

 Salinas Valley
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

BUSINESS JOURNAL



Beyond Access: Supporting Neurodivergent Students at Hartnell College page 22

New Opportunities for the Once-Controversial Sun Street Transfer Station page 26



Honorees Selected for the 105th Annual Awards Luncheon Presented by Taylor Farms

By Chamber Staff

You are invited to honor your fellow Chamber members and community leaders at the 105th Annual Awards Luncheon. The luncheon, presented by Taylor Farms, will be held Thursday, April 9, from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at Sherwood Hall in Salinas. The afternoon begins with a vibrant “Networking Power Hour” commencing at 10:00 a.m., presented by Bay Federal Credit Union. With an attendance of nearly 500, the Annual Awards Luncheon is the single largest gathering of business-people in our area.

“The Annual Awards Luncheon is one of the Chamber’s most meaningful traditions,” said Colleen Bailey, President and CEO of the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce. “For 105 years, this event has celebrated the people and organizations that go above and

HONOREES see page 8



Full room at the 4th Annual Legislative Affairs Breakfast.

Public-Private Partnerships Get Promoted as Policy Solution at Chamber’s 4th Annual Legislative Breakfast

By Kevin Dayton, Government Affairs Liaison

In 2023, your Chamber’s Board of Directors decided to try adding a new signature event onto the annual calendar. Members and guests would be invited to a breakfast at which Salinas Valley elected officials would inform business and community leaders about issues of the day.

The event proved popular with membership. Three years later, it continued with a sold-out breakfast on Friday, Feb. 27 at the Hartnell College main campus in Salinas.

Speakers at this year’s legislative breakfast unintentionally developed a theme: involvement of local businesses as partners with local governments and educational institutions can offset negative impacts of federal and state budget cuts.

LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST see page 5



State Sen. John Laird shares updates on state budget and infrastructure.



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The Alisal District: An Important Part of What Makes Salinas Great

By Leonard Batti, SVCC Board Chair

Recently had the opportunity to attend the Alisal Excellence Awards alongside Chamber staff and fellow board members. As Master of Ceremonies Ralph Martinez explained, “The Alisal Excellence Awards

is a community recognition event honoring individuals, local businesses, educators, civic leaders, and organizations that have made significant contributions to the Alisal. The purpose of the awards is to uplift positive leadership, entrepreneurship, education, and community service while strengthening civic pride and intergenerational engagement.”

For years, the event was managed by the Salinas United Business Association (SUBA). After SUBA’s dissolution, City Councilmember Tony Barrera wanted to see the awards continue and asked the Chamber to assist in promoting the event. The awards were held at the Salinas Elks Lodge, and judging by the packed room, our efforts paid off. The event was a great success.

This year’s awardees were:

Businesswoman — Mun Yi, Owner of Alisal Pizzeria

Mun Yi has operated Alisal Pizzeria for more than 30 years. It’s a beloved spot and home to some of the best pizza in Salinas. In addition to providing consistently delicious food, Mun Yi is a



former president of the Monterey Korean American Association. In that role, she helped establish a sister city relationship between Salinas and Seogwipo City in South Korea. She has also supported

classes in Salinas public schools and awarded scholarships to local high school students.

Business — La Plaza Bakery and Café

The Rodriguez family came to Monterey County in 1968 to work in agriculture. They opened their first La Plaza Bakery in Soledad in 1982 and later expanded into Gonzales, Greenfield, and King City. Today, they operate three locations in Salinas, two in the Alisal and one in West Salinas. If you’ve never tried their tres leches cake, you’re missing a real treat. In addition to some of the city’s best cakes, they serve delicious Mexican food, coffee, and cold drinks.

Organization — National Little League

For 21 years, Marisela Perez has served as president of National Little League. A bilingual educator for 26 years, she has dedicated her life to the betterment of Alisal youth and their families. Her impact spans generations, and Salinas is stronger because of her generosity and commitment to our youth.

Community Spirit — Adan Gomez Family

As one of the original founders of SUBA, Adan Gomez and his family have demonstrated a deep commitment to service and community support. Adan has operated his family’s automotive repair shop on Market Street for more than 25 years and serves as president of the nonprofit Tradición por Siempre, which organizes community events such as the El Grito Festival.

Civic Leader — Officer Danny Garcia

Salinas Police Officer Danny Garcia graduated from the Police Academy in 2007. He exemplifies what it means to serve and protect, enforcing the law while remaining deeply connected to the community. As current president of the Police Athletic League, he has coached and mentored more than 3,000 youth, the majority from the Alisal District.

Educator — Superintendent Monica Anzo

Monica Anzo began teaching at an early age. As a second grader at Spreckels School, she would arrive before her teacher and help instruct classmates. From those early beginnings, she went on to become a Supervisor for the Spreckels School District, later joining the Alisal Union School District and eventually rising to the role of Superintendent.

Entrepreneur — Yong Soo Oh

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Larry Samuel of UC Santa Cruz, Monterey County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Deneen Guss, and Hartnell College Superintendent/President Michael Gutierrez.

LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST

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Despite ideological arguments that government should do nothing— or, conversely, do everything—in the middle is the often-neglected observation that We The People are the government.

Government is not a distant elite faction or monarch that rules with superiority. Instead of existing in constant confrontation, businesses and business owners should consider engaging in partnerships with governments.

For your Chamber, such partnerships align with its official vision

of “a thriving, welcoming Salinas Valley where people, families and businesses succeed via economic growth and opportunity.” Here’s how five speakers at the 4th Annual Legislative Breakfast presented this theme:

Hartnell College Superintendent/President Michael Gutierrez

In his introductory welcome to event attendees, Gutierrez declared that college leadership was pleased to see Hartnell College serve for a third year as the host of the Chamber’s Annual Legislative Breakfast. He declared that Hartnell College advances “economic and social mobility through the power of education” in the Salinas Valley.

This purpose for Hartnell College is aligned with the Chamber’s official vision. “When our students succeed, our community succeeds and our employers succeed,” Gutierrez said. He also noted that the end result of human mobility and success is more civil engagement, in which individuals and groups participate in public business to make their communities a

better place.

Hartnell College is getting national recognition for fulfilling its purpose. In 2025, the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education named Hartnell College as an “Opportunity College and University.” This designation recognizes the excellence of Hartnell College in enrolling students from diverse backgrounds to prepare them for attaining quality, well-paying jobs after graduation.

U.S. Rep. Zoe Lofgren

Lofgren talked about her appreciation for the hard-working, strong-knit communities of the Salinas Valley that she began representing in Congress after redistricting in 2020. She says certain federal policies are having negative impacts on the people and economy of the Salinas Valley. These policies include higher tariffs, aggressive tactics for immigration legal enforcement, and spending cuts to social services and health care subsidies. People in her district are struggling to pay high and rising costs for housing, health care, and

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Yong Soo Oh came to Salinas in 1979 and attended Alisal High School. After graduating, he set out to start a business in his community and opened Star Cleaners in 1983. He is a past president of the Monterey Korean American Association and former chairman of the board at Marina Korean School. Yong continues to support the community by awarding scholarships to local high school students.

Humanitarian — Alisal Rotary

Irene Merrill approached Ricky Cabrera and his brother Rolli and encouraged them to start a Rotary Club in the Alisal District. The club has since become a strong force for good, supporting the community by sending 10 students each year to

leadership camp and contributing to international projects focused on students and families. They proudly do all of this with a smile.

Lifetime Achievement — Roberto Del Real

Roberto Del Real came to Salinas at age 16 and worked in the fields alongside his father. He began selling fruit at the local flea market on Sanborn Road and later founded Los Arcos at Acosta Plaza, which became a gathering place for Hispanic leaders. He has helped numerous nonprofit organizations raise funds

“The Alisal Excellence Awards is a community recognition event honoring individuals, local businesses, educators, civic leaders, and organizations that have made significant contributions to the Alisal.

to improve quality of life for local families and has been a major sponsor of the El Grito Festival.

On a personal note, I came to Salinas in January 1980 and quickly joined a softball league that played at Closter Park. After games, we would grab a beer at the Harmony Bar. On Saturday mornings, I’d order pan dulce for the field crews from Leal Bakery.

I shopped at Monte Mart and ordered Friday night dinner from El Pollo Dorado. The Felice brothers cashed my checks at Quality Liquors and Market on Williams

Road, and I repaid them by shopping in their stores.

The Alisal was more than an important shopping district, it was a neighborhood that felt like just another part of home.

One of the great things about working downtown is stepping out of the office on a Friday evening and seeing three generations of families from all parts of our city heading to see a movie at the Maya and possibly grabbing dinner afterwards.

I don’t spend nearly as much time in the Alisal as I once did. I’ve forgotten some of what makes this cultural gem so special, and I plan to change that by rediscovering its vibrant shops and restaurants. We are stronger as a community when we take the time to experience every part of it. 🌿



U.S. Rep. Zoe Lofgren greeting Chamber members and guests.

basic necessities, but current federal policies seem to make matters worse.

Nevertheless, not all is bad. Lofgren is encouraged by the bipartisan support on the Science, Space, and Technology Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives, for which she is the ranking member (lead member of the minority party on the committee). She also listed some Salinas Valley projects and programs recently receiving federal funding. The Salinas Regional Soccer Complex just received \$500,000. The Salinas City Elementary School District received \$1.5 million to replace ten aging diesel-fueled school buses with zero-emission electric vehicles, Hartnell College received \$2 million for workforce development for jobs related to climate change response and about \$200,000 to upgrade STEM research equipment.

California State Sen. John Laird

Laird is currently the State Senate Budget Committee chair. He noted that federal budget cuts to social services and health care have forced the state to consider ways to replace lost federal funding

sources. For example, cuts in federal health care reimbursements have intensified the ongoing financial distress of many rural hospitals. Watsonville Community Hospital had been regaining financial stability after a transition in 2022 from private to public ownership, but now it's struggling again.

Laird thought specifically about Salinas Valley needs when he recently asked the state legislature to include funding in a proposed statewide housing bond for associated water and wastewater infrastructure. Just providing money for construction ignores the obstacles to building housing outside of major metropolitan areas.

Positive developments on the state level for the Salinas Valley include state funding to expand the California Coastal Trail and develop the San Andreas Wildlife Corridor. Other state actions will help advance the San Lucas Clean Drinking Water Project in southern Monterey County and a wastewater project in San Juan Bautista, where the city's wastewater treatment plant will close and sewage will instead go to the City of Hollister Regional Water Reclamation Facility.

Monterey County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Deneen Guss

Guss is now 10 months away from leaving office, after completing 39 years of service in public education. She observed that "education is not supposed to be political, but it is always political."

Guss outlined challenges facing school districts and schools in Monterey County and in California. Dropping enrollment is a major issue. In Monterey County, enrollment has declined in five years from about 78,000 to 72,000—a drop of about 7%.

Schools are closing, state funding is dropping, and teachers are being laid off because of the student enrollment decline (and the corresponding decline in the critical measurement of Average Daily Attendance). In addition, federal and state budget cuts are forcing school districts to take controversial actions to balance their budgets. Labor unions have responded to

budget cuts by going on strike at some large urban school districts.

Meanwhile, a state law enacted in 2019 (Assembly Bill 218) may put some California school districts in severe financial distress or even state takeover. This law extended the time of civil liability for child sexual assaults. It appears that out-of-state trial lawyers are often disproportionate beneficiaries of

settlements in these claims.

Despite these problems, the Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE) and its Board of Education also report positive news, especially concerning public-private partnerships that supplement taxpayer-funded projects and programs. One example is a \$1.5 million donation from Taylor Farms for professional training of teachers on reading instruction. Another is the financial support of aviation acrobat Sean D. Tucker for career technical education that allows students to prepare to become airplane pilots. Other public-private partnerships are providing outside

Speakers at this year's legislative breakfast unintentionally developed a theme: involvement of local businesses as partners with local governments and educational institutions can offset negative impacts of federal and state budget cuts.



Kaiser Permanente and guests.

support for programs in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), including instruction related to ag-tech (agricultural technology).

In addition, the Monterey County Office of Education is offering students an electronic career exploration platform called Gladeo. This allows students to explore career opportunities in the region and find ways to remain here after completing their education. Employers and students are able to use Gladeo without charge. Local businesses interested in being connected on this platform should contact Monterey County Office of Education Communications & Public Relations Officer Teri Pimentel at tpimentel@montereycoe.org or at (831) 784-4245.

For the public, the Monterey County Office of Education offers a program called "Inside Education Monterey County." Participants visit school sites to obtain a first-hand, interactive look at local educational programs, services, and partnerships implemented through the collaboration of the Monterey County Office of Education and the county's 24 local school districts and eight charter schools.

Finally, the Monterey County Office of Education will soon start construction of its West Campus

Professional Development Center on Blanco Road. This \$42.8 million facility will include a 500-seat meeting room that organizations will be able to lease for use.

Salinas Mayor Dennis Donohue

Donohue described Salinas as an American "urban petri dish" where multi-lingual, multi-national residents are involved with a multi-national trade-based economy. Salinas and Monterey County show consistent strength in economic development that includes innovative new ideas, services, products, or models to respond to current social and environmental challenges.

He cited several exciting upcoming developments for the region, including the Amazon distribution facility in South Salinas, the start of housing construction in the North of Boronda Future Growth Area (FGA), the Archer Aviation flight test program in Salinas and the Joby Aviation research and development facility in Marina, and the California Advanced Air Mobility Corridors Initiative (CAAMCI). He cited the Salinas Regional Soccer Complex as a regional youth sports destination that the city can use to attract hotels and other hospitality elements.

