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Salinas Valley CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
BUSINESS JOURNAL



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LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP

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Chamber Endorses Candidates for Salinas Mayor and City Council

By Kevin Dayton, Government Affairs Liaison

Volunteer members of the Candidate Review Committee of your Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce interviewed and reviewed submitted questionnaires of twelve candidates on Sept. 12 and 13, 2024. Committee members had the responsibility of considering and recommending official Chamber endorsements for these local public offices with competitive races:

1. Mayor of Salinas
2. Salinas City Council District 1
3. Salinas City Council District 3 (two-year term)
4. Salinas City Council District 4
5. Salinas City Council District 6
6. Hartnell Community College District Board of Trustees, Area 1

The Committee asked specific questions about local public policy issues identified as most relevant to Salinas Valley businesses and the economy. Their subsequent endorsement recommendations were presented to your Chamber's Board of Directors at their Sept. 16 meeting for review and approval. The incoming Board Chair then called the candidates who were

Candidates see page 16

A Good Time to Borrow?

Fourteen School Bond Measures on the November 2024 Ballot in Monterey County

By Kevin Dayton, Government Affairs Liaison

Monterey County voters will get their ballots in the mail for the Nov. 5, 2024 election around Oct. 8, 2024. Your Chamber of Commerce advises voters to be responsible, informed citizens when they exercise their right to vote.

At the very least, voters should take a few minutes to read the impartial analysis and the submitted arguments in the Monterey County Voter Guide for ballot measures. Use news sources to get additional background. Commentaries, editorial endorsements (such as the endorsements in this Business Journal), and letters to the editor may offer thoughtful insights. Even the sales pitches of campaign websites and campaign advertising can provide perspectives worthy of consideration.

Reading their ballots, many county voters will see a choice to vote YES or NO for their local school district to get millions of dollars for construction. Elected boards of trustees of 12 Monterey County school districts have placed at least one "bond measure" on the Nov. 5, 2024 ballot, for a total of 14 bond measures. Here's the list of bond measures, in alphabetical order by school district:

1. Aromas-San Juan Unified School District (Measure D)
2. Chualar Union School District (Measure J)
3. King City Union School District (Measures K and L)
4. Mission Union School District (Measure N)
5. Monterey Peninsula Unified School District (Measure A)
6. Pacific Grove Unified School District (Measure B)
7. Pajaro Valley Unified School District (Measure M)
8. Salinas Union High School District (Measure G)
9. Soledad Unified School District (Measure E)
10. South Monterey County Joint Union High School District (Measures H and I)
11. Spreckels Union School District (Measure O)
12. Washington Union School District (Measure P)

On Sept. 11, 2024, your Chamber's Government Relations Committee discussed taking a position on the bond measure for the Salinas Union High School District. During the discussion, committee members observed that

Borrow see page 5



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Chamber CEO Search and Building Bridges of Understanding

By Jennifer L. Williams, SVCC Board Chair



I am pleased to share with you that the search for the next CEO of the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce is well underway. The position has been posted, recruitment efforts have begun in earnest, and we anticipate that interviews will commence shortly.

In this endeavor, we have been guided with expert wisdom by Michaelle Stanford, PHRca, M.A., Senior Consultant and HR Strategy Specialist at TPO. Her counsel has ensured that we have followed an inclusive and thoughtful process — one that, we believe, will help us discover the right individual to lead the Chamber in the weeks ahead.

From the many conversations, focus groups, and the all-member survey, we have gleaned invaluable insights. These tell us that our next CEO must:

- Place a high priority on building strong relationships;
- Understand or be willing to learn the unique culture of Salinas Valley and Monterey County, while discerning the specific needs of individual businesses;
- Provide visible and steadfast support to the community; and
- Focus not only on local markets but on regional and national opportunities as well.

In addition to this, your broader feedback about the Chamber has been most helpful. It suggests that the Chamber should:

- Continue its vital role as a trusted advocate for businesses, providing value to its members;
- Distinguish between the varied interests of its members when addressing both business and community needs;
- Keep sharing valuable insights through The Business Journal;
- Offer more communication about the Chamber's vision and plans; and
- Maintain strong leadership and governance to ensure its future success.

We have taken these insights to heart, using them to refine both the job description and the interview questions, ensuring that we find the very best candidate to lead us forward. Your contributions have been indispensable to this process, and for that, we thank you.

In the following pages, you will discover the choices made by the Salinas Valley Chamber in lending its support to candidates for various local offices. These endorsements were not made lightly, but rather upon the considered recommendation of a six-member Candidate Review Committee. Each candidate was afforded the same set of inquiries, giving them an opportunity to share their views on matters dear to local businesses. The Committee, with thoughtful care, compared these responses with the established policies of the Chamber, discerning where common ground might be found and where it could not.

You'll also see critical analysis provided by our Government Affairs Liaison Kevin Dayton regarding the 14 school construction bond measures on the ballot in Monterey County, explaining the mechanics of bonds and bond measures, and putting those bond measures in broader financial context. Voters need to be better informed about bond measures before they vote on them.

Kevin will also be writing about the formal letter from the Chamber to the City Council opposing rent stabilization by the city.

At the same time, the Chamber's Board of Directors took the first steps in a new endeavor: to connect each Board member with a key local official. We recognize that as time passes, there will be moments when our perspectives align and others when they do not. Yet, in all this, our aim remains clear — to build bridges of understanding. We strive to ensure that when disagreements arise, they are disagreements of principle, not of personal feeling, and that they lead not to division, but to a deeper understanding of the issues at hand.

I hope you will be able to join us on Nov. 7 for the Legacy of Leadership Gala — a celebration of our local business leaders that offers us the chance to honor those who have shaped our community while we strengthen our own friendships. I look forward to seeing you there!

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School Districts in Monterey County With Bond Measures on November 2024 Ballot

School District	Ballot Designation	Estimated Average Annual Cost for Property Owners Per $100,000 of Assessed Property Value	Amount District Is Asking Voters to Authorize to Borrow	To Be Owed Estimated Total Debt Service (Principal + Interest) for Borrowing Full Amount in New Bond Measure	Owed as of June 30, 2023 Total Debt Service (Principal + Interest) for Current Interest Bonds Already Sold from Past Bond Measures	Average Daily Attendance (ADA) for 2022-2023 School Year
Aromas-San Juan Unified School District	D	$54.72	$44 million	$77.9 million	$51 million	893
Chualar Union School District	J	$29.79	$5.6 million	$11 million	$3.9 million	253
King City Union School District	K	$28.85	$19.8 million	$38 milion	$16.7 million	2,365
	L	$28.27	$21.6 million	$44 million		
Mission Union School District	N	$30.00	$1.5 million	$3.4 million	$0	121
Monterey Peninsula Unified School District	A	$50.00	$340 million	$694 million	$395 million	8,627
Pacific Grove Unified School District	B	$31.43	$78 million	$142 million	$50 million	1,537
Pajaro Valley Unified School District	M	$51.68	$315 million	$557 million	$252 million	14,171
Salinas Union High School District	G	$19.00	$115 million	$242 million	$325 million	15,034
Soledad Unified School District	E	$59.55	$42 million	$79 million	$98 million	4,382
South Monterey County Joint Union High School District	H	$30.00	$35 million	$76 million	$63 million	2,514
	I	$30.00	$35 million	$76 million		
Spreckels Union School District	0	$26.36	$27 million	$53 million	$8.6 million	866
Washington Union School District	P	$17.81	$18.2 million	$37 million	$13.2 million	692

Borrow - from page 1

most Californians don't know much about bond measures. They decided that the October issue of the Business Journal should include a easy-to-understand but thorough explanation of bond measures.

Bond Measures Authorize Local Governments to Borrow Money

Bond measures are NOT like government grants, in which federal, state, or regional governments transfer money to other governments without a condition to pay it back. When a local government goes through the process of issuing (selling) bonds, it's borrowing money from investors with an obligation to pay that money back, with interest, over a specific period of time. By selling bonds to investors, a government can pay for a construction project or program when it doesn't have money immediately on hand to pay for it.

When a school district places a measure on a ballot asking voters to authorize a local government to issue $115 million in bonds, this does not mean the total cost to taxpayers will be $115 million. That $115 million is the "principal," or the amount the government will obtain to spend (before transaction fees are taken into account). But the cost over time for the local government may end up being about $242 million because of interest payments paid to the bond investors for 40 years or more.

Who Buys Bonds, and Why?

Bond investors (typically institutional banks, insurance companies, and wealthy individuals) do not buy government (municipal) bonds because they love schoolchildren or care about road conditions. They buy them because they are a relatively low-risk way to make money.

Returns on government bonds are often exempt from taxes. They are generally a reliable investment because they are backed by the government's commitment to pay back the obligation of principal and interest through tax revenue (and asset sales if necessary). Governments are not dependent on consumer demand for a product or service in order to obtain revenue.

There are "credit agencies" (Fitch Ratings, Moody's Investors Service, and Standard & Poor's) that rate the risk that a government will fail to make complete, on-time payments of principal and interest back to the investors who bought the bonds. (One small but real risk for bond investors is that a government issuing bonds subsequently enters into Chapter 9 municipal bankruptcy.)

Ratings are quantified based on letter grades. Lower grades mean higher risk and therefore higher interest rates with repayment of the bonds. Governments with a documented history of fiscal irresponsibility, mismanagement, incompetence, and disorganized and dysfunctional

governance have to pay back bonds at higher interest rates. This sometimes makes their financial struggles even worse.

Does Anyone Else Make Money When Local Governments Sell Bonds?

When bonds are sold, numerous parties involved in the transaction take a small cut of the proceeds. "Cost of Issuance" includes an underwriter's discount subtracted from bond proceeds. (The underwriter is the securities broker or intermediary that buys the bonds from the government and sells them to investors.) Other costs of issuance include bond counsel fees, disclosure counsel fees, paying agent fees, escrow agent fees, rating agency fees, bond insurance fees, verification agent fees, financial advisor fees, printing fees, and other miscellaneous expenses.

A study of 812 bond issues from California local governments from 2012 through 2015 showed cost of issuance ranging from 0.741% to 3.096% of the amount borrowed. Small, rural school districts that borrow relatively low amounts of money via bond sales tend to incur the highest percentage of bond proceeds diverted to transaction fees. (The study is titled "Doubly Bound: The Costs of Issuing Municipal Bonds.")

Major Kinds of Bonds Sold By Governments

General obligation bonds are the kind that voters authorize through the ballot. Most of these bonds are "Current Interest Bonds" that governments pay back to investors (with regular interest payments) from property taxes.

Revenue bonds are paid for by money collected through operations of the project or program. Because revenue bonds depend on the success of the project or program to collect money, they tend to be higher risk than general obligation bonds and therefore have higher interest rates.

There is also a controversial variation of general obligation bonds called "Capital Appreciation Bonds." These bonds are sold to investors at a deep discount from the value of the bond. Over time, compound interest accumulates until the amount of interest, with the principal, equals the value of the bond. The principal and interest is then paid to the bond investor all at once. Many Monterey County school districts have issued Capital Appreciation Bonds.

If You Own Property, How Do You Help Your Local Governments Pay Back Bond Principal and Interest?

Property owners (or their mortgage lenders) are billed for property taxes two times per year. The Monterey County Assessor's Office determines the value of taxable property and adjusts the value based on applications of various state laws. (Assessed value is generally not the market value of the property.) Then, the Monterey County Auditor-Controller calculates the taxes on that property based on that assessed value and applications of various state laws. Then, the Treasurer-Tax Collector sends the bill to the owner (or the owner's agent) and collects the money.

