

Salinas Valley

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

BUSINESS

JOURNAL





LEGACY of
LEADERSHIP

Honoring Excellence &
Community Impact at
the Legacy of Leadership
Awards Strolling Gala

Excitement is building for the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce's prestigious annual Legacy of Leadership Awards, presented by Taylor Farms. It's set to take place on Friday, Oct. 10, from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. at the courtyard of Portobello's on Main at 150 Main St., Suite 116 in Salinas.

This signature event shines a spotlight on remarkable individuals and organizations whose dedication and service have made a lasting difference in the Salinas Valley. The highlight of the night will be the presentation of the Legacy Award, along with honors for demonstrating outstanding achievements in public service, philanthropy, volunteerism, and community engagement.

"The Legacy of Leadership Gala is a celebration of the incredible talent and generosity that defines the Salinas Valley," says Event Chair Amy Gibson. "I'm honored to Chair this inspiring event that recognizes

Legacy of Leadership see page 8

Economic Development Benefits the Public
Sector as Well as the Private Sector

By Kevin Dayton, Government Affairs Liaison

Our Chamber of Commerce supports reasonable economic growth, quality job creation, and increased housing supply for ordinary workers. This kind of economic development advances the Chamber's official vision of "a thriving, welcoming Salinas Valley where people, families and businesses succeed via economic growth and opportunity."

But the benefits of economic development aren't limited to the private sector. Economic development generates the revenue that allows governments to provide the programs, projects, and services that people demand.

Local Governments Worry About Future Tax Revenue and Investment Earnings

This is a time when Monterey County local governments are increasingly focused on economic

Where the County of Monterey Gets Its Money

SOURCE OF REVENUE	AMOUNT IN MILLIONS	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL REVENUE
Intergovernmental (Federal & State)	\$338.9	38.4%
Property Taxes	\$229.6	26.0%
Other Financing Sources	\$138.8	15.7%
Charges for Services	\$70.3	8.0%
Transient Occupancy Taxes (Hotels)	\$38.8	4.4%
Licenses, Permits, and Franchises	\$27.4	3.1%
Sales & Use Taxes	\$15.0	1.7%
Fines, Forfeitures, and Penalties	\$9.1	1.0%
Miscellaneous Revenues	\$5.6	0.6%
Use of Money & Property	\$4.7	0.5%
Cannabis Taxes	\$3.6	0.4%
TOTAL	\$881.8	100.0%

The Monterey County Financial Forecast, presented to the Board of Supervisors in March 2025, provided estimates for county General Fund revenue sources in Fiscal Year 2024-2025. This includes revenue for "entitlement" programs (payments mandated under federal and state law) and for discretionary spending determined by the Board of Supervisors.

development. There's a reason for this. Throughout the county — in fact, throughout California — local governments anticipate future

difficulties in balancing their budgets. Here are some developments that are provoking concern:
Economic Development see page 5

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OCTOBER 2025

Trash to Triumph: Seventeen Years of Progress with Patrick Mathews

At Salinas Valley Recycles (SVR), waste is never just “garbage.” It is a second chance waiting to happen. Our mission has always been simple: recover more, bury less, and keep working toward a future where landfills are the last resort, not the first stop.

For the past 17 years, R. Patrick Mathews has been the man with the plan (and the patience) to take trash talk and turn it into real change. This December, Patrick is trading in board meetings for retirement mornings, but his legacy is not headed to the curb. He turned challenges into momentum, guiding the agency into steady ground. Budgets got cleaned up, deficits went out with yesterday’s scraps, and instead of piling on debt, SVR started paying its own way.

Patrick also had a knack for turning “garbage” into good news. Food scraps? Johnson Canyon’s composting and depackaging facility now turns them into healthy soil. Curious kids? Our Education Center gives them a hands-on lesson in why recycling matters. Big plans? A new recovery center is on the horizon, designed to pull more resources out of the trash stream before they ever reach the landfill. Even a global pandemic did not stop the bins from rolling and the work from moving forward.

Seventeen years later, SVR is proof that one person’s trash really can be everyone’s opportunity.

As Patrick heads off to a well-earned break, SVR stays focused on the same north star: less trash in the ground, more value above it. Thanks to Patrick, the foundation is solid, now the mission keeps rolling.





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Consensus and Compromise are the Only Ways Forward

By Leonard Batti, SVCC Board Chair

I write this month's column in the wake of conservative activist Charlie Kirk's assassination, and I cannot help but feel a deep concern about how political rhetoric is driving people to do the unthinkable.

This is not a left-versus-right conversation. Less than three months before Kirk's murder, a gunman wounded Minnesota Democratic State Sen. John Hoffman and his wife, and assassinated

Democratic State Rep. Melissa Hortman and her husband in their homes. Less than a year before that, President Trump nearly lost his life to an assassin's bullet, and before that, Nancy Pelosi's 82-year-old husband was brutally attacked in his own house.

In the aftermath of Kirk's assassination, national media outlets have been filled with stories debating the role of political rhetoric. Much of the dialogue has centered on "bringing the temperature down" and calls for unity. Unfortunately, too often this conversation devolves into politicians blaming one another, which only inflames the discourse.

Social media, often celebrated as a platform for the



I believe our diversity is what makes the Salinas Valley such a special place to live.

disenfranchised to find their voice, has instead become a powerful tool for spreading disinformation and empowering disruptive ideologies.

This national climate was very much on my mind as I attended the Sept. 9 Salinas City Council meeting, where public comments on the city's rent stabilization ordinances revealed a troubling level of anger. Threats were made against council members. Many comments were

heartfelt, even heartbreaking — stories of landlords refusing to make essential repairs or raising rents beyond what California law allows.

The previous council was right to want to address these injustices. Yet I also heard about the hardships created by restrictive ordinances that made it difficult for landlords to sustain their properties. Council members spoke of a desire to bring both sides together to find common ground — greater renter protections than state law provides, balanced with fair protections for landlords against rising costs.

The Chamber was asked to help convene discussions between renters and landlords, alongside

the Center for Community Advocacy, an organization with a long history of bridging divides. We accepted because consensus and compromise are the only ways forward.

One of the many things that makes America a great place to live is our democratic process, and free speech lies at its core. But when discourse turns into ridicule or hate speech and threats, we are heading in the wrong direction. I fear that parts of our community are being pitted against one another as if they were enemies. I urge our city leaders to avoid divisive rhetoric and instead focus on language that unites rather than divides us.

When I came to Salinas in 1980, I spent much of my career working in the fields, packing sheds, and processing plants alongside a largely Mexican workforce. As a full-blooded Italian, I found that we had much in common: love of family, heritage, food, celebrations, and a strong work ethic. These shared values made me feel at home, and to this day I believe our diversity is what makes the Salinas Valley such a special place to live.

Our community is at its best when we resist division and seek solutions together. We must protect vulnerable renters without vilifying hardworking landlords. The challenges we face will not be solved through anger or blame, but through dialogue, respect, and a commitment to our shared future in the Salinas Valley. 🌱

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- In July 2025, President Trump signed H.R. 1, the “One Big Beautiful Bill.” This new law includes spending reductions and restrictions for social service programs oriented toward low-income households. California residents will be affected by these cuts, as many analyses of poverty consistently identify California as having the nation’s highest poverty rate. In fact, about one-third of the California budget is funded through transfers from the federal government, and intergovernmental transfers comprise almost 40 percent of revenue for the Monterey County general fund.
- There is some evidence that the national economy is slowing down. Uncertainty about tariffs is often cited by economists as a possible cause. On the state level, California is still benefiting from investment and expenditures related to Artificial Intelligence (AI). However, experienced government officials remember the dot-com bubble burst of 25 years ago and see similar patterns.
- Tax revenue in California is highly dependent on earnings from the stock market. How high will the markets rise before a correction?
- How much longer will rising property values generate higher tax revenue? Some people now claim California real estate will always climb in value. There were people who claimed the same thing in the mid-2000s.
- Health care costs for public employees and retired employees continue to rise. A recent Wall Street Journal article reported that increases in health insurance costs will exceed 9% in 2026 as compared to 2025. This will be the highest rate of increase in 15 years. And rates were previously rising significantly.
- Unfunded pension liability of

California local governments has not gone away, although pension programs such as CalPERS (California Public Employees’ Retirement System) have done well with investment earnings in the past few years. In Fiscal Year 2024-2025, CalPERS earned 11.6% return on its investments. Of course, a slowing economy can end that trend.

- Costs of property insurance, liability insurance and workers compensation insurance have soared for local governments in recent years, for various reasons.
- Weather-related natural disasters, wars, population stagnation, social unrest, and aggressive political ideologies seem to dominate the news and discussions on influential social media platforms. Among many people, there is a feeling of societal instability. How will this affect consumer behavior? For example, is the notable recent decline in alcohol consumption a sign of fundamental changes?

Local Responses to Budget Challenges Focus on Tax Increases

In Monterey County, some local governments are addressing potential budget shortfalls by asking voters to approve tax increases. In November 2024, a sales tax increase for Monterey County’s unincorporated areas (Measure AA) was approved by 53% of voters. However, voters in the City of Gonzales rejected a proposed sales tax increase.

The City of Monterey has a history of early response to anticipated economic slowdowns. Its city council is now involved in a comprehensive process to determine how to eliminate a structural budget deficit, including asking voters to consider tax increases. Proposals for the ballot in 2026 include raising the sales tax, imposing an admissions tax on destinations such as the Monterey Bay Aquarium, establishing a property transfer tax, and renewing



The benefits of economic development aren’t limited to the private sector. Economic development generates the revenue that allows governments to provide the programs, projects, and services that people demand.’

an existing sales tax for street and sidewalk repair.

A Suggestion from Your Chamber for Balancing Local Government Budgets

For local governments concerned about balancing their budgets, there is another option besides spending cuts and tax increases. It’s “economic development”—generating more tax revenue by encouraging growth in commercial activity.

The County of Monterey has an Economic Development office with a manager and administrative assistants. This office plans, coordinates, and facilitates efforts to attract, retain and grow businesses and jobs, while also working on efforts to increase housing supply that’s affordable for ordinary workers. They are guided by an Economic Development Plan, a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), and a 14-member Economic Development Committee with two county supervisors and 12 representatives of various economic sectors who are appointed by the Board of Supervisors.

On Sept. 16, 2025, the Monterey County Board of Supervisors received an annual report from its Economic Development office listing accomplishments for business attraction, retention, and expansion in Fiscal Year 2024-2025. These included involvement with over 60 specific businesses, nine of which were leads from the Governor’s Office of Business and Economic

Development (Go-Biz).

The office worked with all 12 Monterey County cities to identify economic development initiatives in which the County can play a role. It also collaborated with local business associations and groups such as the Monterey Bay DART (Drone, Aviation, and Robotics Technology) Symposium, the Monterey Bay Defense Alliance (a group that promotes the capabilities of local military bases), and the Monterey Bay Economic Partnership (MBEP).

Many of the Monterey County’s 12 cities also have economic development officials. Chamber members who attended the “Salinas Valley Speaks” event in August may have met some of these officials, who attended as representatives of their South Salinas Valley cities.

The City of Monterey is now reviewing applications for a newly established Economic Development Manager position. This official will lead “implementation of policies and projects that support the City’s core economic drivers and strengthen the City’s revenues, particularly Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) and sales tax.” Whoever holds this position will also prepare and administer a comprehensive economic development program for the city’s commercial districts.