While mentioning the importance of ongoing ag-tech activity,



Jesus Benitez of Benitez Security Services, Inc. and County of Monterey District 3 Supervisor Chris Lopez.

including the Reservoir Farms incubator, Donohue noted that ag-tech research and development needs to evolve into related but diverse industries, including biotechnology.

Salinas should be exporting vegetables and not its young people. To improve regional affordability, Donohue emphasized the benefits of potential public-private partnerships, including projects and programs listed by earlier speakers. He emphasized that any serious efforts to improve water infrastructure and wastewater infrastructure will require such partnerships.

Housing is an additional policy

priority for Donohue. He was encouraged by the series of housing summits in the last half of 2025 meant to devise strategies for increasing housing supply for people of all incomes.

Economic development in the City of Salinas will be "delayed, denied, and diminished" unless the city can respond adequately to public demand for better infrastructure and housing that's reasonably affordable. Attendees and Chamber members should consider how businesses can play a pro-active role toward positive change in Salinas and the Salinas Valley. 🌱



Church Brothers Farms and Granite Construction Team.



Sophia Schwirzke of Central Coast Community Energy and Seaside Mayor Ian Oglesby.

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beyond to support our local economy and community.”

The following individuals and organizations are being recognized for their significant contributions to our community:



Outstanding Small Business of the Year: Salad Shoppe

Salad Shoppe has been a cornerstone of healthy dining and community support in the Salinas Valley for nearly 40 years, offering fresh salads, soups, wraps, and sandwiches alongside the largest self-serve salad bar in Monterey County. Celebrated locally for its quality, friendly service, and commitment to nutrition, Salad Shoppe has earned a strong reputation with consistently high customer ratings.

The business was originally opened in 1986 by a daughter of the iconic Antle produce-growing family, one of the pioneering agricultural families of the Salinas Valley. What began as an open-air produce market that offered fresh salads as an option quickly evolved into a beloved destination for wholesome meals built around the region's abundant fresh produce.

Today, owners and operators since 2010 — Chuck Hague, Josh Gentle, and Dave Bigham — continue that tradition. Gentle, who began working at Salad Shoppe as a teenager and now serves as partner and day-to-day manager, reflects a deep personal and professional commitment to the business and its role in the community.

Salad Shoppe's impact extends well beyond its menu. The business has demonstrated a longstanding commitment to supporting local schools, youth activities, and arts programs, while also contributing to community initiatives through

organizations such as the Gen Giammanco Foundation, Relay For Life of the Salinas Valley, and numerous other nonprofit efforts. These contributions reflect a sustained dedication to strengthening the well-being and cultural vitality of the Salinas Valley.

As Salad Shoppe approaches four decades of service, it continues to represent the very best of what a local small business can be — rooted in the agricultural heritage of the Salinas Valley, committed to fresh and healthy food, and deeply invested in the well-being of the community it serves.



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Outstanding Large Business of the Year: K&D Landscaping

Founded in 1986 as a humble, small-family operation, K&D Landscaping has grown into a \$20 million regional leader without losing its core values. Driven by deep local roots, K&D launched its Community Beautification Projects in 2016 to give back to the region that built them. Since then, they have beautified over 35 nonprofits, investing more than \$200,000 last year alone to ensure the community thrives. K&D is also championing water conservation efforts through their Annual Central Coast Water Summit since 2022.

Today, K&D is redefining the industry with California's first Level 5 autonomous commercial fleet and 100% electric handheld tools. Even amidst this rapid technological advancement, they fiercely protect a supportive, people-first company

culture. This unwavering commitment to employee well-being allows K&D to proudly sustain an 85% employee retention rate in an industry historically plagued by turnover.

Looking ahead, they are expanding toward the Bay Area and San Luis Obispo County with a vision to become a \$1 billion company by 2035. As they build a path to a \$100,000 minimum salary for their team, the ultimate mission of K&D remains clear: to raise the bar in the landscaping.



Businesswoman of the Year: Chris Morello, Monterey Regional Airport

Chris Morello is an accomplished aviation executive with 18 years of experience in airport management and strategic leadership at Monterey Regional Airport, where she has served since 2008. She was appointed as Executive Director following a nationwide search, becoming the first woman to lead the airport in its 84-year history. Chris previously served as Deputy Executive Director of Planning and Marketing, guiding critical initiatives across planning, operations, maintenance, marketing, environmental sustainability and external communications.

Throughout her tenure, Chris has directed master planning efforts; overseen environmental, design, and numerous complex major construction programs; and managed diverse airport departments including planning, aviation operations,

property management, multimedia, permitting, police, fire, and maintenance.

A key leader in the airport's long-term modernization, Chris played a central role in securing approval for the Airport Master Plan and spearheading the multiphase Safety Enhancement Program, which has delivered a new General Aviation Ramp and facilities, Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting facility, Commercial Apron, and is advancing the construction of a new replacement terminal building along with the associated passenger circulation and parking facilities.



Agricultural Leadership: Brian Church, Church Brothers Farms

Church Brothers Farms is a family-owned grower-shipper of fresh vegetables rooted in the Salinas Valley. Founded in 1999 by brothers Tom and Steve Church, the company was built on generations of farming experience and a commitment to innovation, quality, and integrity in agriculture. Over the last 26 years, Church Brothers Farms has grown into a vertically integrated company producing a wide range of fresh vegetables and value-added products for retail and foodservice customers throughout North America.

In 2017, Tom's son Brian assumed the role of Chief Executive Officer, continuing the family's legacy while guiding the company into its next phase of growth. While many agricultural leaders build their

reputation in boardrooms, Brian is best known for his expertise in the field, particularly the harvesting side of the business.

Early in his career, Brian recognized that controlling harvest operations would be critical to improving product quality and operational efficiency. He led the development of Church Brothers' in-house harvesting program, a move that transformed the company into a fully integrated operation creating greater control from the soil to the customer. That decision has since become a cornerstone of the company's operational strategy.

Brian also led the expansion of the company's agricultural operations into Central and Northern Mexico, and most recently finalized the acquisition of Mann Packing's key assets and operations from Fresh Del Monte Produce, marking a major expansion of Church Brothers' retail and value-added capabilities.

Giving back has long been an important part of the Church Brothers culture. The company actively supports agricultural education, youth leadership and sports programs, and workforce development initiatives that are helping to grow the next generation of agricultural professionals. Through scholarships, partnerships with local organizations, and community engagement, Church Brothers Farms is committed to creating opportunities for young men and women pursuing careers in agriculture.



Spirit of the Community: Food Bank for Monterey County

The Food Bank for Monterey County (FBMC) is a critical lifeline, serving one in three children, one



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— Colleen Bailey, President and CEO of the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce

in three seniors, and one in four residents each month. Across 3,700 square miles, FBMC supplies the food to over 160 nonprofit partners and have over 100 Food Bank monthly distribution sites, delivering more than 30 million pounds of food annually. Half of this is fresh, locally sourced produce — made possible through local produce purchases and ag partner donations that would otherwise go to waste. FBMC's commitment to nutrition and sustainability has made the organization a trailblazer; no other California food bank rivals FBMC's level of fresh produce distribution.

FBMC doesn't just fill empty plates — they transform lives by addressing the root causes of hunger. FBMC's diverse programs, outlined below, recognize that hunger is often intertwined with broader socioeconomic challenges, and they offer holistic solutions to address these challenges. Examples of their innovative programs include FBMC's Pediatric Diabetes Program, Maternal Health Program, and Medically Tailored Grocery Program, have made significant inroads into reducing the risk and incidence of Type 2 diabetes in our most vulnerable populations.

FBMC emphasizes culturally appropriate foods and traditional recipes in the foods they provide through their distributions and nutrition education classes and in

the hot meals they serve from their food truck and produce truck.



Citizen of the Year: Monica Tovar, TMD Creative

Monica Tovar is the President and CEO of TMD Creative, a full-service marketing firm she acquired in 2022. Under her leadership, TMD empowers businesses, nonprofits, and public organizations to enhance their mission and connect their community through high-impact visual storytelling and strategic communications.

As an advocate for Monterey County, Monica has served on multiple boards, including the Salinas Valley Health Foundation, the Monterey County Rape Crisis Center, and the Big Sur Land Trust. She currently serves as Board Chair for the United Way of Monterey County as well as Vice Chair of CASA of Monterey County. Monica received the 2023 Perry Flicker Nonprofit Ally Award by the Nonprofit Alliance of Monterey County in recognition of her outstanding partnership and advocacy within the nonprofit sector. Monica has been dedicated to cultivating the next generation of leaders—a mission she has championed since 2011 as a mentor for Hartnell College's Women's Education & Leadership Institute.

At home, Monica celebrates nearly 30 years of marriage to her husband, William, and takes greatest pride in their three children: Xavier, Yasmin, and Isaac.



Ambassador of the Year: Manny Escarcega, West Coast Community Bank

Manny has proudly served as a Chamber Ambassador for over four years, representing the organizations he's been part of with professionalism and heart. With over 20 years in banking, currently with West Coast Community Bank as a Treasury Management Advisor and previously a Branch Manager with Bay Federal Credit Union, Manny brings strong financial expertise and a relationship-focused approach to his role.

He is a consistent presence at mixers, ribbon cuttings, signature events, and volunteer initiatives, always stepping up to support members and Chamber efforts. Most notably, Manny recently served as Co-Chair of the Chamber Foundation's Children's Shopping Tour, helping lead one of SVCC Foundation's most impactful community programs. His leadership, organization, and dedication were instrumental in creating a meaningful experience for local children and families. Manny also serves as Treasurer for Leadership Monterey County.

Manny also supports his family's restaurant, Tacos Al Fuego, reflecting his passion for small business and local entrepreneurship. A Salinas Valley native and Palma High School alumnus, he remains deeply connected to the community he calls home.

A devoted family man, Manny is a proud father of four children, ages 4, 10, 11, and 25, and shares his

life with his fiancée, Evelyn. Family remains at the center of his motivation to serve, lead, and give back to his community.

Manny exemplifies the spirit of ambassadorship, engaged, dependable, and always willing to serve and step forward.

Anniversaries in 2025: Member Businesses celebrating 10, 25, and 50 years of Chamber membership will also be honored for their longstanding partnership with the Salinas Valley Chamber.

We are honored to extend a warm "THANK YOU!" to our sponsors, whose support make this event possible (as of the publication deadline):

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Maximizing Retirement Plan Liability Protection

By Ryan Hastie, Hastie Financial



Over the years, the 401(k) plan has become the retirement plan of choice for many companies. Once the employer adopts the plan, however, they accept a myriad of responsibilities (and liabilities) they probably never anticipated.

It's commonplace for employers, especially smaller companies, to delegate many of the day-to-day responsibilities of administering the plan and managing the plan's investments.

Regarding plan investments, the Department of Labor (DOL) gives plan sponsors/trustees the fiduciary responsibility of developing and implementing a prudent process to select, monitor and replace (as needed) investments available to plan participants. The legislation that governs all employer-sponsored retirement plans, The Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA), affords trustees the ability to offload investment-related risk in one of two ways.

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

The second option allows the plan sponsor to completely relieve themselves of investment-related liability for the plan by hiring an ERISA 3(38) Investment Manager. In this arrangement, the Investment Manager serves

as chief investment officer (CIO) to select, monitor, and replace funds without any direction or input from the trustee. Within this arrangement, the plan sponsor delegates all investment oversight to the Investment Manager.

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

It's commonplace for employers, especially smaller companies, to delegate many of the day-to-day responsibilities of administering a 401(k) plan and managing the plan's investments.

VICES often include accepting the fiduciary responsibility for performing the vast majority of plan administration: maintaining plan documents in accordance with IRS/DOL regulations, tracking employee eligibility, ensuring communications meet DOL requirements, performing nondiscrimination testing, and sending required participant notices.

