners, and nonprofit organizations develop personalized financial plans and investment strategies tailored to their unique goals. Come celebrate this exciting milestone. Meet the advisors and their dedicated team and enjoy light refreshments.

- **RVS Technology Group 25th Anniversary Celebration**

Thursday, June 12, 4:30-6:00 p.m., 228 Main St., Salinas

Since opening their doors in 1998, RVS Technology Group has been proud to serve the Tri-County area, officially expanding their services to the region in 2000. Dedicated to helping businesses stay connected, secure, and ahead of the curve, RVS offers a full suite of services including managed IT, cybersecurity, network solutions, and tech support. Now, you're invited to Sip, Savor & Meet the Team at Patria on Main restaurant, located at 228 Main St. in Salinas, on Thursday, June 12 from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. Enjoy local wines, delicious small bites from Patria on Main, and connect with the RVS Technology crew to learn more about what they do. Don't miss the ribbon-cutting ceremony with the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce at 5:00 p.m. as RVS celebrates 25 incredible years of innovation and service. Raise a glass to tech, teamwork, and the exciting road ahead.

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

Wednesday, June 18, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m., 200 Fred Kane Drive., Monterey

Join the Chamber 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. 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. Pre-register at SalinasChamber.com.

- **Lunch and Learn with Salinas Valley Health**

Thursday, June 26, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m., 119 East Alisal St., Salinas

Join Salinas Valley Health vascular and endovascular surgeon Jamil Matthews, MD, for an insightful presentation on Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD) and Venous Disease. Learn how these diseases effect our arteries, veins and overall health. Space is limited. To register visit salinaschamber.com or tune in via Zoom.

Faith, Family, Freedom - from page 21

America 2025" are opportunities to bring neighbors together, bridge cultural and generational gaps, and remind people that they matter and they belong.

The Bible reminds us in John 13:34-35, "So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples." These community gatherings are a practical expression of that love. They demonstrate the power of compassion and shared purpose.

We also want to invite local businesses and organizations to come alongside us as partners. These events are made possible through the generosity and partnership of sponsors who believe in giving back to the community. Whether you're a small family business or a large company, there are many creative ways for your brand to be involved, from booth space to banners to stage mentions. You can explore all sponsorship opportunities by visiting www.compasschurchmc.org.

So, whether you're a car enthusiast, a patriot at heart, a family looking for safe and fun activities, or someone simply wanting to connect, join us this summer. Let's celebrate dads, community, and our shared love for this country together. We can't wait to see you. 🌱



RUVALCABA - from page 1

for 10% equity in his card company before an intimidating lineup of billionaire entrepreneurs Mark Cuban, Lori Greiner, Barbara Corcoran and Kevin O'Leary (the core four) and guest Shark Daniel Lubetzky.

And Ruvalcaba gave the sharks quite a show, with mariachi music, a folklorico dancer and examples of his colorful culturally relevant cards. Ruvalcaba explained to the hosts that he got the idea for his line of cards when he was shopping for a birthday card for his mom, but couldn't find anything that seemed authentic or culturally relevant to his Mexican heritage. Most of them were just English-language cards that didn't speak to him or especially his mom.



He recalled mariachi music being played on birthdays, the singing of "Las Mañanitas," the "mordida" cake tradition or his older family members saying "sapo verde" or "sapo verde to you," a funny take on "happy birthday" (sapo verde means green frog) that became a joke shared in bilingual Latino households.

That experience helped launch the idea of a greeting card company that reflected his heritage and was culturally relevant to the Latino community. So he came up with phrases and designs for tongue-in-cheek cards for birthdays, such as "Dale, Dale, Dale," (with a drawing of a piñata), "Have a Flan-tastic Birthday" and "Have a Fabuloso Birthday," featuring the popular cleaning product. But it didn't stop there, he created seasonal cards that included Spanish Father's Day Cards, Spanish Christmas greeting cards, Spanish Valentines cards, Spanish graduation cards, Spanish Mother's Day Cards and many more.

One especially popular card, a get-well card, features the phrase (and the ubiquitous green frog) "Sana sana colita de rana," which refers to a colloquial phrase parents say to children to "rub the butt of a frog," part of a method to help them get over a skinned knee or a bump



Paper Tacos' creator/owner Jesus Ruvalcaba.

on the head. "Our cards are filled with cultura, cariño, and a little bit of sass," says Ruvalcaba. "I have people tell me all the time, 'That's what my grandma used to say.'"

The pitch on "Shark Tank," was very well received, but a couple of the Sharks thought he should build up his business a little more before seeking investment; O'Leary would have invested if he didn't already own a piece of LovePops card line; and Lubetzky offered

\$120,000 for 35% equity, which Jesus turned down. It looked like Ruvalcaba would go back to Salinas empty-handed.

Then Cuban, one of the most-well known and recognizable Sharks, asked him how long it took him to get his cards to the 55 locations (now 60) regional grocery chain Vallarta Supermarkets. He said about three months, so Cuban asked him if he could duplicate that with a larger chain, which Jesus

said he could. Cuban didn't hesitate and offered \$120,000 for 25% equity. Ruvalcaba jumped at the offer.

"I originally went in knowing what my limit would be and for me it was 25%," says Ruvalcaba. "It was reassuring to me, a real boost of confidence that one of these entrepreneurs was willing to invest in me."

