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## Annual Awards Honorees Announced

*Chamber Luncheon to be Held April 14.*

The Salinas Valley Chamber has announced the recipients of its Annual Awards Luncheon, which will take place on Thursday, April 14th from 11:00am-1:00pm at Sherwood Hall. With over 700 businesses and organization members that represent thousands of local employees and stakeholders, the Annual Awards Luncheon will host nearly 500, and is the single largest gathering of businesspeople in our area. The Chamber is celebrating its 101st event this year, presented by Chevron.

"We have incredible members that have continued serving our community, despite the challenges of the past 18 months," shared Steve McShane, Interim President and CEO of the Salinas Valley Chamber. "We can't wait to honor the award winners and made the decision to have the event in April as a live event to account for the current climate with COVID, and still be able to create a community celebration."

### Businesswoman of the Year: Andrea Bailey (Chevron)

Andrea Bailey is a consummate professional who is approachable and genuine in her actions. She has made enormous and lasting impacts in our local business, non-profit and educational communities as a tireless advocate who has address economic development and implemented revitalization strategies for our community. In her leadership role with Chevron, she has advanced community STEM projects and collaborated with local leaders to close equity gaps for college and career readiness programs. Additionally



**ANDREA BAILEY**  
Businesswoman  
of the Year

she worked in partnership with Monterey County Office of Education, Hartnell College and CSUMB to bring the STEM centered Central Coast Mobile Fab Lab to Monterey County. The Fab Lab provides valuable skill development in future careers for young adults aligned with the needs of the local community. Ms. Bailey has served as past chair of the Salinas Valley Chamber, as a board member for Hartnell College Foundation and as Co-Chair of Hartnell College Foundation's STEM Task Force Committee.

### Small Business of the Year: Ocon Family Chiropractic

Dr. Ocon is a Salinas chiropractor who is dedicated to

**AWARDS** - Continued on page 4

## Monterey County to receive \$3M for Countywide Business Recovery Program

The County of Monterey has partnered with the Monterey County Business Council (MCBC) for the administration of a three-year, \$3M grant of federal funds to help businesses recover from the effects of the COVID pandemic. MCBC has announced that former Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce CEO, Paul Farmer, has been hired as the Chief Operating Officer (COO) to lead the new program.

A seasoned local professional, Paul served as the CEO of the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce for nearly ten years. During that time, he solidified the organization's membership, finances, and influence in the community. Multi-lingual and creative, Paul has many relationships with local elected officials, business leaders and non-profit organizations that will be useful as he leads efforts to help strengthen the local economy throughout the County.

Farmer shared, "As a former business owner myself, I understand the challenges faced by courageous entrepreneurs. The headwinds brought about by the pandemic continue, and I look forward to collaborating with others to identify areas of need and solutions to help put locals back to business. Personally, this opportunity enables me to put my relationships and skills to work for greater impact and I'm excited about that."

MCBC CEO Kimbley Craig has worked with Farmer for many years: "Paul is a slam dunk as MCBC'S new COO and second-in-command. I've worked with him extensively and know his business acumen and ability to deliver results. With Paul at the helm, the program promises far-reaching benefits."

The agreement between the County of Monterey and MCBC is to administer a COVID-relief program, with funding from the US Government's "American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA)." This program is designed to support businesses in every corner of the County, with an emphasis on minority-owned businesses and unincorporated areas. For more information on the new program, contact Paul Farmer at the MCBC or email [PFarmer@mcabc.biz](mailto:PFarmer@mcabc.biz).

**About MCBC:** Monterey County Business Council is a membership only 501(c)(6) organization, comprised of professionals from business, government, and education working together on countywide issues. Founded in 1995, the non-profit corporation seeks to promote the concept of private-public partnerships by bringing business experience and techniques to the public arena.



**OCON FAMILY  
CHIROPRACTIC**  
Small Business  
of the Year

# Community Foundation for Monterey County – Here for Good

The Community Foundation for Monterey County (CFMC) has been inspiring philanthropy and strengthening communities for more than 75 years. 2021 marked a year of record generosity and collaboration. Despite the hardships of the pandemic for donors and nonprofits alike, the people of Monterey County stepped up to support those in need.



CFMC Board Chair Teri Belli, Mel and Regina Mason and Dan Baldwin at 2021 Celebration of Philanthropy.

The CFMC granted a record \$36 million in 2021 to organizations doing good work in areas including Children and Youth Development; Health and Human Services; Arts, Culture and Historic Preservation; Environment and Animal Welfare; and Community Development.

This year will build on that momentum thanks to Monterey County Gives! which provides a partial match for each donation. The program generated a record \$9.7 million for 170 nonprofits. MC Gives! is a partnership of the Monterey County Weekly and Monterey Peninsula Foundation, and the CFMC.

The CFMC strengthens hundreds of nonprofits in Monterey County and beyond through grantmaking from donor advised funds and competitive grant programs. Donor advised fund holders can easily recommend grants to their favorite causes through a charitable fund which can be established with a gift of \$5,000 or more. Nonprofits serving Monterey County residents can find information on the CFMC's competitive grant programs at [cfmco.org/Grants](http://cfmco.org/Grants). The Center for Nonprofit Excellence offers workshops, consulting and the LEAD Institute for emerging nonprofit leaders.

Thanks to generous individuals, families and businesses, the CFMC also creates opportunity through scholarships.

Students can apply for more than 65 scholarships totaling \$1.4 million through one application. Salinas-based funds include the California Rodeo Salinas Scholarship Fund, Church Brothers-True Leaf Farms Scholarship Fund, Taylor Farms Scholarship Fund and Raymond H. Costa Family Scholarship Fund. To learn more, visit [cfmco.org/Scholarships](http://cfmco.org/Scholarships).

The CFMC also serves as a community leader on important initiatives. Dan Baldwin, CFMC President/CEO, currently heads the COVID-19 Collaborative made up of more than 55 representatives from the public sector, agriculture hospitality, nonprofits, education and healthcare. They strategize together on testing, communications, vaccine accessibility and best practices to combat the spread of COVID-19. The Collaborative reinforces the idea that all of us are connected regardless of industry or region. "COVID-19 is a community problem that needs a community solution," said Baldwin.

The VIDA (Virus Integrated Distribution of Aid) Community Health Worker program continues to make a tremendous impact. Initially funded by the County of Monterey with \$4.9 million with support from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, VIDA CHWs conducted more than 19,000 rapid tests and helped administer more than 13,000 vaccines since the beginning of the program.

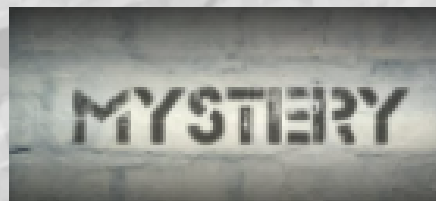


Christine Dawson, VP of Philanthropic Services, with MC Gives! guide.