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

What plans make the best candidates to retain a 3(16)

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

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

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



Getty Images



Support our Chamber Members

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

Member Name	Member Since	Member Name	Member Since
SSB Construction	1957	State of California, Department of Rehabilitation	2016
Bronco Van & Storage	1973		<i>*10 Years*</i>
DeSerpa Investments, LP	<i>*50 Years*</i> 1976	The Home Depot	<i>*10 Years*</i> 2016
T. Bob Uemura, Attorney At Law	1989	United Site Services	2016
Driscoll's, Inc.	1990	The Outdoor Market / El Mercado Popular	2017
Alliance on Aging	2001	Top 10 Produce LLC	2017
Monterey County Weekly	2001	Haupt & Associates	2018
Corral de Tierra Country Club	2009	Western Growers Center for Innovation & Technology	2021
La Plaza Bakery & Cafe-N Sanborn Rd	2009	El Estero Car Wash	2022
BookKeeping Central	2011	Kaiser Permanente	2022
California Welcome Center - Salinas	2011	One Plant Salinas	2022
Hastie Financial Group	2012	Victory Mission	2022
INOSOT Financial and Health Coaching Centers	2013	Envision Initiative	2023
Alternative Dispute Resolution APC	2014	mmjumpers & party rentals LLC	2023
Coast & Valley Properties Inc	2014	Vallarta Super Markets	2023
GT Monterey, dba Main Event Transportation	2015	Ghosxt LLC	2024
Monterey County Film Commission	2015	Heidi Sparre Powur Independent Solar Consultant	2024
Salinas Valley Ford Lincoln	2015	Amazon	2025
Harmony At Home	<i>*10 Years*</i> 2016	Deli-Cafe 3 Hermanos	2025
Madonna Gardens Assisted Living & Memory Care	<i>*10 Years*</i> 2016	Four J Aesthetics	2025
Scholl & Arensdorf, LLP	<i>*10 Years*</i> 2016	Integris Wealth Management	2025
		The Club at Crazy Horse Ranch	2025

A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR VISIONARY AND STAKEHOLDER MEMBERS





The Monterey Motorsports Festival Returns in August 2026

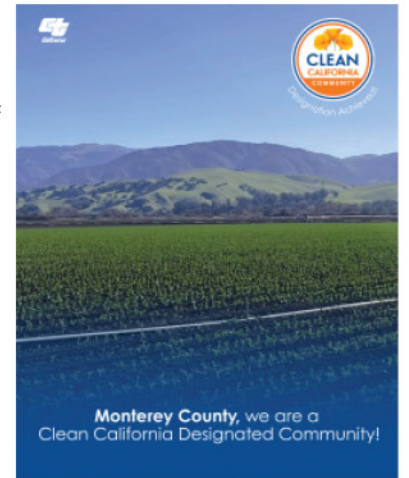
The Monterey Motorsports Festival returns to the Monterey County Fair & Event Center on Saturday, Aug. 15, 2026, bringing together automotive enthusiasts, collectors, industry leaders and families for a high-energy celebration of car culture on California's Central Coast. Set against the backdrop of Monterey's renowned automotive week, the festival features an impressive display of classic and exotic vehicles, hypercars, race cars, custom builds and emerging automotive technology, alongside live entertainment, gourmet food and beverage experiences, sponsor showcases and interactive exhibits. Designed as an accessible and dynamic event for both seasoned collectors and first-time attendees, the Monterey Motorsports Festival blends innovation, craftsmanship and community, positioning itself as a must-attend highlight of the summer motorsports calendar. In addition, the festival proudly welcomes back its nonprofit partner program, offering local and regional organizations the opportunity to participate in the event while raising funds for their missions. Through dedicated ticket codes, promotional partnerships and community engagement opportunities, participating nonprofits can generate meaningful support while connecting with thousands of attendees during one of Monterey County's most exciting automotive celebrations.



Monterey County Officially Earns Unique Designation as Clean California Community from Caltrans' Clean CA initiative

The designation reflects the County's role as a leader in California's Zero Litter movement to reduce litter and keep all parts of the state as clean, healthy and beautiful as possible. Comprised of local city and county agencies, industry leaders, law enforcement, agricultural businesses, and community activists, Monterey County's Illegal Dumping and Litter Abatement Task Force (IDLATF) strives to reduce illegal dumping in the county through a unified effort of education, enforcement, increased recycling, funding of clean-up activities, and community collaboration.

Founded in 1996, the IDLATF developed the County's Disposal Voucher Program, the first of its kind. This unique partnership between Monterey County Environmental Health Bureau, Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority, and ReGen Monterey offers free disposal of litter and illegally dumped material for community clean-up events and victims of illegal dumping. On average, Monterey County removes approximately 200 tons of illegally dumped waste annually from County roads at a cost of over \$300,000. In 2024, Monterey County increased illegal dumping fines from \$100, \$200, and \$500 for each subsequent offense to \$2,500, \$5,000, and \$10,000. In the same year, the IDLATF launched its Pilot Camera Surveillance Program to strengthen enforcement initiatives by holding perpetrators accountable with administrative citations and fines. The Clean California Community Designation Program is part of Gov. Gavin Newsom's \$1.2 billion Clean California initiative, which was launched in 2021 by Caltrans to clean up, reclaim, transform, and beautify public spaces statewide. The program was developed in partnership with Caltrans, Keep America Beautiful and Keep California Beautiful. To earn the Clean California designation, Monterey County completed at least 10 of 15 criteria to clean up and beautify the County, including quarterly litter clean-up events hosted by the IDLATF, informative social media campaigns, infrastructure to support the County Mandatory Garbage collection, community clean-up events hosted by local franchised haulers, Blue Zones Certification, and expansion of the County's Roadside & Litter Abatement Services.



Housing Authority of County of Monterey Hosted Its First Program Coordinating Committee Meeting for the Family Self Sufficiency Program

The FSS program is a voluntary, five-year initiative offered to eligible participants of the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV). Its primary goal is to help families make measurable progress toward economic independence so they may reduce or eliminate reliance on welfare programs, decrease their need for rental assistance, and achieve personal and financial goals for a brighter future. What does FSS offer? Personalized case management or coaching: Participants receive guidance and support, including information about local resources and opportunities, to help them make informed decisions and achieve their self-sufficiency goals.

FSS escrow savings account: As participants' earnings increase from earned income and their portion of rent rises, the Housing Authority deposits the amount that the rent increased into a special FSS account. Over time, this account grows, allowing participants to accumulate savings as a reward for their progress.

What is the purpose of the Program Coordinating Committee? The PCC plays a vital role in supporting the FSS program. It brings together community partners, service providers, and stakeholders to align resources, foster collaboration, and improve service delivery. Involvement in the PCC offers significant professional development opportunities, enhances strategic influence, and enables members to make a meaningful community impact.

PCC members work together to identify funding opportunities and may collaborate on joint grant applications. Additionally, the committee serves as a forum for networking and sharing best practices. If you are interested in joining the Program Coordinating Committee, please contact them for more information. The next PCC meeting is scheduled for July 2026.





Monterey County Bank Unveils New Brand Identity

Monterey County Bank (MCB), a pillar of the local financial landscape since 1977, announced the launch of its new logo and brand identity today. The refresh comes under the guidance of new leadership and serves as a visual testament to the bank's mission: Strong Foundations, Personal Connections. As the banking industry faces a wave of national mergers and consolidations, MCB positions itself as the stable, independent alternative for Monterey County residents and business owners.

"Our new look is much more than just a logo change; it represents the new Monterey County Bank, our commitment to all of Monterey County, and the energy our team has brought to serving our community," said Bill Wilson, President and CEO of Monterey County Bank. "MCB is on a growth trajectory while proudly continuing the personal touch that has defined us for nearly 50 years. We are here to provide the reliability our community deserves."

The bank will introduce a refreshed digital presence and a new website built for speed and simplicity. These visual changes pave the way for a deeper technological transformation, including a reimagined mobile app designed to make financial management effortless. By implementing new digital channels, MCB is ensuring that local families and businesses enjoy the convenience of global banking standards without losing the personalized care of a community institution.

While these advancements offer a more streamlined experience, the Bank's dedication to its community remains constant. Customers can expect the same dedicated Relationship Managers and personalized service they have trusted for decades, now backed by a modernized vision for community banking. By marrying nearly five decades of experience with a forward-thinking strategy, Monterey County Bank is strengthening the foundations that will support our community for decades to come.



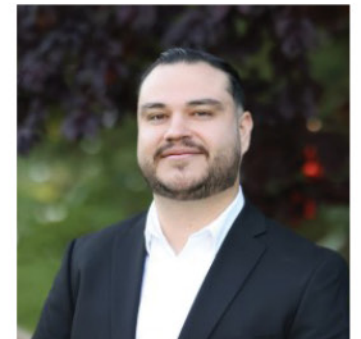
Bay Federal Credit Union Announces New Leadership in Capitola and Watsonville

Bay Federal Credit Union announced the promotion of Art Ruvalcaba and appointment of Maribel Maldonado to Assistant Vice President, Branch Manager roles, reflecting the organization's continued investment in developing strong internal leaders and supporting long-term growth across its branch network. In their new roles, Ruvalcaba will serve as Branch Manager of the Capitola Branch, while Maldonado will serve as Branch Manager of the Watsonville Branch. Ruvalcaba has advanced through several leadership roles in his time with Bay Federal, including Financial Services Officer and Lead Financial Services Officer. He began his financial services career in 2018 and brings a strong foundation in consumer banking, relationship building, and team development.

"My career has been shaped by organizations that value people, service, and accountability," said Ruvalcaba. "From learning discipline and teamwork early in my career, to developing financial expertise and now growing as a leader at Bay Federal Credit Union, I am excited to continue building strong teams, supporting our members, and contributing to Bay Federal's long-term success in my new role as AVP, Branch Manager."

Maldonado brings 25 years of banking experience to her role. Most recently, she served as Assistant Vice President, Branch Manager of the Salinas Branch. Prior to that, she successfully led the Aptos Branch for two years and previously served as Interim Branch Manager at Bay Federal's flagship Capitola Branch.

"I am excited to lead the Watsonville team with purpose, stability, and heart," said Maldonado. "I'm honored to bring my experience and passion for employee development, team morale, and exceptional member service to the branch." Outside of work, Maldonado enjoys spending time with her husband and three children. Together they enjoy camping, hiking, and spending time outdoors. Ruvalcaba enjoys traveling with his fiancé, spending time at the beach, and staying active, and is passionate about personal growth and leadership development.



Art Ruvalcaba

Monster Truck Throwdown Roars into Salinas Sports Complex on Sunday, June 14

The Monster Truck Throwdown will roar into the Salinas Sports Complex on Sunday, June 14, delivering high-flying stunts, car-crushing power, and nonstop excitement to the Central Coast. Fans can expect an all-new, larger, and more challenging track designed to push drivers and machines to the limit, along with the notorious Farmer 500 race, with some new twists this year. Tickets are on sale to the public exclusively at <https://www.carodeo.com/events/2026/monster-truck-throwdown>. The event is presented by Gold Star GMC.

TICKET INFORMATION:

- Box Seats (Ages 2+) – \$45
- West & North Grandstands – Adult & ADA (Ages 13+) – \$32
- Kids (Ages 2-12, except box seats) – \$15
- Monster Meet Up Pass – \$10 (Must be purchased separately and must accompany an event ticket; get up close to the trucks and drivers.)

"This year's Monster Truck Throwdown is shaping up to be bigger and better than ever," said Sam Jenkinson, Chairman of the California Rodeo's Monster Truck Committee. "We invite families to come out early, experience the Monster Meet Up, enjoy lunch at the complex, and settle in for an afternoon of high-energy, adrenaline-packed action when the show begins at 2 p.m."

Truck Lineup:

- Vendetta
- Jurassic Attack
- Velociraptor
- Dirt Crew
- Farmageddon
- Blockhead
- Shell Shocked
- West Coast Legend –
- Dragon Slayer





MEMBER NEWS

Life Time Sea Otter Classic Returns to Monterey on April 16-19

The Life Time Sea Otter Classic returns to WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca April 16-19, transforming Monterey County into the center of the cycling, trail running and outdoor recreation world. Widely recognized as the largest cycling and outdoor sports festival in North America, the Life



Time Sea Otter Classic brings together elite competition, grassroots participation, family programming and a massive interactive expo in one four-day experience.

The event is owned and produced by Life Time, the nation's premier healthy lifestyle brand and owner of nearly 30 iconic athletic events around the country. The Sea Otter Classic features professional and amateur racing across road, gravel, mountain, downhill, dual slalom, eMTB and criterium disciplines, Family Bike Day, kids' races, balance bike rallies, youth programming, and one of the largest outdoor sports expos in the world.

New in 2026, the weekend will also include the Sea Otter Trail Run with 5K and 17K distances through the trails of Laguna Seca. Built around more than competition, Sea Otter is about creating a place where elite athletes, families, kids, and everyday outdoor enthusiasts can all participate in their own way. In addition to its athletic impact, the event delivers significant economic benefits to Monterey County during a key spring travel period. Festival grounds open daily Thursday through Sunday.



For more information:
www.salinaschamber.com



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How Goodwill Central Coast Turns Earth Month Into Year-Round Impact

By Goodwill Central Coast Staff

Every April, Earth Day inspires conversations about recycling, conservation and the small choices individuals can make to protect the planet. But at Goodwill Central Coast, sustainability is not a once-a-year campaign. It is a daily practice — one that connects environmental responsibility with something equally vital — opportunity.

Across California's Central Coast, donated clothing, furniture, and household goods move through Goodwill stores in a constant cycle of reuse. To shoppers, the experience may feel like treasure hunting — discovering a vintage jacket, a perfectly worn coffee table, or a unique décor piece. Behind the scenes, however, each item represents something far larger than a bargain.

It represents a pathway to employment.

A different kind of Earth Day story

Earth Month often focuses on what people should stop doing — wasting resources, discarding reusable items, or overconsuming. Goodwill Central Coast offers a different narrative: sustainability as participation.

Every donation extends the life of an item that might otherwise end up in a landfill. Every purchase supports programs designed to help individuals overcome barriers to employment. And every upcycled find becomes proof that environmental action can also strengthen communities.

The organization operates on a simple but powerful model: reuse fuels opportunity.

In 2024 alone, the Goodwill Central Coast community donated more than 27.5 million pounds of

material, diverting nearly 20 million pounds from landfills through resale, recycling, and salvage recovery efforts. Those numbers illustrate the environmental scale of the operation — but they only tell half the story.

Because the true impact begins after the donation is made.

This circular economy has a human center

Revenue generated through Goodwill stores directly funds free employment services across the Central Coast. These programs provide job training, career coaching, digital literacy education, and workforce placement assistance for individuals working to rebuild stability in their lives.

For many participants, the challenge is not a lack of motivation but the presence of obstacles — gaps in employment history, limited access to technology, financial hardship, or other life circumstances that make entering or reentering the workforce difficult.

Goodwill's mission focuses on removing those barriers.

The organization partners with local employers while supporting job seekers with practical tools and guidance, helping transform donated goods into economic

independence for neighbors throughout the region.