When you receive your property tax bill from the Monterey County Treasurer-Tax Collector, you can find out how much you're paying for the principal and interest on bond measures. Find the line-item list of each series of bonds issued by each local government. It will include the tax rate for each series and the tax amount you owe to help pay off that series.

Do Renters Pay Property Taxes?

While renters are not billed directly for property taxes (because they aren't the owners of the property they rent), it is likely that the property owner will incorporate property taxes into the rent calculation. Property taxes are an expense for the property owner.

What Are Some Laws That Limit the Size of Bond Measures?

In 2000, California voters approved Proposition 39, which reduced the threshold for voter approval of certain bond measures for school districts and community college districts from two-thirds to 55%. When the legislature put Proposition 39 on the ballot, it also passed legislation that did the following:

1. Prohibit the total amount of bonds issued (the total amount of principal) from exceeding a percentage of the most recent assessed aggregate value of taxable property in the district. (Elementary and high school districts have a 1.25% limit; unified school districts a 2.5% limit.)

2. Prohibit the total amount of bonds issued as authorized by one bond measure from requiring a property tax that exceeds $30 or $60 per year per $100,000 of taxable property. (Elementary and high school districts have a $30 limit; unified school districts, a $60 limit.)

However, a school district can ask the State Board of Education to waive these limits. Usually the board approves the waiver. In addition, bills have been introduced in the legislature to increase those limits and allow educational districts to borrow more money.

How Long Does It Take for Local Governments to Pay Off Bond Measures?

Bonds are sold to investors with various lengths of terms (maturities). Short-term bonds are sold for items that don't last long (such as portable technology for classrooms). Long-term bonds are sold for major buildings improvements and for new buildings.

Under California law, bonds for educational districts can be sold for terms up to 40 years, under certain conditions. Thirty years is a common length of a bond repayment term.

However, bonds have often been "refunded" (refinanced) at lower interest rates, not only to save money for taxpayers, but also to increase the amount of additional money that an educational district can borrow through the authority of a new or existing bond measure. So over time, the original bond issues are commingled into new issues, and repayment obligations that can be traced to individual bond issues are lost.

It can take decades for educational districts to issue all of the bonds authorized by voters in a specific bond measure. By the time a local government issues all of the bonds and expends its authority to borrow, many of the people who voted for the bond measure may have moved out of the jurisdiction or died.

Do Educational Districts Use Other Methods Besides Bonds to Borrow Money for Construction Projects?

Monterey County school districts have also borrowed money for construction by using a financial instrument called a "Certificate of Participation." They have sold lease revenue bonds. They have taken out loans from the California Energy Commission (CEC) and entered into Financed Purchase Agreements for installation of solar panels.

Primary Sources for Data on Local Government Borrowing and Debt

The extent of borrowing and the type of borrowing can be found in scattered locations within the annual financial statements for school districts for each fiscal year, which ends on June 30. It takes several months — sometimes even longer — for those reports to be produced and provided to the school board after the fiscal year ends. Data can often be extracted from the section that reports long-term liabilities besides pensions or other post-employment benefits.

Another source of information about municipal borrowing is the Official Statements posted at the Electronic Municipal Market Access (EMMA) website of the federal Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board (MSRB) of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. Also, the website of the California Debt and Investment Advisory Commission (CDIAC) contains information about borrowing and debt of municipal governments.

A Fall Festival for Monterey County

By Pastor T.K. Anderson, Compass Church

At Compass Church, we believe in the power of community and the importance of family. As part of our commitment to making Monterey County a vibrant, loving place to live, we are excited to invite everyone to our Fall Festival on Sunday, Oct. 27, 2024, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. This event is open to all, with plenty of activities that are safe, fun, and free for the whole family. You'll find bounce houses, face painting, games, and delicious food. Our goal is to provide a place where families can come together, connect, and experience joy in a welcoming environment.



Why We Love Families at Compass Church:

1. Families are foundational to the community.

We believe that strong families lead to strong communities, and at Compass, we are committed to building up families in Monterey County. Just as a home is built on a solid foundation, families are the building blocks of our society. "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain" (Psalm 127:1). That's why we focus on creating opportunities for families to grow closer together and closer to God.

2. Families nurture love and faith.

Compass Church values the role that families play in teaching love and faith to the next generation. We support parents, caregivers, and children in their journey of faith, offering a variety of programs designed to nurture spiritual growth. As the Bible says, "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). We are honored to walk alongside families as they seek to raise their children in love and faith.

3. Families reflect God's love.

At Compass, we see family as a beautiful reflection of God's love for us. Just as parents care for their children, God cares for us, providing guidance, protection, and unconditional love. "As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him" (Psalm 103:13). This image of God's compassion is at the heart of what we do as a church.

As a church, we are also deeply grateful for the businesses, large and small, that make Monterey County the wonderful place that it is. Your dedication, hard work, and community spirit are what make this area truly special. We are proud to partner with you in making Monterey County the best place to live, work, and raise a family. Thank you for all you do, and we look forward to seeing you at the Fall Festival!



Embracing the Idea of Sustainable Fashion: The Goodwill Way

By Goodwill Central Coast Staff

In a world where we take time to weigh our individual environmental impacts, sustainable fashion has emerged as a vital movement toward creating a healthier planet.

One of the simplest, yet most effective, ways to participate in this movement is by supporting organizations such as Goodwill. By donating items to Goodwill Central Coast and shopping at one of our 16 stores, you not only help extend the life cycle of clothing and other items but also contribute to community development and reduce waste.



The importance of the movement

Sustainable fashion focuses on creating a system that can be supported indefinitely in terms of environmental and social responsibility. This means reducing waste, minimizing environmental impact, and promoting ethical labor practices.

Traditional fast fashion, with its rapid production cycles and disposable mentality, contributes heavily to pollution, waste and unfair labor practices. Fast fashion contributes to climate change, waste, and microplastic pollution. Studies show that the industry is responsible for 20–35 percent of microplastics in the ocean, and its carbon emissions are greater than those produced by international flights and shipping combined.

Fast fashion also produces millions of tons of clothing each year that end up in landfills, where they release harmful chemicals as they decompose. Many synthetic fabrics used in fast fashion can take hundreds of years to break down.

Fast fashion can also have negative social impacts, most notably in the form of worker exploitation. The industry's factories often have poor working conditions, low wages and unsafe conditions. Workers may also be exposed to toxic chemicals used in the production process, which can cause diseases and are sometimes known carcinogens and hormone disruptors.

Why donate to Goodwill?

- **Extend the life cycle of clothes:** When you donate your gently used clothes and accessories to Goodwill, you give them a second life. Instead of ending up in a landfill, these items can be loved by someone new, significantly reducing waste and the demand for new clothing production.
- **Support job training and community programs:** Goodwill uses the proceeds from sales to fund job training, employment placement services, and other community-based programs. By donating, you're directly supporting these valuable services that help individuals improve their lives and gain meaningful employment.
- **Declutter your home**: Donating items you no longer need or use is a great way to declutter your space. It's a win-win situation: you make room in your home while providing affordable clothing options for others.

Why shop at Goodwill?

- **Affordable fashion:** Our stores offer a wide range of clothing and accessories at very affordable prices. This allows you to build a stylish and unique wardrobe without breaking the bank, all while supporting a good cause.
- **Unique and vintage finds:** Shopping at Goodwill is like going on a treasure hunt. You can find unique, vintage and high-quality items that aren't available in regular retail stores. This adds a personal touch to your style and helps reduce the homogenization of fashion.
- **Environmental impact:** By purchasing second-hand items, you help decrease the demand for new products, which in turn reduces the environmental impact associated with manufacturing and transportation. This simple act can significantly contribute to a more sustainable planet.
- **Help generate jobs:** Every single donation and purchase moves the community job needle in meaningful ways. Your generosity drives the GCC economic engine that helps individuals with disabilities and other barriers find meaningful employment and education opportunities.

How to get involved

- **Donate wisely:** Before donating, ensure your items are in good condition. Clean clothes, shoes, and accessories that are gently used are always welcomed. Donating items that are still useful ensures they can be effectively resold and reused.
- **Spread the word:** Encourage friends and family to donate and shop at Goodwill. Share your positive experiences and unique finds on social media to raise awareness about the benefits of sustainable fashion.
- **Shop regularly:** Make visiting Goodwill a regular part of your shopping routine. Frequent visits increase your chances of finding great items and help you develop a more sustainable shopping habit.

Supporting Goodwill through donations and shopping is a simple yet powerful way to embrace sustainable fashion. Not only does it help reduce waste and environmental impact, but it also supports community programs and provides affordable fashion options. By making mindful choices, we can collectively make a positive difference in the world.



Getty Images

Mutual Funds vs. Exchange-Traded Funds

By Ryan Hastie, Hastie Financial Group

For a large majority of individual (retail) investors, buying shares of mutual funds or exchange-traded funds (ETFs) is more economical and beneficial. Mutual funds and ETFs allow investors to pool their money with other investors to buy stocks, bonds and other investment assets.

As retail investors typically do not have the amount of cash or assets that institutional investors (i.e., hedge funds) have, mutual funds and ETFs allow investor money to go further in that they have the ability to own to hundreds, if not thousands, of securities rather than buying individual securities themselves. Purchasing individual stocks or bonds can not only require many hours of research and investment knowledge, but it can also be quite expensive.

Both types of funds are "baskets" of individual securities that can offer investors exposure to a wide variety of asset classes. Because there are many securities within a fund, they generally provide better diversification than a single stock or bond. This can minimize overall risk within a portfolio and significantly decrease certain types of risk, specifically concentration risk. Although mutual funds and ETFs are similar in many ways, there are several differences between the two.

One of the main differences between the fund types is how they are traded. Mutual funds are purchased directly from the fund company rather than on an exchange (e.g., New York Stock Exchange). Orders are executed once per day at the end of the trading day, with investors who invest on the same day receiving the same price. ETFs, however, trade on an exchange just like a stock and experience intraday price fluctuations. As such, investors will pay a different price for the fund depending on when the purchase order is executed.

The two funds are purchased differently. ETFs, like stocks, are purchased as shares with no minimum investment. However, ETFs must be purchased as whole shares — no partial shares allowed. Some mutual fund may require a minimum investment and can be purchased in fractional shares or fixed dollar amounts.

Regarding costs, the two fund types differ as well. ETF costs are more explicit, in that they have trade costs/commissions to enact the trade in the market. An ETF can also trade at a discount (below) or premium (above) its new asset value (NAV), which is the value of the investments within the fund minus its liabilities, divided by the number of shares outstanding in the market. Since mutual funds do not trade on an exchange, there are no associated commissions. Instead, mutual funds carry an expense ratio, a percentage of fund assets that are taken out annually to cover fund-operating expenses.

Mutual funds and ETFs can be passively or actively managed. Passively managed funds are designed to track the performance of an index, such as the S&P 500. The fund will seek to own all of the same stocks within the particular index. Passive funds, by definition, cannot "beat the market," because their objective is to track the underlying index. Conversely, actively managed funds attempt to beat the underlying index or benchmark. Fund managers will buy and sell securities more frequently to take advantage of price inefficiencies to ultimately outperform the index.

Ryan Hastie, CPFA® is an Investment Advisor at locally owned Hastie Financial Group and can be contacted at ryan.hastie@hastiefg.com.