Meanwhile, the City of Salinas has advertised for a newly-established position for Deputy Director of Economic Development. Your Chamber has long asked the City of Salinas to establish such a position. The Chamber’s President & CEO has been invited to serve on the interview panel as the city seeks to fill it.

Under the authority of the Assistant City Manager, the Deputy Director of Economic Development will provide “strategic leadership to improve the overall economic vitality of the City of Salinas.” The role involves planning, developing, organizing, implementing, and administering the City’s economic

Economic Development see page 26

Common Holiday Health Myths — and the Real Facts Behind Them

It's almost holiday season! The holidays sparkle with traditions, family gatherings, and indulgent feasts — but they're also wrapped in myths that can mislead us about our health. At ARCpoint Labs of Salinas, we believe the best gift we can give you is knowledge. Let's unwrap some of the most common holiday health myths and look at the facts beneath.

Myth 1: Turkey makes you sleepy because it's packed with tryptophan.

Fact: Turkey doesn't contain significantly more tryptophan than chicken or beef. That post-Thanksgiving-meal drowsiness comes more from overconsumption — think stuffing, mashed potatoes, pies, and a couple of glasses of wine — than from a single amino acid.

Just as important, fatigue after holiday meals can sometimes be tied to subtle food sensitivities. These reactions don't cause immediate allergic symptoms but can show up hours or even days later as bloating, headaches, or inflammation. Food sensitivity testing can reveal which foods are dragging you down so you can adjust what ends up on your plate without missing out on that pleasant post-feast nap!

Myth 2: The holiday season causes suicides to spike.

Fact: Despite popular belief, suicide rates do not increase in December. In fact, April, May, and June lead as the most deadly months for suicide in America. What does rise sharply are heart-related deaths. Research shows that Dec. 25 is the single deadliest day of the year for heart attacks in America, followed by Dec. 26 and



Jan. 1. Heavy meals, excess alcohol, and skipped medications (due to travel and packed schedules) are likely to blame.

A simple holiday heart health panel — checking cholesterol, blood pressure, and glucose — can reveal risks before they turn into emergencies. Knowing your numbers could make all the difference in keeping your celebrations joyful and safe.

Myth 3: Tofu and soy products lower testosterone in men.

Fact: The “soy equals estrogen” myth refuses to die, but the science is clear: tofu doesn't feminize men or suppress testosterone. What does lower testosterone? Age, stress, poor diet, and lack of exercise. The real solution isn't avoiding your in-laws' tofu turkey — it's knowing where your levels stand. Men's hormone panels at ARCpoint Labs can identify imbalances,

while women's testing can provide insights into reproductive health, perimenopause, or thyroid function. With clear results, you can make targeted lifestyle changes — or discuss therapy options with a provider.

Myth 4: Holiday blues always mean depression.

Fact: While the “holiday blues” are real for some, what many people chalk up to depression is actually related to vitamin D deficiency. By the end of winter, nearly one in three Americans has insufficient levels of this essential nutrient, since we make it from sunlight. Low vitamin D can contribute to fatigue, mood swings, and lowered immunity — right when you're surrounded by family, friends, and seasonal germs. Testing your vitamin D levels is quick and inexpensive. If you're low, you can correct it with supplementation or by boosting

foods rich in vitamin D, helping your energy and mood carry into the new year.

Myth 5: Your liver can handle anything you throw at it during the holidays.

Fact: It's true your liver is remarkably resilient — it performs over 500 essential functions and even has the ability to regenerate — but it's not invincible. Holiday over-indulgence, from cocktails to calorie-laden meals, can put serious strain on this organ. Elevated liver enzymes often show up on blood work long before symptoms appear, signaling that damage is starting.

A quick wellness check at ARCpoint Labs can reveal whether your liver is keeping up — or whether it needs a little extra care before the season ends.

Myth 6: Plastic contamination in our bodies is invisible — and there's nothing we can do about it.

Fact: It's true that microplastics and chemical residues from plastics, like PFAS (the so-called “forever chemicals”), are widespread in the modern environment. The holidays can be a peak time of exposure: plastic food containers, nonstick cookware, festive packaging, and even the wrappings on gifts can all contribute to what ends up in our bodies. These substances can leech into your body unseen to disrupt hormones, strain the liver, and affect long-term wellness. But that doesn't mean you're powerless.

The good news is that you can find out what's really happening inside your body. At ARCpoint Labs,

Health Myths see page 7

Health Myths - from page 6

advanced wellness panels can screen for environmental exposures, including PFAS and other contaminants. There's more too; toxic mold exposure, heavy metals, and micronutrient profiles are all available at ARCpoint Labs.

Knowing what is inside your body gives you a starting point for action — whether that's making better product choices, supporting detox pathways, or tracking your progress over time. Rather than accepting plastic contamination as an unavoidable part of modern life, you can use testing to take back control of your health.

The Gift of Knowing

The holidays are full of popular myths — but your health shouldn't be one of them. With clear answers from wellness panels, hormone testing, food sensitivity checks,



A simple holiday heart health panel — checking cholesterol, blood pressure, and glucose — can reveal risks before they turn into emergencies. Knowing your numbers could make all the difference in keeping your celebrations joyful and safe.'

vitamin D assessments, or environmental toxin screens, you can enter the new year not with vague resolutions but with real data and peace of mind.

This year, consider giving yourself — and your loved ones — the gift of clarity. Stop by ARCpoint Labs of Salinas, or book online, and discover the truth behind your body's signals. After all, the best tradition is celebrating many more holidays to come. 🌱



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The Chamber congratulates this year's honorees:

• **Legacy Honoree:**

Leon E. Panetta, Chairman, Panetta Institute for Public Policy and Former Secretary of Defense



Legacy Honoree Leon E. Panetta.

Unanimously confirmed in 2011 by the U.S. Senate as the 23rd Secretary of Defense, Leon E. Panetta has had a 50-year career in public service at the highest levels of government: as Secretary of Defense, he established a new defense strategy; as Director of the CIA, he successfully led the operation that brought Osama bin Laden to justice. Secretary Panetta began his public service career in 1964 as a 1st Lt. in the U.S. Army, receiving the Army Commendation Medal, and then served as a legislative assistant to U.S. Sen. Tom Kuchel.

In 1969, he was appointed Director of the Office for Civil Rights at the Department of Health, Education and Welfare responsible for enforcing equal education laws. Elected to Congress in 1976, Panetta represented the California Central Coast for 16 years. In 1993, he was sworn in as Director of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget for the Clinton administration and later appointed White House chief of staff, achieving a balanced federal budget.

In 1997, Panetta established The Panetta Institute for Public Policy, a nonpartisan, not-for-profit study center to inspire men and women

to lives of public service. He chronicles his life in public service in his best-selling memoir "Worthy Fights," which was published by Penguin Press in the fall of 2014.

• **Public Servant of the Year Honoree:**
Gerardo "Gerry" Magaña



Public Servant of the Year Honoree Gerardo "Gerry" Magaña.

Gerardo "Gerry" Magaña, a police sergeant who has worked in Salinas for 21 years, is deeply rooted in the community. He is a versatile patrol division and special operations department member, with past assignments that include the Violence Suppression Task Force, Field Training Officer, Sexual Assault Detective, Canine Handler, and Mounted Unit.

Sgt. Magaña's personal history is intertwined with Salinas, as he is the first generation born in the United States from immigrant parents from Michoacan, Mexico. His educational background includes an AA in Criminal Justice from Hartnell College and a BS in Criminal Justice Management from Union Institute University.

For more than 19 years, Magaña has led the Annual Christmas Toy Drive in East Salinas, personally purchasing and distributing toys to bring holiday cheer to families while fostering stronger bonds between the community and law enforcement. He has also participated in several other community events, such as, the Cops Care Cancer Foundation Fantasy Flight and Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce Foundation's



This signature event shines a spotlight on remarkable individuals and organizations whose dedication and service have made a lasting difference in the Salinas Valley.

Children's Shopping Tour.

He also stays actively engaged year-round — giving public talks, sharing crime updates on Spanish-language radio, and remaining a familiar presence in local neighborhoods. An alumnus of Los Padres Elementary School, he often returns to visit students and parents, reinforcing ties between schools, families, and law enforcement.

• **Non-Profit of the Year Honoree:**

Meals on Wheels of the Salinas Valley, Inc.

For 53 years, Meals on Wheels of the Salinas Valley (MOWSV) has supported and nourished



Non-Profit of the Year Honoree Meals on Wheels of the Salinas Valley, Inc.

seniors

through their home-delivered meals program. More recently, their organization has grown to offer congregate meals and senior social lunch programs.

In 2021, MOWSV expanded their impact by launching SOCOS (South County Senior Socials) — monthly gatherings offering lunch, music, activities, and community connection. The program's success quickly grew to include Soledad, King City, Greenfield, and Castroville (NOCOS — North County Senior Social).

Expanding the program to serve more communities, MOWSV's newest socials include two sites in Salinas named SASSO (Salinas Senior Socials) and in Marina named MASSO (Marina Senior Social). Now, in 2025, MOWSV totals seven monthly events across Monterey County.

MOWSV's plan to help end senior isolation and hunger, very prevalent in our area, by starting these socials, has provided seniors not only with a free lunch but access to local non-profit resources and fresh produce through our partnership with the Food Bank for Monterey County. Widely praised by seniors, elected officials, and community leaders, the senior social lunch program has become a vital source of joy, health, and connection for seniors.

• **Young Professional of the Year**
Honoree: Jonathan De Anda



Young Professional of the Year Honoree
Jonathan De Anda.

Jonathan De Anda is the General Manager of the Salinas Regional Sports Authority, where he leads efforts to expand access to sports, wellness, and community development for thousands of local families each week.

He holds a Master of Science degree in Sport Management from the University of San Francisco and a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Notre Dame de Namur University. Beyond his professional role, Jonathan is deeply engaged in strengthening the community. He serves on the Advisory Council of the Siembra Latinos Fund at the Community Foundation for Monterey County, supporting philanthropy and equity for Latino families. He also coaches the York School boys' soccer team, mentoring young athletes both on and off the field. With a passion for leveraging sports and service as tools for opportunity, Jonathan continues to create inclusive pathways for youth and families, helping shape a healthier, more connected Salinas Valley.

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The Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce is an association of more than 650 businesses and organizations, representing thousands of local employees and stakeholders. The Chamber is dedicated to creating a strong local economy, promoting the community, providing networking opportunities, representing the interests of business with government, and taking political action. To learn more, visit www.SalinasChamber.com or call (831) 751-7725.

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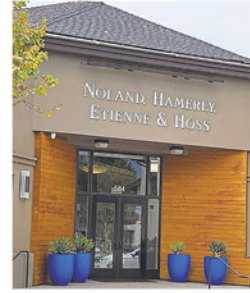


MEMBER NEWS



Noland, Hamerly, Etienne & Hoss Welcomes Attorney Jake Fathy

Attorney Jake Fathy joins Noland, Hamerly, Etienne & Hoss's litigation practice group with a focus on real estate, construction, business and nonprofit law. He is based in the firm's Salinas office. A Sacramento native, Jake earned his J.D. from McGeorge School of Law at University of the Pacific, and his B.A. from University of California, Santa Cruz. Jake lives in Salinas and enjoys coaching his young son in Toro Park Little League.