To respond to the future needs of our community, the CFMC's Fund for Monterey County is invested to grow and grant in perpetuity. The Fund supports a wide variety of causes each year and provides resources for emerging needs, such as the COVID-19 pandemic response and emergency disaster relief. Learn more at [cfmco.org/FundforMontereyCounty](http://cfmco.org/FundforMontereyCounty). ■

*"The continuing generosity in Monterey County never ceases to surprise. The CFMC's growth reflects this interest in people wanting to use philanthropy to improve lives in our communities. Whether through scholarship funds, donor advised funds or estate gifts, philanthropic spirit is making Monterey County stronger."*

— DAN BALDWIN



## dinner event

Friends of Steinbeck House – would you like to promote your business and support us in our need to raise funds to maintain this historic local treasure?

We are hosting 3 murder mystery dinners on John Steinbeck's birthday weekend February 25-27th and we are looking for sponsors.

**Entertainment sponsor \$1,000**

includes 2 dinner tickets, 1 glass of champagne each, best seats in the house and participation with the actors

**Beverage sponsor \$500**

includes 1 dinner ticket, 1 glass champagne and preferred seating

**THE GAME IS AFOOT!**

To sponsor by Feb 10th –  
contact [ceciliaKENNEDY1@gmail.com](mailto:ceciliaKENNEDY1@gmail.com)  
or call 831-261-1779





# Looking Forward to Serving as Your Board Chair in 2022

— Rodney Meeks —

by Rodney Meeks, Board Chair



Thank you Kristy Santiago for choosing me as your successor as Board Chair. You did a remarkable job serving this past year, and I want to thank you on behalf of the entire membership for the countless hours you dedicated to the Chamber and all you were able to accomplish as you mentioned in your last article of the Business Journal.

There are so many new things happening at the Chamber that I would like to share. To begin, we have a new CEO. As you have read on our front page story, our former CEO, Paul Farmer, has accepted a job with the Monterey County Business Council (MCBC) after nearly 10 years as the Chamber CEO. During his tenure he successfully managed our membership, special events, and communications. We thank Paul for his dedication and the positive impact he had on the Chamber during his tenure, and wish him well in his new position with the MCBC. We are excited what his talents will bring to our business community.

Welcome Steve McShane as the new CEO of the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce! Normally this would be a challenging position to fill, but with our luck we were able to hire a well-qualified candidate in Steve. As many of you know Steve was the owner of McShane's Landscape Supply. He recently sold his business to Tope's Sustainable Garden Center and approached the Chamber about the open CEO position. It was perfect timing as Steve knows the community well, and the needs of local business. We were fortunate enough to have Paul and Steve work together for three weeks as Steve transitioned into his new position.

We have also added two new board members, Tom Moran and Amy Salmina. Tom is the CEO of Goodwill Central Coast and brings strong financial skills to our board. He formerly served as the CFO for West Marine and has agreed to serve as Vice-Chair of Finance on the executive committee. Amy is the owner of Coast and Valley Properties.

She is a Salinas native who grew up in the Alisal, and has a strong network throughout the Salinas Valley. Amy agreed to serve as Chair of the Chamber Foundation and helped lead the Children's Christmas Shopping Tour in December. It is engagement from members like Tom and Amy that make the Chamber successful.

As we head into the first quarter of 2022 our focus will be on the final and third year of our strategic plan, which includes:

- Improve Operational Excellence
- Grow our Membership Value and Outreach
- Increase our Regional Collaboration to Enhance our Members Business Success and Growth
- Strengthen our Advocacy and Policy Influence to Advance the Interest of our Membership

Thank you Andrea Bailey and Chevron for covering the cost of our facilitator, Michelle Slade at our board retreat this past October. It's generous members like you that make the Chamber successful. ■



## 2022 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- Chair - **Rodney Meeks**  
(Credit Consulting Services)
- Chair-Elect - **William J. Hastie**  
(Hastie Financial Group)
- Past Chair - **Kristy Santiago** (KION TV)
- Vice Chair, GRC - **Jennifer Williams**  
(Natividad Medical Foundation)
- Vice Chair, Finance - **Tom Moran**  
(Goodwill of the Central Coast)
- Vice Chair, Events - **Amy Gibson**  
(Portola Hotel & Spa)
- Vice Chair, Membership - **Andrea Bailey**  
(Chevron)

## 2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- **Jim Bogart** (Ag Industry Legend)
- **Sara Boyns** (Fenton & Keller)
- **Esteban Calderon** (Comerica Bank)
- **Raymond Costa**  
(RHC Management, dba McDonald's)
- **Jon Ditlevsen** (1st Capital Bank)
- **Albert Maldonado** (MP Express Printing)
- **Kathy Miller** (Aera Energy)
- **Krishna Patel** (Duda Farm Fresh Foods)
- **Brandon Patterson** (Brandon D Patterson - Windermere Valley Properties)
- **Colby Pereira** (Braga Fresh Family Farms)
- **Amy Salmina** (Coast & Valley Properties)
- **Starla Warren** (Monterey County Housing Authority Development Corporation)

## CHAMBER LIAISONS

- **Peter Kasavan** (SPARC)
- **Matt Huerta**  
(Monterey Bay Economic Partnership)
- **Kevin Dayton**  
(Salinas City Center Improvement Assn.)

## LEGAL COUNSEL

- **Matt Ottone**

## PROFESSIONAL STAFF

- **Gino Gonzalez**  
Office Administrator
- **Lindsey Knight**  
Membership Development Director
- **Linda Rosser**  
Operations and Accounting Director
- **Jennifer Russell**  
Special Events Manager
- **Toula Hubbard**  
Business Journal Editor
- **Steve McShane**  
President & CEO

## CHAMBER PRIORITIES

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

Info@SalinasChamber.com  
(831)751-7725

serving the people of Salinas and around the world. Dr. Ocon is a graduate of Cleveland Chiropractic College of Los Angeles and served in his father's native, Nicaragua, to be their Olympic Team Chiropractor. He became the first recognized and licensed chiropractor for the Ministry of Health of Nicaragua. Dr. Ocon co-founded CREW (Chiropractors Restoring Energy Worldwide) where he led numerous Chiropractic Health and Humanitarian Missions into Panama as well as missions into neighboring Costa Rica. **He was awarded** the Keys to the City in Panama City, Panama and was awarded the World Chiropractic Alliance's prestigious Chiropractic Humanitarian of the Year. He continues to serve people worldwide and maintains an active practice in Salinas.

**Large Business of the Year:  
JM Electric**

JM Electric is a family-owned business operating since 1948 providing quality service to customers in Monterey, San Benito, Santa Cruz and South Santa Clara counties. Supporting a variety of electrical contracting services ranging from initial planning and specification to customer design, JM Electric also hosts 24-hour emergency response in the commercial, government and residential industries. The company is a strong successful business with combined construction experience, communication skills, and quality control. The dedication of their team and commitment to client satisfaction is demonstrated at every tier.



