

# South County Business News

*A publication of South County Chambers of Commerce—creating partnerships and opportunities that ensure South County businesses prosper*



March 2022  
Volume 62, Issue 3

## Scholarships available for skill-building bootcamps

**SOUTH COUNTY** — In partnership with the cities of Arroyo Grande and Grover Beach, SLO Partners is offering scholarships for their upcoming bootcamps. They understand that economic instability can lead people to consider new career paths more aligned with interests and passions. Acquiring new skills in innovative, relevant industries can help achieve these goals in a relatively quick way. Visit the [SLO Partners](#) website for information on these courses:

**Precision Manufacturing:** This eight-week bootcamp will give local residents the opportunity to either upskill or enter a new career path through accelerat-



ed training. Gain essential skills like blueprint reading, precision measurement, lean principles, and mechanical assembly.

**Software Development:** In partnership with Cal Poly Extended Ed, this intensive program is a challenging and rewarding educational experience with an in-depth curriculum spanning computer science fundamentals to front-end and back-end software development. Fullstack is a

great environment for motivated, passionate students.

**Cyber Security:** In partnership with Cal Poly Extended Ed, this bootcamp provides students with offensive and defensive cybersecurity skills including Foundations, Security Essentials, and Security Analyst Training.

**Digital Marketing:** Their eight-week Digital Marketing course teaches marketing strategies crucial for the future of business as the economy shifts and consumer's expectations grow. Learn to leverage digital marketing strategies to generate revenue growth and adapt communication channels.

Contact [info@slopartners.org](mailto:info@slopartners.org) for scholarship information.

### UPCOMING CHAMBER EVENTS (IN-PERSON MEETINGS UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED)

**Thursday, March 3**  
**Nipomo Business Meeting**  
8:30 to 9:30 am  
**Nipomo Cowork/Chamber**  
**office at 239 W. Tefft St.**

**Tuesday, March 8:**  
**Pismo Beach**  
**Business Meeting**  
**11 am to 12 noon**  
**SeaCrest Oceanfront**  
**Hotel in Pismo Beach**

**Thursday, March 10**  
**Ambassadors meeting**  
8 to 9 am  
**Deltina Coffee Roasters**  
**in Oceano**

**Wednesday, March 16:**  
**Chamber breakfast**  
7:30 to 9 am  
**Inn at the Pier in Pismo**  
**Beach (Monarch room)**

**Thursday, March 17:**  
**Arroyo Grande Business**  
**Meeting 8:30 to 9:30 am**  
**via Zoom**  
**Please RSVP to receive**  
**the Zoom login**

**Friday, March 18:**  
**Grover Beach Business**  
**Meeting 12 noon to 1 pm**  
**GBeatZ at 675 W. Grand**  
**Ave. in Grover Beach**

**Wednesday, March 23:**  
**Membership Mixer**  
**at SeaCrest Oceanfront**  
**Hotel in Pismo Beach**  
**5 to 7 pm**

**Friday, March 25:**  
**Governmental Affairs**  
**meeting via Zoom**  
**8 to 9:15 am**  
**Please RSVP to receive**  
**the Zoom login**

## March Business of the Month: Grocery Outlet of Arroyo Grande

The Marketing Committee of the South County Chambers of Commerce—a group of local business owners who represent various industries—selected Grocery Outlet of Arroyo Grande as the Business of the Month for March 2022.

Grocery Outlet offers name brand groceries for 40-70% less than conventional grocery stores including a variety of fresh, organic produce. Owned and operated by the local Testa family, their store has been involved in the community since it opened two years ago in 2020. They have raised over \$18,000 for the last two years in their Independence From Hunger Campaigns. 100% of the profits stayed local with New Life Food Pantry and 5 Cities Christian Women's Pantry. They also give weekly product donations to Altrusa, Meals on Wheels, Salvation Army, and more. They donate unsala-



**The Testa family with Chamber Ambassador Linda Vleit (in red) at the Exploration Discovery Center grand opening in August 2021**

ble produce to pig farmers. Grocery Outlet was part of the grand opening of the Exploration Discovery Center in Grover Beach. They participated in the Stone Soup Music Festival and Trunk or Treat in Grover Beach. They helped raised funds (over \$500) for a local youth soccer team. They donated pumpkins to Boys and

Girls Club, participated in fundraising events with The Clark Center, and supported other local organizations and schools. Owner Haley Testa said they are grateful to be a part of this amazing community.

Grocery Outlet is located at 1574 W. Branch St. Suite C in Arroyo Grande.

## Update from Supervisor Lynn Compton, District 4: Oceano, Nipomo, and Arroyo Grande

The Local Health Emergency, prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic, that has been in place since March of 2020 has been lifted in SLO County as of February 25th. While the Declaration is no longer needed, the County remains ready to respond to this pandemic and provide resources like vaccines and testing if needed.

