



Salinas Valley
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

BUSINESS JOURNAL



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— Days to Remember
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Addressing the Complex
Journey of Cancer Care
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Salinas Mayor Dennis Donohue welcomed Salinas residents and other friends of Salinas to the 2025 State of the City address on Sept. 25.

Mayor Donohue Uses State of the City Address to Invite Salinas Valley Businesses to Leadership in Civic Projects

By Kevin Dayton, Government Affairs Liaison

On Sept. 25, 2025, Salinas Mayor Dennis Donohue welcomed Salinas residents and other friends of Salinas to the 2025 State of the City address at Sherwood Hall. Throughout his speech, Donohue remained consistent with his past statements in 2025 concerning his major priorities: (1) growth for economic opportunities, (2) public safety, (3) infrastructure, and (4) customer service. These are his priorities listed in the April **STATE OF THE CITY** see page 6

November Declared Housing Month: Salinas Mobilizes for Real Solutions

By Colleen Bailey, SVCC President/CEO

The City of Salinas and Monterey County are turning focus and resources toward one of the region's most pressing challenges—housing. With a calendar packed full of high-impact events, November is shaping up to be officially recognized as Housing Month across the Salinas Valley and beyond. From major policy summits to grassroots community workshops, local leaders are making it clear: the time to act on housing is now.

Regional Housing Summit 2025: A Call to Action

The City of Salinas will kick off the month with the Regional Housing Summit 2025, set for Wednesday, Nov. 5, 2025, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at 1 Main St., Salinas, followed by a Networking Hour from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. hosted by the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce. This daylong summit, hosted by Salinas Mayor Dennis

“
From policy discussions to hands-on development strategies, November's lineup reflects a regional commitment to collaboration, innovation, and inclusivity in housing.

Donohue, will bring together policymakers, developers, employers, and community practitioners to explore tangible strategies for addressing the regional housing shortage. By fostering collaboration across sectors, the summit seeks to catalyze real partnerships and inspire innovative, scalable housing solutions that can strengthen the economic and social fabric of the Salinas Valley. The program will feature keynote speaker Joel Kotkin, one of the nation's foremost urban scholars. Kotkin—described by The New York Times as “America's uber-geographer”—is an acclaimed author, researcher, and lecturer whose work focuses on

global trends, urban futures, and social dynamics. Currently the Roger Hobbs Presidential Fellow in Urban Futures at Chapman University, Kotkin leads the university's Center for Demographics and Policy, where he studies long-term shifts in population and the built environment. Kotkin will open the Summit by framing the challenges and opportunities facing cities like Salinas in addressing the housing crisis and highlight how housing affordability is shaping the future of California communities. His remarks will provide a broad context for local leaders to consider as they work toward actionable

HOUSING MONTH see page 5

THANK YOU!



Natividad Medical Foundation and Natividad's patients thank the family farmers, companies, and individual members of The Agricultural Leadership Council (TALC) for their philanthropic support. Together they are changing and saving the lives of agricultural workers and their families with 2025 collective donations of **\$475,000**. Since 2010, TALC has donated **\$5,594,200** to fund essential services at Natividad. TALC has purchased **776** pieces of specialized and life-saving medical equipment to provide the best care for patients—from critically ill babies to victims of trauma—in need of highly advanced surgical procedures.

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Intensive Care & Medical-Surgical Units

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Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce Focuses on Future Leaders

By Leonard Batti, SVCC Board Chair

Back in April of this year I wrote about the importance of investing in the development of our community's future leaders. Today I'm happy to announce that your Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce is launching two new programs.

Salinas Valley Junior Chamber Program

A Program of the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce Foundation

The Salinas Valley Junior Chamber Program (SVJCP) empowers emerging professionals ages 22–42 across Monterey County through networking, leadership development, and community engagement. As a program of the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce Foundation, the SVJCP connects rising leaders with Chamber mentors, providing hands-on opportunities to plan and execute events that strengthen the local business communities such as the annual Children's Shopping Tour.

Members meet monthly, contribute to at least one committee, and take part in quarterly events that foster professional growth and civic impact. Through this program, participants build valuable relationships, develop leadership experience, and gain insight into the Chamber's role in shaping the region's economic future.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- The SVJCP will provide a forum for networking and business development through the sponsorship of regular social & professional development events.
- The SVJCP will strive to support



leadership opportunities for young professionals by providing them with opportunities to plan and deliver events and activities including those that benefit the broader community such as the Children's Shopping Tour.

- The SVJCP Members will be assigned mentors from the leadership of the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce who can guide their service on the Foundation and provide professional advice, guidance, and support.

Career Pathways: Workforce Development Program

A Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce Foundation Initiative, the Career Pathways Program connects students, job seekers, and local businesses to build a skilled, adaptable workforce for the region's evolving economy. Through mentorship, regularly scheduled industry panels, and partnerships with local middle schools, high schools, and colleges, the program introduces participants to a wide range of career pathways and valuable networking opportunities. An expanded internship pipeline further enhances career readiness while strengthening the local talent pool and supporting regional economic growth.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND HIGHLIGHTS

1. Salinas Valley Junior Chambers Program

A mentorship and professional readiness initiative that nurtures high-potential young professionals through leadership development, mentorship, and civic engagement opportunities.

2. Quarterly Industry Panels

Rotating panel discussions hosted quarterly, each centered around a specific industry cluster. These sessions are designed to expose students to career pathways, real-world insights, and networking opportunities. Topics will evolve to reflect the dynamic needs of the local business community.

Examples include:

Agriculture and Food Sector

- Ag Technology
- Agricultural Science
- Food Safety
- Manufacturing Operations
- Ag Marketing and Product Development
- Engineering and Refrigeration Systems
- Drone Operation and Aerial Analytics

Government and Public Sector

- Urban and Regional Planning
- Civil Engineering and Infrastructure
- Parks and Recreation Management
- Public Safety (Police, Fire Services)
- Library and Civic Services
- Public Finance and Administration

Sports and Entertainment

- Event and Venue Management
- Artist and Athlete Booking and Representation
- Sports Medicine and Physical Therapy
- Arts and Athlete Management

Health and Biomedical Innovation

- Biomedical Engineering
- Environmental and Public Health
- Diagnostic and Clinical Laboratory Technology
- Mental and Behavioral Health Services

Format and Accessibility:

- Hosted on high school campuses and/or Hartnell College campuses

FUTURE LEADERS see page 5

2025 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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CHAMBER PRIORITIES

CREATING A STRONG LOCAL ECONOMY • PROMOTING THE COMMUNITY • PROVIDING NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES • POLITICAL ACTION • REPRESENTING THE INTERESTS OF BUSINESS WITH GOVERNMENT

Housing Month - from page 1

solutions that balance growth, equity, and livability.

Panel sessions throughout the day will highlight key themes. The first panel of the day, which will be moderated by Kotkin, is titled “California Housing Landscape: State and Regional Tools for Local Action, and will feature Jennifer Hernandez, a real estate lawyer from Holland & Knight LLP; Joel Farkas from Fruition Communities; Wendall Cox from Urban Policy; and Karla Lopez del Rio, a Principal at Connexions Consulting.

At the lunch hour, California State Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas will be the special guest speaker, who will speak about the changes to housing policy at the state level.

The second panel, which I will moderate, will focus on development in the Monterey County region, the challenges, and opportunities from the point of view of those who are directly involved, including Danny Bakewell of the Bakewell Developer Group; Hugh Walker, CEO of Stonebridge Homes; and Lisa Brinton, Salinas Community Development Department Director, who is overseeing the General Plan Update.

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Monterey Attainable Housing Forum: Innovation in Action

The conversation will continue the following days, Nov. 6–7, with the Monterey Attainable Housing Forum

at Asilomar Conference Grounds, hosted by Regenerative California. This nonprofit organization is leading efforts to create a sustainable, resilient, and equitable regional economy—Monterey County serving as its pilot model.

The forum will bring together housing innovators, developers, and regional stakeholders for an intensive two-day working session aimed at activating new pipelines of “missing middle” housing—homes that fill the gap between subsidized and market-rate units. By combining the expertise of builders, landowners, and employers, Regenerative California’s 2025 Attainable Housing Initiative aims to launch pilot projects that could generate 3,000 new attainable housing units by 2030.

Sessions will dive into financing innovations, regulatory streamlining, and collaborative planning, with an emphasis on moving from vision to implementation. While this event is invitation-only, organizers plan to publicly share commitments and outcomes to inform a statewide model for regenerative, community-serving housing development.

The Salinas Community’s Action Plan: Practical, Local Solutions

The housing conversation comes full circle on Thursday, Nov. 20, 2025, with “The Salinas Community’s Action Plan: A Results-Oriented Solution to Housing Production”, held from 8:00 to 11:30 a.m. at 1 Main St. Presented by SPARC and the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce, in collaboration with the City of Salinas, this free public forum is designed for potential developers, small-scale builders, and community leaders committed to producing real, near-term solutions.

Keynote speaker Charles L. Marohn, Jr., co-founder of the national nonprofit Strong Towns, will headline the event. Strong Towns advocates for development approaches that build financial resilience and long-term prosperity in cities and towns. Marohn, a

professional engineer, and planner is widely respected for his clear-eyed analysis of how communities can adapt to modern economic realities while promoting sustainable growth. Marohn will outline concrete steps local leaders can begin implementing immediately to reshape the region’s housing trajectory.

The event will also feature members of the Incremental Development Alliance, an organization that has trained nearly 9,000 public, private, and nonprofit professionals in the principles of small-scale, neighborhood-based real estate development. Their session will emphasize how building code literacy and access to flexible financing can unlock new pathways to homeownership and wealth creation—particularly in underserved and historically marginalized communities.

Staying Engaged: Building the Future, Together

As Housing Month unfolds, residents are encouraged to stay engaged beyond the events. In the coming weeks, both City and County agencies will hold key meetings to discuss updates to their General Plans, including revisions to the Economic Development Element, zoning maps, and the countywide housing element—all of which directly impact the community’s capacity to grow sustainably and equitably.

From policy discussions to hands-on development strategies, November’s lineup reflects a regional commitment to collaboration, innovation, and inclusivity in housing. Whether you’re a policymaker, developer, advocate, or concerned resident, your voice and participation are essential to shaping the future of housing in Monterey County.

As Mayor Donohue aptly stated in preparation for the summit, “Our housing challenge is our shared challenge—and the solutions must be equally shared. Together, we can build the community we envision and deserve.” 🌱

Future Leaders - from page 4

- Events will be recorded to broaden accessibility to students across additional school sites
- Each session will be accompanied by a detailed Career Pathway Guide, which includes:
 - Speaker biographies
 - Required educational credentials for each featured career
 - California-based certificate/degree program listings
 - Local internship opportunities

Speakers: Select members of the Salinas Valley Junior Chamber Program will serve as panelists.

3. Internship Pipeline Collaboration

In partnership with Hartnell College, California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB), Monterey Peninsula College (MPC), and University of California Santa Cruz (UCSC), we will establish an integrated internship program. This initiative will provide high school and college students with direct exposure to industry environments aligned with their career interests, enhancing practical readiness and strengthening industry-academic collaboration.

4. SVCC Member Job Board Enhancement

While our website currently hosts a job board for Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce (SVCC) members, its utility is underleveraged. As the Chamber and its Foundation assume a more prominent role in workforce development, this platform will be repositioned as a vital regional employment resource—promoting internships, entry-level roles, and career-track opportunities.

Summary

Through a structured, community-driven approach, the Workforce Development Program will act as a catalyst for economic mobility, industry growth, and educational alignment. By bridging the gap between education and employment, we empower our local talent pool while strengthening the regional economy. 🌱

State of the City - from page 1

2025 Business Journal article titled "Salinas Mayor Dennis Donohue Announces His Priorities at Chamber Legislative Breakfast."

But Donohue had a few remarks during his speech that were particularly relevant to the business community. These remarks subtly invited Salinas business leaders to get involved — or remain involved — in the financial and organizational investments that build the reputation of Salinas as a prosperous city with an outstanding quality of life for its residents.