**JM ELECTRIC**  
*Large Business of the Year*



**Citizen of the Year: Victor Rey**  
*(Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare System)*

Victor Rey has served on the Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare System (SVMHS) Board of Directors for eight years, and currently serves as its president. Mr. Rey has been a tireless leader who has governed the healthcare system through a tremendous period of growth and financial success, playing a critical part in collaborative efforts between Salinas Valley Memorial and Montage Health, resulting in Aspire Health, and the Monterey County Diabetes Collaborative. Mr. Rey has provided board support and direction to bring healthcare to underserved areas through the SVMHS Mobile Health Clinic and the SVMHS multi-disciplinary clinic in Gonzales.

An active supporter of Blue Zones Project Monterey County,

Mr. Rey is their number one social media ambassador, consistently promoting the Power 9 principles, showing how to easily apply to daily life. Mr. Rey is a certified Purpose Workshop facilitator holding events in English and Spanish, to help us share this community benefit.

**Spirit of the Community:  
Meals on Wheels of the Salinas Valley**

Meals on Wheels of the Salinas Valley (MOWSV) has been delivering meals to homebound seniors with no interruption since the start of COVID-19, and has increased their reach by creating programs to feed more people who have been affected by the pandemic and the restrictions imposed in the community as a result of COVID. 1) The MASA program was created at the beginning of the pandemic, and delivers fresh meals from local restaurants to newly homebound seniors due to the shelter in place orders. MOWSV collaborated with Independent Transportation Network of Monterey County and Monterey-Salinas Transit for delivery of the food, paid local restaurants to cook the meals and served nearly 300 seniors one fresh meal daily, five days a week for three months. 2) In the Fall of 2021, MOWSV created congregate meal programs for South County seniors who had been homebound due to COVID. Provided in Soledad and Gonzales, these programs provided monthly a musician, lunch, and community resources. 3) With funding from the United Way,



**MEALS ON WHEELS  
OF THE SALINAS VALLEY**  
*Spirit of the Community*



**McShane Joins Salinas Valley  
Chamber of Commerce**

Steve McShane has joined the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce as the Interim President and CEO.

Having sold his business, McShane's Nursery & Landscape Supply to Tope's, McShane expressed gratitude and the privilege to serve the Salinas Chamber of Commerce and business community. McShane's experiences as a City Council member, business owner and his knowledge of the Salinas Valley landscape, uniquely positions the Chamber to continue serving their membership with a seasoned and knowledgeable replacement, upon Paul Farmer's departure after ten years.

The Chamber is dedicated to "Creating a Strong Local Economy, Promoting the Community, Providing Networking Opportunities, Representing the Interests of Business with Government, and Taking Political Action," all areas that McShane has worked tirelessly towards in his past endeavors. "I look forward to serving members and local businesses as we emerge from the pandemic, while utilizing my insights and skills to contribute during a continued unsettling time for our members."



**Steve McShane**

MOWSV has been serving fresh, locally sourced meals to people of all ages who need to quarantine due to positive COVID test result. All these programs have been in addition to the core mission of MOWSV, to serve nutritious meals to over 400 homebound seniors each year since 1972. 2022 marks 50 years of MOWSV serving seniors in the Salinas Valley.

**Ag Leadership Award: Kim Stemler**  
*(Monterey County Vintners & Growers)*

Kim Stemler has been an outstanding leader and advocate within the local and regional agricultural community, and particularly for the wine grape growers of Monterey County. Leading through the pandemic, Ms. Stemler utilized her resources to rally for vaccinations for farmworkers, hospitality employees, and testing of all residents in Monterey County. Additionally, Ms. Stemler lobbied for economic recovery for farms, vineyards, tasting rooms and hospitality businesses. Working with the Community Foundation of Monterey County, Ms. Stemler brought many resources forward on a weekly basis to aid in operational requirements and recovery, while the pandemic continued to impact many businesses. Ms. Stemler has also been instrumental in bringing issues to the forefront of our community, including development of the Salinas Valley Wine Trail; highlighting the need for additional day facilities; and work in Big Sur to bring preservation to a treasured residence of a local artist. In addition to Ms. Stemler's work in the community, she serves on the Monterey County Convention & Visitors Bureau's Board of Directors.



**KIM STEMLER**  
*Ag Leadership Award*

**Event Presenting Sponsor:** Chevron **Corporate Sponsors** (as of publication deadline): Union Bank; Pinnacle Bank; Aera Energy; California Water Company; Braga Fresh Family Farms; Cecilia Kennedy Insurance Services; Kasavan Architects; Green Rubber – Kennedy Ag; Noland, Hamerly, Etienne & Hoss; Fenton & Keller; Natividad Medical Foundation; 1st Capital Bank; KION-TV; Alliant Insurance Services; JRG Attorneys.

For more information on attending or sponsoring the Annual Awards Luncheon, please call (831) 751-7725, email [events@salinaschamber.com](mailto:events@salinaschamber.com), or visit [www.SalinasChamber.com](http://www.SalinasChamber.com). ■

**The Chamber is dedicated to Creating a Strong Local Economy, Promoting the Community, Providing Networking Opportunities, Representing the Interests of Business with Government, and Taking Political Action.**



# Hartnell College Construction Projects Moving Forward

## Millions invested in Community Students

by Chamber Staff

In November 2016, 68.8% of voters approved Measure T, a bond measure that authorized Hartnell College to borrow \$167 million for construction projects. Fourteen years earlier, in November 2002, 65.7% of voters approved Measure H, a bond measure that authorized Hartnell College to borrow \$131 million for construction projects.

With matching grants from the State of California and donations from the Hartnell College Foundation and other community leaders, the Hartnell College administration and Board of Trustees have been able to move forward with ambitious plans to improve and expand the main campus in Salinas and establish or expand four satellite campuses in the Alisal/East Salinas, in Castroville (North County), and in Soledad and in King City (South County).

This \$298 million from two bond measures is an investment in the future of the Salinas Valley, and aligns with the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce vision for “a thriving, welcoming Salinas Valley where people, families, and businesses succeed via economic opportunity and growth.” However, your Chamber also recognizes this vision has a price.

Property owners in the district will pay taxes over decades so that bond investors get their initial investment back as principal, plus interest that makes their relatively safe investment worthwhile. Because of those interest payments, the amount of money paid back by property owners in the college district will significantly exceed the amount borrowed - at least before inflation is taken into account.

The 2002 bond measure resulted in visible and measurable improvements on the Main Campus and elsewhere. Measure H paid for construction of major new facilities such as the STEM Center Building at the Main Campus (\$29.1 million), the CALL Building at the Main Campus (\$19.7 million), the Learning Resource Center at the Main Campus (\$27.8 million), the Alisal Campus Center for Advanced Technology (\$36.1 million), and the Parking Structure on the Main Campus (\$26.3 million).

In 2016, the college intensified its focus on facilities at various satellite campuses throughout the Salinas Valley. Voters were told that the money would fund a multipurpose education facility in Soledad, a “Center for Literacy and Language Development” in South Monterey County, a multipurpose education facility in North Monterey County, new classrooms and labs at the Alisal Campus, and expansion of the King City Education Center. On the Main Campus on West Alisal Street in Salinas, the college would build a Center for Nursing and Health Science and expand or upgrade other buildings.