Noland, Hamerly, Etienne & Hoss Relocates Monterey Office

Noland, Hamerly, Etienne & Hoss law firm has completed its expansion into a larger, more centrally located building in Monterey, at the corner of Munras Avenue and Webster Street. NHEH looks forward to welcoming clients and colleagues at this new downtown office.

K&D Landscaping's 2nd Annual Golf Classic Drives \$13,200 In Donations to Friends of Watsonville Animal Shelter

The second annual K&D Classic charity golf tournament received strong community backing which led to a \$13,200 donation for the Friends of Watsonville Animal Shelter (FOWAS). On Aug. 15, Seascape Golf Club hosted the K&D Landscaping event, which attracted more than 140 participants to its sold-out field for a day of competition and community spirit. The event's mission was to make a tangible local impact, a goal reflected in the company's core values. "Community involvement is one of our core fundamentals at K&D Landscaping," said Justin White, CEO of K&D Landscaping. "Our annual Golf Tournament is not only a fun day for our team, partners, and friends, but also a meaningful way to raise money for local charities and support projects that make a lasting impact in the communities we serve." K&D Landscaping selected FOWAS as this year's beneficiary for its hands-on work with vulnerable animals throughout Watsonville. The fundraising total was a collective effort, driven by spirited participation and generous support from more than 35 sponsors, including Kress, Delta, Greenius, Bookies Pizza, and Central Coast Screen Printing. The day concluded with a dinner, an awards presentation, and raffles for donated prizes.



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Bay Federal Credit Union's Cameron Haste Re-Elected to Hope Services Board of Directors

Bay Federal Credit Union announced that Cameron Haste, Executive Vice President and Chief Operations Officer, has been re-elected to the Board of Directors of Hope Services, one of the Bay Area's largest nonprofit organizations providing services to individuals with developmental disabilities. Headquartered in San Jose, Hope Services has been serving the community for over 70 years and currently operates across the Bay Area, including Santa Cruz, Monterey, and San Benito Counties — regions also served by Bay Federal Credit Union. Hope Services' wide-reaching impact includes job training, employment, counseling, and community living support for thousands of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Haste's continued service on the Hope Services Board underscores Bay Federal Credit Union's commitment to community impact, inclusion, and empowerment. His financial expertise and leadership help guide Hope Services in its mission to improve quality of life for people with developmental disabilities through skill-building, advocacy, and support programs. "It's an honor to continue serving on the Hope Services Board," said Haste. "This organization plays a critical role in helping individuals with developmental disabilities live meaningful, fulfilling lives. I am proud to contribute to their mission and to represent Bay Federal in supporting such essential work across our tri-county community."



Bay Federal
CREDIT UNION

Making a real difference

Pacific Valley Bank Appoints Vida Villanueva as Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer

Pacific Valley Bank, a premier community bank serving California's Central Coast, announced the appointment of Vida Villanueva as Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. With nearly three decades of community, international banking, and financial services experience, Villanueva brings a dynamic leadership style and a proven record of strategic and operational excellence to PVB's executive team. Villanueva joins Pacific Valley Bank following her executive leadership roles at Monterey County Bank, 1st Capital Bank, and HSBC, where she directed enterprise-wide strategies across the United States, Latin America, and the Middle East. Her deep expertise spans risk management, compliance, operations, innovation, IT, and strategic transformation — making her uniquely equipped to guide PVB through its next chapter of growth and modernization. "Vida's appointment signals a bold step forward for Pacific Valley Bank," said Anker Fanoie, CEO of PVB. "Her strategic vision and operational depth will be key to enhancing our efficiency, governance, and customer experience across our operating footprint, further positioning PVB for further growth and expansion." In her new role, Villanueva will oversee core operational areas including Risk and Compliance, Information Technology, Innovation, Operations, and Human Resources. She will also help shape the bank's long-term strategy and cultivate a culture of growth, collaboration, and continuous learning.

PACIFIC VALLEY
BANK



Let's get this done.



Local Businessman Jim Gattis to be Inducted into the Airshow Hall of Fame

The International Council of Airshows (ICAS) has announced that one of this year's Air Show Hall of Fame inductees is Salinas businessman and one of the founders of the California International Airshow Salinas, Jim Gattis. He will be joining some of the most iconic pilots, including locals Roy M. (Butch) Voris, Sean D. Tucker, and Wayne Handley. Gattis was instrumental in launching the California International Airshow in the early 1980s and helped create the innovative "Salinas Plan." He was honored as the 1985 recipient of the ICAS Sword of Excellence and became just the 10th airshow event organizer to be inducted into the Airshow Hall of Fame. "We are so proud that one of our own is receiving this honor," said Executive Director of the Salinas Airshow Harry Wardwell. "Jim was not only instrumental in starting this airshow almost 44 years ago, but he is one of the most loyal supporters we have and a champion in our community." This year's Salinas airshow will be held on Oct. 4-5. It will feature the return of the Navy Blue Angels, the United States Air Force F-16 Viper Demo, the Folds of Honor Biplane flown by Ed Hamill, Vicky Benzing Aerosports, the Smoke & Thunder Jet Truck, Sean D. Tucker and the Bob Hoover Academy, plus static displays, including P-51 Warbirds and more. The ICAS Foundation will induct two new members into the Airshow Hall of Fame during the Chairman's Banquet on Thursday, Dec. 11, 2025, at the conclusion of the 2025 ICAS Convention in Las Vegas. A number of the Salinas Airshow board of directors plan to be there to cheer for and celebrate this momentous occasion with Gattis and his family.

More Accolades for Hartnell College Foundation K-12 STEAM Program; Salinas City Elementary and NASA Acknowledge Partnerships

Hartnell College Foundation K-12 STEAM program is the recipient of two important recognitions: the NASA Community College Aerospace Scholars (NCAS) award and Salinas City Elementary School District recognition for involvement in the implementation of the Invention Convention competition. Invention Convention Innovators Award K-12 STEAM Program received a very special recognition from the Salinas City Elementary School District. At a school board meeting, the district Director of Extended Learning, Chloe Johnson, presented the team with the Invention Convention Innovators Award. Johnson said, "Experiences like the California Invention Convention help shift students' outlook on the future from limited options to infinite possibilities. We're especially proud that 15 of our students advanced from our local Invention Convention to the Northern California State Competition in Sacramento, where five of them earned awards for their innovative ideas." Director of K-12 STEAM Program, Ana Ibarra-Castro, is proud of her team, which includes program coordinators Lupita Arroyo and Andrea Sanchez. Ibarra-Castro said, "It is a true honor to serve the students at the Salinas City Elementary School District. Leaders such as Chloe Johnson, Superintendent Dr. Rebeca Andrade, and the many dedicated administrators and educators are paving the way for a thriving student population — one that will ultimately strengthen and uplift our entire community. We are deeply grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the district's vision and to be part of this important work."



Goldberg & Ibarra Opens New Office in Salinas

The Law Offices of Goldberg & Ibarra have announced the opening of a new office in Salinas. While the office officially opened in December 2024, the firm recently celebrated its grand opening alongside the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce. For firm president David Ibarra, this isn't just another office — it's a return to his roots. Born and raised in Salinas, Ibarra's expansion into his hometown is deeply personal. Coming back to Salinas is about more than business," he said. "It's about giving back to the community that gave so much to me." A certified specialist in workers' compensation law, Ibarra has built his reputation on fighting for working people with humility, compassion, and grit. Goldberg & Ibarra focuses on workers' compensation, personal injury, and Social Security disability law, advocating for injured and disabled individuals throughout California's Central Valley. Known for their client-first approach and ability to secure major settlements, the firm continues to grow with a strong foundation in service, trust, and results. The firm was recently honored in the 2025 Best of Central California People's Choice Awards, organized by The Fresno Bee, receiving first place in four key categories:

- #1 Best Law Firm
- #1 Best in Workers' Comp
- #1 Best in Personal Injury
- #1 Best Accident Law Firm

These awards are a direct reflection of the people they serve — and the people who believe in their mission. If you or someone you know needs help with a work injury, personal injury, or Social Security disability case, Goldberg & Ibarra's Salinas office is open and ready to serve. Walk-ins are welcome, and consultations are always free.



Support our Chamber Members

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

Member Name	Member Since	Member Name	Member Since
Piini Realty *55 Years	1970	Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST)	1988
Sambrailo Packaging *55 Years	1970	Tanimura & Antle	1989
Leavitt Central Coast Insurance	1971	Bay Property Management Inc	1991
Northridge Mall	1972	WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca	1991
The Steinbeck House	1974	Dole Fresh Vegetables	1993
California Rodeo Inc *50 Years	1975	Bobcat Bicycles	1994
Ingraham & Associates CPA's *50 Years	1975	Monterey Regional Airport	1994
American AgCredit	1976	Robert Kasavan Marketing	1994
Monterey County Herald	1978	Hitchcock Farms *30 Years	1995
The Nunes Company Inc / Foxy	1978	The Don Chapin Company, Inc.	1997
United Way Monterey County	1979	Carol Kurtz	1999
California Coastal - A Small Business Lender	1983	McCune Audio/Video/Lighting	1999
Notre Dame High School	1983	Republic Services Inc *25 Years	2000
Armanasco Public Relations Inc *45 Years	1985	RHC Management Co, LLC dba	2000
Monterey County Office of Education	1986	McDonalds *25 Years	
Bengard Ranch Inc	1987	Alvarez Technology Group Inc	2001
Dawn Transportation, Inc.	1987	CASA of Monterey County	2002
Firestone Business Park	1987	Gateway Center of Monterey County	2003
Jim Gattis Investment Properties	1988	CSUMB	2004
Markon, Inc	1988	Aurum Consulting Engineers Monterey	2005
		Bay Inc *20 Years	

A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR VISIONARY AND STAKEHOLDER MEMBERS





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Member Name	Member Since	Member Name	Member Since
Alco Water Service	2006	Zenona *5 years	2020
The Salvation Army	2007	Latitude 36 Foods	2021
El Sistema USA/Salinas, Inc -	2010	Mee Memorial Hospital	2021
YOSAL *15 Years		Salinas Valley Medical Aesthetics	2021
Terry Feinberg	2011	Hope Services	2022
Sacred Heart School	2012	Snipville Pet Care	2022
Quail Lodge & Golf Club	2013	Viable Green Building Solutions	2022
SlingShot Connections	2013	Western Pre-Cooling systems	2022
Braga Fresh Family Farms Inc	2014	Brandon Trucking Company	2023
The Maynard Group, Inc.	2014	Fastest Labs of Salinas	2023
Diane Ausonio *10 Years	2015	Loves Travel Stops	2023
Stifel, Nicolaus & Company, Inc	2015	Mmm Churros LLC	2023
American Supply Company - Salinas	2016	North American Mental Health Services	2023
Smith & Enright Landscaping	2016	A&G Facility Services	2024
Mike Hutchinson	2017	Arroyo Seco Wireless LLC	2024
TPO Human Resource Management	2017	Crime Shield Private Security	2024
Monterey County Mosquito Abatement	2019	Kidz Corner USA	2024
District		Prosperos	2024
C4 Consulting *5 Years	2020	Quintana-Saragosa Public Affairs	2024
California Manufacturing Technology	2020	Nikssarian Insurance Services, Inc.	2025
Consulting® (CMTC) *5 years		Raising Cane's	2025
Salinas Regional Sports Authority *5 Years	2020		

A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR VISIONARY AND STAKEHOLDER MEMBERS





Chief Carlos Acosta: Building Trust and Transforming Policing in Salinas

By Colleen Bailey, SVCC CEO

I recently had the distinct honor of being the first to formally interview our new police chief, Carlos Acosta. While the conversation touched on many aspects of his leadership, it began with his reflections on Sgt. Gerry Magaña, who will be recognized by your Chamber this October at the Legacy of Leadership event for creating and sustaining an annual holiday toy giveaway program for families in East Salinas.