This call to service is related to the financial realities in the 2020s of running a city with a population of 160,000, with expectations of the population growing to 200,000 in a few decades. While Donohue urged voters to renew the Measure G sales tax before it expires (in 2030), he also declared that "we're not going to tax our way to the future, in case anyone is wondering. We'll have to find new ways to work."

Donohue warned that city projects will be "delayed, diminished, and denied" without adopting innovative new approaches to city facilities and services. Costs for infrastructure and essential personnel have skyrocketed, while federal and state budget cuts are likely to make grant funding more elusive.

Under these circumstances, does the City of Salinas have any potential strategies other than tax increases to pay for improvements and expansion of city facilities and services? Donohue thinks so. He elaborated on two possible ways: (1) public partnerships with private businesses, foundations, and community organizations, and (2) economic development that generates additional tax revenue.

The mayor listed several local examples of city partnerships with private entities that have helped to achieve city goals while limiting the city's dependence on public funds.



He identified these private partners as "Dreamers Who Take Action."

Past successes cited by Donohue included the Salinas Rodeo, which he pointed out was established (in the early 1910s) by local business leaders to stimulate the local economy and revitalize stagnant recreational facilities. His list also included the Boys and Girls Club of Monterey County (established in 1968), the California International Airshow in Salinas (established in 1981) Rancho Cielo (established in 2000), First Tee - Monterey County (established in 2004), the Gil Basketball Academy (founded in 2010), Rabobank Stadium (opened in 2013) at the Salinas Sports Complex on North Main Street, the Salinas Regional Soccer Complex on Constitution Avenue (opened in 2019 and still expanding in phases), and Essen Community Park (Phase 1 completed in 2025 and Phase 2 ongoing) at Carr Lake.

Many of these achievements involving private funding are related to parks and recreation. Donohue noted the model of Laguna Seca,

where WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca and other Laguna Seca recreational facilities are owned by the County of Monterey but managed by private entities.

The mayor reminded Salinas residents that the public money is funding the current reconstruction of Closter Park and the new Hebbbron Family Center. Public funds will also pay for construction of a recreation center at the recently opened North Gate Neighborhood Park. However, available funds are not sufficient to fulfill community demand for more park and recreation facilities. Help is needed beyond what governments collect from taxpayers.

The same public-private partnership approach for parks and recreation facilities will need to apply to less popular but essential infrastructure improvements. For example, the City of Salinas is spending \$4 million of its Measure X county sales tax allotment on pavement overhaul of Abbott Street, but only a part of the street is getting done. The city will need financial help with upgrades and expansion of

the city's industrial wastewater conveyance and treatment system, although it is already getting some assistance through the Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District (EIFD) established for the Amazon Fulfillment Center in South Salinas. Three existing fire stations need to be replaced, and development of the North of Boronda Future Growth Area will require construction of a fourth fire station to allow adequate response times.

Meanwhile, the City of Salinas is also working on economic development plans and strategies that will generate more revenue to the city through commerce. These include the following: (1) construction of the Amazon Fulfillment Center, scheduled to open in 2026, (2) continued focus on advancing Salinas Valley as a center of agricultural technology (ag tech) development, (3) promotions and incentives to build and operate hotels for participants in tournaments at the Salinas Regional Soccer Complex, (4) inclusion of the City of Salinas in the planned Advanced Air Mobility

(AAM) ecosystem, (5) cooperation with Salinas Valley Health on a new medical and health care innovation entrepreneur program, (6) reevaluation of proposed Alisal Marketplace development, perhaps to become a binational center for education, (7) advancement of the Heritage Park concept at the Salinas Intermodal Transportation Center, (8) ending unsightly blight that's now mentioned as a reason to avoid doing business in Salinas, and (9) finally getting started with housing construction in 2026 in the North of Boronda Future Growth Area.

Donohue concluded his remarks with two observations that show the potential of the City of Salinas to reach a level of prosperity it had in the 1920s.

He noted that professional investor Mark Cuban of the Shark Tank television show recently chose to invest \$120,000 in a Salinas-based greeting card company called Paper Tacos. On its website, this company describes its product as "unique Spanish greeting cards" that "are rooted in Latinx cultura y tradición." Its intention is that "each Paper Taco greeting card connects emotionally with all Latinos en la comunidad Hispana." Donohue asserted that the 80 percent Latino population of the City of Salinas "is a marketable asset. We have a binational economic reality."

And Donohue reported on his recent conversation with the Vice President of Community Relations for the San José Earthquakes soccer club. This professional soccer executive told the mayor that he travels all over Northern California for his job, and he perceives that Salinas "has something special, an energy, and a family commitment."

This story brought Donohue back to the very first statement of his address: "Salinas exports vegetables, and far too many of its children."



Mayor Donohue invited Salinas business leaders to get involved — or remain involved — in the financial and organizational investments that build the reputation of Salinas as a prosperous city with an outstanding quality of life for its residents.

But the mayor is optimistic that something is changing.

He said he met a young man from Salinas who participated in the Gil Basketball Academy and is now a student at Stanford University. For now, the student says he wants to come home to Salinas after graduation.

Can the community provide the opportunities and quality of life in Salinas that will allow his sentiment to endure through his graduation in 2029? From the perspective of your Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce, our organization and its members can indeed help make this sentiment a reality, not only for this Stanford student, but for the many other hard-working young people who graduate from high schools in Salinas and pursue higher education.

Your Chamber leadership will continue to develop, promote, and implement ways to pursue the Chamber's official vision of "a thriving, welcoming Salinas Valley where people, families and businesses succeed via economic growth and opportunity." Please contact President/CEO Colleen Bailey at (831) 751-7725 or at Colleen@SalinasChamber.com if you have ideas or want to help. 🌱

New Roth Catch-Up Rule for Retirement Plans in 2026

By Ryan Hastie, Hastie Financial Group

On Sept. 15, 2025, the Department of the Treasury and the Internal Revenue Service issued their final regulations addressing several SECURE 2.0 Act provisions related to catch-up contributions — additional contributions under a 401(k) or similar workplace retirement plan for employees who are age 50 or older.

Prior to the passage of SECURE 2.0, employees age 50 and older were generally eligible (plan permitting), to make catch-up contributions — up to \$7,500 in 2025 — to 401(k), 403(b), or governmental 457(b) plans. These contributions could take the form of either pretax or designated Roth elective deferrals (or both), depending on plan design and employee election.

Section 603 of SECURE 2.0 eliminates the option for certain employees to select either pretax or Roth treatment for catch-up contributions. Beginning Jan. 1, 2026, employees whose prior-year Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) wages exceed the Roth catch-up wage threshold of \$145,000 in 2025 (indexed annually) must make all catch-up contributions on a Roth basis.

This applies to 401(k), 403(b), and governmental 457(b) plans only — not to SEPs or SIMPLEs. Although the statutory effective date is for taxable years beginning on or after Jan. 1, 2024, the IRS granted a two-year administrative transition period. During the 2024 and 2025 taxable years, plans can accept pretax catch-up contributions from affected participants



without violating the new requirement.

Section 109 of SECURE 2.0 amended the Internal Revenue Code to increase the catch-up dollar limit (i.e., generally \$7,500 for most catch-up

individuals) for eligible participants who turn age 60-63 during the tax year. For these eligible employees participating in a 401(k), 403(b) and governmental 457(b) plan, the increased catch-up limit is 150% of the applicable catch-up limit, or \$11,250 for 2025. The new Roth catch-up rule also applies to these so-called "super" catch-up contributions.

The Roth catch-up wage threshold is based on Social Security wages reported in Box 3 of Form W-2 from the employer sponsoring the plan. To determine whether an employee is subject to mandatory Roth catch-up contributions, FICA wages from the prior taxable year are used. In an employee's first year of employment, however, wages are not adjusted or prorated. Such employees may not be subject to the designated Roth requirement until the next taxable year, depending on actual earnings in the year hired.

Starting in 2025, the threshold will be indexed for inflation in \$5,000 increments. The first adjustment is expected to apply to wages earned in 2026, which will determine Roth catch-up requirements for contributions made in 2027.

Additionally, the final regulations state that plans that allow

ROTH see page 18

City of Soledad Finally Close to Achieving Water Solutions Through Wastewater Recycling

By Kevin Dayton, Government Affairs Liaison

For more than 20 years, the City of Soledad has planned to use recycled wastewater for landscape and playing field irrigation. This would replace groundwater use. Yet, as of 2025, the City of Soledad has not irrigated one blade of grass with recycled wastewater.

It's an example of how wastewater treatment and recycling projects are expensive and require many years of diligent planning. However, the prospect of irrigation with recycled water may finally become reality in the City of Soledad in 2027.

Construction of the Soledad Water Reclamation Facility for Wastewater Recycling

Until 2010, the City of Soledad used basic retention ponds for wastewater treatment. In 1995, the city expanded the capacity of its ponds from 650,000 gallons per day to 3.1 million gallons per day (MGD), with 2.1 MGD of capacity intended for treatment of wastewater from the local prison complex.

However, new water regulations and risks of retention pond overflow compelled the City of Soledad to develop new wastewater strategies. As part of its 2005 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP), the City of Soledad identified recycled water as a strategy to preserve the city's groundwater resources. Recycled water was then included in the city's 2006 Long-Term Wastewater Management Plan (LTWMP).

After receiving a \$4.4 million Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) grant (paid for by Proposition 50 bond proceeds), the City of Soledad built a water reclamation facility for



recycling wastewater as part of \$49 million new mechanical treatment facility. The project was completed in 2010. Capacity of the city's wastewater treatment facility increased to 5.5 million-gallons per day (MGD).

This is the first and only treatment plant in South County with tertiary treatment capability for recycling wastewater into water suitable for irrigation. It processes wastewater with primary (first level) and secondary (second level) treatment (producing sludge) and then can purify some of the remaining water with tertiary (third level) treatment for recycling as non-potable (not drinkable) irrigation water. Unlike the Pure Water Monterey Advanced Water Purification Facility at the Monterey One Water (M1W) Regional Treatment Plant, the Soledad Wastewater Treatment Facility does not include a fourth level of treatment to bring recycled

water to a purity level suitable for drinking.

Although the City of Soledad could now produce recycled water for irrigation, it still needed to build the infrastructure to convey the water from the treatment plant to parks and playing fields. This has ended up as a 17-year process.

Construction of Recycled Water Pipelines to Veterans Memorial Park

In 2011, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) awarded a \$1,155,000 grant (paid for by Proposition 84 bond proceeds) to the City of Soledad for design and construction of dedicated transmission mains (pipelines) to convey recycled water 1.75 miles from the Water Reclamation Facility to the four-acre Veterans Memorial Park, located on the north side of the city.

This was originally supposed to

be a "demonstration project" for use of recycled water in city parks. The transmission mains to Veterans Memorial Park and areas surrounding the park were completed in 2017, but that was just the first step needed to actually irrigate the park with recycled water.

The project needed a new pump station at the Water Reclamation Facility to provide enough pressure to convey the recycled water to the park. In addition, the city needed to convert the Veterans Memorial Park irrigation system from potable water to recycled water. Also required was separation of the irrigation system from the restroom facility, which would continue to use potable water.

Conversion of the Veterans Memorial Park Irrigation System

An effort by the City of Soledad in 2019 to award a contract for completion of the Veterans Park recycled wastewater irrigation project was derailed by technical errors. After a few years of delays caused by city staff turnover and contractor staffing shortages during the COVID era, the city resumed planning in 2022 for the Veterans Memorial Park recycled water irrigation project.

In the meantime, the city had incorporated Veterans Memorial Park into its larger Recycled Water Master Plan, approved by the city council in 2015. Recycled wastewater would be conveyed to all city parks and school ballfields for irrigation.

The first round of bidding in 2023 for the Veterans Memorial Park Recycled Water Irrigation Retrofit Project resulted in bids that were too high. After rebidding the project, the City of Soledad awarded a



\$114,825 contract in 2024 to Lone Star Landscape of San Martin (in Santa Clara County). The city council also approved a \$40,859 contract for construction management and inspections on the project.