MEMBER NEWS

Hospice Giving Foundation Announces its Fourth Annual Día de los Muertos Celebration

On Saturday, Nov. 2, 2024, Hospice Giving Foundation, in collaboration with Hartnell College and Hijos Del Sol Arts Productions, will celebrate the fourth annual Día de los Muertos event from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. This is a free community gathering to honor and remember our loved ones who are no longer with us. This year, the event features multiple agencies providing information, entertainment, and resources. The afternoon will culminate with a procession, a program filled with music, dance, and song. In addition, the Student Center and Steinbeck Hall will be filled with altars dedicated to the loved ones of our community partners. "Día de los Muertos is a tradition that brings our community together to honor and celebrate our ancestors and those we love who have died," said Erin White, President and CEO of Hospice Giving Foundation. Día de los Muertos, a tradition deeply rooted in Mexican culture, pays tribute to our departed loved ones. The event includes ofrendas of sugar skulls, candles, marigolds, and more. Families unite in honor of their ancestors to bridge the worlds of the living and the deceased. Though talking about death can be difficult, Dia de los Muertos provides a different way to think about death. It's a beautiful and tradition-filled way for families to celebrate life with music, art, and altars; to show our deep love for those no longer in our physical world, and to share love with our community.

Alvarado Street Brewery's Upcoming Oktoberfest Celebration Includes Renewed Focus on German Beer Styles



Alvarado Street Brewery has always dabbled in lager beer, brewing Pilsner since its inception 10 years ago (and has been a year-round release since 2020) and revitalizing the once defunct, heritage Monterey Beer brand in 2018. But the idea of certain lager styles was only based in theory for owner and Brewmaster, J.C. Hill. "As an overly enthusiastic craft brewer in the U.S. – I had this romantic obsession with traditional European beer styles, but I had never actually been to the source and tried them in earnest." That changed when Hill and his family moved to Munich this past February, where he became a student at the Doemens Academy, a prestigious brewing school in Germany. Based in Bavarian, he was not only able to immerse himself in the world of German beer styles, but also received quite a bit of education on the subject, earning a Master Brewer certificate through Doemens and their joint venture with Chicago-based Siebel Institute, known as the World Brewing Academy. "I was lucky to cross a lot off the list — Helles in Munich, Kolsch in Cologne, Pils in Prague, Trappist Ale in Belgium. I was fortunate to try a lot of classic styles in their freshest form and talk to the brewers that made them." Now, Hill is taking his lessons and applying them to Alvarado Street. But in baby steps — starting at the company's smallest brewing operation in Carmel-by-the-Sea, Alvarado Street Brewery & Bistro. Here, the brewing philosophy will focus solely on traditional European-style lagers and ales, whereas before it was known for more R&D efforts for the company. Now, Hill says, the original Alvarado Street pub in Monterey will focus on progressive, experimental styles that Alvarado is better known for, aka beers centered around hops. The Salinas Production Brewery on Dayton Street will continue to churn out staples like Mai Tai, Monterey Beer, Cold Pressed, Pils & Howzit Punch. Which, in Hill's words, is perfect. "This switch in brewing focus between Carmel and Monterey will allow us to pursue all the German, Belgian and Czech beer styles we could ever make — and these are beers that we see coming back into favor from our customers, and as brewers we totally crave them!"

Santa Cruz County Bank Volunteers Support United Way Across Three Counties







Santa Cruz County Bank employees volunteered for United Way of Santa Cruz County, Monterey County and the Bay Area in support of this year's Stuff the Bus drive, just in time for kids heading back to school. This vital annual campaign helps local students facing homelessness and/or hardship by collecting school supplies and donations to ensure they start their academic year with the supplies needed to succeed in school. The Bank's volunteers included Katie Austin, Jade Lacuata, Mark Schmidt, Kim Luke, Ventura Leon, Matt Ribeiro, Jenny Grove, Jessica Lopez, Shamara van der Voort, Jasmyn Morales, Ricardo Murillo, Jessica Lepe and Natalie Taaffe. Team SCCB helped stuff backpacks with essential school supplies, filling more than 3,000 backpacks in Santa Cruz, over 6,200 in Monterey and over 3,200 in Silicon Valley. Bank clients, employees and the SCCB Board of Directors also contributed to the drive by collecting much-needed supplies and cash donations. The bank, celebrating its 20th anniversary, has participated in the annual campaign with United Way Santa Cruz County every year since the first Stuff the Bus in 2009. Krista Snelling, President and CEO of Santa Cruz County Bank, said, "Santa Cruz County Bank and the United Way of Santa Cruz County have been community partners since we opened our doors in 2004, and we are happy to support the incredible work they do for youth in our community. As we celebrate our 20th anniversary, we're thrilled to grow our relationships in the communities we serve by partnering with and supporting United Way in Monterey County and in Silicon Valley in addition to Santa Cruz County. Our employees welcome the opportunity to contribute to our communities!"

Judge John Phillips to Receive 2024 Monterey County Bar Association's Nat Agliano Lifetime Achievement Award



Judge John Phillips has been selected as the 2024 Nat Agliano Lifetime Achievement Award recipient. The award was given at the Monterey County Bar Association's Fall Bench Bar that took place on Sept. 12 at 201 Main Event Center, at 201 Main St., Salinas. The Nat Agliano Lifetime Achievement Award is given to a recipient who has shown exemplary service and dedication in the pursuit of justice over the recipient's career, their provisions of legal services go above and beyond what is considered ordinary, and they have an exceptional reputation among peers, the judiciary, and the public. Over his long career, Judge Phillips has served in the District Attorney's office as a prosecutor (1971 to 1984), served as a Monterey County Superior Court judge (1984 to 2004), served as a Monterey County Supervisor for District 2 (2014 and 2022) and founded Rancho Cielo in 2000 and has served on board since. Rancho Cielo is a non-profit organization that creates and provides educational and vocational opportunities for at-risk youths in Monterey County. Since leaving his post as a Supervisor, Philips spends almost every single day at the Ranch, working on building it — and this includes using carpenter's tools — to constantly improve the facilities and infrastructure for the benefit of the kids involved in the Ranch's many programs. Over the decades, Phillips's numerous and impactful efforts in the law and the local community have made him a truly unique citizen of Monterey County.

First Tee Monterey County Gives Away 2024 Lexus!



First Tee – Monterey County proudly marked its 20th anniversary at the 13th Annual Boots, Bottles & BBQ event held Sept. 7, at the Twin Creeks Golf Course in Salinas. Over 350 sponsors, donors, and friends gathered to celebrate, with the highlight of the evening being a benefit drawing for a 2024 Lexus RX500 Turbo Hybrid. The vehicle, generously donated by Lexus Monterey Peninsula and long-time supporter Jeffrey Cappo, was displayed throughout the Peninsula and South County leading up to the event. Participants in the drawing included local organizations such as CLA (Clifton Larson Allen LLP), whose team volunteered as part of their "Day of Giving" at Twin Creeks. Michael Briley, a CLA volunteer, spotted the car while at the course and decided to purchase two raffle tickets. Briley shared the moment he received the unexpected news: "My wife and I were out celebrating our anniversary when I missed a call from an unknown number. Later, we started receiving text messages from co-workers, family, and friends who had seen the raffle on Instagram Live — telling us we'd won the car! It was the perfect surprise for our anniversary."

Salinas Becomes First Certified Blue Zones Community in Monterey County

BLUE ZONES PROJECT

Sharecare and Blue Zones, LLC, today announced that Salinas has achieved Blue Zones Community® certification, making it the first to earn the designation in Monterey County. The certification recognizes Salinas' measurable success in well-being transformation through the effective implementation of Blue Zones Project®, a pioneering population health initiative that integrates evidence-based best practices in environment, policy, and social connection within participating communities. Brought to Salinas in 2018 by Salinas Valley Health, Taylor Farms, and Montage Health, the initiative has engaged local leaders, volunteers, and organizations to help residents move naturally, eat better, develop healthy connections, and live with purpose. Given the early success in Salinas, the Project's footprint expanded across Monterey County in 2021, and remaining communities in Monterey County will be eligible for Blue Zones Community certification next year. "At Salinas Valley Health, our mission is to improve the health and well-being of everyone in our community," said Allen Radner, MD, President/CEO of Salinas Valley Health. "We introduced the Blue Zones Project to Salinas in 2018 with the aim of reducing chronic disease rates and promoting better health. Over the past six years, the initiative has expanded, resulting in a measurable reduction in chronic health risks and increased civic pride. Salinas' designation as a certified Blue Zones Community marks an important milestone in this effort." Salinas earned the designation by meeting and exceeding Project benchmarks in categories including resident and employer engagement rates, well-being scores, and community policies. As a result of the community-wide effort led by the local Blue Zones Project team, Salinas' overall community well-being score improved by 5.9 points since 2019, during a time when the rest of the country experienced a dramatic downward trend. Each point increase in well-being for a population leads to approximately a 2%-reduction in Emergency Department visits and hospital utilization, and to approximately a 1%-reduction in total health care costs. In addition:

- Residents who report they are thriving in daily life rose from 58.8% to 66.6% of the population;
- Individuals are moving more, with 65.5% reporting at least 30 minutes of exercise three or more days per week, compared to 56.2% in 2019;
- 54% fewer residents report high cholesterol;
- Tobacco use is down to 2.8%, well below state and national averages;
- Nearly $21.7 million in add-on funding was leveraged for well-being projects; and
- Over $43.7 million in avoided medical and lost productivity costs were gained over the last five years.

These impressive measures are the direct result of the participation of more than 18,500 individuals and more than 98 organizations who implemented Project programs, activities, and best practices. Thirty-six new community policies, plans and initiatives which were implemented as part of the Project have improved built environment infrastructure, food systems, and tobacco use across Salinas to support better health among residents.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month:
EARLY DETECTION SAVES LIVES

By Mee Memorial Healthcare System

October marks Breast Cancer Awareness Month, a time to emphasize the importance of education, early detection, and support for those affected by the disease.

Breast cancer occurs when cells in the breast grow uncontrollably, forming a tumor that can often be felt as a lump. If not detected and treated early, these cells can invade surrounding tissues and spread to other parts of the body.

While breast cancer primarily affects women, it's important to remember that men can also develop the disease.

Early detection is key to improving outcomes. Monthly self-exams are a simple yet effective way to become familiar with your body and recognize any unusual changes. The National Breast Cancer Foundation recommends the following steps:

- Examine both breasts every month. Using your three middle fingers, apply light, medium, and firm pressure to the breast and armpit area. Check for new lumps, thickening, or other changes.
- With your arms at your sides, visually inspect your breasts for changes in contour, shape, dimpling, or skin irregularities.
- Place your hands on your hips and flex your chest muscles, looking for any dimpling, puckering, or changes.
- While lying down, with one arm behind your head, use the flat part of your three middle fingers to examine your entire breast and armpit area. Apply light, medium, and firm pressure to check for lumps. Repeat on the other side.

Although breast lumps are common and often non-cancerous, schedule an appointment with your healthcare provider if you notice any of the following:

- A new lump.
- Thickening or swelling of breast tissue not previously noticed.
- A lump that feels harder or different from the surrounding tissue.
- A lump that begins to grow or change.
- A lump that persists after menstruation or causes pain.

Mammograms are a critical tool for early detection. The American Cancer Society recommends the following:

- Women ages 40-44: Consider annual screening.
- Women ages 45-54: Annual mammograms are recommended.
- Women ages 55 and older: Screenings can be done biennially or continued yearly, depending on personal preference and health history.