My office was recently notified that Governor Newsom issued a press release stating that starting March 1st masks will no longer be required for unvaccinated individuals but will be recommended in most indoor settings. After March 11th masks will not be required in schools and childcare facilities, but will be strongly recommended. Local jurisdictions may have additional requirements beyond this basic state guideline.

On February 15, your SLO Co. Board of

Supervisors voted to send a letter to Governor Newsom requesting his assistance in securing the required state approvals, should PG&E seek to extend the operation of the Diablo Canyon Power Plant. This letter was prompted after a presentation by the authors of a Stanford University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology study titled "An Assessment of the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant for Zero Carbon Electricity, Desalination, and Hydrogen Production." This study examined how continued operation for the Diablo Canyon Power Plant could provide value in the following areas:

1. Contributing to California's zero-carbon electricity production
2. Providing power to large-scale desalination plant to produce water for drought-stricken areas.
3. Providing a carbon-free source of hy-

drogen production for the transportation and manufacturing sectors

4. Configuring and operating the Diablo Canyon Power Plant as a "polygeneration" facility, generating electricity and producing desalinated water and hydrogen stimulation.

Lastly, thank you members of the Chamber for all you do. It has been an extraordinary two years living under the uncertainty of COVID and has taken an extraordinary toll on our small businesses and small-business owners. It is my hope that this is all now behind us and we can all move forward.

As always, please call my office should you have any questions or need any assistance with County-related issues.

• • •

**Lynn Compton**  
San Luis Obispo County  
District 4 Supervisor

## Update from Supervisor Dawn Ortiz-Legg, District 3: Avila Beach, Grover Beach, Pismo Beach, and San Luis Obispo

### SLO County Libraries of the Future

Our libraries are priceless resources which must be protected, so when the news about SLO County leaving the Black Gold catalogue system surfaced, citizens were naturally concerned. "The landscape of libraries has changed over the years and SLO is in a position to meet the needs of our patrons by reinvesting our funds locally," said Chris Barnickel, Director of County Libraries, explaining why the decision had been made and noting that these are positive changes.

As the biggest financial contributor to Black Gold, the County of SLO Public Libraries has strongly advocated for reduced costs and improved local customer experience, but it has been consistently outvoted by the Black Gold Administrative Council on proposed improvements.

In short, even as SLO County contributed 40% to the Black Gold operating costs, our one vote was not enough to influence improvements thereby limited our ability to provide better services and avoid duplication of costs which was occurring.

We are confident we can meet needs

## Recommended ARPA Affordable Housing and Homeless Projects

Project Name	Organization	Award Amount	Description	Location
Anderson Hotel Preservation	Housing Authority of San Luis Obispo	\$2,000,000	Preserves 68 units of very low-income housing	San Luis Obispo
Arroyo Grande Affordable Housing	Housing Authority of San Luis Obispo	\$1,946,000	Adds 63 new units to serve up to 124 low to very-low income individuals	Arroyo Grande
Non-Congregate Shelter	5Cities Homeless Coalition	\$400,000	New temporary non-congregate emergency shelter providing 80 very low-income individuals with non-congregate shelter	Grover Beach

and continue to offer a diverse print collection, eBooks, and other streaming and digital services. By transitioning to a cost-efficient separate catalog, it will use its savings to enhance local services, build better collections, and boost network security measures.

These changes will begin on July 1. If you would like more information, please visit [www.slolibrary.org](http://www.slolibrary.org) where you can find an excellent fact sheet on all the exciting [news](#).

### American Rescue Relief Act Update: Affordable Housing & Homeless Funding

At the March 1st Board of Supervisor meeting County staff will be providing an update on The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA), also called the COVID-19 Stimulus Package. This \$1.9 trillion-dollar economic stimulus bill passed by Congress and was signed into law by President Joe Biden on March 11,

**continued on page 8**

## Arroyo Grande News

It is such good news that as I write this the Board of Supervisors have lifted the emergency order for SLO County. While we know this is not the end, it is an important marker that certainly feels like we are transitioning from pandemic to endemic. That is good news for our Chamber members because as we all know, uncertainty is the number one enemy of business.

Like many cities in San Luis Obispo County, we are transitioning into districted elections. This process should be complete by the middle of April. The final choices being considered by the Council are currently on the city's website. Please reach out if you have a preference or any concerns. Of special consideration is the order by which we will be electing the council members. In other words, which two districts should be elected in 2022, and which should be elected in 2024? This is not as easy a decision as it would appear. I definitely would like to hear your input on this.