It is sustainability measured not only in pounds diverted, but in lives redirected.

Sustainability begins in the closet

The fashion industry produces enormous amounts of textile waste each year, making clothing one of the fastest-growing contributors to landfills. Thrifting offers a simple alternative — one increasingly embraced by younger generations and environmentally conscious shoppers alike.

Shopping secondhand conserves resources, reduces manufacturing demand, and keeps usable items circulating longer. At Goodwill Central Coast, that choice carries additional meaning: it directly supports employment programs.

Earth Month initiatives (like GCC's #ThriftyTreasures Challenge) encourage community members to rethink consumption creatively. Participants transform thrifted finds into personalized fashion, refurbished furniture, or DIY home décor, sharing their projects as examples of reuse in action.

The campaign highlights an evolving mindset — sustainability not as sacrifice, but as creativity.

Each repurposed item tells two stories at once: less waste for the planet and more opportunity for people.

Stores as classrooms for sustainability

For families and educators, Earth Month also becomes an opportunity for learning. Upcycling projects introduce young people to conservation through hands-on creativity, teaching resourcefulness and environmental awareness in tangible ways.

Goodwill stores function almost like informal classrooms, where shoppers discover that responsible consumption can be accessible and affordable. Repairing, repurposing, and donating become everyday habits rather than abstract environmental ideals.

These lessons extend beyond Earth Month. When communities learn to see value in existing resources, sustainable behavior becomes second nature.

Leadership in reuse

As one of the region's largest reuse organizations, Goodwill Central Coast works to maximize the value of every donated item. Goods suitable for resale return to store shelves, while textiles and materials that cannot be sold are redirected into recycling streams whenever possible.

The goal is straightforward: minimize waste and extend usefulness.

But the organization's broader achievement lies in demonstrating that environmental stewardship and social service are not separate missions. They are interconnected solutions.



In 2024 alone, the Goodwill Central Coast community donated more than 27.5 million pounds of material, diverting nearly 20 million pounds from landfills through resale, recycling, and salvage recovery efforts.

EARTH MONTH see page 30



RIBBON CUTTINGS & CHAMBER EVENTS by Chamber Staff



Housing Authority of the County of Monterey Unveils Fairview Apartments
Housing Authority of the County of Monterey celebrated the Grand Opening of its new Fairview Apartments welcoming community members and partners to mark the launch of its new Homekey housing community in Salinas. The event highlighted their role in expanding access to safe, stable housing and underscored the power of collaboration in addressing homelessness. Attendees gathered to recognize the shared commitment between city, county and state partners that made the project possible and to celebrate an important new chapter for the Salinas community.



Ribbon Cutting with Golden State Paint for New Watsonville Location

Golden State Paint Co. celebrated the grand opening of its new Watsonville location with a ribbon cutting at 1405 Freedom Blvd. Guests gathered to recognize the company's continued growth as a locally owned Benjamin Moore retailer known for quality products and strong customer service. The new storefront marked Golden State Paint Co.'s second location and reflected the amazing growth the business has achieved in just two years.



CHISPA Welcomes Community to Celebrate Acquisition of Historic 295 Main St. Building

CHISPA marked a major milestone with a ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating the acquisition of 295 Main St., a historic downtown Salinas property. Over 100 guests joined and heard remarks from distinguished dignitaries about this pivotal milestone and learned more about the partners who helped make this investment in downtown Salinas possible. This acquisition gives CHISPA a forever home to continue its incredible work of building affordable housing throughout the tri-county area.



Lunch & Learn with RVS Technology Group

RVS Technology Group hosted an exclusive Lunch & Learn with the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce. Members gathered to meet the Women of IT from RVS, enjoyed lunch, and gained practical insights on IT, cybersecurity, and proactive systems to help protect their businesses and reduce downtime. The St. Patrick's Day-themed event also featured RVS swag giveaways, shamrock cookies, and other fun surprises.



Ten-Year Anniversary Celebration with Milla Legal Document Services

Milla Legal Document Services celebrated its 10-year anniversary with a Chamber Mixer co-hosted by TMD Creative, bringing members together for an evening of networking and celebration. Guests enjoyed refreshments and drinks while connecting with fellow Chamber members. The celebration marked an important milestone for Milla Legal Document Services, recognizing a decade of service, and highlighted the value of local partnerships and community connection.



Grand Opening of Casa de Esperanza

Dignitaries, key partners, and community members joined to celebrate the completion of Casa de Esperanza, a transformative renovation project in King City that converted the former Days Inn hotel into 45 studio apartments for individuals experiencing homelessness. Located at 1130 Broadway St., this project addresses a critical need for stable, supportive housing in South Monterey County. Casa de Esperanza will help residents maintain housing, access care, and rebuild their lives.

AMBASSADOR SPOTLIGHT DAVID BIELSKER



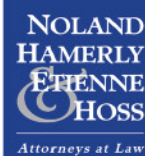
David Bielsker moved from Long Beach to Northern California 2012 to accept a job offer with Monterey-Salinas Transit planning and scheduling bus service for the Monterey County region. David has spent his entire career in the public transportation industry.

Upon arriving here, David discovered that there was a real need for volunteering, and joined the Coast Guard Auxiliary, working on boating safety and marine inspections, as well as to assist with search and rescue efforts when needed. Additionally, David served on the Marina Planning Commission for six years. In 2019, David discovered Salinas up close when asked to volunteer in several political campaigns in the Salinas area. David has enjoyed watching the Salinas area grow, and although living on the Peninsula, he now spends most of his free time here in the Salinas Valley.

He sees great things happening in the region, and is proud to be serving the community as a Chamber Ambassador.



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CHAMBER MEMBER PROFILES

Birchbark Foundation

BirchBark Foundation protects and honors the human-animal bond through financial assistance to vulnerable families faced with unaffordable medical expenses to save the life of a pet, and support for all families with our education and pet loss counseling programs. Financial hardship should never cause the loss of any family pet. Birchbarkfoundation.org, meghan@birchbarkfoundation.org, (831) 471-7255.



Fairwinds Refrigeration and HVAC

Fairwinds Refrigeration & HVAC is a veteran-owned and operated company based in the heart of Monterey, serving the surrounding counties. They specialize in commercial and residential HVAC and refrigeration systems, delivering dependable service, quality workmanship, and reliable solutions tailored to each client's needs. With a strong commitment to integrity, precision, and customer satisfaction, Fairwinds Refrigeration & HVAC provides installation, repair, maintenance, and system optimization services to keep businesses and homes operating efficiently year-round. fairwindsrefrigerationandhvac.com, fairwindsrefrigeration.hvac@gmail.com, (844) 777-9060.



Hampton Inn & Suites

Hampton Inn & Suites is located off Highway 101 in Salinas, within a mile of a range of restaurants. The National Steinbeck Center and Oldtown Salinas are five minutes away. Monterey and Pebble Beach are a 20-mile drive. Enjoy free daily hot breakfast, WiFi, along with a swimming pool. They also have a fitness center and 24-hour convenience store. hilton.com, Linda. Eliopoulos@Hilton.com, (831) 754-4700.



Olivera's Tree Service

Olivera's Tree Service is the top choice in Aromas if you are looking for tree services. They understand the importance of sticking to a budget while still providing high-quality craftsmanship. Their team will work closely with you throughout the project to ensure that the results exceed your expectations while staying within your budget constraints. They specialize in tree removal and tree trimming, as well as tree planting. Their team has worked on countless commercial tree services, ranging from stump grinding and weed cutting to yard cleaning and land clearing. No matter what project you have in mind, we guarantee that our tree experts will bring it to fruition with precision and skill. They strive for excellence in everything they do — no matter how big or small the job may be — because your satisfaction is their top priority! If you're looking for an experienced contractor committed to delivering outstanding results at competitive prices, contact them today to discuss how they can help meet your needs! treeservicearomas.com, oliveras.treeservice25@gmail.com, (831) 588-2585.



Sound Design A/V Contractors

Sound Design is a Licensed, Bonded and Insured, California Contractor (Ca Lic#667282). They specialize in bringing integrated premium products for installation and service into your Monterey County home and/or business. No longer are they just a sound company, they have evolved along with the industry to bring digital system integration to a newer and higher performance level as your go-to smart home automation company. Sound Design can complete anything ranging from remodeling home systems to custom home-theater installations to commercial AV and automation installations. Additionally, they are able to service smart home solutions. For whatever project management wishes you have, they have the experience and tools to fulfill them. Sounddesignav.com, greatservice@sound-designav.com, (831) 422-2350.



Hope is Rising All Around Us

By Pastor T.K. Anderson

There is something special about spring in our community. You can feel it in the air. You can see it in the fields. You can sense it in the longer days, the fresh color, the beginning of harvest activity, and the unmistakable signs of new life all around us. Here in our region, spring is not merely a change in weather. It is a visible reminder that life moves in seasons, and that after the barrenness of winter, growth can come again.



That is one reason Easter means so much.

At its heart, Easter is the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is the reminder that death did not have the final word, darkness did not win, and despair was not the end of the story. Jesus rose from the grave, and because He did, hope is still alive for people like you and me today.

That is not just a theological truth. It is a personal one.

Because Jesus rose, it means that no person is beyond renewal. It means failure does not have to define you. It means grief does not get the last word. It means your past does not have to control your future. It means that when life feels buried under pressure, disappointment, loss, or uncertainty, God still has the power to bring new life out of what looked finished.

That is resurrection power.

Resurrection power means you can get back up after being knocked down. It means broken relationships can begin to heal. It means weary hearts can find strength again. It means people who feel stuck can discover a new beginning. Easter reminds us that God specializes in bringing hope where hope seems lost.

I think that message connects beautifully with this time of year in our community. As our agricultural season begins to take shape, we are surrounded by reminders that growth often starts quietly. Seeds planted out of sight eventually break through the ground. What looked

Spring reminds us not to give up too soon. New growth is often happening beneath the surface before it can be seen above the ground. In both faith and leadership, hope gives us the courage to keep planting, keep serving, keep believing, and keep moving forward.

dormant was not dead. It was simply waiting for the right season.

That truth applies to life, leadership, business, and community.

Many business owners, workers, and families know what it feels like to walk through difficult seasons. There are times when progress feels slow, challenges feel heavy, and the results of your labor seem delayed. But spring reminds us not to give up too soon. New growth is often happening beneath the surface before it can be seen above the ground. In both faith and leadership, hope gives us the courage to keep planting, keep serving, keep believing, and keep moving forward.

That is one of the things I love most about this community. We are surrounded by hardworking, resilient, generous people who understand the value of perseverance. There is a strength in this region that goes beyond industry. It is found in the character of the people who live and serve here every day.

I also want to say how grateful I am to

Hope Rising see page 29

TURN YOUR GOALS INTO REALITY

At Bay Federal Credit Union, we're committed to helping local businesses thrive.



JEFF HEITMANN
AVP, Business Relationship Manager
jheitmann@bayfed.com

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

APRIL 2026

By Kevin Dayton, Government Affairs Liaison



Your Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce Government Relations Committee had 20 members at its meeting on Wednesday, March 11 as it continues to pursue your Chamber's official vision of "a thriving, welcoming Salinas Valley where people, families and businesses succeed via economic growth and opportunity." Here's what they discussed:

1 Committee members declared the sold-out 4th Annual Legislative Breakfast on Feb. 27, 2026, to be a success. Following an introduction by Hartnell College Superintendent/President Michael Gutierrez, attendees heard remarks from U.S. Rep. Zoe Lofgren, California State Sen. John Laird, Monterey County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Deneen Guss, and Salinas Mayor Dennis Donohue.

The committee recommended that the Chamber hold the breakfast again in 2027. See the article about the event in this issue of the Business Journal.

2 The committee recommended to the Board of Directors that the Chamber support Assembly Bill 1941, which would create a new state crime for "organized metal theft." Although a legislative analysis has not yet been prepared for the bill, committee members were encouraged that such a law would give the government greater ability to prosecute organized groups that engage in metal theft.

It's a continual problem in Monterey County for agriculture,

construction, investor-owned utilities, and governments. Chamber representatives will consult with the Monterey County District Attorney's office to ascertain whether this bill will be meaningful and what funding would be needed to implement it.

3 At its next meeting, the City of Salinas Measure G Oversight Committee expects to receive new polling data concerning the potential renewal of the city's Measure G sales tax. A poll was last conducted about Measure G renewal in the spring of 2024. After reviewing the results, the Salinas City Council voted not to proceed with placing a renewal measure on the November 2024 ballot.

On Nov. 4, 2014, 62% of City of Salinas voters approved Measure G, a 1% sales tax measure that extends for 15 years (April 1, 2015 to April 1, 2030). As the expiration year has approached, your Chamber has been closely monitoring Measure G sales tax performance, oversight, and public opinion.

According to a staff report provided to the Measure G Oversight Committee at its Jan. 15, 2026 meeting, expiration of the sales tax in 2030 would result in "a major revenue decline beginning in FY 2030 [Fiscal Year 2029-2030], resulting in significant budget deficits and an estimated 37.8% reduction in revenues." Ending collection of this sales tax would have dramatic impacts on basic city services.

4 Committee members noted the Monterey County Farm Bureau commentary in the March 2026

Business Journal titled "Why is the Farm Bureau Worried About Amazon?" The Farm Bureau is worried about how trucks and commuter vehicles related to the new Amazon distribution center will increase already-existing traffic congestion and safety hazards on city streets and on the South of Salinas Safety Corridor of Highway 101.