Encourage your loved ones to prioritize regular screenings. Early detection can save lives, and having a strong support system — whether through family, friends, support groups, or counseling — is vital for those navigating a breast cancer diagnosis. Reaching out for help is always encouraged.

Mee Memorial Healthcare System offers discounted mammograms for women over 40 during National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Contact our team at (831) 385-7130 to make an appointment or visit us at www.meememorial.com.



OCTOBER BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH



AMBASSADOR SPOTLIGHT

BRAD AND LAURIE MARTIN



Brad and Laurie Martin launched "In The Loop" in 2014, for the residents of Corral de Tierra, San Benancio and Robley Roads.

As the publication became more known and beloved in the community, in 2019 they were able to expand to nearly 5,000 homes on the Highway 68 Corridor and River Road. The publication was rebranded in 2023 to "Greet Hwy 68 Loop." Laurie also runs Monterey County Real Producers, a magazine for the real estate community.

They live in South Salinas with their son, Mitchell, and their Dachsie, Buster. They enjoy their beautiful backyard garden and living in such a special place as the Monterey Bay area.

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Salinas Valley Pride Festival 2024 Theme Embraces Salinas' Western Heritage

By Mac McDonald, Salinas Valley Business Journal Staff

With the city of Salinas celebrating its 150th anniversary in 2024, the theme for Salinas Valley Pride Celebrations' 14th Annual Pride Festival seemed obvious to organizers.

"Personally, it's hard to talk about Pride in our area without thinking of the much-larger San Francisco Pride event, so I was really happy that the group selected a theme that highlights the Salinas Valley's western roots," said Eric Mora, President of SVPC about the "Spurs and Sparkles" theme. "Our Board Member Jose Luis Barajas suggested the Western theme we've adopted this year and the group instantly loved it. I also love the idea of inviting people to dress up and have a great time."

SVPC'S 14th Annual Pride Festival will be held from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 12, at Central Park in Salinas. The event is free to all and with the theme "Spurs and Sparkles," participants are encouraged to "don your best western attire with a dash of sparkle!"

Participants can expect:

- Live DJ
- Drag and dance performances
- Community resources and organizations
- Local LGBTQ vendors and artists
- Fun activities for all ages
- And plenty of PRIDE

Mora says anyone coming to the event should expect music, dancing, socializing and fun activities, but also information on health care services.

"I always tell people that Salinas Pride is one of the most mellow Pride events in the tri-county area. We host our event at Salinas' Central Park which provides a lot of open space for people to talk, dance, or simply sit on the grass and enjoy the performances. A perennial highlight of our event are the drag artists who light up the day with their artistry," he said. "Equally important are our healthcare partners like Access Support Network, who provide free, rapid HIV and Hepatitis C testing as well as the Monterey County Health Department, who offers a free







MPX vaccination clinic at our event. Salinas Pride truly provides an opportunity for people to meet others, to be entertained, as well as to receive access to critically needed healthcare services."

Beyond the fun and festivity, Mora said there's significance to having a 14th annual event in Salinas.

"When people think of thriving LGBTQ+ communities, they rarely think of places like the Salinas Valley. And yet our community has been an integral part of Salinas' rich cultural fabric forever," said Mora. "We are so proud to celebrate our 14th annual Salinas Pride event and continue to challenge the assumptions people may have about where LGBTQ+ community members live. Every year our Pride event grows in attendance and impact and we are so proud to foster a sense of inclusion for our community in the Salinas Valley."

In addition to the annual Pride Festival, SVPC sponsors a number of programs and initiatives to increase LGBTQIA+ visibility and awareness, including an LGBTQ+ Friendly Business Directory, Progress Flag-raising initiatives, partnering with the California Parks Department and the Cal Parks Foundation to host "Pride in Our Parks," an LGBTQIA+ and Ally Volunteer Day, and a Safe Space Program.

SVPC's Safe Space Program allows LGBTQIA+ and ally business owners to register with SVPC as an official Safe Space that will welcome and respect those within the LGBTQIA+ community. SVPC hopes to increase LGBTQIA+ visibility and encourage others to take action to support equality and acceptance through the program.



"Each year, SVPC puts out our LGBTQIA+ Friendly Business Directory of Monterey County in which we list businesses and organizations who are queer-owned or run, or have demonstrated their support of the LGBTQIA community," said Crystal Libby, SVPC Vice President. "Our SVPC Safe Space Program is an extension of our commitment to creating a supportive network for individuals who seek understanding, acceptance, and access to essential services. By allowing businesses and organizations to voluntarily pledge their commitment to being LGBTQIA+ safe spaces, we create a visible network of support. Displaying the Safe Space Sticker not only communicates a welcoming environment, but provides a profound sense of relief. Relief that stems from the fundamental human need for safety and acceptance."

Mora adds that this year's event, especially in a heated election year and increasing discriminatory rhetoric and legislation, is even more important to raise awareness and acceptance.

> Salinas Pride truly provides an opportunity for people to meet others, to be entertained, as well as to receive access to critically needed healthcare services.
>
> – Eric Mora, President of SVPC

"While we live in a time when LGBTQ+ community members enjoy an unprecedented level of visibility and acceptance, LGBTQ+ community members who live in rural communities like ours continue to face discrimination, a lack of resources and more at higher rates," said Mora "At our core, Salinas Pride aims to foster a greater sense of community for our Salinas Valley LGBTQ+ residents and connect them with resources and entertainment. We're so proud to be joined by dozens of community-based organizations and healthcare partners as well as dance troupes and drag artists to provided a much-needed space for our community to gather. Salinas Pride provides Salinas Valley LGBTQ+ residents with an opportunity to get together and celebrate the achievements our community has made towards acceptance and visibility."

More information about SVPC can be found at its website at: www.salinasvalleypride.com.

Candidates - from page 1

interviewed to let them know the endorsement decisions.

To learn about the deliberate planning and thinking behind the endorsement process, please review the article on page 18 of the July 2024 Business Journal titled "Explaining the Chamber's Candidate Endorsement Process." You may also contact the Chamber office with comments or questions. The appropriate Chamber representative will get back to you.

Mayor of Salinas — Dennis Donohue

Dennis Donohue was Mayor of Salinas for three terms from 2006 to 2012. He had the misfortune and challenge of being Mayor during the Great Recession, when the City of Salinas significantly reduced city services to balance its budget. But his knowledge of business (including as a former chair of the Chamber Board of Directors) served him well to get the city through this difficult time without seeking bankruptcy protection (the fate of cities such as San Bernardino, Stockton and Vallejo). His knowledge of business (including through his current role as Executive Director of Western Growers Center for Innovation and Technology) and intention to focus on economic development will be a positive position for the Chamber and its members.

Salinas City Council, District 1 — José Luis Barajas

In recent years, younger people running for local public offices in Monterey County have been critical of local businesses and regard commerce as a cause of social injustice. In a refreshing contrast to youthful enthusiasm for government intervention in the market, José Luis Barajas has a mature, well-founded understanding of how businesses can provide opportunities for prosperity and vibrancy. He has firsthand knowledge of business potential as the Business Support Specialist for the Building Back Better program, coordinated by the Monterey County Business Council in cooperation with the County of Monterey.

Salinas City Council, District 3 — Margaret D'Arrigo

Margaret D'Arrigo is an elected board member of the Hartnell Community College District, where she has been "focusing on student success and workforce development." She has a long history of substantial involvement in numerous community organizations and a consistent record of proven support for businesses. She wants to uplift the community by promoting the creation of middle class jobs and by encouraging workforce housing.

Salinas City Council, District 4 — Gloria De La Rosa

Gloria De La Rosa was a member of the Salinas City Council for from 1998 to 2020. During the most intense phase of the COVID-19 public health orders, she decided not to run for office again. She does not like the direction taken by the city council since she left, so she's making a comeback. She was supportive of business concerns during her 22 years in office and holds the same views today.

The Chamber endorsed the incumbent councilmember Orlando Osornio four years ago when he ran for an open seat. At the time, the Business Journal observed that "Mr. Osornio has valuable perspectives to add to the city council about work ethics, the dangers of excessive debt, and the dilemmas and challenges involved in starting and growing a small business." Councilmember Osornio has indeed advanced those perspectives, but some of his votes have not aligned with Chamber positions.

Salinas City Council, District 6 - Aurelio Salazar

Aurelio Salazar is another board member of the Hartnell Community College District seeking election to the Salinas City Council. He supports positions that encourage economic growth and quality job creation and touts his experience in bringing together diverse groups to reach solutions.

Hartnell Community College District Board of Trustees - Area 1

The Chamber does not have an endorsement recommendation for this office. This North County district includes Boronda, Moss Landing, Castroville and Prunedale.



RIBBON CUTTINGS & CHAMBER EVENTS

by Chamber Staff



Past Chairs Luncheon

Past Chairs gathered at Portobello's on Main for the annual Past Chairs Luncheon. It was a delightful day of reminiscing and reconnecting Chamber leaders past and present, as everyone reflected on their experiences and received Chamber updates.



Paint the Town Purple at 201 Main

The Paint the Town Purple Mixer at 201 Main in partnership with American Cancer Society was a vibrant event. It featured activities like painting, special Folklorio and mariachi performances, trivia, photo booth, and raffles, all aimed to raise awareness about Relay for Life of the Salinas Valley.



Lunch and Learn with ARCpoint Labs

ARCpoint Labs co-owner and lab manager Spenser Smith hosted a discussion on the importance of drug-free workplace safety programs and introduced tools like rapid THC testing devices, new toxicology panels, and AI-enhanced sobriety testing. Smith shared insights into emerging trends and strategies for the evolving landscape.



Relay Kickoff at Portobello's

The annual Relay for Life Kickoff and Paint the Town Purple event hosted by Taylor Farms and American Cancer Society marked the official start of the fundraising season. Highlights included bell-ringing by survivors, hula dancing, heartfelt stories from those impacted by cancer, a car show, and a symbolic purple lighting of the Taylor Building, including the Salinas sign.



Ten Years of Touch-A-Truck: A Decade of Community Support and Fun

Coastal Kids Home Care marked a significant milestone celebrating the 10th anniversary of its beloved Touch-A-Truck event. The Chamber was honored to host a ribbon cutting to officially open the event, joined by local dignitaries and Board Member Brenda Granillo.



Member Orientation

The Salinas Valley Chamber hosted an informative orientation session, guided by Membership Director Gabriel Lopez. The event was designed to welcome new and prospective members, offering them insights into the various resources and tools the Chamber provides to help them achieve, or even surpass, their marketing objectives, fostering growth and success for their businesses.



Impact Center Mural Project

United Way Monterey County and the Salinas Valley Chamber celebrated the launch of the UWMC Community Impact Center Mural Project with a ribbon-cutting ceremony in Mid-Town Lane in Salinas. Guests unveiled Amy Burkman's Youth Orchestra Salinas mural, enjoyed light appetizers, learned about phase 2 of the project, which is transforming 12 panels of the Community Impact Center with art.



Joint Chamber Mixer hosted by Monterey Touring Vehicles

Members from the Carmel, Pacific Grove, and Salinas Valley chambers gathered for a joint mixer hosted by Monterey Touring Vehicles. Guests enjoyed classic car displays, networking, hors d'oeuvres from H. Jackson Events, local wines, brews from Alvarado Street Brewery, and special giveaways.

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

OCTOBER 2024

By Kevin Dayton, Government Affairs Liaison

Your Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce Government Relations Committee had 17 members at its most recent meeting on Wednesday, Sept. 11. As usual, the Committee discussed several priority issues.