By this time, the city was openly expressing frustration with the slow, complicated, expensive process of implementing a recycled water program for irrigation. The city council's resolution for the contract award noted that "...since 2008, when the City embarked on Soledad's new Water Reclamation Facility (WRF) Project, the City has long strived to institute a complex and expensive recycled water (RW) utility enterprise in order to offset the use of a significant amount of groundwater by providing city park turf irrigation using recycled water instead of using potable water." The city is still striving today to institute it.

The Veterans Memorial Park Recycled Water Irrigation Retrofit Project was completed at the end of 2024. The park is now ready for recycled water irrigation. Even signage has been installed.

Soledad Recycled Water Conveyance Project

But what about the rest of the city? In 2023, the City of Soledad received a \$16.6 million grant from the California Department of Water Resources Urban Community Drought Relief program to help pay for conversion of all city parks and playing fields of the Soledad Unified School District.

In May 2025, the Soledad City Council finally approved environmental review and a \$13.8 million

construction contract to Specialty Construction, Inc. of San Luis Obispo for the Soledad Recycled Water Conveyance Project. A groundbreaking event was hosted by the City of Soledad on Sept. 27, 2025.

The project includes a new recycled water pump station at the Water Reclamation Facility, a 12-inch recycled water transmission pipeline from the Water Reclamation Facility to Front Street, and recycled water distribution pipelines extending to 20 sites for irrigation. At the parks and playing fields, the project includes installing irrigation meters, disconnecting the potable water system from the irrigation system, installing irrigation piping, and replacing sprinkler heads. The project will continue through 2026. In the summer of 2027, recycled water will keep the grass green in the city's parks and playing fields.

More Plans for the Wastewater Treatment Facility

Wastewater infrastructure deteriorates over time, and the City of Soledad is not getting a break from expensive construction projects. The current Soledad Wastewater Treatment Facility has now operated continuously for 15 years.

Although the city's treatment plant does not need replacement (unlike the treatment facility in the City of Greenfield), a 2024-2025 assessment identified high-priority improvements and upgrades. These include the headworks (\$6.5 million), overflow storage basin (\$15.2 million), secondary treatment equipment (\$13.6 million), and the high solids handling and dewatering facility (\$18.4 million). Total cost: \$53.7 million.

The city has been implementing ways to reduce costs. A partnership of the City of Soledad, San Francisco-based Foundation Windpower, and Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) installed a wind turbine in 2018 to generate power for the wastewater treatment plant.

And there may be other developments. The City of Soledad has considered producing recycled water for agricultural irrigation, building a possible second wastewater treatment facility to add capacity, and even creating a multi-city consolidated wastewater system that includes the neighboring communities of Gonzales and Greenfield.

But grand plans for the future are overshadowed by immediate concerns. In July 2025, after seven years of planning and discussion, the Central Coast Regional Water

Quality Control Board issued a letter to the City of Soledad with notice that the city has six months to negotiate with the owner of Hacienda Apartments for extension of sewer service to the complex. Hacienda Apartments is a 24-unit farmworker housing complex located about three miles northwest of the City of Soledad. The septic system at this property requires pumping every 3-4 months and weekly flushing of the line to avoid active failure. Grants and loans may be available to the City of Soledad for this project. 🌱





MEMBER NEWS

Central Coast VNA & Hospice Receives \$200,000 Grant from Hospice Giving Foundation

Central Coast VNA & Hospice (VNA) is proud to announce it has received a grant in the amount of \$200,000 from Hospice Giving Foundation. Hospice Giving Foundation has awarded over \$33.7 million in grants for community-based support to promote personal choice, preparedness, and the highest standard of compassionate, dignified, end-of-life care for individuals and their loved ones. VNA is especially honored to continue this partnership, having first received support from Hospice Giving Foundation in 1985. The new grant will strengthen VNA's hospice and palliative care programs by funding Latino community outreach, expanded bereavement services, and caregiver self-care education. It will also allow VNA to introduce innovative services such as music therapy, acupuncture, and a virtual reality platform, enhancing the emotional, spiritual, and social well-being of palliative and hospice patients and families. "This generous support from the Hospice Giving Foundation ensures our patients and families receive not only the highest quality medical care, but also additional emotional, spiritual, and cultural support they deserve," said Jane Russo, Chief Executive officer of VNA. "We are deeply grateful for this long-standing partnership, which helps us extend care to underserved communities and provide comfort to patients and caregivers during end of life."



Bay Federal Makes a Big Splash with Marina Branch Grand Opening Donating \$80,000 to Nonprofits

Bay Federal Credit Union celebrated the grand opening of its new Marina branch with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, marking the occasion by presenting \$80,000 in donations to four nonprofits strengthening the Central Coast community. The Credit Union awarded \$20,000 each to The Epicenter, Habitat for Humanity Monterey Bay, Veterans Transition Center of California, and The Wahine Project, supporting their ongoing work to create opportunity, stability, and connection for local residents. The donations reflect Bay Federal's ongoing commitment to the Central Coast community and align with the credit union mission of "people helping people."



- **The Epicenter** empowers at risk and system involved youth, helping them build stability, pursue education, and explore career opportunities.
- **Habitat for Humanity Monterey Bay** expands opportunities for affordable housing across the Monterey Bay region, building homes and stronger futures for local families.
- **Veterans Transition Center of California** supports veterans and their families with housing, counseling, and services, ensuring stable futures here at home.
- **The Wahine Project** empowers young people to connect with the ocean, building confidence and a sense of belonging through surfing and mentorship programs.

"This donation is a way to celebrate our new Marina branch while giving back to organizations that make a real difference in people's lives every day," said Carrie Birkhofer, President and CEO of Bay Federal Credit Union. "Our members and employees care deeply about the communities we serve, and supporting these nonprofits is one more way we can help strengthen our neighborhoods and create opportunities for growth." The Marina branch, located at 140 10th St., Suite 20, expands Bay Federal's footprint in Monterey County and provides a full range of banking services, including personal and business accounts, mortgage lending, and financial education programs. The grand opening ribbon-cutting included local community members, business leaders, and nonprofit representatives, highlighting the strong connections Bay Federal maintains across the region.

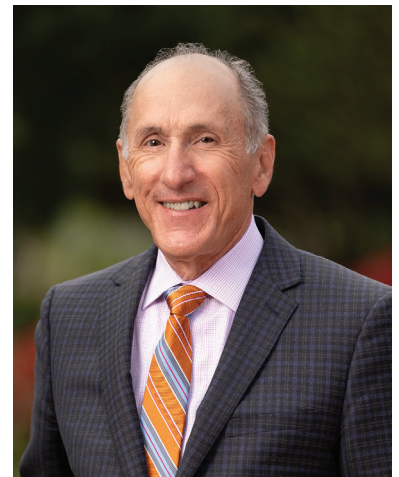


Community Foundation for Monterey County Announces Retirement of President/CEO Dan Baldwin

The Community Foundation for Monterey County (CFMC) announced the planned retirement of long-time President/CEO Dan Baldwin, who will step down in 2026 after a successful 16-year tenure. He will continue to lead the Foundation until a successor is selected. "It has been an honor to be part of the CFMC's family. Monterey County is blessed with a strong spirit of philanthropy. Being able to connect generosity to community need – to know we're truly helping people – has been tremendously rewarding. The staff, board of directors and our donors have helped make this possible," said Baldwin. "Dan has provided exceptional leadership for the foundation. Our growth and impact reflect this. His retirement is much deserved, but he will be sorely missed," said Elsa Mendoza Jimenez, Board Chair. A national search for the next President/CEO will commence this fall. Since joining the CFMC in 2010, Baldwin has led the organization through a period of remarkable growth, change and expanded impact. Highlights of his tenure include:

- Created the mission, vision and strategic plan
- Grew total assets from \$130 million to \$450 million, tripling the number of charitable funds held at the Foundation from 300 to more than 900
- Increased grants from \$6 million in 2010 to \$44 million in 2024
- Growth of Monterey County Gives! from \$565,000 to \$14.2 million
- Increase of annual scholarship awards from \$175,000 to \$2 million
- Opened eight disaster relief funds
- Led the COVID-19 collaborative and coordinated the VIDA Community Health Worker Initiative
- Launched the Community Impact Investment program making significant capital campaign loans for nonprofits
- Facilitated large and complex gifts, including the two largest gifts of real estate in CFMC history, each exceeding \$20 million
- Expanded CFMC's countywide presence, including North County, South County, Carmel Valley and Big Sur regional funds.
- Helped create the Siembra Latinos Fund and Fund for Homeless Women
- Led strategic initiatives including the Salinas Inclusive Economic Development Initiative (SIEDI)

Other accomplishments include purchasing the Monterey office building and expanding and renovating the Salinas office, increasing nonprofit stewardship funds from one to more than 75, restructuring and creating major grant programs, strengthening and diversifying the board of directors and creating the Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD) program. A unifying theme throughout Baldwin's tenure has been his ability to bring people, nonprofits and resources together around important community issues. His leadership has inspired donors, empowered staff and expanded the CFMC's role as a catalyst for healthy, safe, vibrant communities.



Water Efficiency Pilot Program for Rural Residents Expanded — Now Offers Home Assessments

The Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (SVBGSA) today announced the expansion of its Water Efficiency Pilot Program for Rural Residents (WEPP) with a new offering: free home water-efficiency assessments for eligible rural properties in northern Monterey County. The assessments, conducted by WaterWise Consulting, Inc., include an on-site evaluation of indoor and outdoor water use. Trained experts will check for leaks, review irrigation systems, and evaluate plumbing fixtures and appliances. Residents will receive a detailed report with personalized recommendations, and in some cases, water-saving devices will be purchased and installed at no cost to the homeowner. "Every drop matters," said Piret Harmon, General Manager of SVBGSA. "By helping rural residents identify practical ways to use water more efficiently, we're supporting household water savings and the long-term sustainability of our groundwater basin." The program is available to rural residents who own or rent homes in the Monterey, Langlely and 180/400 subbasins in northern Monterey County. To qualify, properties must be served by a private well or a small/medium water system.

Participants will benefit from:

- Evaluation of faucets, toilets, showerheads, and appliances for leaks and efficiency.
- Review of irrigation systems, timers and landscapes to identify improvements.
- Free installation of select devices such as efficient aerators, showerheads, irrigation nozzles and smart controllers.





Support our Chamber Members

Thank you, to our November 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
Graniterock	1959	LAN-GIN, LLC - McDonald's Monterey/	2016
Rain For Rent, Inc.	1974	Salinas	
The Post Box	1983	McSherry & Hudson	2017
KION TV	*40 Years* 1985	Trio Petroleum	2018
Food Bank for Monterey County	1991	BBSI - Monterey	2019
Kasavan Architects	1993	Manpower	2019
Monterey Bay Aquarium	1993	Primerica Financial Services	2019
ACE Hardware	2001	Valley Health Associates	2019
Scheid Family Wines	2002	Inns of California	*5 Years* 2020
Moncrief & Hart, PC	2004	ZenBusiness	*5 Years* 2020
Rotary Club of Salinas California	2004	Center for Community Advocacy (CCA)	2021
Security Public Storage	2004	Community Homeless Solutions	2021
Fenton & Keller	2009	Health Projects Center	2021
Rancho Cielo Youth Campus	*15 Years* 2010	Fleet Tech LLC.	2023
Mahoney & Associates	2013	Maison Law	2023
California Resources Corporation	2014	Pacific Homecare Services	2023
Loaves, Fishes and Computers Inc	2014	Capitol Mortgage	2024
U-Haul Incorporated	2014	Goldberg & Ibarra Law Firm APLC	2024
Alvarado Street Brewery & Tasting Room	2016	Pearson Business Solutions	2024

A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR VISIONARY AND STAKEHOLDER MEMBERS



Legacy of Leadership 2025: Salinas Valley Chamber Honors Leadership Across Generations

By SVCC Staff

The Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce hosted its 15th Annual Legacy of Leadership event, presented by Tanimura & Antle and Taylor Farms, at Portobello's on Main. The sold-out event, with over 240 attendees, was one to remember — bringing together prominent community leaders and business professionals from across Monterey County.