Chief Acosta described Sergeant Magaña as a pillar of the community — an example of the community-centered approach to policing he both values and champions.

That spirit of connection is what drew Acosta to Salinas from his hometown of San Jose. Early in his career, he co-founded a nonprofit that supported underprivileged children and earned him multiple accolades. His philosophy is clear: officers must build authentic relationships with residents, especially young people. “Vibrancy and community spirit is what it’s all about,” he told me—and it’s a vision that aligns closely with Salinas’ values.

Commitment to Youth and Community

Chief Acosta is excited to work in a city with so many young people and his dedication to youth engagement is evident. He has doubled the size of the department’s Cadet Program to 35 cadets—more than any other city in Monterey County. He regularly participates in

programs like Rancho Cielo’s Career Day and has delivered the keynote address at their graduation, ensuring students see positive pathways for their futures.

Recruiting, Retaining, and Restructuring

One of his most significant early accomplishments has been improving recruitment and retention. Under his leadership, the department has hired seven lateral officers — double the previous rate— and has roughly 20 recruits currently in the Police Academy. By restructuring roles, moving certain civilian functions away from sworn officers, and hiring specialized staff, he has increased efficiency while allowing officers to focus on core responsibilities.

Equally important, he has cultivated a workplace culture that values and supports officers. Recognizing the stress and risks of policing, Acosta has implemented wellness



Salinas Police Chief Carlos Acosta

Chief Acosta’s philosophy is clear: Officers must build authentic relationships with residents, especially young people. ‘Vibrancy and community spirit is what it’s all about.’

programs addressing mental and physical health, and work-life balance. Initiatives include training on the psychology of policing, stress management, injury prevention, nutrition, meditation, and an upcoming financial planning training that communicates to employees that they matter.

Education, Training, and Language Access

Education has also been a cornerstone of Acosta’s leadership. He holds a Master’s of Science degree in Public Leadership-Law Enforcement from the University of San Diego and is a P.O.S.T.-certified Spanish instructor. Today, 65 of the city’s 144 sworn officers are Spanish-speaking — a marked improvement that enhances communication and trust in a predominantly Latino community.

Strengthening Trust Through Engagement

Chief Acosta is deeply aware that most police encounters occur during difficult moments for residents. To build trust outside of crises, he has expanded initiatives such as National Night Out, which doubled in attendance this year, and Cops and Conversations, designed to foster dialogue and understanding. These efforts respond directly to the U.S. Department of Justice’s 2016 report, which issued 110 recommendations to improve trust between law enforcement and the Salinas community.

As Acosta put it, “Police should be the face of good and the guardians of the community.” His focus on procedural justice, accountability, and customer service — echoing Mayor Dennis Donohue’s priorities — underscores his commitment to raising the standard across the department.

Results and Long-Term Vision

Chief Acosta’s efforts are already showing results. Violent crime in Salinas has declined, and morale within the department is on the rise. Looking ahead, he is collaborating with city leadership on a 10-year strategic plan to ensure the police department is prepared to sustain core services as Salinas continues to grow.

Chief Carlos Acosta is more than a law enforcement leader; he is a bridge-builder, committed to community, trust, and the long-term vitality of Salinas. 🌱



RIBBON CUTTINGS & CHAMBER EVENTS

by Chamber Staff



The Club at Crazy Horse Ranch Celebrated 100 Years

The Club at Crazy Horse Ranch celebrated its 100-year anniversary with a ribbon cutting, local tastings, music, games, and community fun. Chamber members, business leaders, and friends of the Salinas Valley gathered to honor a century of tradition and connection.



Grand Opening of Cre's BBQ and Soul Food's Food Trailer

Cre's BBQ and Soul Food celebrated the launch of their new food trailer through a ribbon cutting with family, friends, and community leaders. Rooted in family tradition and built with love, Antowyn and Antoinette's business reflects perseverance, community spirit, and a legacy of great food for future generations.



ARCpoint Labs of Salinas Joint Chamber Mixer

ARCpoint Labs of Salinas hosted a lively Joint Mixer with the Salinas Valley and Monterey Peninsula Chambers. Guests enjoyed wine, bites, networking, and a trivia show-down, "The Lab Report," while learning about ARCpoint's wellness and employer testing services.



Member Orientation

Membership Director Gabe Lopez hosted an orientation for new and prospective members, highlighting Chamber benefits, marketing opportunities, and ways to get involved. Attendees left with resources to maximize their membership and connect with the Salinas Valley business community.



Lunch and Learn with Granite Construction

Chamber members enjoyed a delicious Kleinfeldt BBQ lunch followed by an exclusive inside look at Granite's Salinas Hot Plant. Through small-group guided tours, guests experienced the asphalt-making process from start to finish while learning about Granite's operations, industry-leading safety practices, and commitment to quality and sustainability.



Paint the Town Purple

The American Cancer Society's "Paint the Town Purple" event kicked off Relay for Life with an inspiring celebration. Guests enjoyed a car display, mariachi, hors d'oeuvres, and moving tributes. The night ended with a powerful community walk to the Salinas Arch.



Lunch Connect at The Steinbeck House

The Steinbeck House hosted the Chamber's bi-monthly Lunch Connect series, where attendees enjoyed a taste of history and cuisine. Guests learned about Nobel Prize-winning author John Steinbeck's family home while enjoying lunch. It was a wonderful afternoon of networking and heritage.



Lunch and Learn with RVS Technology Group

RVS Technology Group led a Lunch and Learn presentation at the Chamber office, sharing their expertise. Chamber Members learned helpful tips and tricks on how to effectively utilize Microsoft Teams in their workplaces.



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

OCTOBER 2025

By Kevin Dayton, Government Affairs Liaison

Your Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce Government Relations Committee had 23 members at its meeting on Wednesday, Sept. 10 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 The committee reviewed the history and status of four recently approved, but subsequently repealed, City of Salinas ordinances that regulate landlord-tenant relations, including a strict limit on annual rent increases. Now that enough voters have signed petitions for a ballot referendum to repeal the repeal (and thereby reinstitute the ordinances), city council members have to decide to adopt one of three options, while perhaps considering a fourth option.

The city council can put the referendum on the ballot for a special election. It can put the referendum on the general election ballot in November 2026. Or, it can vote to repeal its repeal, as requested in the referendum, and thereby reinstate the four ordinances. (Then there wouldn't be an election at all.) This decision is likely to occur at a city council meeting on Sept. 23.

There is a fourth possibility: supporters and opponents can negotiate and reach an agreement

for a new set of ordinances that would be a compromise between full enactment and full repeal of the ordinances. Presumably, if an agreement was reached, the proponents of the four ordinances would withdraw their petition for a referendum. Negotiations could also occur during the campaign, with an agreement resulting in the end of the campaign to persuade voters to support the referendum to repeal the repeal of the original ordinances.

The Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce took the initiative to offer to convene a meeting for the two sides to meet toward a compromise. A group that supports the ordinances — Center for Community Advocacy (CCA) — agreed to be a co-convenor. As a result, the two sides met on Sept. 6, with seven representatives on each side and two co-moderators.

Opponents of the ordinances (owners and managers of rental properties) came to the meeting with a list of five proposed amendments they thought would be reasonable for mitigating some of the negative effects of the ordinances. They also proposed "ground rules" for negotiations. Opponents did not agree to those rules.

Identifying themselves as "Protect Salinas Renters" and "the Housing Coalition," supporters of the ordinances came to the meeting with a formal statement to read.

It indicated their unwillingness at that time to negotiate, for a variety of reasons, including the belief that "closed-door decision-making processes" were occurring without "input from the community."

Protect Salinas Renters then held a press conference on Sept. 8 and issued a press release declaring "We will not participate in any backroom process that excludes our community." It claimed the ordinances they support are "rooted in years of data, testimony, and community organizing."

Committee members noted that, actually, the city has not yet released data to the public about the impact of rental registration and rent stabilization on the rental market. The Chamber is trying to obtain that data, as its arguments against the strict limit on rent increases are based on macroeconomic assumptions concerning the relationship of demand, supply, and prices.

2 There were no new developments to report to the committee regarding these issues: (1) asking City of Salinas voters to renew the Measure G sales tax, (2) the planned vote of the Salinas City Council on Sept. 23 to triple sewer rates for residential and commercial customers, (3) City

of Salinas wastewater flow accuracy and accountability, (4) proposed revisions to the City of Salinas Economic Development Element of its General Plan, and (5) the County of Monterey Community Climate Action Plan and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan.

3 Committee members expressed continuing concerns that time spent on regulation of rental properties is distracting the Salinas City Council, staff, and community from issues important for revenue generation and economic development. For example, more than a year has passed since the Chamber sent a letter dated July 17, 2024 to the Salinas City Council offering leadership on a Measure G renewal effort, while asking the city to adopt accountability measures ensuring voters that the city spent Measure G revenue as intended. Committee members directed staff to send a new letter to the city council asking about plans for Measure G renewal.





4 City of Salinas officials have asked South Salinas business representatives for a list of small projects that could improve traffic in their area as the city prepares for the anticipated opening of the Amazon distribution center in the summer of 2026. This could include painting new paving markings (road stripes) on the streets. In the meantime, lane closures resulting from Amazon construction and a pipe that burst on Aug. 19, 2025 on Harkins Road have slowed traffic in the area.

Discussions continue for the location of an interchange that may connect Harris Road with Highway 101. This project will not happen for many years. In addition, Caltrans is expected in early 2027 to end left turns on Highway 101 between Airport Boulevard in Salinas and the Chualar exit. Both of these projects are associated with the U.S. 101 South of Salinas Corridor Improvement Project, managed by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) in coordination with Caltrans.

Meanwhile, Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) had an introductory meeting with City of Salinas staff to discuss using a public shuttle service to reduce traffic congestion by transporting Amazon employees to and from a remote parking lot.

Committee members agreed that the Chamber should offer to be a centralized conduit of information from various governments to the business community (and the public) about planning and proposals for traffic mitigation on highways and streets near the new Amazon distribution facility.

5 The committee considered a request to join a coalition to support more funding for the "California Wildfire Fund." Established in 2019

through enactment of Assembly Bill 1054, the California Wildfire Fund pays for losses resulting from wildfires caused by facilities or equipment owned by investor-owned utilities (Pacific Gas & Electric Company - PG&E, Southern California Edison - SoCal Edison aka SCE, and San Diego Gas & Electric Company - SDG&E). Company shareholders and electric customers pay for this fund.

Gov. Gavin Newsom has asked the legislature to provide another \$18 billion to the California Wildlife Fund. As before, half of the funding would come from investors/shareholders and the other half from customers (through ratepayer bills). The three investor-owned utilities have created a coalition in support of this proposal. Because the legislative session ended in two days (on Sept. 12), this proposal would be inserted into a "gut-and-amend" bill introduced at the last minute in which the language is stripped and replaced with language entirely new.