We expected to be rehabilitating the

swinging bridge this spring and summer. We discovered some additional construction and engineering needs, so that required us to go out for rebid which will delay the project by a year. Perhaps this is a blessing in disguise, because material costs on the rise during COVID may recover, and not disrupting business right out the gate as we exit the pandemic is probably a good thing.

We certainly continue to pray for rain in the month of March. It's been a long time since we've had a Miracle March and we could use one now more than ever. I am sure that my next update will discuss water as we are ending the rain year at the end of March and we will have a very good idea of how well we did and whether additional action is necessary.

As always I welcome your comments, questions, and suggestions. Do not hesitate to give me a call or text at 805-234-1270. I am here to serve you.

**Caren Ray Russom**  
Mayor, City of Arroyo Grande

### Welcome new Chamber members:

Erik Howell, associate

T-Mobile in Nipomo

Tiffany Terra, associate

ZG Plastering LLC

Empower Yoga Studio  
and Community Boutique

Monarch Books in the  
Village of Arroyo Grande

...

**Please consider sponsoring  
another local business or  
nonprofit to join the Chamber  
so they can receive all of the  
membership benefits**

## Grover Beach News

I thought we might go in a different direction this month...rather than picking a specific topic to discuss or updating you on the latest happenings in Grover Beach (you can still get your GB fix by reading the [Grover Gazette](#)). Instead, let me ask you a question: What does Grover Beach not do that we should?

Whenever I ask that question, I usually get a return question posed back to me—"Well, what DOES the City do?" I like to respond with...Grover Beach provides a myriad of city services, such as water, sewer, police, fire, financial management of local funds, improving

streets, reviewing projects for conformance with local codes...and we also provide park and recreational opportunities (tennis, basketball and soon pickleball) along with classes, a skate park, a summer concert series, and any number of community events.

But that response still doesn't get me an answer to my question...and for that, we would like to hear from you. You might ask "HOW?" since after all, this is a newsletter article. There are at least two answers to that question—one way is to contact your City Council members, individually or as a group, at the follow-

ing [link](#).

However, another really good way to answer that question is to join us on Monday, March 7, 2022 at 6 pm at Ramona Garden Park for our City Council Goals Workshop. The Council will be reviewing our existing [City goals](#) and would like to hear from you on what your priorities are for Grover Beach. This meeting will mark our return to in-person meetings and we look forward to interacting and talking with residents of Grover Beach. Hope to see you there!

**Jeff Lee**  
Mayor, City of Grover Beach

## Pismo Beach News

Our Council meetings will now be in person since COVID cases are declining. It will be great to be in person again. Those who are not vaccinated will be required to wear a mask if attending in person otherwise there is still the option of attending via Zoom.

Our new Dinosaur Caves restrooms should be complete by the time you read this. We expanded the size of the restroom to accommodate the large num-

bers of people coming to the park. A new restroom at Price Historic Park is almost complete as well.

The Bello Street Bridge near our Corporation Yard is almost complete. There were some delays due to parts shortages. It crosses Pismo Creek and will help our police and fire get to the South part of the City along Highway 1 among other benefits.

City Hall has been renovated and it will

soon be fully open. We will have a single point of entry on the first level to make it easier for the public to conduct business.

Our General Plan/Local Coastal Plan update continues moving along. The plan provides a roadmap on how the City will address future land use and housing.

**Ed Waage**  
Mayor, City of Pismo Beach





## RECENT RIBBON CUTTINGS



### Congrats, Blast 825 Brewery!

We celebrated the grand opening and ribbon cutting last month with new restaurant Blast 825 Brewery in Arroyo Grande. Located at 1462 East Grand Ave., Blast 825 Brewery offers great tasting local craft beers, wines, ciders, and refreshing cocktails. Don't miss their signature nachos and carnitas chicken tri-tip. Learn more online [here](#).



### Congrats, Second Chances!

Congrats to Second Chances resale store in Grover Beach on the grand opening of their second location and their ribbon cutting last month. Their new location is at 892 W. Grand Ave. on the corner of Grand Avenue and 9th Street. They sell furniture, higher-end clothing, accessories, and housewares. The new store can be reached at (805) 202-8800. Second Chances is affiliated with Captive Hearts, a Grover Beach-based nonprofit organization that provides life skill classes and spiritual mentoring to those who have been affected by the devastation of trauma, domestic violence, human trafficking, and compulsive/destructive behaviors. All proceeds go toward sponsoring Captive Hearts' scholarships. The other Second Chances resale location is 911 W. Grand Ave. in Grover Beach. For more information, please click [here](#). For more information about Captive Hearts, please visit [www.captivehearts.org](http://www.captivehearts.org).