The strolling event began with a vibrant social hour featuring gourmet hors d'oeuvres and exquisite wines from Silvestri Vineyards. It led into a powerful performance of the National Anthem by local student Sienna Grant. The program that followed inspired many with heartfelt speeches from rising leaders to longstanding community pillars with this year's honorees.

Young Professional of the Year honoree Jonathan De Anda, General Manager of the Salinas Regional Soccer Complex, attributed much of his success to his family, team, and the community that has given him the opportunity to serve. He shared, "Each day, my focus is on opening more doors for young people—creating safe spaces, real opportunities, and dreams that feel possible." He ended with a call-to-action that we all continue to build a future where every young person is proud to grow up in this community.

Public Servant of the Year honoree, Salinas Police Sgt. Gerardo Magaña, spoke about his longstanding Christmas Toy Drive tradition of over 20 years, saying: "I have driven through East Salinas delivering toys to children and families in need, but it's not really about the toys. It's about the smiles, trust, and the chance to connect with our



Jonathan De Anda and family.

kids on a human level — outside of the uniform. As a police officer and the son of Mexican immigrant parents who grew up with very little, I know firsthand what it means to go without. I have never forgotten where I came from, and I've always believed that if you can help others, you should."

Magaña has spent many Christmas mornings away from his own family to serve others, but as his children have grown, his son has joined him in this tradition. He shared that this award is not just for him, but for the men and women of the Salinas Police Department - adding, "True joy comes from giving."



Police Sgt. Gerry Magaña with his wife and son.



From left to right: Liz Hall of Waste Management and Regina Gage, Executive Director of Meals on Wheels of the Salinas Valley.

The Nonprofit of the Year Award was presented to Meals on Wheels of the Salinas Valley (MOWSV), accepted by Executive Director Regina Gage, who shared: “MOWSV believes that no senior should go hungry or experience isolation. For more than 54 years, MOWSV has been delivering more than a meal, we nourish seniors and we nurture hearts.”

Serving the Salinas Valley from San Ardo to Aromas, MOWSV makes a lasting difference through the dedication of its hardworking staff, board members, volunteers, and many community partners. In addition to meal deliveries, MOWSV enriches lives through creative outreach, such as sidewalk serenades by local musicians and socials across the Salinas Valley, helping to build connection and joy among seniors.

The evening concluded with the presentation of the Legacy Award to Secretary Leon E. Panetta, who shared reflections on his life of service and the values that shaped his leadership.

“I’ve loved every minute of what I’ve been able to do to give back to this country,” he said, recalling his journey from being the son of Italian immigrants — washing

The program inspired many with heartfelt speeches from rising leaders to longstanding community pillars with this year’s honorees.



A full house at the Legacy of Leadership social hour.

glasses in his family’s restaurant and working on the orchard — to serving as a Congressman, Director of the CIA, and Secretary of Defense.

Panetta celebrated the diversity that defines the region — from its agriculture, tourism, and restaurant industries to its research centers, military community, and natural beauty. “I’ve traveled as CIA Director and as Secretary of Defense,” he said. “I went everywhere in the world. There is no place in the world as beautiful as Monterey County.”

His parents came to the United States in search of opportunity, and that same sense of hope has guided his life. Early on, Panetta recognized, “those few key values that are so important to our Central Coast that we all live by. People are hard workers here. People love their families, and they love what



Legacy Award Honoree, Secretary Leon Panetta, accepts his award.



From left to right: Roxanne Noble Boss, Bill Wilson, and Julie Gomez.



SVCC Board Member Colby Pereira with U.S. Rep. Jimmy Panetta.



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they do. They love their community — and that's what this area is all about."

"I've had the chance to live the American dream," he continued. "What I want to make sure about this country is that we give every young person — wherever they are, wherever they come from — every young person deserves a chance at the American dream to succeed in this country and to be a part of what this country is all about."

He also addressed the importance of leadership during challenging times: "This is a challenging time, and our institutions are being tested. The most important thing right now is that we do everything we can to make sure we have leadership in our democracy that is willing to do the right thing for the people of this country."

He also spoke to his and Sylvia Panetta's work at the Panetta institute and their focus on building a new generation of leaders for America, to plant that seed and to ensure that no matter how tough or challenging the crises we face, we have the leadership to get us through it.

Panetta concluded with a reminder of America's enduring strength: "We've been through civil wars, world wars, recessions, depressions, and natural disasters — but we've always found the leadership to get us through."

As the evening drew to a close, attendees left inspired by the timeless message that true leadership — whether in public service, community giving, or mentorship — creates a legacy that transcends generations. 🌱



From left, Raymond Costa, Catherine Costa, and guests.



Presenting Sponsor: Tanimura & Antle Leadership, with Micheal LePlant of CSUMB



From left to right: Honorable Carrie Panetta, Maureen Wruck of Chevron, Ingelise Guy, Sara Gong, and Ben Oakley.



RIBBON CUTTINGS & CHAMBER EVENTS

by Chamber Staff



Lunch and Learn with Salinas Valley Health

Salinas Valley Health hosted an insightful Lunch & Learn, featuring Dr. Orlando Rodriguez, Chief Medical Officer. Chamber members learned how Salinas Valley Health is expanding access to quality care through specialty clinics, PrimeCare locations, extended hours, telehealth, urgent care, and pharmacy services.



Signs by Van Introduces Old Growth Lumber Co.

Signs by Van celebrated the launch of Old Growth Lumber Co. with an exciting open house and ribbon cutting for its new mill and line opening. Guests enjoyed live music, barbecue, local wines, giveaways, and demos while learning how the company preserves California's historic trees through sustainable slab milling, custom woodworking, and specialty finishes.



Blackthorne 50th Anniversary Ribbon Cutting

Chamber Members proudly celebrated Blackthorne Spas' 50th anniversary, honoring five decades of quality, innovation, and service. Founded by industry icon Locksin Thompson and now led by Malina Breaux, Owner & CFO, Blackthorne continues to uphold its legacy as Central California's trusted pool and spa experts.



Grand Reopening of the Hartnell College Arts Building and Gallery

We celebrated the grand reopening of the Visual Arts Building and the debut of "Roots to Horizons" at the Hartnell College Gallery. The event celebrated 90 years of the Art Department, 50 years of the Visual Arts Building, and marked the completion of a two-year renovation with a special ribbon-cutting ceremony.



Tequila and Mezcal Master Tasting

An unforgettable evening took place at the Tequila & Mezcal Master Tasting presented by Ricky Cabrera Productions. Guests enjoyed premium tastings with 100-plus tequilas and mezcals to choose from, gourmet cuisine, DJ, and a silent auction benefitting the Children's Shopping Tour.



Lunch and Learn with Salinas Regional Sports Authority

The Salinas Regional Sports Authority hosted an engaging Lunch & Learn, highlighting how the Soccer Complex is transforming the community through sports tourism, local partnerships, and future expansion plans that promote health, connection, and economic growth.

Thankful for Our Community, Grateful to Our God

By Pastor T.K. Anderson, Compass Church

Every November, our nation slows down just long enough to breathe in the crisp autumn air, smell the pumpkin pies baking, and hear the laughter of family and friends gathering around a table.

Thanksgiving is more than a holiday; it is a heritage. It is a moment when America pauses to remember that gratitude is the glue that binds our hearts to God and one another.

Long before parades and football games, the very first Thanksgiving in 1621 was a humble gathering between Pilgrims and Native Americans. After a brutal winter that claimed nearly half their number, the surviving settlers gave thanks not for comfort but for survival. They recognized that everything they had, from food to friendship, was a gift from God.

The Apostle Paul wrote, "Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). True gratitude is not just about what is on the table; it is about who sits at it, and the God who provides it all.

Here in the Salinas Valley and Monterey County, we have so much to be thankful for. We live in one of the most beautiful places in the world, where the soil produces abundance, the ocean reminds us of God's vastness, and the people reflect the richness of community. From our farmers and first responders to our business owners, educators, and city leaders, each person plays a part in shaping a community that cares deeply about others.

This Thanksgiving season, Compass Church is honored



once again to partner with the Salinas Rodeo Grounds, Salinas Lowrider Council, and our active-duty military personnel for The Great Christmas Toy Drive. It is one of my favorite events of the year, a

time when generosity takes center stage. Watching children light up as they receive a new toy reminds us that joy multiplies when it is shared. Last year, thousands of toys were distributed to families across our region, and this year we are believing for even more lives to be touched.

If you would like to partner with us in making a difference, the simplest and easiest way is to visit compasschurchmc.org and select a toy for a child in need. Every single gift helps us spread the love of Christ and bring smiles to children throughout our Valley.

The real beauty of this season is not found in the gifts we give, but in the spirit behind them. When we give, we reflect the heart of our Creator, who "so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son" (John 3:16). Thanksgiving at its core leads naturally to giving, because a grateful heart is a generous heart.

As we enter this special season, let us take time to thank God for the blessings that surround us... for family and faith, for those who serve, and for the community that makes this Valley feel like home. May our gratitude overflow in acts of kindness, compassion, and love toward one another. From all of us at Compass Church, Happy Thanksgiving. May your homes be filled with laughter, your hearts with peace, and your tables with joy. 🌿

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Pathfindercontent.com, Marc@pathfindercontent.com, (831) 256-6603



Chick-fil-A North Salinas

Chick-fil-A North Salinas serves the community with freshly prepared food, genuine hospitality, and a commitment to making a positive impact. Beyond menu favorites like the Original Chick-fil-A Chicken Sandwich, Chick-fil-A Nuggets, and Chick-fil-A Waffle Potato Fries, they offer convenient catering options for businesses, schools, and community events.

As a locally owned and operated restaurant, they are dedicated to creating meaningful connections, supporting local initiatives, and providing opportunities for growth within our team. Whether dining in, using the mobile app, or partnering with them for an event, their goal is to serve delicious food with remarkable service, while being a caring neighbor in Salinas.

Savannahcfasalinas@gmail.com, (724) 944-1086



Hidden Hills Ranch

For over 25 years, Hidden Hills Ranch has been a place of learning, healing, and connection for families and individuals of all ages and abilities. Through therapeutic programs, enrichment classes, summer camps, and animal-assisted learning, the ranch creates life-changing experiences for more than 1,000 children annually.

Hiddenhillsranch.org, Info@hiddenhillsranch.org, (831) 663-6471



Cre's BBQ & Soul Food

For Antwoyn Brown, barbecue runs deep in the family. Growing up, he watched his dad barbecue ribs and chicken, the smoke, the smell, and the joy of feeding people left a lasting mark. When Antwoyn got older, he carried that same love for cooking forward, teaching himself to barbecue the way he saw his father did with patience, pride, and passion and inspired by his mom's soulful home cooking. Over the years

Antwoyn perfected his own style of barbecue, adding his own unique twists and Southern flair. In 2021, he and his wife, Antoinette "Cre" Brown, turned that passion into Cre's BBQ and Soul Food, named after her middle name, LaCresha (Cre). What started as a small setup at farmers' markets and local events has grown into a beloved local favorite. This past July, the Browns proudly launched their new, custom-built food trailer — a major step forward in sharing their food and story with Monterey County. From Memphis-style tri-tip, ribs, and hot links to soulful sides like mac and cheese, collard greens, and black-eyed peas, candied yams and more, every plate tells a story of family, community, and the joy of serving others. You can find Cre's BBQ & Soul Food parked at Iris and North Main Street, right across from the Sports Complex, open from 1:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. The Browns' dream is to open a sit-down restaurant where families can come together, enjoy a full platter of barbecue, and feel right at home. Because when it comes to great barbecue, it's not just about the smoke — it's about the soul. To contact Cre's BBQ and Soul Food for catering or events, email Creskitchen2@gmail.com or call (831)789-0822.



ROTH - from page 7

catch-up contributions will not be required to include a Roth deferral provision to retain the catch-up contribution provision. If a plan does not offer a Roth deferral option, employees who are required to make catch-up contributions on a Roth basis cannot make catch-up

contributions at all because their catch-up limit will be \$0. The universal availability rule does not require employers to offer a Roth deferral provision or to eliminate catch-up contributions altogether. 🌿

Ryan Hastie, CFP®, AIF®, CPFA®, is a Partner and Investment Advisor with locally owned Hastie Financial Group and can be contacted at ryan.hastie@hastiefg.com.