Committee members were uneasy about joining a coalition that would support legislation not yet published for public review, even though the coalition was currently only dedicated to a concept. In addition, the legislation would apparently be one provision in a much larger bill designated as a budget trailer bill, and those other provisions may not be desirable for Chamber members.

The Government Affairs Liaison informed the committee that this is a typical way for the legislature to pass meaningful bills without dealing with the drag of inevitable opposition. Lobbyists arrange the language with key legislators, and then the new language is whipped through the legislature in the final hours with minimal review. This is why local groups such as

the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce don't have much opportunity to review and discuss key legislation that pops up late in the session each year. It's an insiders' game.

By voice vote, with some opposition, the committee directed the Government Affairs Liaison to obtain the language of the California Wildfire Fund funding provision and the bill as a whole as soon as it became available. After review, that language can be forwarded with analysis to Chamber leaders with a recommendation about supporting it.

6 The committee considered a request to support an effort by the Coalition for Affordable, Reliable and Equitable Housing (CARE) to repeal Sections 57 and 58 of Assembly Bill 130, a state budget trailer bill for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 that was enacted earlier this year. These new provisions in state law authorize governments to collect developer payments for affordable housing as way to mitigate environmental impacts based on anticipated vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by occupants. The provisions are meant to discourage "sprawl" development while providing additional funding for new affordable housing projects. They may increase costs of new housing in rural areas such as South County, where people drive long distances for work or other purposes.

It was noted that AB 130 contains numerous provisions that refer to other laws and connect to them. Like the "gut-and-amend" budget trailer bill about to be introduced for the California Wildlife Fund, AB 130 is an amalgamation of language worked out among lobbyists and legislators and introduced for quick approval through the legislature.

The committee directed the

Government Affairs Liaison to talk to housing developers and housing directors at South Valley cities to determine whether Sections 57 and 58 of Assembly Bill 130 will hinder new housing development.

7 The committee discussed whether the Chamber should take a position on Proposition 50, a state ballot measure openly intended as political retaliation to Congressional redistricting in Texas that would minimize the number of California districts represented by Democrats. While committee members recognized that deliberately manipulating district boundaries for political advantage (partisan gerrymandering) has a long tradition in America, members were generally dismayed that circumstances have led to a ballot measure asking voters to approve openly and brazenly gerrymandered districts as a political tactic. It was noted that the proposed districts under Proposition 50 would tend to favor increased power for urban representation over rural representation in places such as Monterey County. By voice vote (with a scattering of nay votes), the committee recommended to the Board of Directors that it oppose Proposition 50.

8 It was noted that California Senate Bill 144 was gutted and amended one day earlier to be transformed into a budget trailer bill with numerous provisions related to public health policies. Among these provisions would be establishment of a state baseline for vaccine coverage and authorization for the California Department of Public Health to modify or supplement these baseline vaccine recommendations. This would circumvent federal vaccine policies established by the Trump administration. 🌱

Position Your Business for Fall Success: A Financial Checklist for Monterey County Businesses

By Sherry Farson, Monterey Business Banking VP, Bank of America

The fall season is here, marking a key transition point that sets the tone for strong year-end business performance.

Now's the time for business owners to assess finances and capitalize on upcoming opportunities such as changing cycles of customer engagement. For example, some businesses see an influx of traffic during the fall and winter, especially during the holidays. For other Monterey County businesses, such as those in the agricultural and tourism industries, they may experience slower business influenced by temperature drops.

Either way, here are some tips to help Monterey County companies optimize the seasonal business transition and maximize the rest of the year.

Solidify cash flow

Cash is king, and business owners need to meticulously manage and monitor its flow to finish the year strong. A good fall business practice includes:

- **Forecast your budget**, especially for businesses in certain sectors like tourism and hospitality where cash flow is susceptible to feast-or-famine cycles. Peak summer and winter seasons may bring in a wave of customers and substantial revenue, leaving a potential lull during the fall months. So build potential revenue dips into your budget.
- **Negotiate with suppliers.** Ask for extended payment terms, discounts for early payment, or volume discounts. If you can't agree, don't be afraid to shop around for



Monterey County business leaders getting an economic briefing from Bank of America.

better deals and partners.

- **Accelerate receivables.**

Incentivize customers to make early payments with a seasonal discount, stay on top of invoicing, and follow up on late payments.

- **Explore financing options:**

Don't wait until you're in a Q4 cash crunch to seek financing. A line of credit can be a valuable safety net toward the end of the year.

Optimize inventory for seasonal demand

Examine inventories and adjust as needed to streamline for the fall months. By strategically optimizing inventory, you can more confidently navigate fluctuating demand, avoid costly overstocks, and ensure customer needs are met. Some tactics to manage inventory include:

- **Analyze past sales data:**

Historical sales data can identify your best- and worst-selling

products during the fall months, indicating which products to stock up on and which to remove from the shelves.

- **Implement just-in-time inventory:** Work with suppliers to receive items when you truly need them to help minimize storage costs and the risk of overstock.

Think like a CFO

Review the past three to five fall seasons to determine specific revenue dips and expense spikes - then identify the *why* behind these numbers. To do this, start by:

- **Segmenting your customer base:** Understand which customer segments are most active in the fall and tailor your offerings to them. Are locals more likely to spend, or are you reliant on tourists? These considerations can better inform marketing messaging and spend.
- **Track key performance**

indicators (KPIs): KPIs like customer acquisition cost, average transaction value and website traffic provide visibility into your current performance. This can identify growth pathways, pinpoint optimization opportunities, and accelerate progress toward goals.

As the number-one small business lender in America, Bank of America has served the Monterey region for over 100 years. So, we understand that owning a business is a rewarding but challenging vocation. It's why we not only lend more than a half-billion dollars to local businesses of all sizes, but we actively advise business clients as well.

We know that a crucial element of success lies in effectively managing fluctuating consumer needs and costs as the seasons change. By taking proactive steps through the fall months, you can set your business up to thrive in the final months of the year. 🌿

See Monterey Unveils Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Business Plan to Drive Tourism Through Storytelling, Events and Cultural Partnerships

See Monterey, a non-profit organization that drives tourism for Monterey County, released its FY2025-26 Business Plan with the objective of maximizing economic impact for the community while ensuring lasting benefit, all guided by the Monterey County Tourism 2030 (MCT 2030) long-term strategic roadmap.

The plan for the year includes expanding the Monterey County brand to visitors across the country and leveraging the County's many assets such as world-renowned events, rich history and culture and a focus on sustainability and respectful travel.

Launched last year, MCT 2030 has already driven significant success, and the current Business Plan builds on that momentum. See Monterey's marketing communications program reached more than 9 million traveling households and influenced 547,000 overnight trips that generated \$1.1 billion in visitor spending.

Business development efforts also delivered impressive results, booking more than 200 groups accounting for more than 83,000 definite room nights secured, which is projected to generate \$86 million in economic impact for Monterey County.

"Tourism is at the heart of Monterey County's economy and our responsibility is to ensure it grows in a way that enriches the lives of both visitors and residents," said Rob O'Keefe, president and CEO of See Monterey. "This annual Business Plan weaves in the strategies outlined in MCT 2030 for managed tourism growth, while

setting the stage for elevating our destination through storytelling, partnerships and a stronger cultural connection that will sustain community prosperity well into the future."

New Strategic Priorities for 2025-26

Targeting New Markets: See Monterey will expand its brand presence to the east through paid advertising, PR, social media and sales efforts to reach new, high-value fly-in visitors.

In addition to the current fly-and drive-in markets, new brand advertising will launch in Austin and Chicago, while growing social media engagement and targeted PR campaigns will reach even further

to tell Monterey County's story on a broader stage. With sales offices already established in Dallas and Chicago, the increase of brand support will boost the team's ability to secure high-value meetings and events in Monterey County.

Bringing the Destination to Life: SeeMonterey.com will continue to evolve with new digital content that provides the in-depth tourism information travelers seek, inspiring them to explore all parts of Monterey County. Supported by AI-powered trip planning, interactive maps and personalized itineraries, new tools will guide travelers to

local attractions, trails, parks and businesses — showcasing what Monterey County has to offer and how these experiences can be easily connected into a longer stay. Fresh content, including a new video series, will bring the destination's diverse personalities to life.

Making Events Work Harder:

Events present a critical opportunity to drive the tourism economy and See Monterey will focus on making existing events work harder for the destination as well as attracting new events. A new partnership with WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca is designed to connect race

experiences with the broader destination, giving visitors even more reasons to come, stay longer, enjoy more and spend more. With See Monterey

named a Preferred Travel Partner of the track, this exposure will elevate Monterey County's global reputation as a motorsports destination and align with the county's broader tourism economy.

On the horizon are events such as Super Bowl 60 in Santa Clara, FIFA, the USGA Men's Open at Pebble Beach in 2027 and the LA Olympics in 2028.

Expanding History, Culture and Art Tourism: New storytelling initiative, Monterey County 1000, will take the forefront in promoting Monterey County's heritage, connecting the destination's vast

and rich history to tourism experiences available today. And also, in partnership with the Arts Council for Monterey County, See Monterey will spotlight public art, murals and cultural experiences — enhancing the region's appeal as a creative destination.

Responsible Travel: The Right Path, a multi-faceted initiative that permeates almost everything See Monterey does, will be woven into the above initiatives, showing visitors what responsible travel looks like in Monterey County. The initiative allows See Monterey to uphold its commitment to responsible travel, ensuring tourism growth aligns with community values.

These new initiatives and proven strategies reinforce See Monterey's commitment to MCT 2030's vision: enhancing quality of place, stimulating economic vitality and managing tourism growth responsibly. By weaving Monterey County's history, culture and major events into a unified narrative, See Monterey is ensuring the destination continues to compete globally while preserving the essence of what makes it unique. 🌿

See Monterey is a 501(c)(6) non-profit organization that drives tourism for Monterey County. Tourism is the largest industry on the Monterey Peninsula and the second largest in the county. See Monterey is a partnership of the hospitality community and local governments that aims to generate community prosperity and enrich economic vitality for Monterey County through the responsible growth of the tourism economy. In 2024, travel spending in Monterey County was \$3.1 billion, supporting nearly 28,000 jobs and generating \$310 million in state and local tax revenue that directly benefited the community. For more information, visit www.SeeMonterey.com and follow @SeeMonterey on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.

Advancing Health Equity: A Decade of Community Impact in the Salinas Valley

By Chris Haubert, Salinas Valley Health



Mandy Jackson, MD, serves as both pediatrician and Medical Director for Salinas Valley Health's Taylor Farms Family Health & Wellness Center.

For the past decade, Salinas Valley Health's Taylor Farms Family Health & Wellness Center has been a trusted resource for people across the Salinas Valley. As the Center approaches its 10-year anniversary in October, it celebrates remarkable achievements made possible by a deeply committed team that takes great pride in what they do and who they serve.

Opening Access to Quality Care

Mandy Jackson, MD, serves as both pediatrician and Medical Director for the Center. She has a long history of supporting the underserved and a huge heart for helping people succeed – in health, education and life.

"When I moved here 17 years ago, I fell in love with the South

County population," Jackson says. "Access to quality healthcare is a matter of human equality, and I'm dedicated to helping level the playing field."