### VISIBLE AND MEASURABLE

Five years after the passage of Measure T, the results of this second bond measure are now becoming visible and measurable. Your Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce has been tracking the Measure T construction program through the monthly reports presented to the Board of Trustees by the Hartnell College Executive Director of

Facilities Planning & Construction Management. In addition, Chamber officials have been visiting the sites to see the progress.

Construction contracts were awarded for four of the largest planned Measure T projects in a four-month period in the second half of 2019. In August 2019, the

elected Board of Trustees awarded a design-build contract to local companies Dilbeck & Sons/In Studio Architecture for \$11.6 million to build the North Monterey County (Castroville) Education Center. In October 2019, the Board of Trustees approved a contract to local company Dilbeck and Sons for \$10.3 million to build the new Soledad Education and Outreach Center. In November 2019, the Board of Trustees approved a contract to local company Tomblason for \$21.4 million to build the Nursing and Health Sciences Building on the Main Campus. And also in November 2019, the Board of Trustees approved a contract to local company Avila Construction for \$9.5 million to build the King City Education Center Expansion.

### OUTCOMES TODAY

The completed King City Education Center Expansion opened for classes on August 30, 2021 with an official ribbon cutting ceremony on October 14, 2021. The Soledad Education Center also opened for classes on August 30 with an official ribbon cutting ceremony on October 23. ***The Castroville Education Center and Center for Nursing and Health Science on the main campus opened for classes on January 24, 2022.***

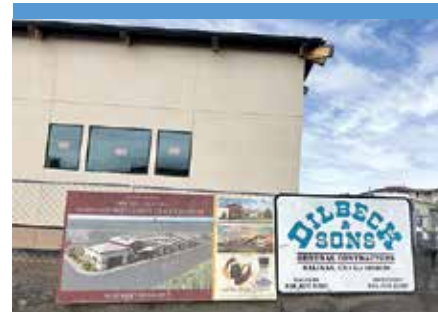
With these projects completed it will be time for the Salinas Valley to test the arguments in support of Measure T in the November 2016 voter guide. Supporters defended the substantial focus on new buildings at Hartnell College satellite campuses by declaring “Measure T is a well-developed plan to expand education access and to meet the workforce needs of our region’s leading industries... The improvements sought through Measure T strengthen the entire Salinas Valley.” Meanwhile, the Measure T opposition argument in the voter guide countered that “technology can provide distance education at a fraction of the price of a new building for students who truly can’t get to the main campus.”

That argument was made in 2016. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic would compel community colleges in California to dramatically shift to virtual learning. And technology in distance education leaped forward when there was widespread demand for it.

Yet, not every student has excelled when taking classes at home with a computer. The Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce hopes that in-person learning in new physical structures at the four satellite campuses (and at the Main Campus), will indeed “make Hartnell more accessible for our communities” and “meet the workforce needs of our region’s leading industries” in a way that virtual classes at home cannot. ■



*New King City Education Center*



*New Castroville Education Center*



*New Center for Nursing and Health Sciences on the main campus in Salinas*



*New Soledad Education Center*

# 2022 - New Year - New Compliance Obligations for Employers

by Gladys Rodriguez-Morales, Fenton & Keller Law Firm

With the new year comes new compliance obligations for employers, including new minimum wage rates. On January 1, 2022, the state minimum wage increased to \$14.00 per hour for employers with 25 or fewer employees and to \$15.00 per hour for employers with 26 or more employees. If at any during the year the size of an employer's workforce increases above the threshold of 25 employees, the employer will have to increase the minimum wage paid to its employees to \$15.00 an hour. By comparison, if the size of the workforce falls below 26 employees, the employer can reduce the wage rate because the workforce has fallen below the threshold of 26 employees. However, before making a change in the workforces' minimum wage rates based on a change in workforce size, the employer must notify the affected employees in writing and in advance as required by Labor Code section 2810.5. The California Department of Industrial Relations ("DIR") publishes a notice that complies with the requirements of Labor Code section 2810.5. The Notice to Employee can be downloaded at [https://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/LC\\_2810.5\\_Notice.pdf](https://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/LC_2810.5_Notice.pdf).

Employers should also be aware that some cities and counties have adopted a higher minimum wage ordinance than California. Where there is a conflict between federal (the federal minimum wage is currently \$7.25 an hour), state, and local laws regarding the minimum wage, and an employer employs individuals in a city or county that has a minimum wage ordinance, employers must pay the highest applicable minimum wage. Employers who are unsure if the city or county in which they employ individuals has a minimum wage ordinance should contact an employment law attorney. The UC Berkeley Labor Center also keeps a detailed list of local minimum wage ordinances which can be found at <https://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/inventory-of-us-city-and-county-minimum-wage-ordinances/>

The minimum salary for exempt employees also increased on January 1, 2022. Employers must pay exempt employees at least two times the state minimum wage for full-time employment. For employers with 25 or fewer employees, the exempt employee minimum salary is \$58,240 a year. For employers with 26 or more employees, the exempt employee minimum salary is \$62,400 a year. Some exceptions apply to the new minimum salary requirements for exempt employees. Exempt computer professionals must be paid a minimum of \$50 per hour, \$8,679.16 per month, or \$104,149.81 annually. Licensed physicians and surgeons must be paid a minimum of \$91.07 per hour.

With California's new minimum wage rates, employers are also obligated to comply with California's workplace posting requirements. Employers are required to post information related to working conditions and wages in an area frequented by employees, including minimum wage rates. Employers can download the required workplace posting from the DIR's website, including the minimum wage poster at <https://www.dir.ca.gov/wpnodeb.html> Effective January 1, 2022, whenever an employer is required to post information at the workplace, employers may now also distribute this information to employees by email with the document or documents attached. This is particularly important now that a vast population of the workforce is working remotely. However, emailing the required notices does not negate an employer's obligation to continue to physically post the required notices.

The new year is a good time for employers to review their wage and hour policies and practices to ensure compliance with not only the new minimum wage rates, but compliance with all the new 2022 employment laws. ■

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

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RCFE #275202569





# How to Attract & Retain a More Satisfied Workforce

How can you, as a business, attract and retain a more satisfied workforce? Certify as a Family Friendly Business through the countywide Bright Beginnings Early Childhood Development Initiative.

Join the dozens of businesses in Monterey County that have already certified, like the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce and Central Coast Federal Credit Union. A family friendly business supports the well-being, retention, and productivity of employees with children.

Especially since the pandemic started,

workplaces have to be more flexible than ever so parents can earn a living, contribute to a recovering economy, and take care of their families, all while ensuring a business thrives. This might mean an employer offers options to work remotely, flexible schedules to accommodate classroom closures or COVID exposure, or helping parents find child care for their young children.

What's good for families is good for business. Visit [www.brightbeginningismc.org](http://www.brightbeginningismc.org) to learn more and to certify. It's quick and easy, you'll see! ■

## A Salute to Code Enforcement Personnel Workforce

There are certain jobs that don't get a lot of respect, while deep inside everyone knows those jobs are needed for public order. Many of these jobs involve getting people to abide by inconvenient rules or spend money for the collective good.