Strengthening Community, One Purchase at a Time

By Colleen Bailey, SVCC President/CEO

If you're anything like me, much of your shopping happens around the holiday season. As we enter that time of year, I encourage you to consider doing your shopping close to home. Our local small businesses are owned and operated by our friends, neighbors, and fellow community members. Every time you shop local, you're helping them thrive — and you're helping our entire community flourish.

When you spend locally, your tax dollars stay local too, supporting the services that make Salinas such a wonderful place to live — things like our libraries, community programs, parks and recreation, road and sidewalk maintenance, and public safety.

While the convenience of online shopping has its appeal, it's worth noting that e-commerce still accounts for only about 15.2% of total retail sales in the U.S. That means most shopping still happens in person — and for good reason. The in-store shopping experience is more than just a transaction; it's a human connection. It's a smile, a conversation, a shared sense of community. When we shop face-to-face, we strengthen the social bonds that make our community vibrant.

To celebrate that spirit of connection, the City of Salinas has a wonderful lineup of holiday events designed to bring people downtown this season.

- **Saturday, Nov. 29** – The annual Salinas "Tree for Peace"

Lighting Ceremony will take place at One Main Street from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

- **Saturday, Nov. 29** – Shop Small Salinas! encourages everyone to explore and support local shops throughout the city.
- **Sunday, Nov. 30** – The Salinas Holiday Parade of Lights will illuminate Downtown Salinas starting at 6:00 p.m., bringing festive cheer to Main Street.

Just down the road, King City will kick off its holiday season with the Annual Lighted Christmas Parade on the first Friday after Thanksgiving. Beginning at Mildred and Broadway, this beloved parade

features local police, color guards, Fort Hunter Liggett commanders, and community groups, all joining together with lighted

floats and holiday spirit.

These, and similar events are perfect opportunities to rediscover our local shops and restaurants. You may find unique, handcrafted gifts that your loved ones will cherish — and enjoy the familiarity and warm hospitality that make our local eateries so special.

By choosing to shop and dine locally, you're not only finding one-of-a-kind treasures, but also helping make our community more economically resilient, socially connected, and full of vitality for everyone who lives, works, and visits here.

So this season, let's celebrate together. **Shop small. Shop local. Shop Salinas.** 🌿

While the convenience of online shopping has its appeal, it's worth noting that e-commerce still accounts for only about 15.2% of total retail sales in the U.S.

AMBASSADOR SPOTLIGHT SAVANNAH LASHOMB



Savannah LaShomb is a Marketing Manager at Chick-fil-A North Salinas, where she leads local partnerships, events, and community outreach initiatives. She has a strong background in marketing, sales, and business development, with a passion for building connections that strengthen both business and community. Originally from Florida, Savannah relocated to Monterey County as a military spouse and is excited to serve as an Ambassador for the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce.



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

NOVEMBER 2025

By Kevin Dayton, Government Affairs Liaison

Your Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce Government Relations Committee had 20 members at its meeting on Wednesday, Oct. 8 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 Government Relations Committee discussed the four City of Salinas ordinances enacted in 2023 and 2024 that regulate landlord-tenant relations. These ordinances include two high-profile new public policies: (1) a requirement for property owners to register their rental properties with the City of Salinas and provide information about them, and (2) the imposition of a strict percentage limit on annual rent increases (known as "rent stabilization" or "rent control"). These ordinances will remain in effect as law at least until the end of 2026.

In response to a qualified petition from Salinas voters, the Salinas City Council voted on Sept. 23 to put a referendum on the November 2026 ballot that asks voters to affirm or deny the city council's approval in June 2025 of an ordinance repealing the four earlier ordinances.

At this time, the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce has not taken a position on the referendum. However, it was agreed that the Chamber can play a leadership role

on this issue in two ways.

The Chamber will maintain its standing offer to be a convener for supporters and opponents of the ordinances to negotiate a compromise. (For now, it appears that both sides believe they can convince a majority of voters to support their position.) And the Chamber will compile and report data about the Salinas rental housing market in publications such as the Business Journal.

Currently the City of Salinas has not been able to provide data to the public (including the Chamber) about its rental registration system or actions related to appeals and enforcement of rent control and tenant protection. This is unfortunate, as the rental registration ordinance enacted on April 4, 2023 includes a mandated annual review "assessing the effectiveness of the program established under this article" with recommendations for changes to the program.

But even without official city data, the Chamber is aware of ways the public can be "assessing the effectiveness of the program." Local bankers that lend money for rental property purchases and improvements are reportedly less inclined to consider lending for properties subject to the cap on rent increases. In addition, real estate agents are reporting that rental property owners now selling their properties identify the new ordinances as a primary reason for the sale. One rental property owner has claimed

that the City of Salinas charges \$3,700 as a fee just to begin considering whether a landlord is justified to seek an exemption from the limit on the annual rent increase. To substantiate these various anecdotal reports, the Chamber will collect documentation and testimonials.

2 Salinas City Manager Rene Mendez and Salinas Finance Director Selina Andrews will attend the Nov. 12 Government Relations Committee meeting to answer questions about expenditures, oversight, and accountability for the Measure G sales tax, which is scheduled to expire in 2030. Committee members were asked to propose questions and review the nine recommendations in the Chamber's July 17, 2024 letter to the Salinas City Council titled "Conditions for Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce Leadership on Measure G Sales Tax Public Education and Community Outreach."

3 Government Relations Committee members expressed continued concerns about what governments will do to accommodate additional truck and passenger vehicle traffic generated by the Amazon fulfillment center,

now under construction. Streets in the industrial area of South Salinas are already congested for much of the workday, and Highway 101 entrance and exit ramps remain dangerous.

Committee members praised Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) for being a pro-active public agency that has taken initiative to propose solutions to mitigate the impact of additional truck and passenger vehicle traffic. MST is considering the establishment of a fixed bus route to and from the fulfillment center. However, it appears that Amazon will mainly handle employee commuting and parking by building a reported 1,100 space parking lot adjacent to its facility. Rumors are not true that Amazon will build an employee parking lot on the east side of Highway 101 with shuttles running between the lot and the distribution center.

Meanwhile, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County



(TAMC) and Caltrans District 5 will soon hold two community engagement/public information meetings concerning the US 101 South of Salinas Safety Corridor project. This is the stretch of highway where trucks and many employee vehicles from the Amazon fulfillment center will come in and out.

The two meetings (in Salinas and Chualar) will focus on two topics: (1) the short-term plan for permanent closure of the Highway 101 median between Airport Road and Chualar, thus eliminating turns on and off the side roads, and (2) long-term plans for improvements to the corridor. The long-term plans would presumably include possible strategies to ease truck and vehicle traffic entering and exiting Highway 101 from the Amazon fulfillment center.

At the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) Measure X Oversight Committee meeting on Oct. 7, the oversight committee asked for a report from staff at their next quarterly meeting (in January 2026) on the US 101 South of Salinas Safety Corridor project and what will be done to address additional traffic from the Amazon fulfillment center and other industrial facilities in South Salinas.

Committee members were unaware of any activities by the City of Salinas to consider how to minimize traffic impact. Amazon has reportedly paid the city about \$12 million for traffic mitigation. It was suggested that perhaps the City of Salinas Traffic and Transportation Commission would be an appropriate place for the City of Salinas to begin public discussion and deliberation on how the city will address traffic impacts of the Amazon fulfillment center.

4 Nothing is ever mentioned at public meetings of the City of Salinas or regional water agencies about the future reliability of wastewater flows from the City of Salinas to the Monterey One Water (M1W) Regional Treatment Plant



Ozone treatment is the first step of the four-step process to recycle already-treated wastewater into potable water at the Pure Water Monterey Advanced Water Purification Facility, located at the Regional Treatment Plant of the Monterey One Water (M1W) regional wastewater treatment and recycling agency. Ozone kills pathogens and degrades pesticides and “Constituents of Emerging Concern” (CECs) such as pharmaceuticals, personal care products, and industrial chemicals. The other three steps are membrane filtration, reverse osmosis, and advanced oxidation.

for recycling. The general public remains oblivious (other than readers of the Business Journal). Some Monterey Peninsula interest groups and elected officials continue to assure residents and businesses that there’s enough water supply to meet all their future needs (as long as population growth and economic development is restrained). But behind the scenes, tension is building about how the Salinas Valley sends wastewater to the Monterey Peninsula.

Meanwhile, the M1W regional wastewater treatment and recycling agency is getting ready to begin expanded operations of its Pure Water Monterey recycling program. (The Chamber’s Government Affairs Liaison toured the M1W Advanced Water Treatment Facility on Oct. 4.) The agency expects that increased production of recycled water will rely mostly on City of Salinas industrial wastewater, which is diverted to the plant from the main industrial wastewater pipeline from South Salinas facilities or pumped from Pond 3 of the Salinas Industrial

Wastewater Treatment Facility on Davis Road, adjacent to the Salinas River.

During the growing season, recycled wastewater is generally supposed to be conveyed to the Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project (CSIP) for agricultural irrigation. During the rainy season, it goes to the Seaside Groundwater Basin as aquifer storage for Monterey Peninsula drinking water of the California American Water Company (Cal Am) or to the Marina Coast Water District (MCWD) for landscape irrigation in its Regional Urban Water Augmentation Program (RUWAP). Readers of the Business Journal are routinely informed and reminded about this complicated but ingenious regional water supply strategy. As long as nothing unusual happens (such as drought, earthquake, tsunami, catastrophic mechanical failure, or sabotage), it should work.

5 A series of local “housing summits” in the second half of 2025 are reminding elected officials and the public that housing

demand continues to exceed supply and that implementation of certain local government policies may encourage more supply. On Aug. 14, Monterey Bay Economic Partnership (MBEP) held a “Workforce Housing Solutions Summit” in Seaside. The Chamber’s Government Affairs Liaison collected and dispersed ideas for housing policy as a participant in the interactive “Pre/Post Entitlement Streamlining Action Station.” The Chamber President and CEO attended the summit, and some City of Salinas elected officials also attended.

On Nov. 5, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., the City of Salinas will host a Regional Housing Summit at the Steinbeck Center in partnership with local agencies and organizations. It will include “sessions on the regional housing landscape, housing policy, innovative housing models, and more.”

On Nov. 6-7, Regenerative California will hold a “Monterey Attainable Housing Forum” at the Asilomar Conference Grounds in Pacific Grove. This is an

invitation-only “working forum designed to accelerate projects from idea to implementation and position Monterey County as a model for community-serving housing innovation.” Participants will be asked to identify potential sites, partners, and creative financing strategies for construction of moderate-income housing (housing that costs a bit below typical market rate but is not intended as “low-income” housing). Past articles in the Business Journal have reported on the challenges for building such housing and the resulting lack of it.

6 In November, the Salinas Planning Commission is expected to discuss the proposed revision of the city’s Economic Development Element of its General Plan. At that meeting, representatives of Salinas Planning and Research Corporation (SPARC)—the group central to the development of the original Economic Development Element—will talk about how the Economic Development Element can incorporate ideas from the “Strong Towns” movement. “Strong Towns” principles are meant to shift dominant residential development trends away from large detached homes built for wealthy households on empty land just outside of urban areas and instead focus on density and infill development for ordinary households.

7 Members of the Monterey County Board of Supervisors are concerned about state proposals to impose new taxes on vehicle owners based on how many miles they drive. This methodology of imposing taxes has been under consideration in California and elsewhere as more people drive electric vehicles and thereby avoid paying taxes on gasoline, while still using streets and highways built and maintained with gasoline tax revenue.

A tax based on vehicle miles traveled would disproportionately affect rural Monterey County residents,

especially people who commute long distances from South County to Salinas and the Monterey Peninsula because they cannot afford to live in housing closer to their jobs. On Sept. 24, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) board received a presentation on the state’s “Road Charge Pilot Program” and the prospects for the state legislature implementing a mile-age-based new tax.