1 Committee members considered which message to emphasize in its formal opposition letter to the Salinas City Council concerning the package of three ordinances establishing many new restrictions and requirements on the landlord-tenant relationship. A vote is scheduled for Sept. 24. Not every provision in the three ordinances is unreasonable; for example, some of the tenant protection provisions would likely reduce abuses, if enforced. However, the 2.75 percent limit on annual rent increases is excessive government control.

2 Committee members agreed that the Chamber will continue to base its opposition on the validity of classical economic theory and on facts. Contrary to claims made by city officials and their economic consultants, government-imposed price controls will warp and disrupt housing supply and diminish the quality of housing stock in the City of Salinas. Members of the business community know this is how the market works in practice.

3 The Chamber sent a letter to the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) Board of Directors asking them to recognize the existence of the Amazon warehouse project and incorporate discussion of its truck traffic in their upcoming meeting agenda item concerning the U.S. 101 South of Salinas Safety Corridor Project. Residents and businesses south of Salinas have sought this project for many years, and now a dramatic new variable has been introduced. It needs to be addressed.

4 The Chamber is about to survey its members for their opinions on the Amazon warehouse and their comfort with the project moving forward without any public review or discussion. On Aug. 26, 2024, the City of Salinas acknowledged publicly for the first time that this massive project is happening. Chamber members and staff continue to receive comments from business owners, employees, and residents concerned about the impact of this warehouse on traffic, safety, housing, labor, economic development trends, and culture in the City of Salinas and the Salinas Valley.

5 Staff for the California Coastal Commission now recommends approval of a permit for the Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) SURF! Busway and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project. The vote is on Sept. 12, 2024, at the Portola Hotel & Spa in downtown Monterey. The Chamber supports this project.

6 There has been widespread public interest in the two articles on the front page of the September 2024 Business Journal: "Chamber Dismayed by First Set of Audit Findings for Regional Wastewater Recycling Agency" and "Uncomfortable But Necessary — An Audit of Water Flow Data."

7 The committee did not vote on a position for Measure AA, which would authorize Monterey County to increase the sales tax by 1 percent in unincorporated areas of the county, such as Chualar, San Ardo, San Lucas, Carmel Valley, Big Sur, Pebble Beach, the Highway 68 Corridor, Prunedale, Castroville and Moss Landing.

8 The committee did not vote on a position for Measure G, which would authorize Salinas Union High School District to borrow $115 million via bond sales to pay for school construction improvement projects.

9 The Committee directed staff to write an article for the October Business Journal that clearly and concisely explains bond finance for California educational districts. Some committee members believe voters generally don't know what a bond is and don't understand what it means to approve a bond measure.

> "Members of the business community know this is how the market works in practice

U.S. Latinas Are Giving Life to the Economy and Should Be Celebrated

By Esmeralda Montenegro Owen, Precious Stone PR Inc.

Every year, Hispanic Heritage Month provides an opportunity to reflect on the impact Hispanics have made in our culture. However, their tremendous impact continues year-round through our food, sports, business, politics, science, education and the arts.

Yet one of the most important and lasting impacts that isn't often recognized is the role that Hispanic women play in accelerating the nation's economy.

The recently released U.S. Latina GDP Report, funded by Bank of America, reveals a powerful truth: Latinas are a driving force in the U.S. economy, contributing $1.3 trillion to the GDP in 2021 — that's larger than the economy of Florida and every state except California, New York and Texas.

In fact, Latina economic output has grown over 50% in a decade, driven by labor force participation and higher educational attainment that far outpace their peers, and it is multi-generational.

This incredible momentum is found here in the Salinas Valley.

Ana Jimenez of Salinas owns Tacos El Jerry, a barbershop, and manages Biwise in Watsonville. She came to America in 1994 from Mexico with an accounting degree. Her goal was to have her own business and provide jobs to others.

"I can say that I have reached the American dream," Jimenez said. "Having a business is satisfying but what is most important to me is what I do with it — the greatest satisfaction is to help others, my community, and the economy."

Guadalupe Soria, Small Business Banker for Bank of America reflects on the new report. "We see this exciting growth within the bank's business clients here in the region, with more Latina-led businesses than ever before driving our local economy."

Given the greater Monterey Bay region has a diverse mix of colleges and universities, the report's findings of a 103% increase of Latinas with a bachelor's degree or higher education over the last decade — 2.7 times faster than that of non-Hispanic females — was great news to many locally.

Hartnell College sociology professor and author, Dr. Hortencia Jimenez could not agree more, noting "This incredible surge underscores the profound and transformative influence Latinas wield on the U.S. economy. They're an unstoppable force to be reckoned with, deserving of recognition and respect."

Through this increased educational attainment, labor force participation and powerful entrepreneurial mindset, Latinas continue to drive the economy in ways that uplifts their communities, propels economic mobility and creates generational wealth. They are also role models showing the next generation what is possible with dedication and opportunity.

"Bank of America funded this study because it's data like this that help change the narrative around Hispanic women and make clear just how important they are as a consumer power-house and financial decisionmaker," Soria added.

This year, as we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, take a moment to recognize the significant role Latinas play in our nation's economic and cultural growth.

These women are not just contributing to the economy; they are giving life to it.



Support our Chamber Members

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

Member Name	Member Since
California Coastal—A small business lender	1983
Notre Dame High School	1983
Monterey County Office of Education	1986
Bengard Ranch Inc	1987
Jim Gattis Investment Properties	1988
Monterey-Salinas MST	1988
Markon, Inc	1988
WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca	1991
Hitchcock Farms	1995
The Don Chapin Company, Inc.	1997
McCune Audio/Video/Lighting *25 year*	1999
RHC Management Co, LLC dba McDonalds	2000
Alvarez Technology Group Inc	2001
CASA of Monterey County	2002
Valley Yellow Pages/AGI Publishing, Inc.	2002
CSUMB *20 Year*	2004
Aurum Consulting Engineers—Monterey Bay Inc	2005
El Sistema USA/Salinas, Inc—YOSAL	2010

Member Name	Member Since
Salinas Police Activities League PAL	2011
Sacred Heart School	2012
Quail Lodge & Golf Club	2013
The Maynard Group, Inc. *10 Year*	2014
Smith & Enright Landscaping	2016
Allied Universal Security Services	2017
Greg Hamer REALTOR	2018
Monterey County Mosquito—Abatement District	2019
Zenona	2020
Salinas Regional Sports Authority	2020
Salinas Valley Medical Aesthetics	2021
Hope Services	2022
Western Pre-Cooling Systems	2022
Snipville Pet Care	2022
Davila-Prado Athletic Scholarship	2023
Brandon Trucking Company	2023
Grocery Outlet Soledad	2023
North American Mental Health Services	2023

A Special Thanks to Our Visionary and Stakeholder Members

Support our Chamber Members

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

Member Name	Member Since
Piini Realty	1970
Sambrailo Packaging	1970
Leavitt Central Coast Insurance	1971
Northridge Mall *Stakeholder Member*	1972
The Steinbeck House *50 Years*	1974
California Rodeo	1975
Ingraham & Associates CPA's	1975
American Ag Credit	1976
Monterey County Herald	1978
The Nunes Company Inc/Foxy	1978
United Way Monterey County	1979
Armanasco Public Relations Inc	1985
Dawn Transportation, Inc.	1987
Firestone Business Park	1987
Tanimura & Antle	1989
Bay Property Management	1991
Valley Farm Management	1993
Dole Fresh Vegetables	1993
Bobcat Bicycles *30 Years*	1994
Monterey Regional Airport *30 Years*	1994
Robert Kasavan Marketing *30 Years*	1994

Member Name	Member Since
Carol Kurtz	1999
Republic Services Inc	2000
Gateway Center of Monterey County	2003
Royal Packing Company	2004
Alco Water Service	2006
The Salvation Army	2007
SlingShot Connections	2013
Braga Fresh Farms Inc *Stakeholder Member*	2014
CSUMB Salinas City Center	2015
Diane Ausonio	2015
Stifel, Nicolaus & Company, Inc	2015
American Supply Company—Salinas	2016
American Supply Company—Seaside	2016
TPO Human Resources Management	2017
California Management Technology Consulting	2020
Lattitude 36 Foods	2021
Mee Memorial Hospital	2021
Viable Gree nBuilding Solutions	2022
831 Auto Glass	2022
Fastest Labs of Salinas	2023
Loves Travel Stops	2023
MMM Churros LLC	2023

A Special Thanks to Our Visionary and Stakeholder Members

Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce Will Host Legacy of Leadership Event on Nov. 7, in Salinas

The Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce will celebrate its Legacy of Leadership Awards from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 7, 2024, at the beautiful Portobello's on Main Courtyard, in Salinas. During this special evening, the Chamber will bestow its prestigious "Legacy of Leadership Award" to State Sen. Anna Caballero, in recognition of her remarkable career in public service and significant contributions to the Salinas Valley. Additionally, the Chamber will celebrate a select few local businesses for their exemplary leadership and dedication to the region through distinguished innovation, philanthropy, and service.

This strolling gala will feature excellent networking opportunities, entertainment, and a variety of food and wine offerings. The Legacy of Leadership promises to be an unforgettable night of celebration, recognition, and appreciation as we honor those who have made a lasting impact on our community.

Tickets are available for purchase at SalinasChamber.com for $75 (members) and $95 (non-members). Sponsorship opportunities are also available. For more information, contact the Chamber Office at (831) 751-7725 or email Gabe@salinaschamber.com.

The Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce is thrilled to honor the best and brightest in our community on Nov. 7. We look forward to seeing you there!



A very Special thank you to our Sponsors!

PLATINUM LEVEL: California Resources Corporation, Kaiser Permanente and Pinnacle Bank

GOLD LEVEL: SSB Construction, California Water Service, Wescom Credit Union, Chevron and Vistra Moss Landing

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BRONZE SPONSORS: Fenton & Keller, JRG Attorneys at Law, Waste Management, Community Human Services and EMC Planning Group, Monterey Plaza Hotel & Spa

SPARKLING WINE WELCOME: JRG Attorneys at Law

PAST LEGACY HONOREES

2011 **Don Chapin**, Construction
2012 **Joanne Taylor-Johnson**, Agriculture/Non-profit
2013 **Sam Linder**, Automotive
2014 **Harry Wardwell / Jim Gattis** Healthcare
2015 **Butch Lindley**, Agriculture
2016 **Shirley Lavorato**, Non-profit
2017 **"Oktoberfest - 99 Bottles of Chambeer on the Wall"**
2018 **Ruth Andresen**, Education
2018 **Sean D. Tucker**, Aviation/Non-profit
2018 **Sam Downing,** *posthumous,* Healthcare
2018 **Tony and Al Sammut**, Property Management/ Developers
2018 **Rick Antle,** *posthumous*, Agriculture
2018 **Brigid McGrath Massie**, Small Business
2019 **Barbara Ballentine,** Other (Rodeo)
2019 **Sherrie Isaac,** *posthumous*, Accounting
2019 **Ollie Lowe & Brian Holaday**, Agriculture
2019 **Candi DePauw**, Education / Ag
2019 **Vern Horton**, Banking
2020 **Melissa Kendrick**, Non-profit
2020 **Eduardo Ochoa**, Education
2020 **Ron Johnson**, Non-profit
2021 **Lorisa McKelvey Daye**, Courageous Company Award
2021 **Smith Family, ARCPoint Labs**, Successful Despite Pandemic Award
2021 **Dr. Gary Gray,** Local Legend Award
2021 **Chief Adele Fresé,** Local Legend Award,
2022 **Marlene Garcia**, Young Pro of the year
2022 **Danny Little,** Young Pro of the year
2022 **Carla Rocha**, Outstanding Minority owned business
2022 **Rolando Cabrera**, Business Philanthropy of the year
2022 **D'Arrigo California**, Distinguished Business innovation award
2022 **Salinas Valley Health,** Distinguished Business innovation award
2022 **Bill Perocchi**, Pebble Beach Company
2022 **Spenser Smith**, ARCPoint Labs
2022 **Mike Avila**, Avila Construction
2022 **Matt Gourley**, Gourley Construction
2022 **Dr. Gary Gray**, Natividad Medical Center
2023 **Jose Luis Barajas**, Young Professional
2023 **Soria Contracting and Solutions**, Minority-Owned Business
2023 **Vistra Energy**, Business Innovation
2023 **California Water Service**, Business Philanthropy


Children's Shopping Tour
Children's Shopping Tour
Saturday, December 7
Every year, in December, our community comes together to make the holiday season brighter for hundreds of children. This is a cherished event where children in need are paired with volunteers for a day of shopping.
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50 Years EST. 1974 NORTHRIDGE MALL
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831-751-7725

Employee Leave Requests for their Child's School-Related Activities

By Brad Levang, Fenton & Keller



With the new school year underway, many parents may find themselves needing to take some time off from work to address their child's school-related activities. Several California laws allow for parents to take time away from work for their child's school-related purposes. A few of those school-related leaves are discussed below. Of course, which school-related leave may apply depends on multiple factors, including: the size of the employer, the nature of the employee's work, and the underlying reason for the leave.