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## RECENT RIBBON CUTTINGS



### Congrats, Empower Yoga Studio and Community Boutique!

We celebrated a ribbon cutting last week with new Chamber member Empower Yoga Studio and Community Boutique in Grover Beach. With community at the heart of everything they do, Empower Yoga Studio and Community Boutique provides an inclusive, safe, and dynamic environment for all members and visitors. They offer an array of yoga classes designed to help build a stronger union of mind, body, and soul. They also proudly display and sell local art—creating a unique space for yoga lovers and artists alike. First responders and caretakers can enjoy a free class every Thursday evening from 7 to 8 pm or save 10% off all other classes. For more information, please visit [empoweryoga805.com](http://empoweryoga805.com), or call (805) 619-0989.

### Congrats, Envoy Mortgage of Arroyo Grande!

We celebrated a ribbon cutting recently with Chamber member Envoy Mortgage to kick off their grand opening of their new Arroyo Grande office. Loan originators Fernando Granados and his sister Vanessa Oms work from the newest Envoy Mortgage location. Their company offers some of the most competitive rates in the mortgage industry and provides impeccable service from start to close. They are committed to delivering a hassle-free mortgage experience by providing breakthrough technology, transparent communication, unparalleled turnaround times, and around-the-clock attention to your loan. Their team is well equipped to guide you through some of the most comprehensive financing available. The new office is located at 1174 E. Grand Ave. For more information, contact Fernando at (805) 369-6370 or Vanessa at (805) 310-5665.



### Congrats, Four Point Home Inspection Inc.!

We celebrated a ribbon cutting last month with new Chamber member Four Point Home Inspection Inc. at the Chamber's Arroyo Grande office. Four Point Home Inspection provides residential and commercial building inspection service. Services include inspections for buyers, sellers, annual home maintenance, vacation homes, foreclosures, rentals, and repair verifications. Owner Ken Cox (pictured with his daughter, Ava) has lived on the Central Coast with his family for over 20 years. With over 20 years of construction industry experience and with training by InterNACHI®—the International Association of Certified Home Inspector—he will give you the information you need to purchase your property with confidence and maintain it with peace of mind. For more information, call (805) 286-2402, or visit [fourpointhomeinspection.com](http://fourpointhomeinspection.com).



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## Chamber adds Business Engagement Liaison position

Chris Wise recently joined the South County Chambers of Commerce team as their Business Engagement Liaison. He is actively involved with the growth of the cowork spaces in both Nipomo and Grover Beach as well as representing the South County Chambers to business owners throughout the area.

Prior to working for South County Chambers of Commerce, Chris had a short stint with a payroll company and previously was involved with a product that worked specifically with QuickBooks Desktop and allowed users to share their data with any number of remote



**Chris Wise**

financial professionals or locations.

Before these experiences, Chris worked for 18 years in the insurance industry specializing in employee benefits. Chris has participated in the founding of three agencies in addition to being a business and marketing consultant to brokers throughout the area.

During this time, he implemented web-based enrollment and HR management systems and was part of a group that launched an insurance industry specific web hosting company providing simplified, cost-effective websites for brokers. A California native, Chris lives in Nipomo

with his wife and enjoys being a part of the local community. They have six adult children who are established throughout the state of California with just one that has left the state.

"I am looking forward to this new opportunity with the South County Chambers of Commerce," he said. "I do believe there are many resources available to business owners that will help them to be more successful. I am looking forward to helping make those available to them."

Please introduce yourself to Chris at an upcoming Chamber event. Contact him at [chris@southcountychambers.com](mailto:chris@southcountychambers.com) or [cowork@southcountychambers.com](mailto:cowork@southcountychambers.com).

### Update from District 3:

**Avila Beach, Grover Beach, Pismo Beach, and San Luis Obispo**  
continued from page 2

2021, intended to speed up the United States' recovery from the economic and health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Board decided to allocate \$6M of the County's share of \$55 million of ARPA funding towards housing and homelessness. I have been on the designated subcommittee with Supervisor Debbie Arnold to review recommendations from projects submitted by various organizations and nonprofit entities. The final recommendations are as follows:

1. Approve the Affordable Housing and Homeless Funding Recommendations totaling \$4,346,000
2. Approve Safe Parking Program Funding Recommendation totaling \$1,000,000

Projects were selected based on extensive criteria to ensure long-term affordability, demonstrate sustainability of project and supportive services, ensure units are set aside for homeless persons, ADA needs, consideration for proximity to transit for jobs and amenities like schools, market, etc. as well as healthcare services

as appropriate to the targeted special needs and vulnerable population interim income housing.

### **San Luis Obispo County Honors Black History Month**

Black History Month was established to recognize the often-missed accomplishments of Black Americans throughout our history. This year's BHM theme is Black Health and Wellness acknowledging the contributions and breakthroughs of Black health professionals and wellness practitioners. What made this year's theme and first-time Black History Month resolution more striking is that SLO County's own Sheriff-Coroner Dr. Joye M. Carter embodies this very incredible contribution and professional skill set.