Code enforcement officers are an example. The concept of code enforcement often elicits groans, but people know their government imposes rules to try to protect public safety and preserve a reasonable quality of life for communities. In fact, often code enforcement is most popular when a property owner's behavior or neglect compromises the quality of life for everyone else in the neighborhood.

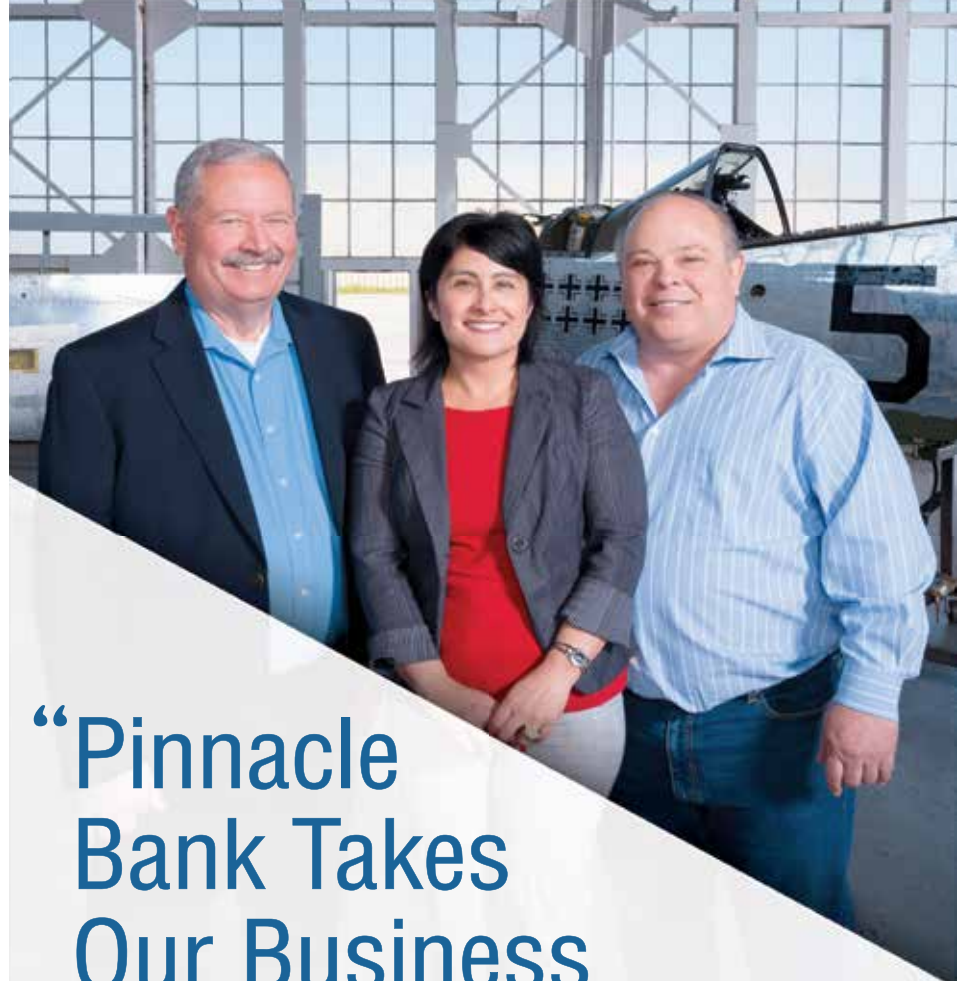
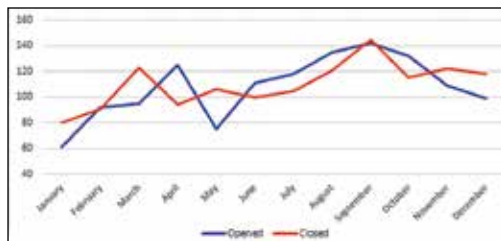
In 2018, the California State Legislature passed Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 283, establishing an annual "Code Enforcement Officer Appreciation Week."

The declaration notes that "Code Enforcement Officers have challenging and demanding roles and often do not receive recognition for the job they do in improving quality of life for residents and businesses of local communities" and describes Code Enforcement Officers as, "dedicated, highly-qualified and highly trained professionals who share the goals of

preventing neighborhood deterioration, enhancing communities and ensuring safety, and preserving property values through knowledge, training and application of housing, zoning, and nuisance laws."

On January 9, 2022, the City of Salinas press release announced that the City's Code Enforcement Officers were "hard at work", with over 2,600 cases opened and/or closed in 2021. Some of the most common violations observed were zoning violations, illegal occupancy, and recreational vehicles.

Although the press release did not mention this, City of Salinas Code Enforcement has received accolades for their recent success in addressing prominent and widely-detested blighted properties such as the Bruhn Building and the Greyhound Building in Downtown Salinas and the abandoned house on the corner of West Alisal Street and Lorimer Street. ■



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# Behavioral Finance: What Investors do to Derail Their Goals

by Bill Hastie, MBA



investment advisor(s). The idea is that by "spreading out their investments" among two or more investment advisors, the investor derives a benefit. Perhaps the single greatest potential downside of engaging multiple investment advisors is the lack of a coordinated strategy necessary to achieve the investor's long term financial goals.

There is no time when an investor needs a coordinated investment strategy more than when they are approaching retirement. This is when investments are, ideally, consolidated – not spread out – in order to maintain management control of the investments. As the investor approaches retirement, they want to adhere to a well-designed retirement income plan and implement a coordinated investment strategy. Losing management control, or not having a coordinated investment strategy at this stage, can act to derail even the best retirement income plan.

## Risk Management

Managing performance expectations relative to portfolio risk is critical for most investors. Let's use the salsa analogy to make this point. When making salsa, the various types of peppers provide the lion's share of the flavor but they can also occasionally burn you. Tomatoes are added to the salsa to help offset the potential to get burned, but also tend to dilute the great flavor potential. In this example, stocks work like peppers and bonds work like tomatoes. In portfolio construction, matching the stock/bond balance to an investor's acceptable level of risk is much like making salsa to one's personal tastes. ■

**Bill Hastie, MBA is the Founder of locally-owned Hastie Financial Group. If you would like to discuss your personal or company's investment needs, please contact Bill at [william.hastie@hastiefg.com](mailto:william.hastie@hastiefg.com)**

The field of behavioral finance focuses on the psychological process of how people think about and deal with their money. One example is the herd instinct which leads people to follow popular trends without any deep thought of their own. "Herding" is notorious in the stock market, often as the cause of rallies and sell-offs as investors follow trends of either buying or selling stocks. Behavioral finance believes that the herd instinct is a result of investors' inability to make rational decisions under emotional strains of anxiety, anger or excitement.

Here are three very common financial behaviors that while on the surface seem rational and logical, can often lead to the investor losing their way towards achieving their financial goals.