1. School Disciplinary Meetings

California law allows for schools to establish policies that require parents or guardians to attend class with their child who is returning to school following a suspension. Pursuant to California Labor Code Section 230.7, an employee who is the parent or guardian of a child who has been suspended can take unpaid time off when the school, pursuant to Education Code Section 48900.1, requires the employee to attend a portion of a school day in the suspended child's classroom. Leave for this purpose requires the employee to give their employer reasonable notice of the need to take time off for this purpose.

All employers are prohibited from discharging, threatening to discharge, demoting, suspending, or otherwise discriminating against an employee for taking time off to appear at their child's school for this purpose.

2. School-Related Activities

California Labor Code Section 230.8 provides parents with time off to participate in school or child care activities. This school-related activities leave only applies to employers who have 25 or more employees at the same location. Eligible employees include parents, guardians, stepparents, foster parents, grandparents, or persons who stand in place of the child's parent. This leave allows eligible employees to take up to 40 hours of unpaid leave each year – not exceeding 8 hours in a month – to 1) find, enroll, or re-enroll a child in a school (K-12) or a licensed child care provider; or 2) participate in school or child care activities. An eligible employee must provide their employer with reasonable prior notice regarding the planned absence for this purpose.

Eligible employees can also take time off under this leave to address a child care provider or school emergency. Such emergencies include: 1) the school or child care provider requesting that a) the child be picked up, or b) has an attendance policy (excluding planned holidays) that prohibits the child from attending or requires the child to be picked up from the school or child care provider; 2) a closure or unexpected unavailability of the school or child care provider (excluding planned holidays); 3) behavioral or discipline problems; or 4) a natural disaster, including, but not limited to, fire, earthquake, or flood. The 8-hour-per-month cap does not apply to these emergency leave reasons. If time off is needed for any of the above-listed emergency situations, employees are required to give notice as soon as possible.

If more than one parent/guardian of a child is employed by the same employer at the same worksite, then the employer may limit leave under this law to the parent/guardian who first gave notice for this leave.

An employer may request the eligible employee to provide documentation from the school or child care provider as proof that the eligible employee participated on a specific date and at a particular time in the permitted activity.

Employers subject to this law cannot discharge, threaten to discharge, demote, suspend, or otherwise discriminate against an employee for taking time off to appear at their child's school or child care provider for this purpose.

3. Emergency Conditions

California Labor Code Section 1139 is a relatively new law that took effect January 1, 2023, which prevents employers from taking adverse action or threatening to take adverse action against an employee who leaves work or refuses to report to work during an "emergency condition." This Code Section defines "emergency condition" to include an order to evacuate the school of the employee's child due to a natural disaster (excluding a health pandemic) or a criminal act.

There are several categories of employees who are excluded from this new law, such as first responders, disaster/emergency service workers, and health care workers providing direct patient care/emergency support services, among others.

This law also prevents employers from restricting an employee's access to their mobile phone or other communications device for purposes of seeking emergency assistance, assessing the safety of the situation, or communicating with a person to verify their safety. However, such access may remain restricted for certain employees, such as those working correctional facilities, certain depository institutions, and those operating certain equipment (such as passenger tramways and amusement rides).

The employee must notify their employer, when feasible, about the emergency condition requiring their absence. If notice is not feasible, the employee is required to provide notice as soon as possible.

Employees cannot be discharged, demoted, suspended, or retaliated against for taking time off or for being absent from work due to an "emergency condition" at the employee's child's school.

Therefore, employers should make sure that their policies and procedures are maintained and updated to address such leaves. Human Resources personnel, managers and supervisors should also be made aware of the available school related leaves and ensure such employees are adequately trained to recognize when an employee's request for time off may be subject to the employee's legal right to take the time off in the above situations.

UPCOMING EVENTS —

- **Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting with BrewJee Coffee Co.**
  Thursday, Oct. 3, 5:00 - 6:30 p.m.
  16 E. Gabilan St., Salinas
  Join us for the Grand Opening of BrewJee Coffee Co. Here at BrewJee, we believe that every drink is a simple way to enjoy life — something we forget to do all too often. Our drinks are more than just beverages; they are a symbol of self-expression, self-care, and self-awareness. Our goal is to create a warm and welcoming experience filled with good vibes and great drinks — a place for you to belong. This is Brewjee Coffee Co! Come celebrate with us.

- **ITN*MontereyCounty* 100,000 Ride Celebration & Ribbon-Cutting Event**
  Thursday, Oct. 24, 5:00– 8:00 p.m.
  WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca,
  1021 Monterey-Salinas Hwy 68, Salinas
  We're celebrating a significant milestone in Monterey County! The community and media are invited to the ITNMontereyCounty (Independent Transportation Network Monterey County) 100,000th Ride Celebration. ITNMontereyCounty, founded in 2012, provides dignified rides to anyone over 60 years of age or those with visual impairments over age 18. This free event will include a hosted wine reception and delectable food. The celebration will commence with a reenactment of the 100,000th ride. Additionally, there will be an opportunity to enjoy hot laps and go-cart rides. Join us in celebrating this remarkable achievement and support ITNMontereyCounty's ongoing mission to provide essential transportation services to our community. If you have any questions, email info@itnmontereycounty.org or call (831) 233-3447.

- **Grand Opening of Valley Health Associates**
  Wednesday, Oct. 30, 5:00 - 6:30 p.m.
  913 Blanco Circle, Salinas
  Join us for the grand opening of Valley Health Associates' new office location. Tour their new home, learn more about their services, meet their clients and staff! There will be excellent networking, food, soft drinks, music, and more. Register today at SalinasChamber.com!

- **Legacy of Leadership Gala**
  Thursday, Nov. 7, 5:30– 7:30 p.m.
  Portobello's on Main, 150 Main St., Salinas
  It's almost time for the Chamber's most popular fall event — the Legacy of Leadership Gala! The event is set to take place on Thursday, Nov. 7, from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. at the Taylor Building/Portobello's Courtyard in Salinas. The Legacy of Leadership Gala brings together prominent leaders and local businesses to recognize and honor those who have demonstrated excellence and business innovation and made significant contributions to the Salinas Valley. Tickets can be purchased for $75 (member rate) and $95 (non-member rate) at SalinasChamber.com. Sponsorships are available as well! If you have any questions, contact the Chamber office at 831-751-7725.

RSVP at salinaschamber.com

Looking for Child Care?
Visit www.MontereyCountyChildCare.org
Call MAOF Resource & Referral - (831) 757-0775
Options for child care and early learning • Tips for parenting, health and safety • Resources for child care and education providers



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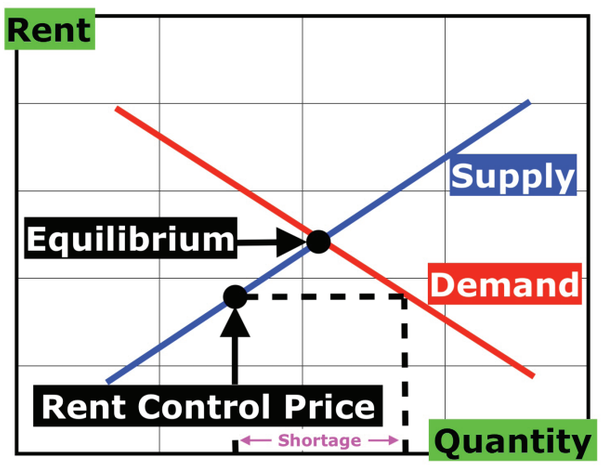
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A Final Chamber Letter Before the Salinas City Council Votes on Enacting Substantial New Restrictions on Landlords

By Kevin Dayton, Government Affairs Liaison

Here is the text of the final letter that the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce sent to the Salinas City Council, in advance of the council's scheduled Sept. 24, 2024 vote on ordinances that impose new regulations on landlords.



Dear City Councilmembers:

The Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce continues to oppose some provisions in the package of three proposed "Rent Stabilization and Tenant Protection" ordinances prepared by staff for consideration at the Sept. 24, 2024 city council meeting. In our view, there are two provisions that seem most egregious: (1) a restriction on annual rent increases to the lesser amount of 2.75% or 75% of the most-recent 12-month increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI); and (2) the retroactive implementation of this restriction to Dec. 31, 2023 or afterwards.

Assessment of the Housing Situation in the City of Salinas

The Chamber recognizes that many of these findings in the prefaces used to justify the ordinances are generally accurate: (1) a "housing shortage and rising costs of living in Monterey County, and Salinas in particular, has detrimentally impacted a substantial number of residents in Salinas;" (2) Salinas has a high number of lower income residents compared to some Monterey County communities; (3) lower income individuals and households are more likely to be renters; (4) average rents for multifamily rental units in Salinas have continually increased at a higher rate compared with the increase in the median income; (5) it's likely that a majority of renter-occupied households are "rent-burdened," meaning they pay 30% or more of their household income on housing, thus "having less money to spend on other essentials like food, transportation, healthcare, and childcare," and (6) individuals and households can experience stress and anxiety as they consider how to obtain enough money to pay rent while also paying for other essentials.

The City Council's Proposed Approach to Address These Findings Is Fundamentally Wrong, For Several Reasons

1. Property Owners Are Inaccurately Regarded as One Collective Class Exploiting Another Collective Class

The Chamber is uncomfortable with the framing of this issue as a conflict or struggle between exploitive property owners and exploited tenants. That approach overlooks the individual human element in these contractual relationships, including the human capacity to love others.

Some landlords have strong personal relationships with their tenants and make conscious efforts to avoid rent increases that result in excessive stress and anxiety. They inject a moral aspect into their contracts, while trying to achieve a return on their investment that achieves their personal objectives.

Conversely, some property owners don't know their tenants at all. Some corporate landlords are even using computer algorithms to determine the maximum amount of rent they can charge within a regional housing market.

Some property owners who rent properties are local individuals and married couples, some are partnerships, some are families, some are corporations. Some do not live in the area. Some apparently don't even live in the United States.