Dr. Carter is the first Black Chief Medical Examiner appointed IN THE HISTORY OF THIS NATION! She is the first Black female to serve as Deputy Chief of the Armed Forces Medical Examiner Department and was the first graduate of Howard University College of Medicine to become board certified in forensic pathology. We proudly salute her success and contributions!

We also recognized stories provided by the History Center of San Luis Obispo County and the South County Historical Society's military historian Erik Brun to presented "They Faced the Rising Sun: The 54th Coast Artillery Regiment On The Central Coast In WWII." The Black 54th Coast Artillery Regiment arrived from the southern states and was deployed on the Central Coast in early 1942, with a battalion of two batteries of long-range artillery to protect our vital coastal oil terminals at Morro Bay and Port San Luis. As these Black soldiers arrived, they almost tripled the African American population in San Luis Obispo County. I was honored to share a few, although significant, pieces of local Black History however there is much more to learn as we underline the importance of civil rights, strive for greater equality, and empower Black history-makers to tell their own stories. Visit [www.historycenterslo.org](http://www.historycenterslo.org) or [www.southcountyhistory.org](http://www.southcountyhistory.org).

**Dawn Ortiz-Legg**  
**San Luis Obispo County**  
**District 3 Supervisor**

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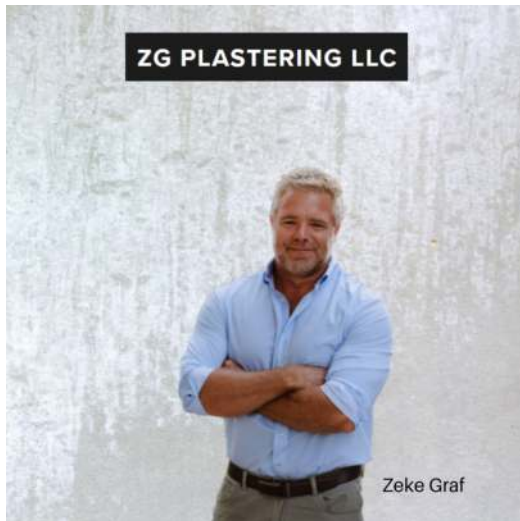
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## New Chamber Member Highlights



### Welcome to the Chamber, ZG Plastering LLC!

Zeke Graf, owner and operator of ZG Plastering LLC, is a plastering contractor serving San Luis Obispo and the Central Coast. He prides himself on clean, quality work and believes in doing the job right the first time. With 21 years personal experience—and 45+ years total experience as a team of plastering contractors—he can provide you with the best possible work, a timeline that you can count on, and an impeccably clean working environment. Zeke is also a construction industry strategist and coach. To discuss your next project, contact Zeke at [Zeke@ZGPlastering.com](mailto:Zeke@ZGPlastering.com), or call (805) 235-2970.

### Welcome, Monarch Books!

Monarch Books, an independent bookstore, will be opening soon in the Village of Arroyo Grande in the former location of Hello Village (Hello Village and Village Kids will share the same space in the Village Kids location) at 201 East Branch St. Monarch Books wants to create a community-oriented bookshop where all feel welcome to read, explore, and share in the beauty of books. They are currently hiring part-time booksellers who are passionate, fun, well-read, customer-service-oriented, book people. Please email a resume and cover letter to [monarchbooks805@gmail.com](mailto:monarchbooks805@gmail.com). For more information, please call (805) 295-1865.



### Welcome, Empower Yoga Studio and Community Boutique!

Located in Grover Beach at 775 W. Grand Ave., Empower Yoga Studio and Community Boutique offers a personalized experience at an affordable price. They provide private, semi-private, and small-group yoga classes, and they will even come to your business location. Empower Yoga Studio is a gift card option for the Buy Local program in Grover Beach. Shoppers and diners who spend \$100 or more at Grover Beach small businesses (in the retail, restaurant, brewery, winery, fitness, and salon/personal services sectors), can select a free \$25 gift card from dozens of available choices—like Empower Yoga Studio and Community Boutique. To claim their free gift cards, shoppers and diners can upload their receipts totaling \$100 or more at [southcountychambers.com](http://southcountychambers.com). For more information about the studio, please call (805) 619-0989, or visit [empoweryoga805.com](http://empoweryoga805.com).





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## 'LOVE Spay' improves treatment for local female canines

PISMO BEACH — Pismo Beach Veterinary Clinic is adopting a laparoscope-assisted surgery to spay female canines. The procedure is less invasive, less painful, and reduces recovery time to two to three days from the traditional 10-14 day house arrest.