The Center's 20,000-square-foot facility features nine medical providers, with two additional providers joining soon. Last year, the Center received nearly 6,000 unique patient visits, delivering care for individuals and families at every stage of life.

The medical team provides comprehensive healthcare to many long-established patients. Urgent care services offer an accessible alternative to the emergency department, while visiting specialists in cardiology, diabetes, orthopedics, gastroenterology, and general surgery ensure well-rounded quality care.



Salinas Valley Health's Taylor Farms Family Health & Wellness Center's 20,000-square-foot facility at 850 5th St., in Gonzales.

COMMUNITY HEALTH DAY

Join the Community Health Day celebration of the 10th anniversary of Taylor Farms Family Health & Wellness Center. Taking place from 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 25, the event will feature free flu shots through our Mobile Clinic, a soccer ball giveaway, a heart-healthy cooking demonstration, a Zumba class, community health and resource tables along with other activities and entertainment. Taylor Farms Family Health & Wellness Center is located at 850 5th St., in Gonzales.

A Hub for Well-Being Resources

Beyond clinical care, Taylor Farms Family Health & Wellness Center has become a hub for community well-being. It offers preventive bilingual education classes on healthy living, free flu shots and fresh food distributions through Blue Zones Project Monterey County's partnership with Savor the Local.

Free Zumba and yoga classes are open to all, and a bus stop just outside the Center makes it easy

for patients visiting from Greenfield, Soledad, King City and beyond to access services. Everyone is welcomed with a smile.

Preventive care, urgent care and advocacy are central to the Center's mission.

"Community Health Workers are available five days a week," Jackson explains. "They help patients with arrangements for housing, food, transportation, education and other basic needs."



Getty Images

Community Connections

Many staff members call South County home, creating strong connections between caregivers and those they serve. Jackson credits the Center's manager, Micaela Vargas — a Gonzales native — for her exceptional vision to expand access and services vital to the people who call South County home. It's a vision, Micaela says, that continues the work of Christine Ponzio, MD, who helped start the Center.

"Dr. Ponzio was deeply committed to providing compassionate, accessible and quality healthcare to our community," Micaela explains. "Her goal was always to improve health outcomes by addressing the unique challenges faced by our patients with respect empathy and dedication."

Philanthropic support has also been vital to the Center's success.

Named for generous supporter, Taylor Farms, the Center has received significant donations from the Central California Alliance for Health, Susan Merrill, the Monterey Peninsula Foundation, Mike and Mary Orradre, the Salinas Valley Health Service League, the Sally Hughes Church Foundation and others.

Salinas Valley Health, founded in 1953, was built for the community, by the community.

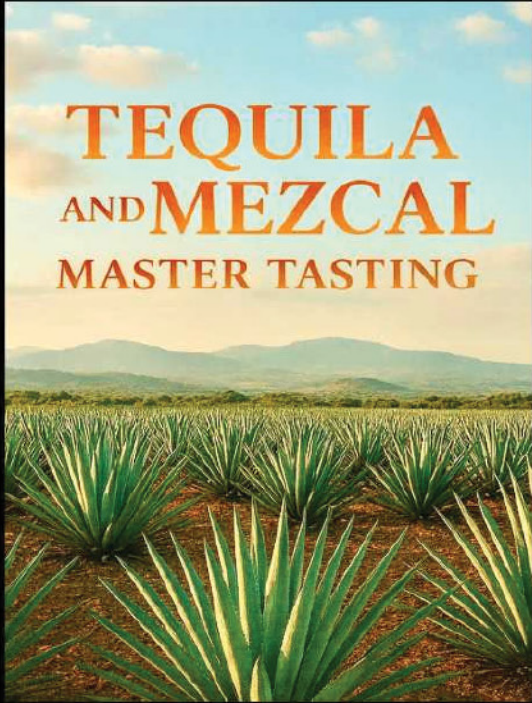
"In seven decades of service, we have continually advanced access to quality healthcare," says Allen Radner, MD, President and CEO of Salinas Valley Health. "We are extremely proud to celebrate this milestone anniversary for Taylor Farms Family Health & Wellness Center and the meaningful difference it makes for the people of South Monterey County."



Scan the QR code for more information.



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OCTOBER 4

MASTER TASTING 5 - 8 PM
AFTER PARTY 8 - 11 PM

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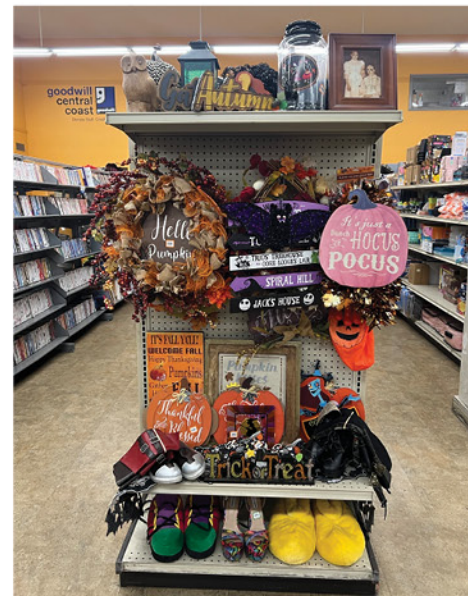
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CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Goodwill Central Coast's 16 Stores Become Halloween Headquarters for Costumes, Decor and Spooky Savings

By Goodwill Central Coast Staff

Every October, Americans embrace the spooky season with gusto. From haunted houses and trick-or-treating to elaborate costumes, Halloween has become one of the nation's most celebrated — and most expensive — holidays.

In 2024 alone, consumers spent more than \$12 billion on Halloween, with nearly \$4 billion devoted to costumes. Many of those mass-produced outfits, often priced at \$40 or more, were worn once before being stashed away in closets or tossed into landfills.

But along the Central Coast, one nonprofit is proving that you don't have to break the bank — or harm the planet — to have a frighteningly good time. GCC has become the region's go-to destination for thrifty shoppers looking to conjure one-of-a-kind costumes, eerie décor, and even pet ensembles — all while supporting a mission that uplifts communities through the power of jobs.

The magic of DIY

Goodwill Central Coast's stores brim with hidden treasures for costume-seekers who prefer creativity over conformity. Instead of grabbing a polyester pirate outfit off the rack, shoppers can hunt for unique pieces that spark imagination. A leather jacket and studded belt might become the centerpiece of an '80s rock star. A trench coat and fedora transform into a film-noir detective. Denim and a red bandana make Rosie the Riveter instantly recognizable.

"Building your own costume from thrifted finds is part of the fun," said GCC's VP of Retail & E-Commerce Alan Martinson. "You're not just dressing up — you're telling your own story."

The process is as eco-friendly as it is creative. An estimated 80 percent of store-bought Halloween costumes are made from oil-based plastics such as polyester, nylon and acrylic, all of which are resource-intensive to produce and slow to decompose. By contrast, repurposing existing clothing and

accessories gives items a second life, diverting waste from landfills while avoiding the environmental toll of fast fashion.

For many shoppers, the joy lies in the unpredictability of the hunt. A vintage wedding dress becomes a ghost bride. Overalls can morph into a scarecrow or even a Minion. The mix-and-match possibilities are endless, and the results are always one-of-a-kind.

'Building your own costume from thrifted finds is part of the fun. You're not just dressing up — you're telling your own story.'

Spooky savings

Beyond the creative thrill, thrifted costumes deliver serious savings. Big-box retailers charge between \$30 and \$70 for prepackaged costumes, while at Goodwill Central Coast, shoppers can pull together an entire outfit for a fraction of that cost. Families with multiple children

especially appreciate the difference, often outfitting everyone for less than the price of a single new costume elsewhere.

The savings extend beyond wardrobe ensembles. GCC's aisles are stocked with decorations that can transform any home into a haunted mansion. Candlesticks, eerie dolls, dark curtains, or a splash of DIY craft supplies are enough to set a chilling scene — all while staying under budget.

Costumes that give back

Every purchase at Goodwill Central Coast goes far beyond Halloween night. Proceeds help fund local job training, career services, and educational programs across Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Luis Obispo counties. In the past year alone, GCC programs supported more than 23,000 people in overcoming barriers to employment.

That means when a parent buys their child's thrifted vampire cape or a student picks up supplies for a last-minute zombie look, they're

not just shopping — they're directly investing in their community.

"It's about more than costumes," said Martinson. "Every dollar spent in our stores helps someone find a job, build stability, and create opportunity. Shoppers walk away with savings and creativity, but they're also fueling real change."

Tips for a frightfully good thrift trip

Shop with an open mind: The best costumes come from unexpected finds. **Start with one key piece:** Find something that inspires you and build the rest around it.

Repurpose with flair: That old wedding dress? Ghost bride. Those overalls? Farmer, scarecrow, or Minion. **Mix and match eras:** A 1920s flapper with vampire fangs? Why not?

Pets join the fun

Of course, Halloween isn't just for humans anymore. According to the National Retail Federation, Americans spent more than \$700 million on pet costumes last year. But those pint-sized superhero capes and pumpkin suits come at a steep price—and are often uncomfortable for furry friends.

GCC offers a thrifty alternative. Shoppers can scour the children's clothing racks and accessories aisles for items that can easily be repurposed into pet outfits. A toddler T-shirt with a superhero logo, trimmed to fit, becomes a dog's crime-fighting uniform. Baby-sized legwarmers and a colorful headband can turn a pup into an '80s workout

star. Even an oversized bandana or apron can transform a pet into a pint-sized chef.

The result? Costumes that are affordable, comfortable, and utterly unique. And for pet parents who like to coordinate, GCC finds make it easy to create clever human-and-pet duos: a wizard and their familiar, a farmer and their "piglet," or a detective and sidekick.

Safety always comes first, and Goodwill Central Coast reminds pet owners to avoid restricting movement, skip small chewable parts, and to supervise pets while in costume.

A sustainable, community-minded Halloween

In a season often driven by overconsumption, Goodwill Central Coast is redefining what it means to celebrate Halloween. By choosing thrifted costumes and décor, shoppers save money, flex their creativity, and sidestep the wasteful cycle of fast fashion. More importantly, they contribute to a mission that empowers neighbors through employment and education.

With 14 stores and two outlets across the Central Coast, GCC has positioned itself as the region's Halloween headquarters, offering endless possibilities for spooky style — without the scary price tags.

This month, whether you're a ghost, a glam rocker, or a dog in a cape, one thing is certain: Every costume tells a story, and every purchase changes a life.

Find your nearest store at <https://www.ccgoodwill.org/shop/goodwill-store-directory/>.



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A Message and Update from Monterey Regional Airport's Interim Executive Director Chris Morello

Leading the MRY Team through the MRY Metamorphosis Final Projects

As we continue flying into fall, I am pleased to share an update on Monterey Regional Airport's (MRY) Safety Enhancement Program (SEP), also known as the MRY Metamorphosis. As MRY's Interim Executive Director, I am committed to keeping our community informed about how the MRY team is modernizing the passenger experience and addressing future operational changes so as not to impact our customers and community.

Past is Prologue

First, it's important that I acknowledge the Monterey Peninsula Airport District Board of Directors for appointing me Interim Executive Director and giving me the opportunity to lead the MRY Metamorphosis through to completion. I have been a part of MRY's history and operation for over 18 years, serving in the airport's Planning Department since 2007, and as the Deputy Executive Director since 2022. In these roles, I have led strategic, safety, and sustainability programs that have propelled MRY's ongoing success. I am honored to now lead the SEP, which is transforming the airport's experience for travelers, airport tenants, and our employees.