Of course, if the state is not collecting tax revenue for streets and highways, it will not build and maintain streets and highways. The Government Relations Committee asked Chamber staff to continue to monitor deliberation of this new tax structure at the state legislature and recommend a position when specific language begins to emerge.

8 The Government Relations Committee discussed reconsideration of a possible position on Proposition 50. At its Sept. 10 meeting, the Committee recommended via voice vote to the Board of Directors that the Chamber oppose Proposition 50, with direction to staff to develop a written justification for the position. A voice vote at the Sept. 24 board meeting to take a position on Proposition 50 was stopped by a point of order that the board lacked a quorum.

Proposition 50 is a state ballot measure openly intended as political retaliation to Congressional redistricting in Texas that would minimize the number of districts represented by Democrats. Proposition 50 is supposed to reduce the number of Republican districts in California from the current 9 out of 52 to 4 out of 52, at least until the 2032 elections, when new districts would take effect. Nationally, Proposition 50 may determine party control of the U.S. House of Representatives. On a state level, it will continue California’s 30-year trend toward becoming a one-party state.

On Oct. 3, the California Farm

Bureau announced opposition to Prop. 50, noting that this strategy for redistricting necessarily divides up cohesive rural districts into small appendages of multiple urban districts, thus marginalizing the perspectives of agricultural regions. The Monterey County Farm Bureau opposes Proposition 50. However, the California Chamber of Commerce has declined to take a position on Proposition 50.

It was noted that Chamber leadership discussion of a position on Proposition 50 has not come to a consensus, and board members have expressed strong views for the opposition position and the neutral position. As directed, staff prepared a draft statement justifying a Chamber position in opposition based on philosophical concerns about erosion of the checks and balances of the constitutional republic, rather than on which political party ends up controlling Congress and the relationship of Congress to the President.

However, on a practical basis, interests of Chamber members are indeed related to how Proposition 50 would determine who controls the power of the legislative branch (Congress) to support or derail the power of the executive branch (the President). Control of Congress would affect taxes, regulations, spending, and labor supply (from immigration) for various sectors of the Monterey County economy, especially agriculture, health care, hospitality, local governments, and nonprofits.

Because ballots have already been mailed to voters and the election is on Nov. 4, the Committee recommended that the President & CEO send an email to the Board of Directors asking them to take a position, with unanimous support required to take one position or another. It seems very unlikely that the board will end up with a unanimous position, which means there will be no position.

9 Government Relations Committee members discussed recent experiences with the City of Salinas Permit Center. Some Chamber members believe the performance of the permit center has greatly improved, while others believe it remains lackluster and discourages economic development. Examples were given of noteworthy responsiveness or inexplicable neglect of various permit applicants.

This inconsistency of reports brought up questions about fair and equal treatment of applicants. What variables allow one applicant to have an outstanding experience with the permit center while another applicant experiences “an absolute disaster?”

It was noted that the Chamber needs to obtain and evaluate actual data or documented cases to support any requests for changes. City staff only provides the annual report from the permit department in January each year. The committee directed staff to add permits to the list of public policy issues for routine monthly discussion.

10 The Government Relations Committee was informed about two viable candidates running for Monterey County Superintendent of Schools to replace Dr. Deneen Guss, who is retiring. Former Salinas Union High School District Superintendent Dan Burns is running against former Pacific Grove Unified School District Superintendent Ralph Porras, who now works at the Monterey County Office of Education. They will face off on the March 2026 election ballot.

The committee agreed that either of these candidates would be excellent for the business community. The committee decided not to convene the Candidate Review Committee for interviewing the candidates and then recommending an endorsement of one or the other. Instead, the committee directed staff to write an article for the Business Journal presenting the particular strengths and priorities of each candidate. 🌱



A SEASON OF *Gratitude*

By **Spenser Smith**, ARCpoint Labs Manager

As the holidays approach, we pause to reflect on what matters most: health, family, and community. At ARCpoint Labs of Salinas and Monterey Bay, we are deeply thankful for the trust you place in us. Every day, we have the privilege of supporting individuals, families, and employers with reliable, confidential testing services that promote wellness and peace of mind.

This November, we celebrate not only the season of giving thanks, but also the commitment we share with you in prioritizing health. From routine wellness testing to specialized screenings, our goal is to give you answers you can depend on.

Spotlight: Food Allergy and Sensitivity Testing for the Holidays

The holiday season brings gatherings, favorite recipes, and abundant meals—but it can also bring challenges for those navigating food allergies or sensitivities. Knowing what foods your body tolerates best allows you to enjoy holiday traditions without the worry of discomfort or adverse reactions.

At ARCpoint Labs, we provide comprehensive food allergy and sensitivity testing that can help you:

- Identify common triggers before holiday meals.
- Plan menus and make informed choices.

- Enjoy seasonal favorites while avoiding unnecessary stress.

Your results don't just provide a list of restrictions—they serve as a personalized guide. With insights into what works best for your body, you can approach every holiday table with confidence.

Additional Services to Support Your Health

This month we are also highlighting:

- **Men's Health Awareness**—screenings including PSA, cholesterol, and diabetes checks.
- **Diabetes Awareness Month**—early detection testing for better management.
- **Wellness Testing**—fatigue panels, vitamin and mineral assessments, hormone testing, and more.

Whether you are planning for travel, ensuring workplace compliance, or seeking peace of mind through health answers, ARCpoint Labs is here to serve Salinas and Monterey Bay.

Wishing You a Healthy and Happy Thanksgiving

From all of us at ARCpoint Labs, we extend our gratitude to you, our community. May this holiday season bring health, joy, and cherished time with loved ones. 🍀

Addressing the Complex Journey of Cancer Care

By Chris Haubert, Salinas Valley Health

While advanced diagnostics, state-of-the-art treatments and multidisciplinary medical teams are foundational to excellent cancer care, the journey through diagnosis, treatment and survivorship can be complex. Survivorship begins at diagnosis and continues throughout a person's life. At Salinas Valley Health, our Comprehensive Cancer Program involves a diverse range of medical services and individualized support to patients as they navigate what can be an overwhelming journey.

Multidisciplinary Teams and Personalized Support

"Cancer treatment as a whole is so much more than a diagnosis," says Jessica Valero, BSN, RN, OCN, Manager of the Susan Bacon Cancer Resource Center. "To have equitable care, we have to address all aspects of survivorship. Having a multidisciplinary cancer care team gives every patient that kind of support."

The clinical team includes experts at the forefront of cancer care in the fields of oncology and hematology. Treatment options include surgery, chemotherapy, radiation, immunotherapy, hormonal therapy and targeted therapy. Genetic screenings enable the development of customized treatment plans, while clinical trials ensure access to innovative therapies and emerging drug combinations.

Nurse navigators, licensed clinical social workers, and others bridge the gap between clinical excellence and patient experience, ensuring patients receive not only top-tier medical interventions but also the guidance and support necessary to navigate the healthcare landscape. Many on the team have personal experience with cancer, giving them firsthand insight into the feelings that accompany the



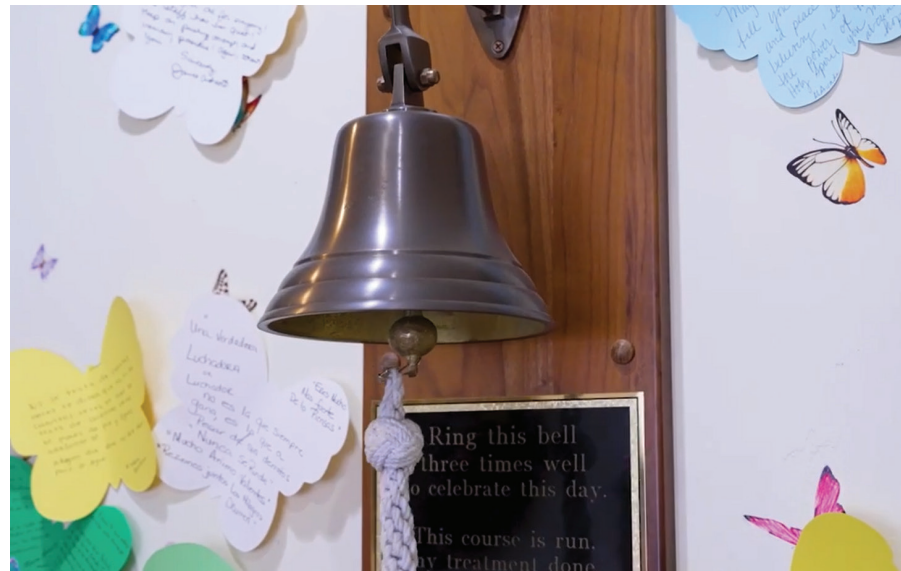
Geetha Varma, MD, Hematologist and Oncologist, Salinas Valley Health Hematology & Oncology.

Just as the medical field of cancer care has evolved, offering greater hope for cancer survivors, the human dimension of care has expanded to provide greater support both during and after treatment.

experience. "Some people aren't sure how to tell their doctors they are afraid to have chemotherapy," says Jessica Vega, Oncology Health Coordinator with the Susan Bacon Cancer Resource Center. "We understand those feelings and can help with that kind of very personal communication."

Empowering Patients and Supporting Survivorship

These professionals help patients understand their diagnosis, explore treatment options, and manage appointments across multiple departments. They serve as consistent points of contact, helping to coordinate care, reduce barriers to health equity and improve health outcomes. Salinas Valley Health is proud to have four nurse navigators dedicated to supporting families throughout their cancer journey. Two oncology social workers and



A beacon of strength: The cancer bell, surrounded by heartfelt notes of hope, celebrates every victory and the unwavering courage of survivors.

an oncology health coordinator assist patients with appointments, transportation, finances, emotional support and other needs. It's guidance that helps patients remain focused on the big picture and avoid becoming overwhelmed.

"By providing education, advocacy and emotional support, our navigators, social workers and coordinator empower patients to make informed decisions and help them follow a path that puts them on the best course for treatment," explains Thelma Baker, MSN, RN, OCN, NEA-BC, Director of the Comprehensive Cancer Program. "The result is an approach to cancer care that recognizes the importance of treating the whole person, not just the disease."

Just as the medical field of cancer care has evolved, offering greater hope for cancer survivors, the human dimension of care has expanded to provide greater support both during and after treatment. Salinas Valley Health is proud to offer a full spectrum of outstanding clinical care as well as personalized services and guidance to make the

cancer journey more manageable. This commitment to comprehensive care allows individuals to focus on healing and living well, surrounded by the people and resources that matter most.

About Salinas Valley Health

Salinas Valley Health exists to help our community rise through good health. Founded in 1953 as Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare System, today we serve individuals and families throughout the Salinas Valley, Monterey Peninsula, and surrounding region. Salinas Valley Health employs more than 2,000 people and consists of a network of resources and collaborations, which include a 263-bed acute care medical center; primary, specialty, and urgent care clinics; a mobile clinic; and community-based health and wellness programs such as Live Well Project (formerly Blue Zones Project Monterey County). We deliver evidence-based quality and patient-focused care to improve health and well-being for all. Learn more at www.salinasvalley-health.com. 🌱

DÍAS DE LOS MUERTOS

DAYS TO REMEMBER

By José Ortiz, Founder/Artistic Director, Hijos del Sol Arts Productions

It is called Días de los Muertos—the *days* of the dead—because remembrance can't be contained within a single day. For many, it is a commitment not to forget; for others, it serves as a reminder to slow down—to breathe, to notice, and to honor those who once walked beside us, fed us, loved us, and challenged us. Nature demonstrates how to do this. After spring and summer, autumn arrives; harvest concludes; the land rests. Life has always moved in cycles. Death is not the opposite of life—it is part of life's rhythm.

An *ofrenda* or altar is a simple, loving bridge between worlds. On it rest photographs, favorite foods, a candle, *papel picado*, and flowers—the four elements that sustain life. Marigolds (*cempasúchil*) are not there to hide death. Their bright color and fragrance are the scent of life itself, a luminous path home for the spirits of those who are loved and remembered. Creating an altar is also an act of arranging the heart. Beauty becomes a doorway to healing.