There are a few ongoing efforts from local public agencies and private companies to develop and consider short-term solutions to the traffic issues. Amazon is expected to begin full operations at its massive distribution center at the beginning of 2027.

5 Committee members were informed that the Board of Directors took time at its Strategic Planning Retreats on Feb. 6 and Feb. 11, 2026 to discuss the Chamber's candidate endorsement process and its potential hosting of public forums for local candidates. The board also added "transparency" to its official organizational values, as transparent decisions "strengthen trust among members and enhance the Chamber's reputation in the broader community."

The Government Relations Committee is always conscious about documenting and communicating its activities in a transparent manner, including through its monthly detailed report of discussions and discussions that is published in the Business Journal. As an influential leadership organization in the Salinas Valley, your Chamber wants people to know what we're thinking and what we're doing.

6 Several events and discussions related to local housing supply continue in many ways and places, with Chamber representatives involved. These discussions include meetings related to City of Salinas public policies related to housing development: the proposed Vision Salinas 2040 General Plan, the proposed revision of the Economic Development Element of the General Plan, the proposed comprehensive update of the city's Zoning Code, and the 2025 Progress Report of the 6th Cycle Housing Element of the General Plan. In addition, follow-up meetings continue to implement ideas generated at various housing summits held in the second half of 2025.

The Chamber's goal is to see Monterey County move beyond talking about housing to construction and actual occupancy of new housing units, by people of all incomes. Housing that's affordable to ordinary people is essential for economic growth and quality of life.

7 To enhance public accountability on new housing supply, the Government Affairs Liaison will once again produce an easy-to-read table for the Business Journal showing the



status of the City of Salinas and other local governments in achieving their Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) goals for the 6th Cycle (2023-2031). He noted the minimal construction of any moderate-income housing, thus giving this category of housing the moniker of “missing middle.”

Committee members asked the Government Affairs Liaison to prepare a comprehensive table for publication in the Business Journal that lists infill housing developments for all income levels that have been built or proposed locally since the Great Recession, with special focus on housing that’s below market rate. Some members are aware that Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) have become a major component of new housing in Salinas.

8 Committee members discussed additional housing issues for the Chamber to investigate in the City of Salinas: (1) residential structures that sit vacant and blighted for years; (2) newly-constructed Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) that are used as short-term rentals (STRs) rather than residences; and (3) the detrimental impacts of inclusionary housing policies (that is, mandates on developers to set-aside a certain percentage of units in newly-constructed multi-family buildings for residents with incomes below the median).

The Government Affairs Liaison noted that all three of these issues are controversial, and public policy proposals to address them attract passionate support and opposition from various interested parties. He will prepare an analysis of these issues for the Government Relations Committee to review at its April 2026 meeting.

9 There is nothing new to report concerning the possible future

rehabilitation and revitalization of Sherwood Hall in the City of Salinas. Some creative ideas for this facility and the surrounding neighborhood were discussed at the recent Board of Directors Strategic Planning Retreats and the last Board of Directors meeting. The City of Salinas has Sherwood Hall on its list of future projects, but it is not a top priority at this time.

10 However, streets and water and wastewater infrastructure are top priorities for the City of Salinas in 2026. On June 5, 2026, a summit will be held on the future of City of Salinas infrastructure, and it will be open to the public. The City of Salinas does not have enough locally generated funding for needed infrastructure improvements, so it will need to consider public-private partnerships (P3s) and a more aggressive quest for federal and state grants.

11 Chamber members continue to note how much municipal wastewater, drainage water, and industrial wastewater from the City of Salinas is going to the Monterey One Water (M1W) regional wastewater treatment and recycling plant for subsequent conveyance to the Seaside Groundwater Basin. There, it is injected and stored for future extraction and distribution as Monterey Peninsula drinking water. (This is known as the Pure Water Monterey project, which began injecting recycled water into the basin in September 2019 and began expanded production and injection of recycled water at the end of 2025.)

For example, more than 50% of municipal wastewater sent to the M1W regional treatment plant comes from the City of Salinas interceptor pipeline. Industrial wastewater goes to the regional treatment plant directly from the industrial wastewater conveyance system (through “the shunt”)

and from a pump at Pond 3 of the industrial wastewater treatment plant. “New source” wastewater goes to the regional treatment plant from drainage flows in the Reclamation Ditch and the Blanco Drain. Even a bit of stormwater from South Salinas now goes to the regional treatment plant as a “new source.”

Reimbursement amounts and distribution proportions for City of Salinas industrial wastewater are generally unavailable to the public, although your Chamber has sought for years—without success—to bring transparency and accountability to this wastewater flow when it reaches the regional treatment plant. Some exasperated business and community leaders are now daring to say that perhaps City of Salinas wastewater should be recycled exclusively in the Salinas Valley for exclusive use within the Salinas Valley.

12 Besides problems related to wastewater, committee members discussed the complicated and costly challenges related to water supply. Some Chamber leaders and other business leaders contend that Monterey County has a water distribution and storage problem, not a water scarcity problem. As always—going back to the mid-1800s—there are wet years and there are dry years, and there are very wet years and very dry years. On occasion there is even a normal year, if there is ever truly a “normal” year of rainfall in a Mediterranean climate. But more and better water storage and distribution networks could take advantage of very wet years and neutralize damaging economic and social impacts of a multi-year drought.

13 Committee members were also reminded that the Salinas Industrial Wastewater Treatment Plant and Conveyance System is at

capacity and needs improvements and expansion to comply with waste discharge regulations and also allow additional economic development in South Salinas. Finally, seawater intrusion continues to threaten agricultural wells and ultimately, drinking water wells for the City of Salinas. There is a danger that the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) could intervene in Salinas Valley water management if seawater intrusion is not adequately addressed. Proposed solutions are hindered by money, conflicting and competitive regional interests, anti-growth and anti-capitalist attitudes, and politics.

14 The committee heard about an upcoming Monterey County Board of Supervisors meeting agenda item about placing a “mansion tax” on the November 2026 ballot to pay for workforce housing development. The proposed home sale threshold for this real estate transaction tax is \$10 million, which would therefore apply the tax only to a limited number of exceptional houses along the coast that tend to be purchased by wealthy out-of-area celebrities and foreign nationals. Supervisor Kate Daniels, who represents Monterey, Pacific Grove, Carmel, Carmel Valley, and Big Sur, points out that all of the qualifying residential real estate transactions would be in her district, so it would be fair and just to focus the mansion tax revenue on workforce housing construction in her district. Obviously, there are many issues to be considered during deliberations on this tax. It would not apply to commercial, agricultural, or multi-family properties.

15 The Chamber will be hosting a Lunch and Learn on March 26, 2026 about childcare in Monterey County. The Chamber continues to

Government News see page 29

Beyond Access: Supporting Neurodivergent Students at Hartnell College

At Hartnell College, conversations about student success are increasingly centered on an important question: What does it truly take for every student to thrive once they arrive on campus?

For many students, the first weeks of college bring anticipation and possibility. For neurodivergent students, they can also bring a new set of questions about how to navigate unfamiliar academic and social environments.

Students who identify as neurodivergent, including those on the autism spectrum or with other intellectual or developmental differences, often feel excitement when transitioning from high school to college. However, because schedules are less structured, learning becomes more independent, and students are often responsible for advocating for the support they need, this transition can also be complex.

Recognizing both the opportunity and the responsibility to better support these learners, Hartnell College was recently selected as one of only eight California community colleges to participate in specialized training focused on neurodiversity, intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), and autism through the UCLA Tarjan Center. The center serves as the official consultant to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office on issues related to disability access and inclusive education.

The opportunity quickly sparked something larger.

On Friday, Feb. 27, 2026, Hartnell College's Department of Supportive Programs & Services (DSPS) opened the training to include faculty, counselors, and student support professionals from across Monterey County for what became the inaugural "Beyond Access" workshop. The convening marked the beginning of a hopeful annual regional effort to strengthen collaboration and alignment among institutions working to support neurodivergent students.



During the workshop, participants reviewed local college and county data alongside national trends to gain a clearer picture of both the challenges and the shared opportunity ahead. The discussion highlighted a growing acknowledgment across higher education: when institutions design learning environments that recognize diverse ways of thinking and learning, the entire academic community benefits.

One approach gaining momentum among educators is Universal Design for Learning (UDL), a framework that encourages faculty and program coordinators to design courses that support a wide range of learning styles from the start. Rather than retrofitting accommodations later, UDL invites instructors to build flexibility directly into their teaching.

Small adjustments can make a meaningful difference. Clearer instructions, assignments broken into structured steps, flexible ways for students to demonstrate their understanding, and additional opportunities for practice and feedback can help neurodivergent

learners navigate coursework more confidently. At the same time, these design choices can also enhance the educational experience for all students.

Neurodivergent students bring remarkable strengths to the classroom, including exceptional attention to detail, deep focus in areas of interest, strong analytical thinking, and persistence when tackling complex problems. These qualities highlight why approaches such as Universal Design for Learning are so effective. When courses are designed with flexibility and multiple pathways for engagement, students are better able to apply their unique ways of thinking, problem solving, and exploring ideas. In learning environments built with inclusion in mind, these strengths are not only supported but become invaluable to the entire classroom community.

For Kevin O'Haire, Director of Student Affairs in Hartnell's Department of Supportive Programs and Services, the Beyond Access initiative represents an important step forward.

"Ultimately, the goal of the

Beyond Access effort is to foster a campus environment and a broader regional network where neurodivergent students feel understood, supported, and empowered to succeed," O'Haire said. "Faculty and student services teams are continuing to explore ways to strengthen mentorship, expand support resources, and improve the transition from high school to college."

Looking ahead, Hartnell sees this work as closely tied to preparing students for the workforce. Across industries, particularly in fields such as technology, research, design, and data analysis, employers increasingly recognize the value of neurodiverse talent. By helping students build the confidence and practical skills needed during college, institutions can ensure those strengths translate into meaningful career opportunities and long-term success.

Supporting neurodivergent students effectively requires more than a single program or office. It depends on coordinated efforts across institutions, including faculty, academic and student support services, counseling staff, and community partners. When these groups work together intentionally, they create a network of support that helps students feel connected, confident, and capable as they navigate college life.

That is why the Beyond Access work matters. The initiative brought together educators and student support professionals to align strategies, share knowledge, and strengthen the systems and pathways that help neurodivergent students thrive. It reflects a broader commitment to ensuring that every student who arrives at Hartnell, regardless of how they learn or process information, has the opportunity to connect, contribute, and succeed. 🌱

The Party at Hartnell: Volume 20 LET'S TURN IT UP!

By Esmeralda Owen

The Hartnell College Foundation presents “The Party at Hartnell: Volume 20” with the theme, “Turn It Up!” on May 9, 2026, 2:00 – 6:00 p.m. This is the 20th anniversary celebration of this signature event that has made an extraordinary impact on education and enabled the Hartnell College Foundation to continue its work to champion student success and drive economic growth in the Salinas Valley.

The Party at Hartnell promises to be an inspiring and unforgettable experience featuring live entertainment, exquisite food and wine, and meaningful opportunities to connect with others who share their passion for the community.

“I love The Party at Hartnell! It has meant so much to the college and to the Foundation,” said Dr. Jackie Cruz, VP Office of Institutional Advancement at Hartnell and Executive Director for the Hartnell College Foundation. “Over the years, we have honored leaders in our community who support education, economic opportunity, and mobility and who wholeheartedly believe in our youth and our community.”

Central to the event is the presentation of the prestigious Leadership Award. This year, they are recognizing the more than 60 volunteer committee members who have shaped, stewarded, and elevated Party in the Library, Party Near the Library, and The Party at Hartnell over 20 years.

These committee members have brought the community together to raise more than

\$7 million, but the impact is even greater: every \$1 invested in The Party helps generate \$19 in support



for students — an extraordinary return that enriches the entire community.

“I am so grateful to everyone who has responded to the opportunity to support Hartnell through The Party,” said Susan Gill, co-founder of The Party. “Together, we are making a difference in the lives of students and in the future of our community.”

Just last year, The Foundation awarded more than \$1.2 million in scholarships to more than 1,000 students and contributed \$4.5 million to support college programs. Other special highlights include:

- The Office of Basic Needs serves

more than 2,000 students per semester by providing access to essential services related to food, housing, wellness, and financial stability.

- The Foundation’s K-12 STEAM program served more than 10,000 local students, trained and hired more than 200 teachers, and supported 41 school sites.
- Bright Futures, a cradle-to-career initiative anchored at the HC Foundation, with more than 30 partners, Monterey County families have claimed more than \$11 million in college savings accounts as of December 2025.



Every \$1 invested in The Party helps generate \$19 in support for students — an extraordinary return that enriches the entire community.”

- In partnership with the National Steinbeck Center, the Foundation purchased One Main Street. Plans include expanded educational programming, community and industry event space, and opportunities for innovation.
- In the past two years, Hartnell has increased enrollment by more than 2,700. Plus, in 2024-25, Hartnell served 1,468 dual enrollment students.
- Summer school is more popular than ever! With the first implementation of the Summer Momentum Program in 2025, enrollment growth accelerated last summer to 5,386 students. This is an increase of 18% compared to prior years.
- In 2024-25, Hartnell awarded 2,436 degrees and certificates — a 14% increase from the prior year.

Hartnell College students grow in extraordinary ways, transforming their potential into success through education. With the right resources and support, they grow into future leaders, innovators, and change-makers who strengthen their communities.

For more information about The Party, call 831-755-6810 or visit <https://hartnellfoundation.org/event/party/>.