## Market timing

Most investors remember the market decline of 2008 and early 2009. It became very common for investors to reach the point of getting out of the market, but the next step was often the fatal one. Investors would say "I am getting out of the market now while it's so bad, then I will get back in when the market gets better." On the surface, this seems to make reasonable sense, or does it? Behavioral finance would offer this translation of what investors were really saying – "I am going to sell my investments now while prices are low and I won't get very much for them, then I will get back into the market when the price for me to repurchase those same investments is much higher."

## Diversification

One of the most widely accepted concepts borne out of Modern Portfolio Theory is diversification - the blending together of various investments that perform differently in various markets seeking to reduce overall portfolio risk. However, some investors apply this concept of diversification to their

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# Covid Testing: A Snapshot

by Spenser Smith, Lab Manager, ARCpoint Labs of Monterey Bay & Salinas



*Spenser Smith,  
Lab Manager,  
ARCpoint Labs of  
Monterey Bay & Salinas*

So an employee at your business tests positive for COVID-19. What now? When can they come back to work? What steps or tests can your business use to hasten their return to work, while protecting workplace safety and staying compliant with COVID-19 regulations and best practices?

Going on three years into this pandemic, and these are still the most frequent questions I hear from our clients. Changing government guidelines, new evolutions in testing technology, a stretched workforce, and the omicron variant make it more difficult than ever before to make these judgements. In this article, we will explore and summarize what the CDC, Cal/OSHA, and peer-reviewed research have to say to help guide the employer making these crucial pandemic decisions.

Let's set the stage. A manager is informed that an employee in their workplace has received a positive COVID-19 test. Their first instinct might be to doubt the result; after all, we've all heard of false positive results on these tests, right? While the detailed epidemiological answer might involve some math, the short answer hits two main points. First, most FDA authorized COVID-19 tests are very accurate, and false negatives are generally a much higher concern than false positives. The second point is that a positive test result from an employee is required, by Cal/OSHA Emergency Testing Standard (ETS), to be addressed. Ignoring such a result could expose a business to OSHA fines and potential liabilities, not to mention increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission in the workplace.

Still, there is no such thing as a 100% accurate test. What tests are reliable, and which might need to be taken with a grain of salt? At-home kits and self-swabbed tests present the greatest risk of false results. Additionally, as of the recent Cal/OSHA rules revision, employers are required to provide COVID-19 testing in the case of a workplace exposure or outbreak, and this testing cannot be self-administered and self-read. In other words, at-home testing does not qualify for Cal/OSHA testing requirements any longer. Lab-based antigen and rapid tests are more accurate and qualify, and more sophisticated lab-based PCR tests are more accurate still.

What should an employer do if an asymptomatic employee tests positive? An employee with no symptoms and no known exposure who tests positive presents the highest risk of a false positive (though the chances are still low). For these asymptomatic employees, a follow-up test may be warranted to confirm whether they do indeed have COVID, and if a quarantine is necessary.

According to the Federal OSHA Emergency Testing Standard (ETS), a positive rapid antigen test may be overturned, but only by taking a more accurate molecular test. OSHA guidelines do not, however, allow further rapid test results to overturn an initial rapid positive test. Only a molecular test can overturn a rapid test, and this should only be deployed for asymptomatic employees who test positive.

Molecular tests can take several days to return results, though some facilities have the capacity to return same-day molecular test results. While waiting for a molecular test following a positive antigen test, it is important that an employee follows quarantine procedures, as they should be presumed positive until otherwise demonstrated.

Documentation is also important for any workplace COVID-19 test. From Cal/OSHA's ETS FAQ, an employer is responsible for "Recording and tracking all COVID-19 cases with the employee's name, contact information, occupation,

location where the employee worked, the date of the last day at the workplace, and the date of a positive COVID-19 test. The information must be provided to the local health department, Cal/OSHA, the Department of Public Health and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health immediately upon request." Helping to maintain and report such results is one of the key advantages of using a laboratory for COVID-19 testing.

So if the employee is judged to be positive, how about quarantine times? The CDC recently changed the requirement to just five days, right? Well, yes, but only in certain cases and if testing protocols are followed.

The quarantine recommendations from the CDC represent best practices for protecting your workplace from COVID-19. According to several peer reviewed studies, COVID-19 is the most contagious from two to three days prior to symptoms until the two to three days after symptoms appearing. This means that there is about a five-day period of maximum infectiousness towards the beginning of a case of COVID-19. The new CDC guideline takes this period of peak transmissibility into account with their new quarantine guideline. However, transmission of COVID-19 is still a risk in some patients until ten to 15 days after initial exposure, so follow-up testing is still required by the CDC to shorten the quarantine period to fewer than ten days.

Once an employee tests positive, they need to quarantine for at least five days. At the end of that five day period, an employee can end their quarantine provided two conditions are met. First, they have no symptoms of COVID-19. Second, they test negative on an FDA authorized COVID-19 test.

An employee who fails to meet both requirements should maintain quarantine for a total of 10 days. If they manage to meet both requirements, they can return to work, but are required to wear a mask, preferably an N-95 or medical grade mask, for another five days. If an employee still has symptoms or tests positive again, they should observe a full 10-day period of quarantine before returning to work.

In the case of a COVID-19 outbreak at work, defined by Cal/OSHA as three or more cases of COVID-19 within a 14-day period, an employer is required to make free COVID-19 testing available to employees and to quarantine any who test positive. As of the updated workplace guidelines which came into effect on January 14, 2022, these tests cannot be self-administered and self-read, and even vaccinated employees are now covered in this requirement. ■

*The article is intended to offer information by Chamber member, ARCpoint Labs. Maintaining a safe and productive work environment during the Omicron spike is more challenging than ever, and ARCpoint Labs of Monterey and Salinas are available to serve. The Chamber shall have no liability for the accuracy of the information and cannot be held liable for any third-party claims or losses of any damages.*



# Getting Serious: Litter and Dumping

by Chamber Staff

Litter and dumping are harming commerce and compromising quality of life in Monterey County ("Businesses Frustrated With Trash", December 2021 issue, *Salinas Valley Business Journal*). On behalf of our members, we asked if anyone is trying to make a difference?

It is estimated in the past few years more than \$1 million has been spent on efforts to remove litter and debris from Monterey County. For example, contractor Smith & Enright (Salinas Valley Chamber Member) reports that workers picked up 1,532 tons of debris from 2019 through November 2021, at a cost of \$104,942 for dump fees, and \$605,051 for labor and equipment.

There are numerous public and private parties in Monterey County involved with picking up trash, removing dumped debris, and cleaning up public health issues at encampments. The Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce and other stakeholders are affiliated with the **Monterey County Illegal Dumping & Litter Abatement Taskforce (IDLATF)** established by the Board of Supervisors to try to reduce illegal dumping.

The Monterey County Health Department's Environmental Health Bureau oversees this working group. The Taskforce has representatives from local city and county governments, solid waste haulers and landfill operators, law enforcement, agricultural representatives and landowners, and other community leaders. As a resource, we have listed many of the participants in the taskforce and Salinas Valley Chamber Members are denoted with an asterisk (\*).

**Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority dba Salinas Valley Recycles\***, a regional government agency, which coordinates litter abatement activities with private garbage

companies that serve customers in its jurisdiction: <https://svswa.org>.

The Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority is involved in the **Central Coast Recycling Media Coalition (CCRMC)\***, which provides public outreach about proper disposal of waste. Website to report illegal dumping: <https://protectyourcentralcoast.org/tips/illegal-dumping/>.

**Waste Management\*, Republic Services\*, and Monterey Regional Waste Management District\***, comprised of Monterey Peninsula cities: <https://www.mrwmd.org>, are also represented on the Taskforce, along with the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans).

Illegal Dumping & Litter Abatement Taskforce Website:

<https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-h/health/environmental-health/solid-waste-management/illegal-dumping-litter-abatement-taskforce>

Website to report litter and Illegal dumping in Monterey County: [www.KeepMontereyCountyClean.Org](http://www.KeepMontereyCountyClean.Org).

The Monterey County Environmental Health Bureau offers a "Disposal Voucher Program" for public area community clean-up events organized by non-profit organizations and for the cleanup of illegal dump sites in Monterey County: <https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-h/health/environmental-health/solid-waste-management/disposal-voucher-program>

The **AMOR Salinas** project was launched by the **City of Salinas\*** in 2021 to promote community service. Actively recruiting volunteers and organizing litter cleanup in parks and other city public areas, and in partnership with **Republic Services**, AMOR has hosted nine cleanups at city parks since April 2021: <https://www.cityofsalinas.org/our-city-services/amor-salinas-1>.

**Smith & Enright** is a private contractor local governments and private parties in picking up trash, removing dumped debris, and rectifying public health issues at encampments. Costs of these cleanups can be high, especially if law enforcement monitors the cleanup to ensure safety of the work crews: <http://smithenright.com>.

**Clean California** is a **Caltrans** program that has been funded through a new \$1.1 billion multi-year program, and designated to clean up litter at and near encampments on the medians and sides of state highways. Caltrans provides people experiencing homelessness containers for needles/sharps, hazardous materials such as aerosol cans

and batteries, and trash bags and. Clean California also incorporates the existing Adopt-a-Highway program and a Caltrans pilot program that began in October 2021, offers Adopt-a-Highway volunteers up to \$250 for picking up highway litter: <https://cleancalifornia.dot.ca.gov>.

**Downtown Streets Team\*** is a Northern California nonprofit organization that provides services to unhoused people and people at risk of homelessness in conjunction with structured cleanup activities. They have a contract with the City of Salinas for work in areas including Chinatown, Sherwood Park, and downtown: <https://www.streetsteam.org>.

**Republic Services** is the City of Salinas, waste disposal company and hosts eight community cleanups per year in association with the Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority. COVID-19 reduced the number of cleanup campaigns in 2021: <https://www.republicservices.com>.

**Waste Management** serves unincorporated Monterey County and King City for waste disposal and also hosts community cleanup events: [https://www.wm.com/us/local/ca/monterey-county/residential?cmp=ag\\_home\\_2017-11-28\\_usa\\_ca\\_monterey\\_county](https://www.wm.com/us/local/ca/monterey-county/residential?cmp=ag_home_2017-11-28_usa_ca_monterey_county).

**Tri-Cities Disposal & Recycling Service** offers waste disposal services to the cities of Gonzales, Greenfield, and Soledad.

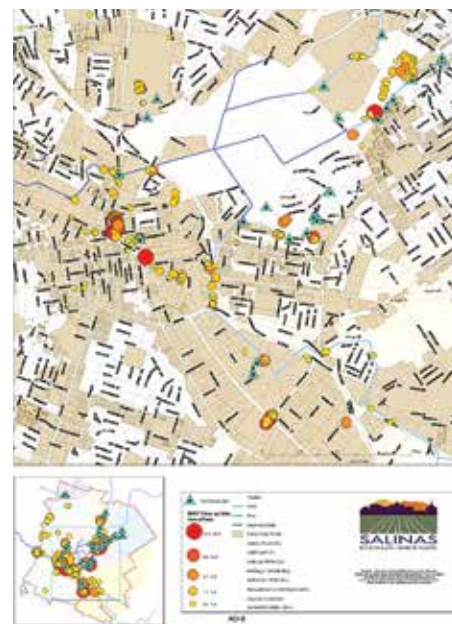
Annually, two community clean-up and two litter abatement events are offered in the cities they serve: <http://www.tri-citiesdisposal.com>.

## Other Abatement Partners

The City of Salinas has organized meetings with landowners and business representatives to discuss threats to public health from encampment waste. A significant challenge has been the right-of-way for the Union Pacific railroad. The City of Salinas has obtained some authority to perform certain cleanup at the railroad tracks, and the Downtown Streets Team has assisted with litter pick-up, needle removal and encampment debris.

## Trash and Dumping Jeopardizes Stormwater Permits

Litter and dumping is more than an aesthetic issue for local government. The federal **Clean Water Act** and several state laws impose requirements on local governments, as a condition of allowing discharge of municipal stormwater into waterways. These requirements include prohibitions on "the discharge of trash to surface waters of the State and the deposition of trash where it may be discharged into surface waters."



The **City of Salinas** has a "National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System" (NPDES) permit from the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Coast Region, allowing the city to discharge municipal stormwater into waterways, including Santa Rita Creek, Gabilan Creek, Natividad Creek, the Reclamation Ditch, and the Salinas River. The City of Salinas Stormwater Outfall Pipe to the Salinas River, has been recognized as a "significant contributor to pollutants in the Salinas River and contains non-stormwater flows during dry weather."

The city's permit requires the implementation of various Best Management Practices to control trash and litter. These include public education and outreach programs, municipal ordinances, litter cleanup events at priority locations, warning signs, street sweeping, trash capture systems, and trash removal from downstream waterways. The city's homeless encampments are "a potential source of human feces, trash, and other pollutants" entering the waterways.

**Monterey One Water\*** has begun the process of recycling some City of Salinas municipal stormwater. New pumping equipment and pipelines allow stormwater to be diverted for Monterey Peninsula drinking water, with the new Pure Water Monterey Groundwater Replenishment program and for crop irrigation through the existing Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project.

A lot is being done and many resources have been established to facilitate litter and dumped debris abatement. It is important for our business, communities, municipalities and waterways.

**\*Denotes Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce member.** ■





# Non-Profits Upcoming Events Calendar

## FREE Electric Vehicle Webinar Series from Ecology Action

Large employers in Salinas Valley now have the opportunity for employees to join a FREE Electric Vehicle Webinar Series, February 3: 12-12:45pm and February 17: 12-12:45 and 7-7:45pm. The series will cover important topics including electric vehicle and plug-in hybrid options, EV charging overview and options near work, plus financial incentives that lower the cost of purchasing or leasing an electric vehicle and installing home charging systems.

Register at <https://mbeva.org/events/> or contact [sabrina.delk@ecoact.org](mailto:sabrina.delk@ecoact.org).