Some landlords have been renters. Some renters have been landlords. A few are even landlords and renters simultaneously.

The Chamber recommends that the city council regard each landlord and tenant as an individual entity, and therefore enact policies and adopt practices that resolve disputes and injustices among individuals rather than among collective classes.

2. Identifying an Appropriate and Reasonable Level of Profit Is Highly Subjective

The city's analysis of the need for rent stabilization is based on a conclusion that property owners as a collective class are making excessive profits. For unknown reasons, this conclusion is not indicated in the findings.

Based on this conclusion, the city assumes that government-imposed rent limitations to 2.75% per year will simply reduce excessive returns on investment. It will not affect housing supply or change how owners manage and maintain their rental units. The Chamber does not believe this thinking is correct.

In addition, the measurement of a sufficient or reasonable profit is subjective. It may vary based on the needs and desires of the individual property owner. People rent their property under many different circumstances for many different reasons.

3. The Highly Restrictive Threshold on Rent Increases May Benefit Some Individuals and Households, But Overall It Will Harm the Community

The threshold on the percentage of annual rent increases is exceptionally low among local governments that consider rent stabilization as a valid policy solution. For a tenant who plans to remain in the same unit in Salinas for many years, this restriction will surely be a desirable outcome — that is, if that landlord chooses to continue renting the unit.

However, the Chamber expects that some landlords will calculate their long-term returns on investment under this new rent

stabilization policy and withdraw units from the rental market. We expect a stagnation of the local rental housing market, which will discourage young people from returning to the region after college and complicate the ability of employers to recruit new employees.

Government-mandated rent stabilization will likely benefit some people while being detrimental to others. The idea that the additional imposed cost will be absorbed through lower profits isn't likely to work in practice.

4. Retroactive Limits on Rent Increases Will Cause Stress and Anxiety — For Landlords

While the Chamber understands the rationale for the retroactive implementation of this ordinance, we expect significant hassles for landlords as the report spreads throughout the community that renters may be entitled to a refund check from their landlords because their landlords charged too much in rent in 2024.

The Chamber will consider a position on whether refunds triggered by the retroactive implementation of the rent increase threshold shall be issued as vouchers — vouchers that would be redeemable only through the purchase of goods and services from locally owned entities based in the City of Salinas. If the findings of these ordinances are indeed accurate when declaring that high rents mean "having less money to spend on other essentials like food, transportation, healthcare, and childcare," then the city should make sure that rent refunds are spent on those essentials.

5. Lack of City Resources and Reliance on Third Parties for Enforcement May Result in Unequal and Unfair Enforcement and Penalties

The city's record so far in tracking and implementing the rental registry ordinance does not bode well for the city's success in implementing the rental stabilization ordinance. The Chamber is concerned about the potential for selective enforcement of these new ordinances.

It's difficult to enforce complicated, burdensome regulations. Because enforcement will need to show measurable results, the Chamber expects the city and third parties will focus on identifying inadvertent and technical violations by large, organized, accountable corporate landlords with substantial financial resources. Pursuing the underground economy (such as landlords who evaded the rental registration requirement or still do not know about the requirement) is a much more difficult and less fruitful pursuit.

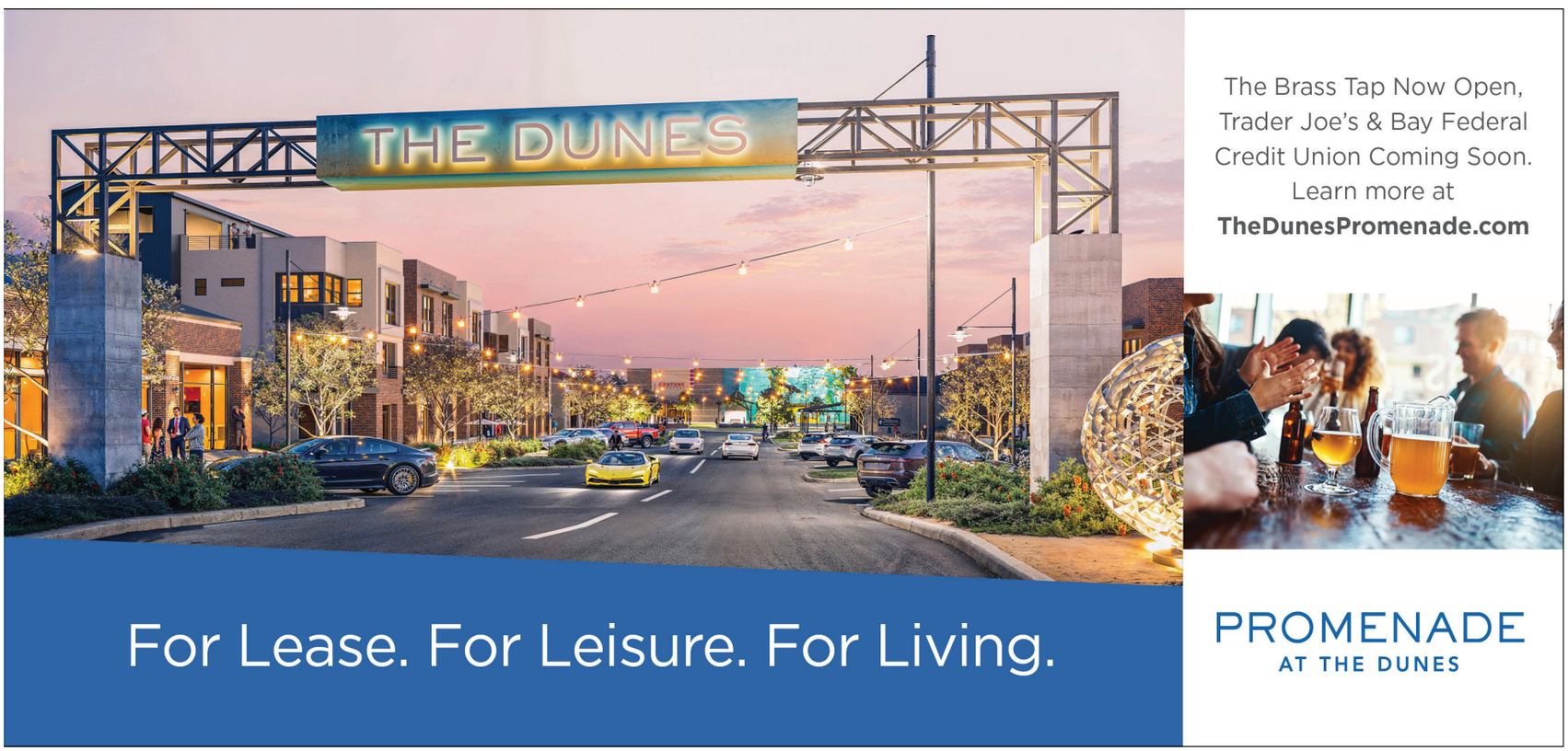
An Alternative Approach to the High Cost of Housing

From the perspective of the Chamber, rent stabilization can seem appealing as a deceptively simple and satisfying answer. It's simply government controlling prices, to the extent that it can enforce such control.

The policy is emotionally gratifying, because it identifies and targets a specific party that is allegedly causing stress and anxiety through injustice. Tenants feel like the government is on their side. In contrast, abstract and often inscrutable market forces (such as supply and demand) can feel irrelevant and cold to an individual or household who struggles to pay the rent.

A more difficult solution is figuring out why housing supply is not keeping up with housing demand and trying to lower prices for housing by adopting strategies to increase the supply. Here are some strategies that the Chamber advises the city council to adopt:

Continued on page 28



Continued from page 27

1. Courage and Leadership

One of the main reasons why housing supply does not adequately meet demand in the City of Salinas, Monterey County, and the Central Coast of California is the desire of many established residents to stop more housing in their communities. Even residents who can barely pay the rent are leery of new people moving into their neighborhoods and negatively influencing their quality of life through traffic, parking, and the challenges of living among others. The lack of new housing is, to some extent, a reflection of the democratic will of the people.

The Chamber has endured criticism from anti-growth advocates for holding a strong position in support of more housing. We understand the pressure on local elected officials to avoid growth, but we urge the city council to stand up for people and principles.

2. Review and Accountability

At every meeting of the City Council Housing and Land Use Committee, councilmembers should have an agenda item focusing on the city's progress toward meeting the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) goals. The committee should regularly review the status of every parcel in the city that could be used for housing. Councilmembers should be asking the city staff (and outside experts as appropriate) what the city council needs to enact, amend, or repeal to activate those parcels. City councilmembers should identify certain parcels in their districts and adopt them as a personal plan for conversion to housing. To the extent they are present and identifiable, obstacles in the permit process should be revealed and analyzed, with additional resources given to the Community Development Department and other departments to eliminate those obstacles.

The Pacific Grove City Council, which governs a community very sensitive to growth, receives a monthly Housing Element status report from its Housing Program Manager. The Salinas City Council should do the same.

3. Openness to Market Rate Housing as Part of Increasing Supply

In places such as Santa Cruz and the San Francisco Bay Area, a line of thinking in housing policy has emerged to assert that local governments should no longer approve any market rate housing built for investor profit. Instead, governments should only grant permits for 100% affordable housing built by nonprofits or by the government.

This belief, founded on social justice concerns, conveniently dovetails well with the desire of some people to restrain population growth and economic development. In fact, it was a common theme of some Monterey County residents who vehemently objected to the Monterey County Draft Housing Element for the 6th Cycle (2023-2031).

The Chamber believes that a "no-profit" approach to housing development would hinder the ability of the City of Salinas and other local governments to build any housing at all. The City of Salinas does not have enough tax revenue for the government to fulfill the affordable housing needs of the city.

The Chamber notes that Monterey County has been nationally recognized for its encouragement of farmworker housing. That housing is built entirely with private funding. The Chamber also notes that plans of private companies to build multi-story density housing in transit-oriented areas of downtown Salinas have stalled, supposedly for political reasons. This needs to stop. Let's get this proposal moving again.

Even for housing built by and for the government, there is perhaps more that the City of Salinas can do. The Chamber believes the leadership teams of some local governments are interested in pursuing workforce housing, similar to what has been done at the Salinas Union High School District and what is planned at Soledad Unified School District and Monterey Peninsula Unified School District. The City of Salinas should consider reaching out to local K-12 school districts, the local college district, and public health care institutions to determine their interest in partnerships with the city to advance this housing strategy.

4. Compile All Legislative and Regulatory Strategies That May Increasing Housing Supply, and Adopt Them

Groups such as Monterey Bay Economic Partnership (MBEP) have produced reports on practical ways to encourage housing development through public policy strategies. In fact, all over the state, local governments are working with local organizations on creative ways to overcome the cost of building housing, the cost of owning housing, and the cost of renting housing. The Chamber would be interested in being a partner with the City of Salinas and the next Mayor and City Council in developing a long list of policies and getting them adopted.

5. Landlord-Tenant Mediation Committees

In the early city council and committee hearings to develop rent stabilization and tenant protection ordinances, it was obvious that most public speakers were focused more on individual disputes they were having with their landlords than on the claim that rent is too high. Imposing limits on annual rent increases is not going to solve differences between landlords and tenants. Perhaps mediation provided by the city would resolve such disputes. The Chamber recommends that the city council look at establishing a committee and procedures to resolve the stress and anxiety that can occur when there are different interpretations of contractual relationships for housing.

The Chamber also notes the various public and private organizations that work to help renters in times of need. To what extent is the City of Salinas referring tenants to those groups?