MRY Metamorphosis: Program Update and Upcoming Open House

We are pleased to announce that the commercial apron, located southeast of the current passenger terminal, is now complete. The 425,000 square feet/10 acres of brand-new pavement is the foundation for our future, where passengers, personnel, and planes will create important moments at MRY beginning in 2027 and for decades to follow.



Strike a pose and take a photo at MRY's new selfie wall in the terminal on the 2nd level.

The commercial apron completion literally paves the way for constructing the terminal, airport roadways, and public parking, which are the final projects in the MRY Metamorphosis. The airport team is working alongside contracting partners to begin implementing designs and building your hometown airport terminal and support facilities. We're just getting started and will continue to keep our community informed about construction progress.

Please join us for a public open house at Monterey Regional Airport on Wednesday, October 22, between 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m., for an up-close view of the MRY Metamorphosis. Attendees will have the opportunity to see project progress and ask questions of subject-matter experts. Visit montereyairport.com for more details and to RSVP.

Spread Your Wings at MRY

Strike a pose and take a photo at our new selfie station! Located on the second floor of the terminal next to the airport administration offices, oversized butterfly wings have been attached to

the wall with "I  MRY" text for airport users to be at the center of our airport. Tag @montereyairport when sharing your selfie to possibly be featured on MRY's social pages.

A Message of Thanks

The MRY team wishes you safe and enjoyable travels as you gather with family and friends during the fall and for the Thanksgiving holiday. When you fly MRY, please arrive early to allow time for airline check-in and security screening. Also, for those who live close to the airport, consider using taxi or ride share services (or ask a friend to drop you off) to keep parking spaces open for those traveling to the airport from farther distances.

Thanks for choosing MRY for your travel needs.

Stay Informed During Construction

As the MRY Metamorphosis continues, the airport team is committed to providing our customers with a convenient, hassle-free travel experience. Please visit montereyairport.com or follow @montereyairport on Facebook, Instagram, and X for travel advisories.

Learn more about MRY and the MRY Metamorphosis SEP at montereyairport.com/transform.





NON-PROFIT EVENTS

Hidden Hills Ranch — 7th Annual Hoedown Fundraiser

Oct. 4, 4:30 – 6:30 p.m., 19014 Pesante Road, Prunedale, Hidden Hills Ranch

Kick up your boots and join in for an unforgettable fall evening of live music, great barbecue, and ranch-style fun, all for a great cause! What to Expect • Delicious barbecue by Chillin & Grillin • Live music from the amazing Bubba Pickens • Horseshoe toss, drinks, auction, fun prizes, and more! • A lively community evening under the fall sky. 21-and-older event. General admission, \$72. Get yours at: hiddenhillsranch.org/hoedown. All proceeds benefit ongoing improvements to the new horse and pony enclosures. Come eat, dance, and celebrate while supporting a place that makes a difference in our community!

Department of Rehabilitation — 2nd Annual Resource Fair

Oct. 18, 1:00-4:00 p.m., Northridge Mall, Salinas

This free community event brings together inclusive employers, training providers, and local organizations to support individuals with disabilities, job seekers, and families in accessing resources, employment, and career opportunities.

What to expect:

- Meet inclusive employers who are hiring now
- Connect with community resources and support services
- Learn about training and vocational opportunities
- Get job search, interviewing, and accommodation tips

Who should attend:

- Individuals with disabilities seeking employment
- Job seekers interested in training and career pathways
- Families and caregivers looking for community support

Event highlights:

- On-the-spot Interviews with participating employers
- Workshops and resume help from career specialists
- Resource tables featuring over 100 local organizations and programs

Important information:

- The event is FREE and open to the public
- Job seekers are encouraged to bring copies of their resumes
- With more than 100 vendors and employers, there will be valuable opportunities for networking and support

Coastal Kids Home Care — 20th Anniversary Celebration

Oct. 18, 6:00 – 10:00 p.m., 101 River Road, Salinas, Rustique Winery

Join Coastal Kids Home Care as they celebrate two decades of caring for medically fragile children in our community. The 20th anniversary celebration will be an evening of inspiration, connection, and impact — and they would love for you to be part of it. What's in store: fine wine from Rustique Winery; delicious bites; local brews from Monterey Tap Truck; live music by the Flat Rock Boys; vintage mobile photo booth; inspiring patient stories. Come raise a glass with them as Coastal Kids Home Care honors 20 years of compassionate care and over 11,000 young lives touched. Tickets & sponsorships available now.

Rancho Cielo's 25th Anniversary Celebration

Oct. 25, 2:00 – 7:00 p.m., 710 Old Stage Road, Salinas, Sally Hughes Amphitheater

Join Rancho Cielo for an unforgettable day of live music, delectable food, awards and community as they mark 25 years of transforming lives in Monterey County. Rancho Cielo has empowered thousands of lives through education, job training and community support — and now it's time to celebrate everything they've accomplished together. Festivities kick off with a welcome and a tribute to Rancho Cielo's roots, honoring founder, Judge John Phillips and recognizing longstanding champions and advocates. Guests will enjoy a culinary experience like no other, showcasing premier local chefs and Rancho Cielo's Drummond Culinary Academy students, paired with local fine wines and craft beers, while taking in the high-energy sounds of John Nava and the Latin Jazz Collective. The program also includes a special appeal, giving you the opportunity to be a part of a new era at Rancho Cielo, as well as stories demonstrating the far-reaching impact made by their mission-driven organization over the past 25 years. The grand finale — a powerhouse Tribute to Ray Charles brought to life by blues legend Chris Cain and former Santana crooner Tony Lindsay — will be a performance to remember. This isn't just a party. It's an inclusive celebration of impact. Be there, raise a glass and feel the love! Tickets include entertainment and culinary experience (wine and beer available for purchase). All proceeds benefit Rancho Cielo programs and youth. More information and tickets at ranchocieloyc.org/rancho-cielos-25th-anniversary-celebration.

———— BE SURE TO VISIT THE CHAMBER WEBSITE FOR UP-TO-DATE LISTINGS ————

Economic Development - from page 5

development programs, plans, activities, policies, and procedures.

Whoever holds the position will also be responsible for "revitalization efforts, including but not limited to business attraction, retention, and expansion, collaboration with other departments, agencies, business community, community organizations, and other stakeholders, and guiding initiatives that support sustainable growth, job creation, and investment" in the City of Salinas.

Your Chamber of Commerce looks forward to seeing these new economic development officials help advance commerce in our region. This will allow our local governments to balance their budgets with less dependence on tax increases and cuts to programs, projects, and services. In addition, it will advance the Chamber's official vision of "a thriving, welcoming Salinas Valley where people, families and businesses succeed via economic growth and opportunity." 🌱

CORRECTION

In the September 2025 issue of the Business Journal, the story titled "Explaining the Tax Mistake of the Monterey County Auditor-Controller's Office Affecting Gonzales Unified School District Property Owners," stated on page 17 that the elected Monterey County Treasurer-Tax Collector spoke before the Monterey County Board of Supervisors on June 24, 2025, about correcting the mistake. It was actually the elected Auditor-Controller who spoke before the Board of Supervisors. As noted elsewhere in the article, the Treasurer-Tax Collector was responsible for sending notices to taxpayers about the mistake, but the Auditor-Controller was the official whose office was fully responsible for making the mistake and therefore for explaining it to the Board of Supervisors.

Hollister Hills SVRA Celebrates 50 Years of Recreation, Conservation and Community Impact

By Wes Gray, Sector Superintendent

This year marks a major milestone for one of California's most beloved off-highway vehicle (OHV) destinations. Hollister Hills State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA), tucked into the rolling hills just south of Hollister, is celebrating its 50th anniversary as a cornerstone of outdoor adventure, public service, and regional economic vitality.

Since opening in 1975 as one of California's first SVRAs, Hollister Hills has grown into more than 6,800 acres of trails, camping areas, and open spaces designed for off-road enthusiasts, hikers, equestrians, and nature lovers. Over the decades, it has become a model for balancing recreational use with environmental stewardship.

A Place for All Riders

From families teaching their kids to ride dirt bikes for the first time to experienced off-roaders testing their skills on rugged terrain, Hollister Hills offers something for everyone. The park features separate riding areas tailored to different skill levels and vehicle types, including

motorcycles, ATVs, 4x4s, and utility terrain vehicles. Safety remains a central focus, with education programs and training sessions aimed at promoting responsible riding.

Environmental Stewardship

Beyond recreation, Hollister Hills is recognized for its strong commitment to conservation. Park staff manage sensitive habitats, restore native vegetation, and protect cultural resources. The park is home to golden eagles, red-legged frogs, and a variety of rare plant species. Ongoing projects reduce erosion, improve water quality, and demonstrate how land can be responsibly shared between people and wildlife.

Educational programs, field trips, and volunteer opportunities also allow the public to connect with these efforts. Students from local schools regularly visit the park to learn about ecology, fire prevention, and sustainable recreation.

Driving Local Economic Activity

Hollister Hills is not just a place to ride — it's an

engine of economic activity for San Benito County and beyond. California State Parks Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division has data to state that SVRAs across the state contribute hundreds of millions of dollars annually to local economies through tourism, jobs, and visitor spending.

In Hollister, the park draws visitors from across California and neighboring states. Campers fill local hotels when sites are booked, restaurants and gas stations see steady business from riders, and outdoor retailers benefit from increased demand for gear. Special events, including races, training clinics, and community celebrations, further boost local revenues.

Celebrating 50 Years

To honor its 50th anniversary, the park is hosting an event on Oct. 11 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. The gathering will highlight the park's history while looking ahead to its future. Day use fees will be waived, and all are welcome to hear some guest speakers and check out booths hosted by local clubs, businesses, and park partners. There will also be Motorcross event hosted at the GP track that same weekend.

Looking Forward

As Hollister Hills embarks on its next 50 years, park officials are planning new



Off-road motorcyclists take to the trails at the Hollister Hills State Vehicular Recreation Area.

investments in trail management, facilities, and educational programming. These efforts aim to keep the park accessible and sustainable for future generations while continuing to serve as a model for recreation areas nationwide.

For half a century, Hollister Hills SVRA has

stood as proof that with thoughtful management, public lands can serve both people and nature. Its golden anniversary is not just a celebration of the past, but an invitation to Californians everywhere to enjoy the trails, camp under the stars, and take part in a legacy that continues to grow. 🌱

SAVE THE DATE

to Celebrate 50 years of OHV Recreation at
Hollister Hills State Vehicular Recreation Area



Saturday, October 11th
10 am-2 pm | Lodge Campground

Free Day Use Admission
Food • Entertainment • Presentations



If you would like to be a vendor please
contact Chris Silverberg by email at
christina.silverberg@parks.ca.gov
or phone (831) 636-5560





UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Hartnell College Arts Building and Gallery Grand Re-Opening**

Thursday, Oct. 2, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m., Building J, Hartnell College, Main Campus, 411 Central Avenue, Salinas

The event will feature the gallery opening of “Roots to Horizons: Hartnell Artists Then and Now” — A celebratory art exhibition honoring the creative legacy of Hartnell’s faculty and staff. Contact dsharpe@hartnell.edu with questions or concerns about accessibility.