Ruvalcaba said he had a big watch party with friends and family to celebrate the occasion.

"It was pretty surreal, experiencing it all over again for the first time," he says. "It's quiet on the set, no music, but I could hear the music in my head!" He said the whole segment took about 45 minutes to film, but only 10 minutes or so was aired.

Now the hard work of expanding the brand has begun. Cuban's investment will help him with influencer and other marketing efforts, as well as purchasing a digital press. "A digital press would help our turnaround time, give me more control of the inventory and raise our per-card profit margin."

As for next steps, Ruvalcaba has a lot of ideas swimming in his mind.

"There a lot of ideas, I just need to find the time," he laughs. "There are so many Latin countries and cultures out there," and each have their own cultural traditions and popular sayings. So the idea of Paper Tacos is just a blueprint for expansion. He's already working with other freelance creatives from Mexico and other countries and an artist from El Salvador, Eduardo

Marticorena, who is creating concepts specific to Salvadoran-American culture.

Ruvalcaba grew up in farmworking housing in Castroville artichoke fields with a love of drawing. He studied graphic design at Hartnell College then went on to CSU Monterey Bay before landing art director jobs for Silicon Valley companies such as eBay and Hewlett Packard Enterprise. They were prestigious, high-paying positions, but he wanted to get back to his roots as a creative soul.

"My ultimate goal is I wanted to get back to what I loved doing when I was a kid. I loved drawing and being creative," he says. "It's a little overwhelming, so I'm taking it one step at a time."

He quit his day job in 2023 and committed to his company full time, with the help of family (his dad, niece and nephew were helping him in his office while he was being interviewed) and now an infusion of funds from Cuban.

One thing he knows for sure is that he's definitely on the right track.

"One of the nice, unexpected things to come out of all this is the amount of support I've received from the community," he says. "People have been telling me, this is great news for the city of Salinas, but it's just really nice finding out that the community is behind me as well."

For more on Paper Tacos, including all the cards available, go to the official website at <https://papertacos.com/>. 🌱



NON-PROFIT EVENTS

First Fridays! – Artist Reception at Artwork @Salinas Javier Lopez Jr. Presents “Home from the Valley to the Peninsula”

June 5, 5:00 – 7:30 p.m., Old Town, Salinas

Join Artwork @Salinas for a special artist reception with local artist Javier Lopez Jr. Experience his heartfelt exhibit alongside the inspiring PhotoCarmel display celebrating photography on the Central Coast. Enjoy light refreshments and snacks as you explore the vibrant artist studios and shop featuring over 10 local artists and artisans.

Hucks Fore Homes with Habitat for Humanity Monterey Bay

June 7, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., 1151 Beacon Hill Drive, Salinas – First Tee Salinas

Welcome to the Hucks Fore Homes Habitat for Humanity Disc Golf Invitational! Join in on June 7 for a day of fun, competition, and fundraising for Habitat for Humanity Monterey Bay. This exciting event, promises to be a memorable experience for disc golf enthusiasts of all skill levels. The PDGA XC-tier tournament invites players to test their skills on the exciting pop-up temp course located at the First Tee Facility at Twin Creeks Golf Course, all while contributing to a worthy cause. Pros and amateur players welcome. Come join in for a day of friendly competition, camaraderie, and the satisfaction of knowing you're making a difference. Tee off for a cause and help build affordable homes and brighter futures with Habitat for Humanity Monterey Bay. To register, go to <https://www.habitatmontereybay.com/2025-hucks-fore-homes>.

Trashion Show – Alliance on Aging

Aug. 22, TBA, 2700 17 Mile Drive, Pebble Beach – Inn at Spanish Bay

Tickets on sale now for Alliance on Aging's Trashion Show. Get ready for a wild and wonderful night where art, fashion, and outrageous creativity collide — all in support of Monterey County's seniors. The Trashion Show is not your average runway event. It's fun, funky, and fuels the vital services that help older adults thrive in our community. All proceeds go directly to Alliance on Aging's critical senior services. Ticket info: Regular seats, \$200; Runway seats, \$225; tables of eight also available. To purchase tickets, call (831) 655-7564 or (831) 655-4246, or contact Nicki at npasculli@allianceonaging.org. Mark your calendar, grab your most creative outfit, and join Alliance on Aging for a night you won't forget.

MST - from page 24

fares paid by passengers eligible for Measure Q service, the entire remaining \$7,393,650 cost of the MST RIDES program is paid for by Measure Q sales tax revenue. Another \$5,806,350 in Measure Q sales tax revenue is budgeted for mobility programs, including

senior/veteran taxi vouchers, senior/veteran shuttles, mobility services, and fixed route services for seniors.

Measure Q Has Independent Oversight

Measure Q requires annual performance and financial audits that are reviewed by the MST Board of Directors.

The ballot measure also includes a requirement for a Citizens Oversight Committee to ensure that sales tax revenue is spent in compliance with what was approved by voters.

Your Chamber's Government Affairs Director was first appointed to this committee in March 2019 and continues to serve on it. He reports that the committee meets

quarterly to review financial documents and has never identified an inappropriate expenditure. He is also a member (and current chair) of the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) Measure X Citizens Oversight Committee and checks to make sure Measure Q expenditures and Measure X expenditures are not duplicative. 🌱

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