Known as the LOVE Spay, LOVE is an acronym formed from "L" for laparoscopy and "OVE" for ovariectomy. Traditional spay surgery requires an incision of one to four inches on the dog's abdomen. The LOVE Spay procedure involves two to three small incisions requiring just a few stitches each to close the openings. The small incisions accommodate a camera, a tube to inflate the area, and the surgical instruments.

"The traditional spay surgery, like any intra-abdomen surgery, is invasive and complicated," said Dr. Joel Conn, who co-owns the practice with his wife Dr. Sarah Conn since 2009. "The LOVE Spay is a much lower risk procedure requiring less anesthesia."

With an estimate of 65% less pain to



the animal, the procedure uses a cut and cauterize technique instead of tearing the ovarian ligament. There is virtually no bleeding and less trauma to the dog.

"This is a much better treatment for the dogs," Conn added. "It aligns really well with our core values, which include offering the best medicine and highest standards of veterinary care. We will be adopting this technique solely at our practice with all five of our veterinarians."

The procedure is not yet widespread in California, especially outside of major cities. The same instrumentation and procedure can also be used to perform gastropexy, a surgery to prevent gastric dilatation and volvulus (GDV), otherwise known as bloat and torsion. Common in large or giant dog breeds and often fa-

tal, GDV is a condition that occurs when the stomach becomes distended with gas or fluid or food and twists on itself, constricting blood flow to the stomach and spleen.

"To prevent this from happening, we attach the stomach to the abdominal wall," Conn said. "With laparoscopy, we minimize the necessary incision for this surgery from 8-12 inches to less than two inches."

As a service to the local animal community, Pismo Beach Veterinary Clinic will be performing the LOVE Spay procedure on several dogs currently residing at local shelters. "As you can imagine the 10-14 day recovery time is challenging for shelter staffs and volunteers. We're happy to be able to shorten the recovery time and not cause more trauma to already fragile dogs in rescue housing," Conn said.

Pismo Beach Veterinary Clinic is committed to elevating the local standard for veterinary care and education. Visit them online at [pismo beachvet.com](http://pismo beachvet.com).

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JAY AND SCOUT

Please join us in welcoming two new members to the bookstore family - Jay Katsby and Scout Finch. Jay and Scout were adopted from the North County Paws Cause, one of many amazing nonprofits dedicated to improving the lives of cats and kittens on the Central Coast. These cats are now home and anxious to meet you! Stop by anytime Monday-Saturday, 10am-5:30pm or Sunday 1pm-5pm.

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Here's how:

**Join a club!:** We have club levels at all age groups from K through 12th grade. We provide leadership development skills to all ages. We also provide summer camp programs and after-school programs at local schools throughout the year. We are all-inclusive and with boys and girls —all are welcome!

**Get outside!:** Camp Fire groups promote hiking, outdoor skills and host several camping trips throughout the year.

**Become a leader!:** Leaders are the lifeblood of our organization. Anyone can become a leader support youth—the spark is in you!

**For more information, or to find the nearest club for your family contact us below or email:**  
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## Arroyo Grande-based nonprofit expands operations to increase outreach to those affected by suicide

ARROYO GRANDE — Knowing You Matter, a local nonprofit that raises awareness about suicide and promotes emotional health and wellness in our community, welcomes two new additions to their staff. Brittney Vanderlei joins as Development Director and Caroline Gels as Operations Director.

Brittney Vanderlei is a Cal Poly graduate with a degree in Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Administration and concentration in Event Coordination. She leads all aspects of event management and fundraising at Knowing You Matter. Brittney's expertise in sales, marketing, donor relations, and volunteer management will be essential to growing the company's donor base to continue the expansion of their programs.

"Knowing You Matter has enriched the lives of so many in our community through outreach services and support," said Vanderlei. "I am excited to bring my knowledge and skill set to the organiza-



**Left to right: Brittney Vanderlei joins as Development Director and Caroline Gels as Operations Director**

tion and assist in raising the much-needed funds that make these crucial services available."

Caroline Gels is a Cal Poly graduate with a background in nonprofit manage-

ment and fundraising. She is the hub of the Knowing You Matter office, managing the day-to-day operations and providing support to all programs to ensure the organization is running smoothly.

"I feel incredibly humbled to be a part of Knowing You Matter and their mission of sharing with every individual that they truly matter," said Gels. "Our mission to remind people of this truth is an ever-present need in our world today and I am excited to be a part of advancing the KYM vision forward."