Yet More Discussion on How to Increase Housing Supply

By Kevin Dayton, Government Affairs Liaison

The Salinas Inclusive Economic Development Initiative (SIEDI) convened its quarterly meeting in Downtown Salinas on March 12, 2026. SIEDI is a coalition of 12 community organizations with “a shared commitment to build a more inclusive and equitable economy for the families and communities of the Salinas Valley.” It is funded by the James Irving Foundation in partnership with the Community Foundation for Monterey County.

While your Chamber does not necessarily agree with every position of every organization in SIEDI, their vision aligns with the Chamber’s official vision of “a thriving, welcoming Salinas Valley where people, families and businesses succeed via economic growth and opportunity.” An area of agreement is recognition that many Monterey County families and communities are struggling to find and keep housing that they can afford.

One likely reason for the lack of affordability is the inadequate amount of new housing units built over the past 25 years. Even with slowed population growth, demand is still exceeding supply. Because more housing construction would theoretically moderate prices and reduce the rate of price increases, one breakout session at the SIEDI meeting focused on new housing supply.

It was a panel discussion moderated by Colleen Bailey, President & CEO of the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce. Panelists were Rene Mendez, Salinas City Manager; Hugh Walker, Vice President of Stonebridge Homes; and Diane Coward, Co-Founder & CEO of Re:Vision West.

City of Salinas Planning and Implementation

As the first panelist to speak, Mendez outlined what the City of

Salinas has been doing and what it plans to do to encourage housing construction for ordinary people. This includes city development of a new General Plan (last approved in its entirety in 2002) and a comprehensive update of zoning laws that will help large and small project applicants to get easier and faster permit approvals.

The new General Plan (called *Visión Salinas 2040*) will be the first to include an Environmental Justice Element, now mandated for the city under a 2016 state law. It will also include a revised version of the original Economic Development Element, which was appended in 2017 to the 2002 General Plan. It will also include the current Housing Element for the 6th Cycle, approved in 2023.

In addition, all of the special plans enacted by the Salinas City Council since 2002 will be incorporated into *Visión Salinas 2040*. Finally, the General Plan incorporates numerous other city and regional plans for various purposes.

Mendez observed that the City of Salinas has attained recognition for its housing policies. It was the first city to get state approval for its 6th Cycle Housing Element. And the City of Salinas remains the only city in Monterey County (as of Jan. 1, 2026) to obtain the state’s official Pro-Housing Designation. (Santa Cruz is the only other Monterey Bay area city to obtain this designation.)

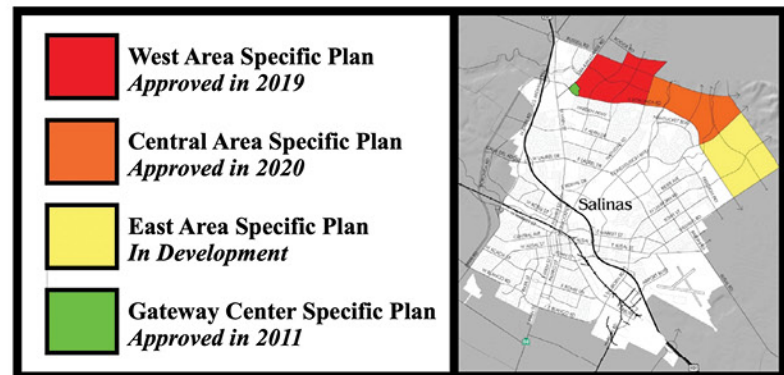
Over the past 10 years, consultants and staff have completed an impressive number of plans now associated with the proposed new General Plan. But the next challenge for the City of Salinas is actually implementing all those plans and converting the goals into accomplishments.

City of Salinas Future Growth Area

Walker, of Stonebridge Homes,



Hugh Walker speaks during the panel presentations. The other panelists were Diane Coward and Rene Mendez.



Location of the North of Boronda Future Growth Area in the City of Salinas.

was the second panelist to speak. His company has been the first applicant to get a housing subdivision approved within the North of Boronda Future Growth Area. He provided a narrative of the 25-year process to get to the point of imminent construction, including a description of the economic and litigation challenges that have delayed construction and increased costs.

His story was an anecdotal explanation of why substantial new housing construction has not occurred in the City of Salinas since the Monte Bella development in the early 2000s. All the plans and dreams for housing become moot when the economy is bad, or when other parties assert their own conflicting plans and dreams.

For the details, read the two front-page stories in the March 2026

Business Journal that report on the city’s Future Growth Area and how California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) lawsuits delayed housing construction for years.

Affordability by Design

Coward, of Re:Vision West, was the final speaker. She has been a leader in multiple campaigns in Monterey County and in California to try to spur more housing construction. Her special focus is “missing middle” housing, the elusive category of housing for households that don’t have incomes low enough to qualify for government assistance but also aren’t financially capable of buying homes at current market prices. These are the people continually leaving California for other states, where they can afford housing and other routine costs of living.

Coward has worked on implementing “affordability by design” models that allow quality housing construction to occur at a speed and at a price that is far less than traditional building models. In addition, she is involved in the creation and testing of alternative financing models that allow housing construction in places where it would normally be prohibitively expensive.

Locally, she has tried to put

words into action with construction of structures using the Shibusa Systems pre-fabrication delivery method. After building a cottage on Cass Street in the City of Monterey as a “proof of concept model,”

Re:Vision West is now using the same building system for construction of a 15-unit project in the City of Marina called Hillcrest Marina and a Phase 2 expansion next to the cottage on Cass Street. Re:Vision West has also pursued workforce housing opportunities with various Monterey County employers. The process from idea to occupancy is difficult.

Sounds Good, But Not Everyone is on Board

As shown during the question-and-answer period, attendees of the breakout session recognized that the optimism about new housing construction conveyed during this panel discussion has to be tempered with acknowledgement of the substantial obstacles. Even at the conference itself, there were people pushing for other directions and other solutions to housing.

For example, some people believe the lack of affordable housing can be best solved by limiting rent increases, and thus making it affordable. Some people are wary of

pre-fabricated assembly and believe housing developers should use traditional construction practices with unionized trade workers who have completed multi-year comprehensive apprenticeship training programs. Some people are skeptical of profit in the housing market and think the public must build and own housing under the umbrella of government or other collective or cooperative arrangements.



As shown during the question-and-answer period, attendees of the breakout session recognized that the optimism about new housing construction conveyed during this panel discussion has to be tempered with acknowledgement of the substantial obstacles.

Finally, lurking outside the conference without a voice was the skeptical general public. For various reasons—some valid and some reprehensible—many Monterey

County residents believe their own communities have enough housing and more than enough people. From this perspective, permit hassles, environmental lawsuits, and restrictive building practices are tools to preserve community character and protect quality of life.

Even low-income residents dread an influx of newcomers who would compete for a limited number of street parking spots and create more traffic congestion at commute times. Contrary to popular opinion, poor people aren’t naturally motivated to support additional housing as a strategy to reduce their housing costs.

Public policy conferences, planning documents, and new legislation alone will not result in new housing. The effort will also need to recruit and train people willing to develop parcels large and small. It will need to soften objections from people who see no personal advantage and much personal disadvantage from having new neighbors. The effort will need to be fought door-to-door and heart-to-heart. 🌱

WHAT’S IN THE VISIÓN SALINAS 2040 GENERAL PLAN?

Elements of the New 2026 General Plan

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- Land Use Element
- Housing Element
- Community Design Element
- Circulation Element
- Noise Element

ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

- Conservation and Environmental Safety Element
- Open Space Element

SOCIOECONOMIC SYSTEMS

- Health and Environmental Justice Element
- Arts, Culture and Youth Element
- Public Safety Element
- Economic Development Element

Specific Plans Incorporated in the New 2026 General Plan

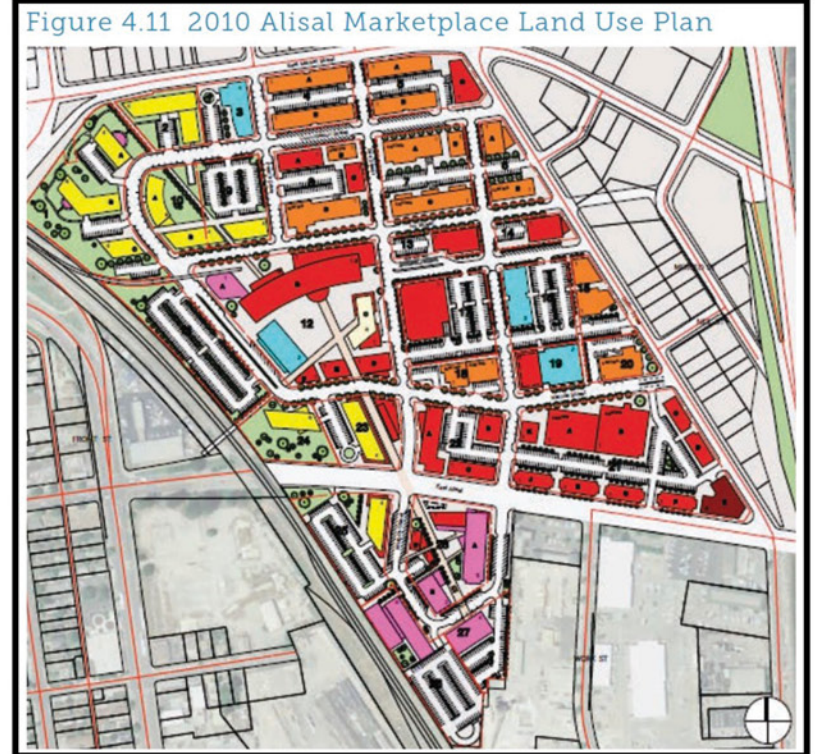
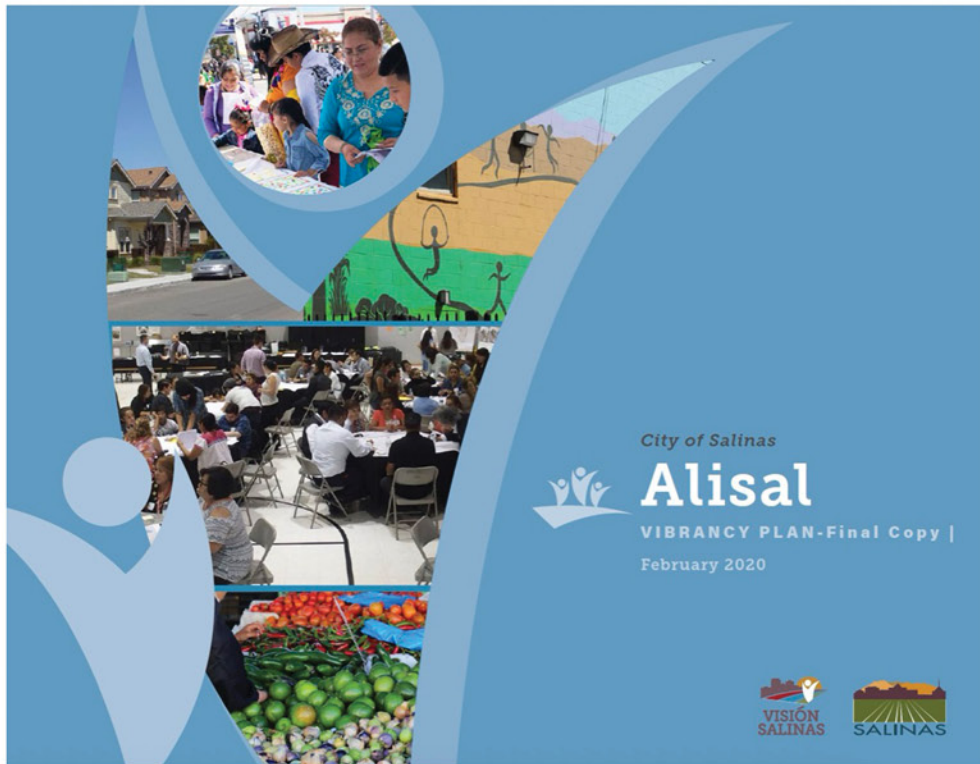
- 2010 Salinas Ag-Industrial Center Specific Plan
- 2011 Gateway Center Specific Plan
- 2015 Downtown Vibrancy Plan
- 2018 Salinas Travel Center Specific Plan
- 2019 Alisal Vibrancy Plan
- 2019 Chinatown Revitalization Plan
- 2019 West Area Specific Plan
- 2020 Central Area Specific Plan
- 2026 East Area Specific Plan Pending

Older Specific Plans Already Implemented and Therefore Not Incorporated in the New 2026 General Plan

- 1988 Harden Ranch
- 1993 Williams Ranch
- 1994 Westridge Center
- 1996 Auto Center
- 1999 Mountain Valley aka Monte Bella
- 2003 Boronda Crossing

Other Incorporated City and Regional Plans Incorporated in the New 2026 General Plan

- 2018 Salinas and Pajaro Valley Farmworker Housing Study and Action Plan
- 2018 Visión Salinas Guiding Principles
- 2018 The Salinas Plan
- 2019 East Alisal Street Corridor Plan
- 2019 Parks, Recreation, and Libraries Master Plan
- 2019 Monterey County Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice
- 2020 Public Art Master Plan
- 2025 Consolidated Plan and Alisal Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy
- 2021 Vision Zero Action Plan
- 2021 Monterey-Salinas Transit Comprehensive Operational Analysis
- 2022 Monterey County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan
- 2022 Safe Routes to School Plan
- 2022 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the Sustainable Communities Strategy
- 2022 180/400-Foot Aquifer Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan
- 2022 Eastside Aquifer Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan
- 2023 Fire Department Long-Range Master Plan
- 2023 Salinas Sanitary Sewer Master Plan Update
- 2024 Alisal District Identity Master Plan
- 2024 Stormwater Master Plan
- 2024 Broadband Master Plan
- 2024 Active Transportation Plan
- 2024 Urban Forest Management Plan
- 2026 Salinas Airport Master Plan
- 2026 Alisal Streetscape Master Plan



The Alisal Marketplace has long been a redevelopment plan for the City of Salinas.