6. What Happened to the City's Rental Registry?

In a Feb. 28, 2023 letter to the Mayor and City Council, the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce took a neutral position on the controversial rental registry proposal. That letter generated some criticism from landlords and others in the community who felt this position was appeasement. In the letter, the Chamber recommended that the Mayor and City Council "wait to see measurable, data-based results of this rental registry program before imposing additional fees and regulations on property owners who rent their properties."

Since then, the city council has shown little interest in the performance of the rental registry. In fact, it was the Chamber of Commerce that pointed out to the city council that the supplemental budget appropriation for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 showed cost overruns for a program that does not provide reports to the city council or public.

Based on that letter alone, the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce is opposed to a restriction on annual rent increases to the lesser amount of 2.75% or 75% of the most-recent 12-month increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), as well as the retroactive implementation of this restriction to Dec. 31, 2023 or afterwards.

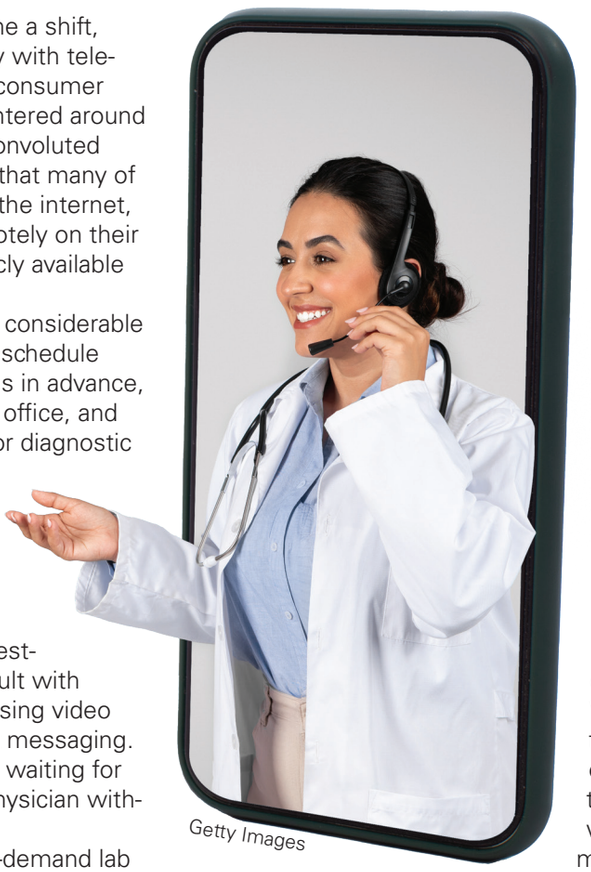
There are wiser, less-intrusive, less-divisive, less-hostile public policy options.

Revolutionizing Healthcare: The Power of Telemedicine and On-Demand Lab Testing

By Spenser Smith, ARCpoint Labs Owner

In recent years, healthcare has undergone a shift, fueled by the public's growing familiarity with teleconferencing software and on-demand consumer laboratory testing. Once an industry centered around in-person appointments, long waits, and convoluted insurance claims, patients are discovering that many of their healthcare needs can be solved over the internet, by speaking with a licensed physician remotely on their own schedule, and following up with publicly available on-demand laboratory testing, if needed.

Traditional healthcare typically requires a considerable investment of time. Patients often have to schedule appointments days, weeks, or even months in advance, take time off work, commute to a doctor's office, and spend significant time in waiting rooms. For diagnostic testing, patients might then need to visit separate laboratories and await results, with little to no communication about the process. The experience is cumbersome, stressful, and inefficient, not to mention expensive.



Getty Images

Enter telemedicine and on-demand lab testing. Telemedicine enables patients to consult with doctors from the comfort of their homes using video calls, phone conversations, or even instant messaging. Gone are the days of driving to a clinic and waiting for hours; now, you can speak to a qualified physician without leaving your home.

The convenience doesn't stop there. On-demand lab testing allows patients to order tests online, visit a local lab when it's convenient for them, and receive their results directly on their smartphones or computers. This approach eliminates the need for multiple visits and streamlines the process, providing patients with the flexibility they need to fit healthcare into their busy lives.

One of the most transformative aspects of this healthcare evolution is that it puts the patient in the driver's seat when it comes to healthcare decisions. In the past, individuals were largely dependent on physicians to order lab tests, even when the patient already knew exactly what they wanted. On top of that, insurance will often only pay for a small subset of tests, but it can be difficult or impossible for a patient to know if their test will be covered until after the bill is issued. With on-demand testing, patients now have direct access to their lab results, know exactly what it will cost ahead of time, and retain the ability to check in with a remote physician to interpret them if needed.

This transparency gives patients a clearer picture of their health, allowing them to make more informed decisions about their care. Whether it's monitoring cholesterol levels, tracking blood sugar, or keeping tabs on hormonal imbalances, patients can proactively manage their health by ordering tests that are most relevant to their needs. The combination of telemedicine and consumer-ordered lab tests also opens the door to quicker intervention. Instead of waiting weeks for a follow-up appointment, patients can consult with a telehealth provider as soon as their results are available, receiving timely advice on next steps.

Furthermore, the sheer volume of data that on-demand lab testing provides allows individuals to track their health metrics over time. This long-term view of health offers a powerful tool for disease prevention and early intervention, as changes in lab results can alert patients to potential health issues before they escalate, instead of leaving health problems to worsen until they become an emergency.

For many patients, this model offers not only greater transparency but also reduced costs. On-demand lab services provide clear, upfront pricing, eliminating the guesswork and hidden fees associated with traditional healthcare billing. Many of these services operate on a subscription or pay-as-you-go basis, enabling patients to only pay for the tests they need, when they need them.

Telemedicine appointments similarly reduce costs by eliminating the overhead associated with in-person visits. Without the need for physical office space, administrative staff, and other overheads, telemedicine platforms can provide care at a lower price point with shorter wait times. As a result, patients are empowered to seek care when they need it, without worrying about navigating the maze of insurance approvals or high copays.

Perhaps one of the most profound impacts of the telemedicine and on-demand lab testing revolution is the increased access to healthcare for underserved communities. In rural areas and regions with limited healthcare infrastructure, access to specialists and timely diagnostic testing has historically been a major challenge. Residents may have to travel long distances to see a doctor, and specialist appointments may be few and far between.

Telemedicine bridges this gap by bringing healthcare directly to patients, no matter where they live. Whether it's a remote town or an urban area with limited access to specialists, telemedicine allows patients to connect with doctors from across the country. For individuals in underserved communities, this increased access can be lifesaving, offering a lifeline to those who might otherwise forgo medical care due to distance or cost.

On-demand lab testing also plays a crucial role in improving access. With the ability to order tests online and visit local labs, patients in rural areas can now receive timely diagnostics without the need for lengthy commutes or multiple appointments. In some cases, mobile clinics and at-home testing kits further expand access, ensuring that even the most isolated patients can benefit from the latest healthcare innovations.

NON-PROFIT EVENTS

First Friday @ ArtWorks

Oct. 4, 5:30 - 8:00 p.m., 262 Main St., Salinas

Join us next month for the new exhibition, "Glaze, Stain, Pour: Embodied Alter-Tales," featuring the captivating work of Dani Torvik at ArtWorks @Salinas. The opening reception was held on First Friday, July 5. Invite a friend and don't miss the chance to meet the artist and explore their mesmerizing artwork. You can also enjoy pieces from the studios of Deborah Good, Kenji Tanner, Ekaterina De La Torre, and Shagufta Khan. ArtWorks @Salinas welcomes visitors Fridays through Sundays, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Plan your visit and immerse yourself in a world of creativity and inspiration!

Alzheimer's Association - Salinas Caregiver Support Group

Oct. 9, 12:30 – 2:00 p.m., 1130 San Vincente Ave., Salinas

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

Interim Inc. - The Hoedown Chests for Charity

Oct. 17, 5:00 – 9:30 p.m., 104 W. Carmel Valley Road, Carmel Valley

Grab your cowboy hat, dust off your dancing boots, and prepare for a memorable evening at The Hoedown Chests for Charity, Interim, Inc.'s signature fundraiser. It will be held in the picturesque hills of Carmel Valley at Hidden Valley Music Seminars. This year, it will also include a twist; a general admission ticket will include the opportunity to win one of multiple treasure chests brimming with prizes. Enjoy a delicious barbecue dinner, and dance the night away with your friends. If you can't make it, no problem. You can still purchase a ticket, which includes a chance to win one of the chests. Purchase sponsorships or tickets online at interiminc.org.

Graves Elementary School Harvest Festival and Trunk or Treat

Oct. 25, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., 15 McFadden Road, Salinas

Join us for the Graves Elementary School Harvest Festival & Trunk or Treat on Friday, Oct. 25, from 6:00-8:00 p.m. Enjoy fun games, exciting raffles, delicious food, and plenty of candy. Bring your family and friends for an evening of fall fun and Halloween treats. We look forward to seeing you there. Don't miss out on the festivities!

Rancho Cielo – Jazz at the Ranch

Oct. 18-20, 3:30 – 10 p.m., 710 Old Stage Rd., Salinas

Don't miss the second annual Jazz at the Ranch concert series at Rancho Cielo, featuring a versatile array of talent: blues guitar virtuoso Chris Cain, acclaimed singer-songwriter Sarah McKenzie, renowned SF crooner Nicolas Bearde with Full Spectrum Jazz and the acclaimed 7-piece Latin Jazz Collective with John Nava. And, the one and only Los Lobos! In association with the Monterey Jazz Festival, Jazz at the Ranch provides a unique opportunity to experience the magic of Rancho Cielo while enjoying world-class entertainment. Tickets include parking and heavy apps prepared by Monterey chefs and served by our Drummond Culinary Academy students. Guests can enjoy their appetizers with fine local wine and beer (available for purchase). Best of all, 100% of the proceeds go to Rancho Cielo's Arts and Mental Health programs. Limited tickets are available for purchase at ranchocieloyc.org. Get yours now before they sell out.

Hospice Giving Foundation - Dia de los Muertos Celebration

Nov. 2, 2:00-6:00 p.m., Hartnell College – Student Center

On Saturday, Nov. 2, 2024, Hospice Giving Foundation, in collaboration with Hartnell College and Hijos Del Sol Arts Productions, will celebrate the fourth annual Día de los Muertos event from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. This is a free community gathering to honor and remember our loved ones who are no longer with us. This year, the event features multiple agencies providing information, entertainment, and resources. The afternoon will culminate with a procession, a program filled with music, dance, and song. In addition, the Student Center and Steinbeck Hall will be filled with altars dedicated to the loved ones of our community partners.

Salinas California Women for Agriculture Santana Row Bus Trip

Saturday, Nov. 2, 2024, 7:30 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.

The Salinas Valley Chapter of California Women for Agriculture (CWA) invites you to embark on Salinas Valley's premier shopping experience with 200-plus of your closest girlfriends. The Bus Trip will transport participants in luxury coaches to and from San Jose to enjoy a fun-filled day of shopping and dining at Santana Row. The day begins with a delicious champagne breakfast and concludes with a dinner box to enjoy on the bus ride back to Salinas. Please consider joining us or sponsoring this fabulous event. We are excited for what we can accomplish together to raise funds for our scholarship program for deserving young women in agriculture for the Tri-County area. Please visit our website at https://www.salinascwa.org or contact Cheryl Penrose at (831)710-0394 or cheryl@visveg.com.

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