The organization's next fundraising event is their annual golf tournament at Monarch Dunes. Registration for the event is open now through March 15 and there are opportunities for businesses to sponsor the event that include additional perks. Knowing You Matter has Gold, Silver, and Bronze sponsorship levels available in support of their

**continued on page 16**

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## ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

April 1st - April 30th, 2022

### MONARCH DUNES GOLF RESORT

Challenge Course \$400 / Team of 4  
12 Par-Three Holes Scramble

Old Course \$600 / Team of 4  
18 Holes Two Ball Best Ball

Schedule to Play Your Round Anytime Between  
April 1st and April 30th!

**REGISTER ONLINE through March 15th**  
**[www.KnowingYouMatter.org](http://www.KnowingYouMatter.org)**

# Knowing You Matter

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## Used laptops needed

ARROYO GRANDE — The Rotary Club of Arroyo Grande is collecting used laptops for families who do not have a computer at home for their children. Cash donations will also be accepted on the Rotary's [Facebook page](#) to provide hot spots for internet access.

The Rotary Club of Arroyo Grande can only accept PCs with Windows 10. Drop off locations are listed below:

- Ben's Computers: 983 W Grand Ave, Grover Beach
- B&W Property Management: 135 S. Halcyon, Arroyo Grande
- Grocery Outlet: 1574 W. Branch St, Arroyo Grande
- C&M Nursery: 195 N. Thompson, Nipomo
- Pure Bliss Spa: 234 W. Tefft St., Nipomo
- Vacation Rentals: 354 Main St, Pismo Beach
- Exploration Discovery Center: 867 Ramona Ave, Grover Beach
- Pismo Beach Dentistry: 1090 Dolliver St, Pismo Beach

Please contact Linda Vleit with any questions at 805-268-3813.

## Knowing You Matter continued from page 14

annual golf tournament at Monarch Dunes April 1 - April 30, that offer promotional opportunities for businesses. Raffle items and gift cards are also needed for their player BBQ where they will award prizes in various categories and raffle winners will be drawn. Sponsorship levels and perks are outlined [here](#).

Teams select the Challenge Course (12 par-three holes, Scramble) or Old Course (18 holes, Two Ball, Best Ball) and play their rounds between April 1st and April 30th. Visit [www.KnowingYouMatter.org](http://www.KnowingYouMatter.org) for details and to register.

Knowing You Matter is offering its first support group starting in March. Dr. Sarah Moreland will facilitate this eight-week session focused on processing the various shades of trauma experienced after a parent loses their child to suicide. For more information email [info@knowingyoumatter.org](mailto:info@knowingyoumatter.org).

"We are thrilled to have Brittney and Caroline join our team to help us reach more people through our programs," said Cindy Kullman, founder of Knowing You Matter. "Our first support group for parents who have lost a child by suicide kicks off next month, our Hope Bag Project is growing, and we are being called upon to share our story and programs in a variety of settings. I'm honored that we are making an impact to ensure that everyone knows that they matter."

Knowing You Matter exists to let people know that they matter by raising suicide awareness and promoting emotional health and wellness in our community and beyond. It is their vision to utilize multiple levels of outreach to offer healing, build a community of connectivity and support, and bring hope to the one considering suicide, the one who's survived an attempt, and to those affected by the loss of a loved one by suicide. Visit them online at [www.knowingyoumatter.org](http://www.knowingyoumatter.org).

## Chamber Breakfast at Inn at the Pier

Wednesday, March 16

7:30 am to 9 am

601 Cypress St. in Pismo Beach  
(in the Monarch Room)

Learn the latest updates on how tourism impacts South County from Cathy Cartier, the Chief Marketing Officer for Visit SLO CAL. Visit SLO CAL is the nonprofit countywide destination marketing and management organization for SLO County. A full breakfast will be served by Inn at the Pier. Epic Entertainment will provide music and sound. Please register early since seating is limited.



Cathy Cartier  
Chief Marketing Officer  
Visit SLO CAL



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## *8th Annual Comedy Night* *Saturday April 30, 2022*

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## Torchlight Marketing named Google Premier Partner

PISMO BEACH — Torchlight Marketing, a national Digital Marketing Agency, has achieved 2022 Premier Partner status in the Google Partners program.

Torchlight's team of experts provides digital advertising services throughout the United States specializing in the highly competitive markets of home services, legal services, and healthcare. Explore the full range of offerings on their website.

Google recently recognized the achievements of top-performing digital marketing partners across the globe by awarding Premier Partner status as part of a new Google Partners program for 2022.

"Congratulations to our Premier Partners for being among the top 3% of Google Partners in the US. These companies stand out based on their commitment to developing product expertise, building new client relationships, and helping their current clients grow. We look forward to supporting them as they help their customers succeed online," said Davang Shah, Senior Director, Google Ads Marketing.

Torchlight Marketing specializes in the technical side of marketing: Pay-Per-Click Advertising, Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Data Analytics. They help clients measure their marketing efforts and leverage that data for extreme growth. Torchlight's small and specialized team are dedicated Digital Advertising Engineers, SEO Specialists, and Digital Marketing Strategists. For more information, visit [GetTorchlight.com](https://www.gettorchlight.com).