New Opportunities for the Once-Controversial Sun Street Transfer Station in the Alisal

By Kevin Dayton, Government Affairs Liaison

The Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority (SVSWA), also known as Salinas Valley Recycles, has sold the site of its former Sun Street Transfer Station at 135-139 Sun St. to Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST).

Boards of directors of both agencies began discussions about a potential sale and property transfer during closed-session meetings in the summer of 2025. At a closed-session meeting on Dec. 8, 2025, the MST Board of Directors voted to authorize negotiations with SVSWA for a purchase offer not to exceed \$5.975 million for the Sun Street property. Conditions of the purchase referenced in the report from closed session include a commitment for a 4,500-square-foot

community garden and completion of a satisfactory environmental review.

The SVSWA Board of Directors then approved negotiations and potential sale of its property at a closed-session meeting on Dec. 18, 2025. At the time of this writing, the final agreement between the two agencies is expected to be signed by March 31, 2026.

Perspective from the Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority and the City of Salinas: Sale of the Sun Street Transfer Station Site:

24 Years Ago: Choosing the Alisal for Garbage Operations

Upon its formation in 1997, the Salinas Valley Solid Waste

Authority (SVSWA) temporarily used the transfer station at 1120 Madison Lane—then owned by Waste Management (WM) and now owned by Republic Services—for its waste transfer operations. It began seeking an appropriate permanent location.

After studying numerous potential sites and making a failed attempt to purchase the Madison Lane transfer station, SVSWA sought to establish its permanent facility at a former produce cooling, packing and shipping site at 135 and 139 Sun St., within the Alisal/East Salinas business district. SVSWA deemed this site to be ideal because of its centralized location with easy access to Highway 101 and a history of truck traffic.

SVSWA proceeded from 2002 to 2005 to purchase the property, complete an environmental review, and obtain permits. Interim operations began there in 2005 for a limited amount of tonnage per day. It fully opened on Jan. 1, 2008.

Not surprisingly, some residents and business owners did not appreciate the introduction of this busy waste facility into their neighborhood. They had to deal with traffic congestion, noise, and odors. Also, some people observed that a historically disadvantaged community (Alisal/East Salinas) was being further subjected to unpleasant industrial impacts that other neighborhoods would never tolerate.

In addition, the recycling and transfer station was plopped in the

middle of one of the city's redevelopment districts, the Sunset Avenue Redevelopment Project Area, which had been established in 1987 and combined in 1991 with the Buena Vista Redevelopment Project Area. (The other city redevelopment area at the time was the Central City Redevelopment Project Area for Downtown.)

City of Salinas Envisions the Alisal Marketplace

In 2008, the City of Salinas began asking the Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority (SVSWA) to reconsider the location of the recycling and transfer operations so that the city could promote adjacent redevelopment under a concept called the Alisal Marketplace. It suggested moving the facility to a new location at 721 Work St.—a property that Granite Construction Company leases from the City of Salinas for its local asphalt and materials plant.

For the next five years, SVSWA and the City of Salinas considered this move. During this time, the city's vision of an Alisal Marketplace would be put on hold, as the Great Recession brought redevelopment visions in California cities, including Salinas, to a halt. In 2011, Governor Jerry Brown and the California legislature dissolved the state's redevelopment districts, which included Sunset Avenue/Buena Vista district and Central City in Salinas.

With this state program no longer available to aid downtown redevelopment, the City of Salinas decided to spur downtown revitalization with a new approach. In January 2013, the Salinas City Council approved a staff initiative to begin preparing a Downtown Vibrancy Plan.

Observing this Downtown Vibrancy Plan initiated by the city, Alisal residents and community groups led by the Building Healthy Communities — East Salinas (BHC) Collaborative asked the city to create, adopt and implement a Vibrancy Plan for the Alisal business district and former



Monterey-Salinas Transit had an operations and maintenance facility on the former Fort Ord from 2016 to 2025.

redevelopment area. The Salinas City Council in 2013 agreed to move forward with this idea.

Putting on the Pressure for Alisal Vibrancy

In 2013, the City of Salinas indicated it was no longer interested in relocating the Sun Street Transfer Station to 721 Work St. SVSWA then appointed a Citizens Advisory Group to review possible locations for a new transfer and recycling facility. This group also considered the possibility of closing the Sun Street Transfer Station altogether and consolidating operations at the Madison Lane Transfer Station and Johnson Canyon Landfill.

In December 2018, the City of Salinas provided notice to SVSWA that it planned to withdraw from the agency. This withdrawal would have eliminated 60% of the agency's revenue. It "created havoc" and meant "potential significant disruption" to the agency and ratepayers, according to the SVSWA board president at the time. Of course, the notice was recognized as a tactic to pressure SVSWA to close the Sun Street Transfer Station to allow for the Alisal Marketplace development.

In July 2019, the Salinas City Manager told the SVSWA board

that the city had "received general interest" from potential developers of the Alisal Marketplace, including one proposal from a developer specifically interested in projects in the city's new federal Opportunity Zones. Allegedly, potential developers of the Alisal Marketplace observed that the nearby presence of a trash recycling and transfer station would not enhance the location's appeal.

Final Alisal Vibrancy Victory for the City of Salinas

Meanwhile, on Nov. 5, 2019, the Salinas City Council approved the completed Alisal Vibrancy Plan. A centerpiece of the plan is the proposed Alisal Marketplace pedestrian-oriented mixed-use residential and commercial development. Therefore, one goal listed in the 2019 Alisal Vibrancy Plan was to "Work with the Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority (SVSWA) to Relocate the Sun Street Transfer Station and Recycling Center."

In the end, the goal was achieved. On Aug. 19, 2021, SVSWA agreed to "facilitate the relocation of the Authority's Sun Street Transfer Station operations to the Republic Services Madison Lane Transfer Station" and "prepare the Sun Street Transfer Station for future lease or sale." The City of

Salinas rescinded its 2018 notice to withdraw from the agency.

SVSWA closed the Sun Street Transfer Station on Sept. 19, 2022. The site has remained vacant since then. The City of Salinas did not lease or buy the site, and neither did any potential developers.

Perspective from Monterey-Salinas Transit and the City of Salinas: Purchase of the Sun Street Transfer Station Site: A Sweet Deal from the Army on a Lease at the Former Fort Ord

In 2016, Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) began construction of its Monterey Bay Operations and Maintenance Facility at 1 Ryan Ranch Road in Monterey. This work meant that MST had to find a temporary location for vehicle maintenance and service deployment. It began leasing property from the U.S. Army on Joe Lloyd Way in the former Fort Ord, close to land parcels that MST acquired from the U.S. Army through public benefit conveyances after Fort Ord closed in 1994.

After completion of the new Monterey Bay Operations and Maintenance Facility, MST returned its fixed route operations and maintenance activities back to the original location in Monterey. MST then used the property under lease from the Army for use by its minibus operations and maintenance contractor. Moving those operations from Salinas to the former Fort Ord saved significant money for MST because of reduced vehicle miles travelled and fuel consumption. The new location also reduced MST greenhouse gas emissions.

MST reported in 2023 that it had saved \$941,460 in four years (2019-2023) because of the U.S. Army lease, including \$288,000 in savings resulting from the below-market rate of its lease. But for the two-year period of Oct. 1, 2023 through July 1, 2025, the U.S. Army increased the MST lease from \$99,600 to \$230,856 to reflect market rates based on a new property appraisal.

Moving to Salinas

In 2025, the U.S. Army informed MST that it did not intend to renew the Joe Lloyd Way lease at all. At that time, it was obvious (but never publicly announced) that the U.S. Army was withdrawing some of its remaining operations from various facilities it still retained on the former Fort Ord. Its presence there was changing.

MST had to respond quickly. It began leasing a property at 271 Rianda St. in Salinas and in a few months renovated the facilities there to better support bus maintenance and transit operations. MST then fully withdrew its operations from the Joe Lloyd Way location and transferred them to its new Rianda Operations Center.

By this time, MST officials knew that 44% of their riders were in the City of Salinas, up from 29%

of riders in 2019, before the COVID-19 public health orders. In fact, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, MST transit ridership in the City of Salinas reached 1,262,930, exceeding pre-COVID ridership

levels by 8%. (Much of this increase is attributed to a redesign of MST bus routes to focus on densely populated areas with lower incomes and lower rates of car ownership.)

With an optimistic future for bus ridership in Salinas, MST began looking for an appropriate place to establish its permanent operations and maintenance facility. Sitting unused and available was the former Sun Street Transfer Station.

The Opportunities of the Former Sun Street Transit Station

Would a new industrial/transportation facility at this site jeopardize the vision of the Alisal Vibrancy Plan and discourage future Alisal Marketplace development? The

mayor, city council members, and executive officials of the City of Salinas wanted to protect the interests of the Alisal if there was a property sale to Monterey-Salinas Transit for this purpose. They pressed MST to ensure there would be enduring community benefits from this project.

While no one can predict the future, your Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce sees some strong potential benefits for the Alisal. On the most basic level, MST will occupy and activate what has been unused space for more than three years. Workers at the facility will become a pool of potential customers for current and future restaurants and stores in the vicinity.

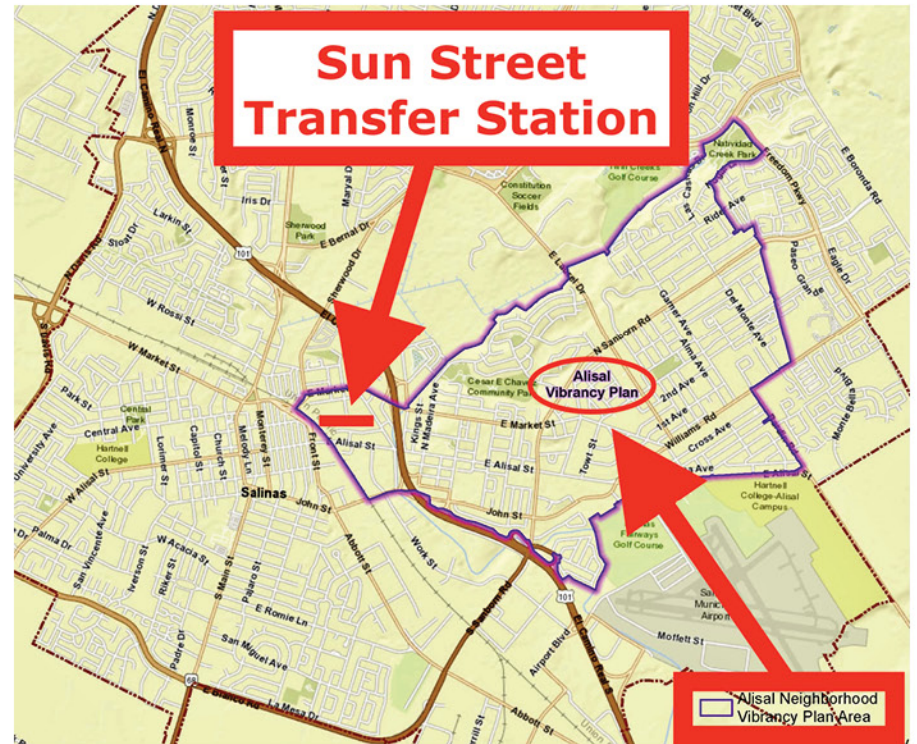
Many MST maintenance and operations employees already live in the Alisal, so they will have shorter commutes,

which will reduce traffic impact and greenhouse gas emissions. MST employees will also be potential residents of future Alisal Marketplace mixed-use developments.

MST has committed to training local residents for its skilled technician positions such as mechanics and electronic specialists. These are jobs that can be careers. MST plans to establish an “advanced tech training center” at the facility.

MST will build its facility in an attractive Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style, rather than adopting a cheap and purely functional industrial design. To fulfill this request, MST has hired an architectural firm (Stantec) that recently designed the San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority Bus Operations and Maintenance Facility and the Napa Valley Transportation Authority Bus Operations and Maintenance

While no one can predict the future, your Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce sees some strong potential benefits for the Alisal. On the most basic level, MST will occupy and activate what has been unused space for more than three years.



Location of the Sun Street Transfer Station within the Alisal Vibrancy Plan Area in the City of Salinas.

Facility. MST has also asked the architect to include a community room within the facility, on the side facing Griffin Street.

MST has committed to maintaining the community garden that the Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority (SVSWA) established and maintained when it ran the Sun Street Transfer Station. Some nearby residents have said they didn't regard the Sun Street Transfer Station as "injustice" to their neighborhood and appreciated some of the benefits, especially the community garden.

With its operations and maintenance yard now located in the area of highest transit usage, MST can reduce the amount of travel time for empty buses that go to the start of a route or return from the end of a route. MST can put more buses into immediate customer service as soon as they leave the bus yard. This will likely allow MST to provide expanded and more frequent service for Alisal riders.