- **Legacy of Leadership Awards Gala**

Friday, Oct. 10, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m., 150 Main St., Suite 116, Salinas

Save the date for the Chamber’s most popular fall event — the Legacy of Leadership Gala. The event is set to take place on Friday, Oct. 10, 2025, from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. at the Taylor Building/Portobello’s on Main restaurant courtyard in Salinas. Tickets can be purchased at \$80 for members and \$95 for non-members.

- **Lunch and Learn with Salinas Regional Sports Authority**

Tuesday, Oct. 14, 12:00-1:00 p.m., 119 E. Alisal St., Salinas

Join the Chamber for a Lunch and Learn with Salinas Regional Sports Authority. From new turf fields to upcoming events, hear firsthand and discover the latest developments happening at the Soccer Complex. The Lunch and Learn is set to take place at the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce’ office’s second-floor conference room. Zoom option available for the event. For more information and to register, visit SalinasChamber.com.

- **Lunch and Learn with PG&E**

Tuesday, Oct. 21, 12:00-1:00 p.m., 119 E. Alisal St., Salinas

Join the Chamber for a Lunch and Learn with PG&E for “Electric Vehicles 101: How, When, and Why to Electrify Your Fleet.” The Lunch and Learn is set to take place at the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce office’s second-floor conference room. A Zoom option is available for those joining virtually. For more information and to register, visit SalinasChamber.com.

- **UnitedAg Membership Office & Wellness Clinic Ribbon-Cutting Event**

Thursday, Oct. 30, 5:00–6:30 p.m., 275 W. Laurel St., Suite B & C, Salinas

Join in on welcoming UnitedAg, a member-owned agricultural trade association, to the Salinas Valley community. UnitedAg is dedicated to keeping the agricultural community healthy, strong, and vibrant through innovative health benefit solutions and a network of wellness clinics across California. This is your opportunity to learn more about the agricultural community and the proactive steps UnitedAg is taking to support its well-being. Celebrate the grand opening of their new clinic and membership office with an evening of networking, refreshments, and fun! Enjoy delicious food, exciting raffles, and the chance to meet their regional staff, clinical team, and board members. Don’t miss this special milestone for the Salinas Valley agricultural community.

- **Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce Foundation's 74th Children's Shopping Tour**

Saturday, Dec. 13, 7:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., 796 Northridge Mall, Salinas

The Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce Foundation invites you to be part of a heartwarming event that brings joy, smiles, and warmth to the holiday season — the Children’s Shopping Tour. We welcome all generous individuals to participate, donate, and volunteer to make this special day possible. We need dedicated volunteers on Saturday, Dec. 13. There’s a role for everyone — help with set-up, check-in, distributing gift cards, cutting merchandise tags, take-down, or sign up as a chaperone to enjoy a fun-filled day of shopping with the children. Witness the joy as they pick out their own clothing, create lasting memories, and experience the magic of the season. To ensure the safety of the children involved, if one is 18 years or older, they must be pre-screened through our background check process and fingerprinted, prior to the event to participate.

RSVP at salinaschamber.com

AMBASSADOR SPOTLIGHT LAURA KERSHNER



Laura Kershner is a communications professional trained in media and public relations, non-profit communications, government relations, cable franchise coordination, telecommunications, live television news production and workforce development. Over the years, she’s volunteered with the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce Ambassador Committee, the Salinas Valley Businesswomen’s Network, The First Mayor’s House, Fund Builders Alliance, Monterey County Theatre Alliance, Job Developer’s Networking Group, City of Salinas, General Plan Steering Committee, and she’s a graduate of Leadership Salinas Valley - Class XXVI.

Laura’s background includes working behind the scenes in local media, for non-profit organizations, and local government. She currently works for the Monterey County Workforce

Development Board as a business liaison to bring together local employers and jobseekers here in Monterey County.

When she’s not working, she’s busy singing in four-part, a capella harmony with the Monterey Bay Belles ladies’ barbershop chorus; and her quartet, Vocal Point. She also enjoys sings in a small choir at Grace Community Church in Prunedale.

Laura is a native of Bakersfield, and moved to Monterey County in 1996. She is a 1991 graduate of Cal State University Bakersfield with a double major in Communications and History and a minor in Political Science. She also graduated from Bakersfield College with an A.A. Degree in Liberal Arts. In recent years, Laura has enjoyed traveling the world with her sister, Debbie.

Investing When Interest Rates are Falling

By Bill Hastie, Hastie Financial Group

The Federal Reserve (Fed) finally did it! At their Sept. 16 and 17 meeting, the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) cut interest rates for the first time in 2025 by 0.25% (or 25 basis points).

Although this rate cut was widely anticipated, it was what else the Fed had to say about future rate cuts that was of particular interest to the investment markets. After announcing the 25-basis point cut, the Fed indicated they are planning two additional rate cuts by the end of the year which came as great news to the market.

So how do investors adjust their portfolios to potentially profit in a declining interest rate environment? Although there are many ways, here



are a few of the most commonly used ideas.

This could be a healthy environment for cyclical sectors, meaning sectors like technology, financials, and consumer discretionary, that tend to rise and fall in tandem with the economy. Historically,

in non-recessionary environments, cyclical sectors have outperformed by 2 percentage points on average in the 12 months after the Fed started cutting rates. By contrast, defensive sectors like utilities, health care, and consumer staples have underperformed by 3 percentage points on average in such environments.

Small capitalization (cap) stock may also benefit. Since smaller companies typically have a more difficult time borrowing funds for operations and expansion than larger companies,

lower interest rates may be of a greater benefit to smaller companies. Case in point — the Russell 2000 has shown a strong positive reaction to declining interest rates, with the index surging to a new record high following the Fed's recent rate cut. Historically, small cap stocks have produced solid returns following the conclusion of a rate-cutting cycle, perhaps indicating the potential for continued gains as the market digests the easing of monetary policy.

As interests decline, investors in money market accounts and CDs may find the lower rates of return less attractive and begin to look for alternative investments that may produce higher rates of return and keep a lower risk profile.

One possible investment that may benefit from lower rates is intermediate-term corporate bonds.

"Intermediate" would mean maturities of four to six years, which to dedicated bond investors is considered the "belly of the curve."

The rate of refinanced mortgages jumped 60% since the Fed cut rates in September. This is likely to revive an otherwise sluggish housing market by making borrowing for a home less expensive.

At this point, many analysts do not expect the U.S. economy to fall into recession although there is noticeable weakness in the labor markets. The Fed's recent rate cut and anticipation for two additional cuts this year is intended to stimulate the economy, revive employment, and set the path forward for the economy to grow for the balance of 2025 and into 2026. 🌱

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Celebrating 25 Years of Rancho Cielo

By Adam Joseph, Rancho Cielo

"Frustration." That's the word John Phillips uses to sum up what it felt like to send 18-year-old kids to prison for life during his 21 years as a Monterey County Superior Court Judge.

"If only we could reach these kids earlier, they might have ended up in college or starting their careers," Phillips says. "After a while, I stopped feeling good about my job. I didn't feel like I was actually making a difference. So, I decided to do something about it."

That moment of disillusionment became the spark that lit a movement. Twenty-five years ago, Phillips — retired from his roles as a prosecutor and judge — leased the 100-acre site of the former Natividad Boys Ranch. With help from the local construction industry, he launched a nonprofit now known throughout Monterey County and beyond: Rancho Cielo.

What began as a modest dream — just a few classrooms to give kids another shot — has since grown into a full-fledged educational and vocational campus that now serves more than 200 students each year. The mission? Equip at-risk youth with the tools, confidence and opportunities to change their trajectory.

"We had no idea how much this was needed," Phillips admits. "The private sector and local business community blew me away with their support. It wasn't just about money; they came



to the campus, got their hands dirty and mentored our kids. It was incredible."

Support didn't just come from the sidelines. Leaders like Don Chapin, president of the Don Chapin Company, rolled up their sleeves and got involved from the very beginning. Chapin has served as Board Chair, donated funds and labor and personally mentored students. He remembers the early years vividly, especially the moment students moved from the crumbling Natividad Hospital building into the first remodeled structure on Rancho Cielo's campus.

"It was the beginning of the future," Chapin says. "Some people were standing in our way back then, but they all seem to have slowly gotten out of our way, and we made that happen."

That building, once an overnight juvenile detention facility, now houses the Silver Star Youth Program. It was a complete overhaul: control stations were

"The transformation was huge. Nobody could have imagined this. But growth and success breed more growth and success. That's really what this is a testament to: A community got together and did what government

—Don Chapin

torn out, outdated security hardware was dismantled, showers and toilets were removed, walls were rebuilt and new infrastructure was installed—nearly all the labor and materials were donated.

"The transformation was huge," Chapin recalls. "Nobody could have imagined this. But growth and success breed more growth and success. That's really what this is a testament to: A community got together and did what government

could not."

Today, Rancho Cielo is more than a school. It's a launchpad. It's an opportunity. It's a place to reinvent yourself. Every graduate earns a high school diploma and leaves with a job or plans for further education. More importantly, they leave with a sense of self-worth and hope. And they can see a clear path to success that previously didn't exist.

"Our mission to empower youth and transform lives keeps growing stronger," Rancho Cielo CEO Chris Devers says.

And that mission has never been more relevant. In a world where young people face increased pressure, greater risk and fewer support systems, Rancho Cielo offers something genuine: structure, mentorship, job training, community and all the resources needed to break barriers towards success.

Over the past 25 years, Rancho Cielo has partnered with local businesses, mental health professionals and civic organizations to build a comprehensive network of support. Students receive on-site counseling, career readiness training and connections to employers.

"(The students) develop a great deal of self-esteem and self-confidence they never had before," Judge Phillips said at the 2025 graduation ceremony (77 students walked, making it Rancho's largest class yet). "To me, that's more important than just the diploma."

It has and still does take a village to run Rancho Cielo, which is why celebrating the 25-year milestone alongside the community that helped

turn this idea into a perpetually evolving reality is so important.

Rancho Cielo's 25th Anniversary Celebration on Saturday, Oct. 25, will be a day to recognize not only the nonprofit's growth but also the positive impact it has had on many young lives and Monterey County.

Longtime bluesman Chris Cain and Santana vocalist Tony Lindsay will perform a Tribute to Ray Charles, while John Nava & the Latin Jazz Collective are set to kick things off. The culinary experience will feature dishes from top local chefs, including those from the American Culinary Federation, Cultura, Folktale Winery & Vineyards, Salt Wood Kitchen & Oysterette, Santa Lucia Preserve, and Rancho Cielo's Drummond Culinary Academy Students.

Folktale Winery & Vineyards, ROAR Wines and Talbott Vineyards will pour fine wines, and Alvarado Street Brewery and Other Brother Beer Co. will offer craft beers.

While Rancho Cielo was born out of frustration, it thrives because of belief in the potential of youth, in the power of community and in the idea that a system that once failed can be rebuilt into something better. That belief continues to drive the work today—and it's worth celebrating.

Rancho Cielo's 25th Anniversary will be held on Oct. 25, 2025, at the Sally Hughes Church Amphitheater, 710 Old Stage Road, Salinas. Visit ranchocieloyc.org/rancho-cielos-25th-anniversary-celebration for tickets and more information. 🌱

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