## Grover Beach Buy Local program adds more gift card choices

GROVER BEACH — There are now 27 gift card choices in the popular Buy Local program in Grover Beach. Shoppers and diners who spend \$100 or more at Grover Beach small businesses (in the retail, restaurant, brewery, winery, fitness, and salon/personal services sectors), can select a free \$25 gift card from dozens of available choices—like the ones shown below. To claim their free gift cards, shoppers and diners can upload their receipts totaling \$100 or more [here](#).

- 805 Barber Co
- Catalyst Salon
- Chameleon Style for the Home
- Empower Yoga Studio and Community Boutique
- Exfoliate Skin Therapy
- Fin's Bar & Grill
- Fuego
- Grand Inspirations Home Decor
- Grover Beach Sourdough
- Grover Station Grill
- Halcyon Store
- Heidi's Suite
- Jimmy D's Spaghetti Joint
- Julia's Juice Bar
- Mike's Record Rack
- Monarch Grove Winery and Tasting Room
- Nan's Pre-Owned Books
- Pardon My French Bakery
- Rib Line by the Beach
- Second Chances Resale Store
- Signature Nails and Spa
- Spoon Trade
- St. Barnabas Thrift Shop
- Surfside Deli
- Trinity Cyclery
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## MEMBERSHIP MIXER

Wednesday, March 23, from 5 to 7 pm  
SeaCrest Oceanfront Hotel  
(outdoor event on the Oceanfront Terrace)

Join us for an oceanfront evening of networking, appetizers, beer, and music. Enjoy food and beer from Blast & Brew with music by Epic Entertainment.



Please RSVP at [southcountychambers.com](http://southcountychambers.com), or call (805) 489-1488.

## Chamber event photos from the February luncheon



**Left photo: Susannah Brown, Facilitator of Development Directors Roundtables at Spokes, was the main speaker at the Chamber luncheon on February 16 at Vespera Resort on Pismo Beach.**

**Top photo: Guests enjoyed a delicious lunch in the Vespera Resort ballroom before the start of the presentation.**

Don't miss the Chamber breakfast on Wednesday, March 16, at Inn at the Pier (indoors in the Monarch Room) in Pismo Beach. Save the date for the Chamber's Membership Mixer on Wednesday, March 23, on the oceanfront terrace at SeaCrest Oceanfront Hotel in Pismo Beach. To register for these events, please visit [southcountychambers.com](http://southcountychambers.com), and click on the Events tab at the top of the page to view the calendar. Seating is limited at the breakfast, so this event will sell out in advance.

## Thank you, renewing Chamber members, for your continued support!

- **Mechanics Bank in Arroyo Grande, Founding Level Chairman's Circle**
- **Solid Rock Recovery in Nipomo, Founding Level Chairman's Circle**
- **Burdine Printing & Graphics, Gold Level Chairman's Circle**

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— **We appreciate your support!**



## Who would you choose? Nominate a Business of the Month

Local businesses contribute to our economy, provide jobs, and demonstrate leadership. Many of these local leaders also invest time and money by giving back to our community. This deserves recognition and celebration. For this reason, South County Chambers of Commerce (SCCC) recognizes a Business of the Month.

### The SCCC Business of the Month Criteria:

1. The business is a current SCCC Member in good standing.
2. They conduct responsible, ethical business in South San Luis Obispo County; Avila Beach, Pismo Beach, Grover Beach, Oceano, Arroyo Grande, or Nipomo.
3. They contribute significantly to the local economy and/or the local workforce.
4. They have demonstrated leadership in the business community.

The Business of the Month is recognized in the Chamber's monthly newsletter "South County Business News," on social media, and at the Chamber's monthly breakfast or luncheon. The SCCC Businesses of the Month are automatic nominees for the SCCC Business of the Year Award. The SCCC Business of the Year is celebrated at the Annual Dinner and Recognition Awards. (Businesses are allowed to nominate themselves and SCCC Marketing Committee Members may also nominate businesses.)

...

Please help us choose by nominating a local company for *Business of the Month*. Visit [southcountychambers.com](http://southcountychambers.com), and click on the *Resources* tab at the top of the page to nominate a business.



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### Chamber Staff:

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**Chief Operations Officer**  
ligia@southcountychambers.com

Holly Leighton  
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holly@southcountychambers.com

Chris Wise  
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chris@southcountychambers.com

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megan@southcountychambers.com

Amy Layman  
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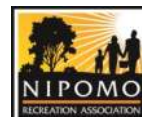
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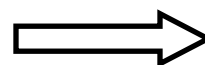


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