In addition, the new Alisal location will align with MST plans for a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor on

East Alisal Street. This bus corridor will connect riders with a proposed new Downtown Salinas transit center, which may be built at the Salinas Intermodal Transportation Center where the train station is already located. This will advance the Downtown Vibrancy Plan as well as the Alisal Vibrancy Plan.

MST is likely to become a valuable new partner and ally for the residents and business owners of the Alisal. As a public agency, MST receives strong positive ratings from Monterey County voters and has a reputation for competence, creativity, and actual achievement of its strategic objectives. Their executive leaders have a strong community presence and are conscious of their mission for serving the community.

Your Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce sees positive opportunities for the Alisal and the Alisal Vibrancy Plan as Monterey-Salinas Transit creates its main operations and maintenance facility at the location of the former Sun Street Transfer Station. 🌱



UPCOMING EVENTS —

- Lunch and Learn with Hastie Financial Group: Prudent Investing 101**
Tuesday, April 14, 2026, 12:00 – 1:00 PM, 119 E. Alisal St., Salinas, CA, 93901
 Join us for an informative Lunch and Learn with Hastie Financial Group. Hastie Financial Group will be introducing the following concepts: Being aware of your investments, Asset classes, Diversification, Asset correlation, Bond duration, and more! Tune in via Zoom or in person. Lunch will be provided. For more information, visit SalinasChamber.com.
- Lunch and Learn with Alliance On Aging: Aging Services, Community Impact & Why It Matters to Local Business**
Tuesday, April 28, 2026, 12:00 – 1:00 PM, 119 E. Alisal St., Salinas, CA, 93901
 Monterey County's population is aging - and the impact reaches every sector of our community. Join Alliance On Aging Executive Director MJ Donohue for a Lunch & Learn event focused on: how aging trends affect local businesses and families; the role of the Alliance On Aging HUB program in providing education, classes, and support; the services Alliance On Aging delivers at no cost, in English and Spanish; where gaps exist — and how the business community can help; membership, volunteerism, and partnership opportunities. Lunch will be provided.
- Ribbon Cutting with Hampton Inn & Suites Salinas**
Thursday, May 7, 5:00 PM – 6:30 PM, 523 Work Street, Salinas, CA 93901
 Join us as we celebrate a ribbon cutting with Hampton Inn & Suites Salinas. This special event will introduce the hotel's new leadership team and provide an opportunity for the community and Chamber members to connect. Guests will enjoy light refreshments and drinks while networking with local business professionals. Attendees will also have the opportunity to take guided tours of the hotel and learn more about the amenities and services the Hampton Inn offers to visitors and the Salinas community. More information coming soon at SalinasChamber.com.
- Ribbon Cutting with Diamond Financial Group**
Saturday, May 9, Time TBA
 Join us as we celebrate the grand opening and ribbon cutting for Diamond Financial Group's new office. This celebration marks an exciting milestone for their business. Community members, Chamber members, and local professionals are invited to attend, connect, and help commemorate this special occasion. More event details, including the location and time, will be announced soon. Visit SalinasChamber.com for updates.
- Pacific Valley Bank and Chamber Ribbon Cutting**
Wednesday, May 13, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. 1097 S Main St., Salinas
 Join us and Pacific Valley Bank for an evening Chamber ribbon cutting. Enjoy a relaxed atmosphere while expanding your network and strengthening connections within the local business community. More information coming soon.

RSVP at salinaschamber.com

Hope Rising - from page 18

serve in this community. Truly, every time someone tells me that they read these monthly articles, it encourages me more than you may realize. Those brief conversations remind me how connected and thoughtful our community really is. They remind me that people here care deeply about faith, family, work, and the future of our region. That kind of encouragement is a gift, and I

never take it for granted.

This Easter season, my prayer is that you will be reminded that hope is not wishful thinking. Hope is the confident belief that with God, new life is possible. New strength is possible. New perspective is possible. And new beginnings are possible.

All around us, hope is rising.

And because Jesus lives, it can rise in you too. 🌿

Pastor T.K. Anderson

Government News - from page 21

be interested in this public policy issue and last published a comprehensive article about it in the January 2025 Business Journal. (See "Efforts Continue to Increase Child Care Affordability and Accessibility in Monterey County.") Despite voter rejection of Measure Q, a proposed parcel tax on the November 2022 ballot to provide supplemental funding to the county's childcare system, incremental progress is occurring in the county.

16 At its Feb. 24, 2026 meeting, the Salinas City Council received the Permit Center Annual Report for 2025. Your Chamber had asked for production of such a report numerous times in the past, with an aggressive lobbying push most recently in mid-2022. Your Chamber is pleased to see the city's Community Development Department has now produced an annual report for 2022 and the three following years (2023, 2024, and 2025). These comprehensive reports produced each year exhibit city openness and transparency and inform city council members and the public about what is happening with permits, housing, and economic development.

If you see areas for potential improvement at the Permit Center, please provide your specific recommendations or case examples to Chamber President & CEO

Colleen Bailey at (831) 751-7725 or at Colleen@SalinasChamber.com. Also, contact Colleen with your *positive* comments to pass on to the Community Development Department! Governments always hear about the bad things but rarely hear about the good things.

17 Since the beginning of March, many of the comments to the Chamber related to government affairs are about soaring gas prices and chemical prices that are a result of warfare in the Middle East. California is particularly vulnerable, because only 25 percent of crude oil used by the remaining operating refineries in California comes from California. About 16 percent to 20 percent of the state's crude oil comes from Alaska. The rest comes from foreign countries, with Iraq as the top importer of oil to California.

Some Californians have been giddy about the recent closure of two refineries in the state (Valero in Benicia and Phillips 66 in Wilmington/Carson). They have a vision of a day coming soon when there are no fossil fuels extracted or refined in the state, and every resident and business is exclusively using electricity generated by sun and wind (NOT nuclear or hydroelectric) for all aspects of daily life.

Perhaps one day that vision will become real. In the meantime, many Californians are going to pay the price for our state's heavy dependence on foreign oil. 🌿



NON-PROFIT EVENTS

Multiple-Employer Job Fair – Monterey County Works

April 1, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m., 344 Salinas St., Salinas – Salinas Career Center

Is your Monterey County business hiring? Maybe you're a jobseeker looking to reenter the workforce? In either case, you're invited to join us at our Salinas Career Center for our Multiple-Employer Job Fair. We host our Multiple-Employer Job Fairs twice a month. These events can be employers hiring from a variety of industries. We're seeking 10-15 employers that are currently hiring to join us for this event. There is no fee to participate.

Jacob's Heart Soiree – Jacob's Heart

April 4, 5:00 – 9:00 p.m., 400 Beach St., Santa Cruz – The Grove

Join Jacob's Heart for an evening under the big top at the Jacob's Heart Soirée. Step right up for a night of joy and generosity where we will come together to support children battling cancer and make hope the main attraction. It will be an evening filled with a delicious dinner, fun entertainment, and heartfelt moments that will leave a lasting impact. Buy your tickets at jacobsheart.org/soiree and reach out to paula@jacobsheart.org for any further information.

2026 Champions of the Arts – Arts4MC

April 17, 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., 350 Calle Principal, Monterey – Marriott Hotel

Champions of the Arts™ presented by Arts4MC, is a highly regarded award that honors individuals, organizations, and businesses making a profound impact on the arts in Monterey County. Nominated by the community, this recognition celebrates those who inspire creativity, promote cultural engagement, and advocate for the transformative role of the arts in enriching lives. This award highlights the extraordinary contributions that drive artistic expression and strengthen community connections. Join Arts4MC for one-of-a-kind celebration. Single ticket, \$75, table of 10, \$750

The Sea Otter Classic

April 16-19, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., 1025 Monterey-Salinas Highway, Salinas – WeatherTech Raceway

The Life Time Sea Otter Classic is a "celebration of cycling"! It's a festival for anyone who enjoys or appreciates the bicycle and outdoor adventures. Whether a cyclist or a spectator, folks of all ages can share in the excitement and camaraderie of the Sea Otter Classic. If you love the idea of being part of a cool scene with active people who all share a passion for bicycles and the outdoors—come! Sea Otter is for road, gravel and mountain bikers. It's for kids, commuters and recreational cyclists, and, yes, the Sea Otter Classic draws the very best racers—both amateurs and pros. No other event gives you such up-close access to your cycling heroes! The Sea Otter Classic mostly takes place at Weathertech Laguna Seca Raceway, 1021 Monterey Salinas Highway, Salinas. Festival hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, and 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sunday. Please note: the schedule is subject to change — check back often for any daily schedule updates/changes.

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

EARTH MONTH - from page 15

A donated jacket helps reduce landfill waste — and may also fund job training for someone preparing for their first interview in years. A refurbished chair conserves resources while supporting workforce development programs that help individuals regain financial independence.

The cycle continues because the community participates.

Earth Month — and every month after

Earth Day serves as a reminder that collective action shapes the future. At Goodwill Central Coast, that action happens year-round through everyday decisions:


donating thoughtfully, shopping secondhand, and choosing reuse over disposal.

Each small act contributes to a larger system where sustainability supports human potential.

In that way, Goodwill's work reframes environmentalism itself. Protecting the planet is not only about preserving natural resources — it is also about investing in people, strengthening communities, and ensuring that opportunity remains renewable.

One donation. One purchase. One second chance at a time. 🌱

Discover how Goodwill's free employment services can have a profound effect on communities — and how the community's participation fuels that change. Find out more at www.ccgoodwill.org.



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- ✓ Direct-mailed to 650+ businesses
- ✓ On the Chamber website (4,000+ monthly visitors)
- ✓ In e-newsletters to 3,800+ business contacts with a 46% open rate.



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Tips To Keep You Moving To And Through Monterey Regional Airport

MRY Metamorphosis and Expanded Flight Service Updates

Monterey Regional Airport (MRY) prioritizes keeping our passengers moving. Whether moving through the airport during the MRY Metamorphosis Safety Enhancement Program or in the skies to a fabulous destination, our team is committed to delivering a safe, secure, and seamless travel experience. As we move into peak travel season, these travel tips and flight updates will help you plan your next getaway.

What to Know Before You Go

Consider these top-tier tips before heading to MRY:

- 1) Make plans for an on-time departure. This means arriving at the terminal at least 90 minutes before flight departure time because:
 - Roadway construction is underway at the airport entrance through July 2026.
 - The Long-Term Parking Lot will be relocated to its permanent location adjacent to the currently-under-construction replacement passenger terminal after the Memorial Day weekend.
 - More locals and visitors flying during peak travel periods mean more people and vehicles traveling to and from MRY.
- 2) MRY parking lots fill quickly during peak travel days. Travelers living close to the

airport are encouraged to use rideshare or taxi services or ask a friend to drop off at MRY so parking spaces are available for those traveling to the airport from farther distances.

- 3) Visit the Transportation Security Administration website www.TSA.gov for passenger security updates. Adult travelers with no ID, or without a REAL ID or acceptable ID such as a valid passport must now use TSA ConfirmID to verify identity before boarding domestic flights. ConfirmID costs \$45 and can be paid online before arriving at the airport. TSA's website also has valuable information about family travel and packing check-in and carry-on bags.

One additional travel tip is to please pack your patience and be kind to staff. Their priorities are providing a safe, on-time, and comfortable journey no matter the destination.

More Flights and Seats to Where You Want to Go

We're excited to share that MRY airlines are adding more flights and seats in response to traveler demand.

United Airlines

United Airlines continues to invest its people, planes, and other resources at MRY with these flight upgrades:



Roadway construction is underway at airport entrance through July 2026. Please allow extra time.

- Nonstop flights to Chicago O'Hare International Airport launch on May 23. United will operate Boeing 737-800 aircraft on the seasonal route. As travelers use the flight more, the demonstrated demand will support increasing frequency beyond Saturday service.
- United will increase passenger seats to Los Angeles International Airport and Denver International Airport in April and May, respectively. Upgrading to mainline Boeing 737-800s from regional Embraer 175 aircraft, the carrier will add approximately 90 more daily outbound and inbound seats on each route.

JSX

Seasonal carrier JSX, a public charter service, returns to MRY with nonstop flights to Hollywood Burbank Airport and John Wayne/Orange County Airport between June and

September. It's an easy flight to Southern California for business and leisure, including to major theme parks.

Travelers are reminded that JSX flights operate out of the Monterey Jet Center, 200 Sky Park Drive, Monterey, not out of the commercial terminal building.

Stay Informed During Construction

Thanks for choosing MRY for your next getaway. Our team wishes you safe, sunny, and enjoyable travels.

Please visit montereyairport.com or follow @montereyairport on Facebook, Instagram, and X for travel advisories.





**FREE
COMMUNITY
CANCER
EDUCATION
EVENT**

Expert Cancer Care Close to home

Geetha Varma, MD
Hematology & Oncology

You're Invited!

Join us for an open house and learn how Salinas Valley Health combines leading-edge cancer treatments with compassionate, personalized care.

- Learn about our comprehensive cancer care services.
- Take a special tour of our Cancer Resource Center and Infusion Center.
- Meet our expert physicians, nurse navigators and care teams.
- Explore the supportive services and classes available to cancer patients and caregivers.



**Thursday,
April 9, 2026**

**Salinas Valley Health
Cancer Resource Center
501 East Romie Lane, Suite C
Salinas**

5:00pm Reception

5:30pm Presentation

5:45pm Tours start (until 7:15pm)

*FREE valet parking
at the Medical Center
parking structure.*

*Register by scanning
the QR code.*



WALK-INS WELCOME!