These days carry deep meaning across generations. Nov. 1 honors children—lives cut short too soon, love that never fades. Nov. 2 embraces all who have gone before, of every age and walk of life. Grief and gratitude meet in the same breath. Reflecting on death also reveals something about life—how people treat one another, what memories are being created now, and the kind of ancestors each person hopes to become.



Días de los Muertos procession.

Rooted in ancient Mayan traditions, Días de los Muertos is about everyone. It is the great equalizer: all humans are mortal, and all remember. Across Monterey County, celebrations flourish—school altars, processions, art exhibits, community feasts, and candlelit vigils—each one a different doorway into the same truth: memory and love connect all people.

Around this time of year, even cemeteries come alive. At Queen of Heaven Cemetery in Prunedale, families gather among marigolds, candles, music, and food vendors. In Salinas, visitors stroll through the Garden of Memories Cemetery, where some pause at John Steinbeck's grave—a reminder that story and memory share the same soil.

All are invited to two free gatherings that Hijos del Sol Arts is helping produce—each with food,

music, art, and activities: • Día de los Muertos @ Hartnell College, Thursday, Oct. 30, 6–8 p.m., in collaboration with Hospice Giving Foundation and Hartnell College. • Días de los Muertos Festival at the Hijos del Sol Arts Studio (443 E. Alisal St.), Saturday, Nov. 1, 4–7 p.m.

Bring a story, a picture, or a memory—come to honor those who walked before us, and the life that still moves through us. *Currently, Hijos del Sol opens its free art studio five days a week—a place where youth create, belong, and all are welcome.*



Días de los Muertos ofrenda, or altar.

‘What the People Want’

A Stroll Through the Economic Development Element of the Salinas General Plan

By Peter Kasavan, Kasavan Architects

Did you see that startling headline for an article under the byline Roseann Cattani? It was published by the Salinas Californian on Jan. 3, 2025. It told us in bold letters what most of us already know:

“Salinas is Least Affordable City for First-Time Homebuyers, New Study Shows”

The article notes that as of last fall Salinas has a median single-family home listing price of over \$830,000. That number earns us this unfortunate and regrettable distinction.

Quoting from Cattani’s article: “Salinas is the least affordable city for first time homebuyers, a new study reveals, with the biggest disparity between average salary and housing cost in the United States.” She continues, “That placed the city at the bottom of the list.”

What we also know is this is not a new development. Salinas has been among the most expensive markets for all housing types in the United States based on income for decades. It is our view that there are many considerations under the City’s control or influence that have helped contribute to this dubious honor. Three of these are 1) Land use policy, 2) Land availability, 3) Permitting and fees.

The Economic Development Element (EDE) of the Salinas General Plan is a planning document developed by the broadest and most authentic Community Engagement process in the history of the region. It went on to win three planning awards including two statewide awards due in no small part to the City’s approximately \$1,000,000 investment in the EDE and the incredible investment by 100s of people in the

community who volunteered 1,000s of hours contributing to the vision and values embodied in the EDE.

The General Plan is the highest-level plan in the City and rises to a legislative level document. That is why the City and community wanted Economic Development as an element of the General Plan- to give it teeth. The EDE recognizes our housing challenge and provides solutions which, if effectively implemented in good faith over time, could begin to improve housing affordability in Salinas- or at least get us higher than dead last on the national affordability list!

The following items are examples taken from the City Council-approved EDE. Some have been edited for

length but the page numbers are cited where they can be found at this City website link: <https://www.salinass.gov/files/sharedassets/city/v/1/community-development/appi/appendix-b-salinass-e-de-vol-i.pdf>.

From approved award-winning EDE:

“Lack of available vacant land within the city limits ... is a key constraint to economic

development. Vacant land is needed to ...promote a healthy jobs and housing balance.” P 1:3

Economic development policies ... in part, drive decisions about land use...especially in regard to providing an adequate inventory of land for ... providing adequate housing for workers...” P1:17

This City must also provide a range of high quality and affordable

housing ...”

P 2:8

“**Action WF-1.1.5** – Consider establishing a “boomerang” program for Salinas natives...to encourage them to return to Salinas to work. Incentives may include ... housing assistance...”

P 2:58

“**Action N-1.1.4** – Support a diverse variety of housing types, including farm workers, seniors, multifamily, smaller houses on smaller sites, market-based affordable housing, secondary dwelling units and executive housing on large lots.” 2:64

“**Action**

N-1.1.5 –...

facilitate innovative solutions for the creation of seasonal workforce housing, ...” 2:65

“**Action N-1.1.8** – Implement programs that further support and promote home ownership opportunities in all neighborhoods.” 2:65

“**Action N-1.1.9** – Implement revisions to the Zoning Code, as appropriate, that promote housing of 1,000 square feet or less...” P 2:65

City staff’s EDE Update

The General Plan is in the process of being updated by the city, including updating the Economic Development Element. The planning staff have been preparing their draft EDE Update without the same level of community engagement used to create the original comprehensive EDE document. This level of engagement is required by the EDE in preparation of its update. See Action LU-1.1.4 on page 2:17 of the EDE. The planning staff has

communicated that they intend **not** to include the original EDE document in their General Plan Update but just list it as a reference document.

Community’s EDE Update

When the community learned of this threat to the EDE we re-engaged and formed an EDE “Shareholders” coalition to both save the EDE and recommend updates. The Shareholders included representatives from SPARC, SUBA, Salinas Valley Chamber, COPA, Salinas City Center Improvement Association (SCCIA), Central Coast Builders Association, Salinas Valley Tourism and Visitor’s Bureau, and the Monterey County Business Council.

The shareholders volunteered hours of time reviewing the EDE on a line-by-line basis and prepared their version of the EDE Update which was submitted to the City Manager on Aug. 1, 2025. That community-based update preserves most of the approved EDE but includes many deletions to streamline the document as well edits and additions with several relative to housing including the following:

Land Use Policy

“**Action N-1.1.3** - Promote investment in expanding the stock of affordable housing by promoting the existing Zoning Code regulations that allow second dwelling units as permitted uses... and implement updated zoning to remove barriers to new construction. Approve a selection of pre-approved plans for ADUs, cottages, small apartments, townhomes, and stacked duplex and triplexes to encourage missing middle infill.



It is clear what the people want.
They want to save the community’s
EDE and for the City to approve the
Shareholder’s EDE Update.

The purpose is to:

1). reduce time and costs associated with approvals required to construct secondary dwelling units on residentially-zoned lots of sufficient size; 2) increase the stock of affordable housing through the City; 3) promote infill development to reduce impacts on agricultural land while allowing expansion of area of influence and City limits to support a wide variety of housing types; 4) promote use of public transit by increasing ridership density; 5) reduce environmental impacts of new housing; and 6) enhance family income and raise property values; and 7) create starter homes.” 2:64, edited

Land Availability

“**Action LU 1.1.10** — Incentivize production of more housing by making more land available by

strategically expanding the City limits particularly to the East and North into the foothills to support all types of housing (starter to executive) and work with community shareholders to simplify and accelerate the entitlement and permit process.”

Permitting

“**Action LU-1.1.6** — Because delays and inefficiencies in local permit processes have been costly and frustrating for applicants for many years; take effective steps to reform and accelerate the permit process ...

Permanently re-engage ... industry experts and other community resources... [w]ith the goal of simplifying and permanently accelerating the permit process.

City must integrate the value of community outreach, constant monitoring of results, and practice

of effective process improvements into the culture of the Permit Center...”

Fees

“**Action LU-1.1.8** — Recognize that the regular upward adjustment of development, permit, and other fees may eventually contribute to financial constraints or disincentives to economic development due to misalignments with actual project impacts. Regularly ... conduct a critical review of development fees, permit and other fees including community engagement with local business and industry experts utilizing actual local market conditions ... Make adjustments as possible to reduce this barrier while fairly evaluating fee levels to continue reasonable support for infrastructure development.

In collaboration with the

community shareholders, update the Traffic Fee Ordinance (TFO) and associated fee structure to avoid unintended loss of proposed projects, ... In addition, traffic impact fees should be prioritized to mitigate the actual local impacts in the environs of the project that has been found to cause those traffic impacts and is being required to pay the traffic impact fee.”

What the People Want

Based on the breadth of the renewed interest and broad community engagement by many of the original EDE creators, it is clear what the people want. They want to save the community’s EDE and for the City to approve the Shareholder’s EDE Update including these recommendations related to Land Use Policy, Land Availability and Permitting & Fees. 🌿

Are You Ready for the Holidays and the New Year?

By Gladys Rodriguez-Morales, Fenton & Keller

Employers and employees often ask the question around the holidays whether extra compensation is required to be paid for working on a holiday or if it’s required to be paid for the holiday even when the holiday is not worked. The answer is generally no to both questions.

Absent an employment agreement between the employer and employee or a collective bargaining agreement, there is no requirement under California law that employers pay employees a premium for working non-overtime hours on a holiday or paying employees for the day when they did not work the holiday.

If an employee works on a holiday, the hours worked are paid at



the employee’s regular rate of pay unless the employee works overtime hours, which generally means the employee worked more than eight hours in the workday or more than 40 hours in the workweek. Also, if the employee did not work the holiday, either because

it was their scheduled day off or because the employer closed the business in observance of the holiday, the employer is not required to pay its non-exempt employees for the hours not worked on the holiday. However, this does not mean that employers are permitted to make a pro-rata deduction from the salary of an exempt employee who did not work on the holiday as the result of the business being closed.

Although California law does

not require employers to pay extra compensation to employees who work non-overtime hours on a holiday, or pay non-exempt employees for hours not worked on the holiday, employers desiring to pay a premium to employees who work on an observed holiday or pay employees when the business is closed in observance of a holiday, may do so.

Employers who choose to provide this benefit should implement a clear written policy and distribute it to their employees. This will avoid employee confusion about their compensation for hours worked, or not, on a holiday. The policy should at least identify the holidays the business observes, whether the business will close on the observed holidays, identify which employees are eligible for the holiday pay (e.g., non-probationary employees, full-time and/or part-time employees),

whether employees working on an observed holiday will receive extra compensation, and whether employees will receive compensation if they do not work on the holiday or because the business is closed in observance of the holiday.

Furthermore, before you know it, the new year will be upon us. Employers who intend on staying open on New Year’s Day 2026 need to ensure the correct minimum wage is paid. The current minimum wage is \$16.50; however, the minimum wage will increase to \$16.90 on Jan. 1, 2026. The minimum annual salary for exempt employees will also increase from \$68,640 to \$70,304 on Jan. 1, 2026.

The increase to the minimum wage in 2026 also means that employers will need to give advance written notice of the new rate of

Holidays see page 30

Goodwill Santa Cruz: The Central Coast's Coolest Spot for Retro Finds, Holiday Deals and Giving Back

By Goodwill Santa Cruz Staff

Retro fashion isn't just a trend — it's a movement. In an era of fast fashion and fleeting styles, vintage clothing offers something rare: quality, character and a story to wear like a badge of honor.

At Goodwill Santa Cruz, shoppers can embrace that timeless style while doing good for the planet and the local community.

From faded jeans and band tees to groovy jackets and one-of-a-kind accessories, this beloved Goodwill Store & Donation Center at 204 Union St., has become a favorite among UC Santa Cruz students, locals and tourists alike. Conveniently located near such hotspots as the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk and The Mystery Spot, it's the perfect place for anyone chasing that effortlessly cool, coastal California look.

Style that stands out

Retro and vintage clothing remain popular because they offer more than nostalgia — they offer sustainability and individuality. Shoppers today are turning away from mass-produced fast fashion and seeking pieces with meaning, longevity, and style that stands out. By shopping vintage, you're not just saving money — you're saving resources and giving new life to clothes that



still have miles of magic left in them.

Previously recognized as "Best Thrift Shop" in Santa Cruz Waves' annual Swellies Awards, Goodwill Santa Cruz has built a reputation for offering authentic vintage finds curated by a passionate, 16-member team. Each rack holds potential treasures, from '70s denim to '90s surf-wear, and every purchase supports Goodwill Central Coast's mission to provide job training and employment opportunities for local residents.

Pay your stuff forward

As we roll into the holiday shopping season, now is the perfect time to donate gently used clothing, home goods, and accessories. Those donations make everything we do possible. Every item, large or small,

new or old, helps fund Goodwill Central Coast's job training and employment programs, supporting everyday people in our local community.

So before you start even thinking about holiday shopping, drop off a bag (or two!) of items you no longer need. Then, head inside and discover something special — maybe the perfect vintage jacket, a mid-century lamp, or a holiday outfit that's full of personality.

At Goodwill Santa Cruz, every donation and purchase helps build a brighter, more sustainable future — one where good style meets goodwill. So clean out your closet, donate what you no longer wear, and help stock the store with new gems for holiday shoppers hunting for that always cool, sustainable style! 🌱



Obsessed With Hunting for Treasures

Let me tell you why I'm OBSESSED with hunting treasures at the Goodwill Central Coast bins—it's straight-up magic in a metal tub! Every time I dive in (gloves on, energy high), it's like a real-life treasure hunt: \$1-\$2 items that scream potential, and zero judgment if you strike out.

Take my latest score—that dusty, scalloped Tara dish handmade in Ireland? Found it buried in a bin of "meh" ceramics for pennies. A quick scrub, and boom: elegant floral vibes with butterflies and gold trim, now holding my Dial soap like it was born for it. Vintage charm meets everyday glam, all for under \$5 total. Or that 10-minute \$10 outfit challenge? Striped Ralph Lauren shirt, wild patterned scarf, Paige jeans—pulled from the chaos and styled into a slay-worthy look that rivals any boutique haul.

The bins aren't just cheap; they're a rush! You never know if you'll unearth a designer gem, quirky knick-knack, or the piece that flips your space. Plus, every dig supports job training and community good—win-win. If you're in Salinas or nearby, hit up 1325 N Main St. and join the bin brigade. Who's coming with? Drop your best bin find on our social media site!

#GoodwillBins #ThriftAddict #CentralCoastTreasures



UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Salinas Regional Housing Summit**

Wednesday, Nov. 5, 8:30 a.m. –4:30 p.m., 1 Main St., Salinas

The City of Salinas is proud to host the Regional Housing Summit 2025, a gathering designed to confront one of the most urgent challenges facing our community—the shortage of affordable housing. By convening thought leaders, developers, policymakers, employers, and community practitioners, this summit aims to spark innovative partnerships and advance actionable solutions that expand access to safe, affordable, and sustainable housing throughout the Salinas and the surrounding region. Conclude the day with a Social Networking Hour (3:30–4:30 p.m.), hosted by the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce—an opportunity to connect, collaborate, and continue conversations about building a more affordable and sustainable housing future. The event is brought to you by the City of Salinas. There is no fee to attend the event however pre-registration is required. Space is limited so register soon. To learn more, visit SalinasChamber.com.

- **Mershops Northridge Mall & Chamber Mixer**

Thursday, Nov. 13, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m., Storefront next to Pandora, inside Northridge Mall

Join the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce and Mershops Northridge Mall for an exciting evening of networking, connection, and celebration on Thursday, Nov. 13, from 5:00–7:00 p.m. at the storefront next to Pandora, inside Northridge Mall. This special mixer will feature the official brand reveal of Mershops Northridge Mall along with insight into Mershops' exciting future plans by introducing Mershops to the business community and Chamber members. Learn about new partnership and leasing opportunities at the mall and meet the mall management team. The event will also feature a silent auction benefiting The Children's Shopping Tour (CST). Learn more on how you can support this wonderful program. Enjoy light refreshments, great company, and an evening celebrating collaboration, community, and growth in Salinas.

- **The Salinas Community's Action Plan: A Results-Oriented Solution to Housing Production**

Thursday, Nov. 20, 8:00 – 11:30 a.m., 1 Main St., Salinas

The Salinas Community's Action Plan: A Results-Oriented Solution to Housing Production", will be held Thursday, Nov. 20, 2025, from 8:00 to 11:30 a.m. at 1 Main St., Salinas. Presented by SPARC and the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce, in collaboration with the City of Salinas, this free public forum is designed for potential developers, small-scale builders, and community leaders committed to producing real, near-term solutions. Keynote speaker Charles L. Marohn, Jr., co-founder of the national nonprofit Strong Towns, will headline the event. Strong Towns advocates for development approaches that build financial resilience and long-term prosperity

in cities and towns. Marohn, a professional engineer, and planner, is widely respected for his clear-eyed analysis of how communities can adapt to modern economic realities while promoting sustainable growth. Marohn will outline concrete steps local leaders can begin implementing immediately to reshape the region's housing trajectory. The event will also feature members of the Incremental Development Alliance, an organization that has trained nearly 9,000 public, private, and nonprofit professionals in the principles of small-scale, neighborhood-based real estate development. Their session will emphasize how building code literacy and access to flexible financing can unlock new pathways to homeownership and wealth creation—particularly in underserved and historically marginalized communities. The event includes a continental breakfast.

- **Member Orientation**

Thursday, Dec. 4, 12:00– 1:00 p.m., 119 E. Alisal St., Salinas

Join us for an informational orientation with the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce's Membership Director, Gabriel Lopez. We welcome new and prospective members to learn more about member benefits and how the Chamber can help you meet and surpass your marketing goals! Lunch will be provided. If you have any questions, please contact Gabriel Lopez at Gabe@salinaschamber.com or call (831) 751-7725. Join us in-person at the Chamber Office or via Zoom.

- **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. There are plenty of ways to get involved and support the event! You can volunteer at various stations, such as:

- Shopping chaperone
- Set-up & check-in
- Table station
- Take-down

Experience the happiness and excitement of children as they select their clothing, create lasting memories, and make a meaningful impact! To ensure the children's safety, anyone aged 18 or older must undergo our background check process and be fingerprinted before participating in the event. Sign up at www.salinaschamber.com or contact: athena@tmdcreative.com or (831) 261-1983. Not able to volunteer? You can still help by making a tax-deductible donation to the Children's Shopping Tour.

RSVP at salinaschamber.com



NON-PROFIT EVENTS

Annual Bocce Ball Night Notre Dame High School

Nov. 1, 5:30 – 8:00 p.m., 455 Palma Drive, Salinas, Notre Dame Gym

Notre Dame High School in Salinas, is hosting its annual Bocce Night on Saturday, Nov. 1, starting with check-in at 5:30 p.m. at the Notre Dame Gym located at 455 Palma Drive. The event will include live music, a dessert auction, raffles, and the bocce ball tournament.

Artisan Crafts Fair – Active Seniors Inc.

Nov. 8, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., 100 Harvest St., Salinas

Enjoy diverse handmade crafts, lovingly created by experienced artisans for your holiday enjoyment and gift giving. Enjoy the season in community. Buy mindfully and locally, while supporting Active Seniors Inc. artists. Over 30 vendors attending.

12th Annual Nonprofit Awards Ceremony – Nonprofit Alliance of Monterey County

Nov. 6, 3:00 – 6:00 p.m., 10520 York Road, Monterey – Fairview Laguna Seca

The Nonprofit Alliance of Monterey County is looking forward to gathering on Nov. 6 to collectively recognize and honor all of this year's impactful nominees and award winners at the 12th Annual Nonprofit Awards Celebration, which features a new venue and new format. New afternoon format features time for networking, a selection of appetizers, a signature "Mocktail" and no-host bar. Tickets at: <https://www.nonprofitalliancemontereycounty.org/>.

2025 Annual Girls Inc. of the Central Coast Gratitude Gala

Nov. 7, 6:00 p.m., 1700 17 Mile Drive, Pebble Beach – Fairway One

Girls Inc. inspires all girls to be strong, smart, and bold. They put their mission into practice through the Girls Inc. experience that equips girls to navigate gender, economic and social barriers and grow into healthy, educated and independent adults. The program will include a tasty reception, a fun drawing, silent auction, a keynote message, three awardees, and music. Tickets at <https://girlsinc.org/events/gratitude-gala>.

Fall Gala & Silent – The Blind and Visually Impaired Center of Monterey County

Nov. 22, time TBD, 225 Laurel Ave., Pacific Grove – Monterey Marriot Inn

The Blind and Visually Impaired Center of Monterey County's Fall Gala and Silent Auction is set for Saturday, Nov. 22 at the Monterey Marriott Ferrante's Bay View Room. Tickets include a three-course dinner, wine and live entertainment. For more information, www.blindandlowvision.org/. (831) 639-3505.

Annual Friendsgiving Meal – Interim Inc.

Nov. 21, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m., 339 Pajaro St., Salinas

Interim, Inc. will be hosting its annual Friendsgiving Meal on Friday, Nov. 21. Join Interim as they gather in community to share food, gratitude, and camaraderie. Interim is grateful to celebrate together and proud to keep this tradition alive, come join in with your friends and family!

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

Holidays - from page 27

pay to all employees who will be affected by the minimum wage increase. The Department of Industrial Relations ("DIR") publishes a pay notice in English and Spanish that can be used by employers. The notice can be downloaded at <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/dlse-publications.htm>.

Employers also need to post the new 2026 minimum wage rate in a work area that is frequented by employees, like a breakroom. The DIR publishes required workplace postings which can be downloaded at <https://www.dir.ca.gov/wp-nodb.html>.

The new year will not just

increase the minimum wage, but new laws will go into effect. Employment related bills were introduced during the 2025 legislative session. Gov. Gavin Newsom had until Oct. 12 to either sign or veto the bills. Employers should get ready for the new year and new laws by revising their employee policies and handbooks accordingly, and conducting trainings on any new applicable laws, which likely take effect Jan. 1, 2026.

Now is also a good time for employers to review other compliance obligations like sexual harassment prevention training and workplace violence prevention training.

Employers with five or more employees are required to provide

sexual harassment prevention training every two years to their employees. Supervisory employees must complete two hours of training every two years (new supervisors must be trained within six months of becoming a supervisor) and non-supervisory employees must complete one hour of training every two years.

Employers are also required to establish, implement, and maintain a Workplace Violence Prevention Plan ("WVPP"). Employers are required to provide employees with training on the WVPP annually, maintain a violent incident log, and keep records of workplace violence hazard identification, evaluation, correction,

and training. Employers must also provide training when a new or previously unrecognized workplace violence hazard has been identified and when changes are made to the WVPP.

Employers with questions about the new employment laws that will go into effect on Jan. 1, 2026, or regarding sexual harassment prevention training, workplace violence training, or other requirements are encouraged to contact their employment counsel. 🌱

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



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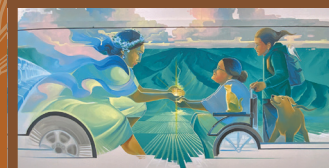
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Cristina Martinez, MD
Emergency Medicine Department Chair

WHEN TO OBTAIN EMERGENCY CARE



Emergency care is treatment for a condition that requires prompt attention and imposes an immediate, serious health threat, such as*:

- Chest pain
- Any loss of consciousness
- Deep cuts, bleeding that will not stop
- Signs of stroke including facial drooping, arm weakness, slurred speech or difficulty forming words.
- Difficulty breathing, severe allergic reactions, choking
- Bone fractures with open wounds
- High fever that doesn't improve with medication
- As directed by your doctor

If you are having difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, an injury that threatens your life or limb, or signs of stroke or heart attack, call 911. Do not drive yourself to the Emergency Department.

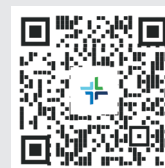
[SalinasValleyHealth.com](https://www.SalinasValleyHealth.com)

WHEN TO SEEK URGENT CARE



Urgent care is treatment for a condition that requires prompt attention but does not pose an immediate, serious health threat, such as*:

- Colds, coughs, sore throat, sinus infection, upper respiratory infection, flu, fever
- Minor injuries such as sprain, minor cuts including need for stitches, minor burns
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Minor bone fractures
- Allergies, rashes, ear and eye infections
- Childhood illnesses
- COVID testing and treatment
- As directed by your doctor



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 **Salinas Valley**
HEALTH