## Chicken Little at ARIEL Theatrical - 320 Main Street, Salinas

Friday, Feb 18th at 7 pm & Saturday, Feb 19th at 2 pm & 7 pm

General admission - \$5

Children age 2 and under - FREE

Tickets at [www.tix.com/ticket-sales/arieltheatrical/4420](http://www.tix.com/ticket-sales/arieltheatrical/4420)

One little chicken who thinks the sky is falling causes quite a stir on the farm. This is the perfect introduction to live theatre, so bring the family and create lasting

## Alliance on Aging 2022 Trashion Show

3/24/22 – 10:30 am at the Salinas Sports Complex

Trashion : Where artists create one-of-a-kind outrageous, unique and theatrical fashion from recycled /repurposed everyday items such as: coffee bags, newspapers, candy wrappers, mason jar lids and more! The only place art, fashion and ecology come together in a fun and fabulous show. All proceeds benefit Alliance on Aging.

## Gil Basketball Academy's 12th Anniversary Awards Banquet

COURT HEROES, *March 19th, 2022 • 5:30 – 11:00pm, Salinas PAL Center*  
This gala event includes a live band and DJ, no-host bar, dinner, dancing and silent auction, with prizes ranging from a paint night with Coach Gil, getaway trips and more!

Tickets available @ <https://gbacelebratingourheros2022.eventbrite.com>

## Meeting Nonprofit Staffing Challenges

February 16, 2022, 9 – 10:30 a.m, online, [www.cfmco.org/workshops](http://www.cfmco.org/workshops)

The Center for Nonprofit Excellence joins with TPO Human Resources to offer this webinar with practical guidance in navigating this challenging environment for nonprofit employers.

## Salinas Senior Center St. Patrick's Dinner

March 10 at 5:30, \$15

For reservations call 757-6030 or email: [ssc@salinasseniorcenter.org](mailto:ssc@salinasseniorcenter.org)

## Rancho Cielo's 12th Annual Culinary Round Up Event.

Please join us for an evening of culinary delights, fabulous wine, amazing raffle and auction items, and a special invitation to speak to our students and have them demonstrate what they have learned in our culinary program.

*Sunday, February 27, 2022. 5:00-8:00pm at the Portola Hotel & Spa*

[www.ranchocieloyc.org/events](http://www.ranchocieloyc.org/events)



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# Mee Memorial Battles Rural Healthcare Challenges

by Rena Salamacha, CEO, Mee Memorial Healthcare System



## Mee Memorial Hospital

It is our goal to increase local access to healthcare and to see a community where everyone thrives. We face our own challenges, of course — long before the pandemic.

Invariably, rural hospitals are threatened with declining reimbursement rates and disproportionate funding at both the state and federal levels. As a nonprofit hospital, Mee Memorial is fortunate to enjoy widespread, unwavering community support — beginning with the Mee Memorial Hospital Foundation.

The independent, nonprofit foundation works diligently to raise funds and increase awareness of rural health-related challenges.

Over the past 50 years, it has raised millions of dollars for the betterment of the hospital. A few years ago it presented a \$750,000 check to help expand and renovate the Greenfield Clinic, one of the busiest health centers in South County. The \$4 million project allowed for an additional 1,200 patients to gain access to medical care per month, helping meet our community's growing demand for medical care.

Even with such support, statistics paint a grim picture about rural healthcare:

- Although 25 percent of Americans live in rural areas, only 10 percent of physicians practice in them.
- Rural residents tend to have a per capita income that is \$9,242 lower than residents in urban areas.
- Approximately 1 out of 4 rural children live in poverty.
- Rural residents face greater problems with medical transportation than residents living in urban areas.
- Approximately 20 percent of rural counties lack not only basic mental health services but any mental health services at all.
- Approximately 54 percent of rural Americans lack access to high-speed internet.
- Tobacco use is a significantly higher problem among rural youth than it is urban youth.

- Rural communities have higher unemployment rates and more uninsured residents.
- Rates of diabetes and coronary heart disease are higher in rural areas.

Given these realities, and in the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic and movements for racial justice, health equity has become a top priority for American hospitals.

At MMHS we try to put our commitment into action because it's a topic so vital to the health and welfare of all.

Recently, the healthcare think tank Lown Institute published a national ranking of socially responsible hospitals, and I'm proud to say that MMHS earned top marks across three major categories — scoring A grades in Health Equity, Pay Equity and Community Benefit.

"It's not enough for hospitals to say they're committed to social responsibility," said Dr. Vikas Saini, president of the Lown Institute. "They need to put their commitment into action. Doing well on the Lown Index is one way they can demonstrate progress."

Communities within South County certainly face accessibility issues, profound needs of an aging population and a larger percentage of uninsured and underinsured residents.

Sadly, this has all been exacerbated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, but we continue to face these challenges head on. It's amazing to witness the dedication and commitment of the Mee Memorial staff, providers, nurses and physicians. They help ensure our patients and families receive quality, compassionate healthcare during the most trying of times.

It's equally inspiring to see the support from local folks from all corners of the county. Often I am asked: "How can I help?" Well, there are many ways to get involved.

You can volunteer to help the foundation. Or better yet, apply to be a board member. Write a letter to lawmakers asking for the healthcare needs of rural citizens to be more adequately addressed. Donate directly to the Mee Memorial Hospital Foundation through our website. You may also support the foundation by purchasing a forever brick, rose bush or bench at the Mee Memorial Rose Garden.

The bottom line is that we're all in this together. There is nothing more sacred than our good health. Here's to better times ahead for us all! Wishing you a happy, safe and healthy 2022. ■

While rural life is not for everyone, for many Americans it is a desirable alternative to the stress and strain of the modern urban world.

Living in Southern Monterey County allows us several advantages, among them:

- Open spaces: It's easier to connect with nature, breathe fresh air and enjoy the quiet of the countryside.
- Slower pace: By and large it's a less stressful life away from the rat race and hustle-bustle of a big city.
- Tight-knit community: It's easier to form strong social bonds, and rural citizens are more likely to take an active role in helping others.

An estimated 57 million people — nearly 1 in 5 Americans — live in rural communities throughout the country. It can be a coveted way of life, yet it does not come without its challenges.

Access to healthcare services is critical to everyone, yet those in many rural communities often face barriers that adversely affect their overall physical, social and mental health status.

Economic factors, cultural, social differences and educational differences — and the sheer isolation of living in remote areas — all conspire to create healthcare disparities that impede rural Americans in their struggle to lead normal, healthy lives.

That is why we stand behind National Rural Health Day (celebrated each November). It's an annual opportunity to face our challenges while honoring the community-minded spirit that prevails in the countryside of America.

Founded by the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health, National Rural Health Day reminds us all about the sheer wealth of health.

Ideally, residents should be able to conveniently and confidently access services such as primary care, dental care, behavioral health, emergency care, and public health services. According to Healthy People 2020, access to healthcare is important for:

- Overall physical, social and mental health
- Disease prevention
- Detection, diagnosis and treatment of illness
- Quality of life
- Preventable death
- Life expectancy

At Mee Memorial Healthcare System, we work diligently to help remove obstacles to comprehensive health services — delivering them in a professional and caring environment. As the only healthcare system within 40 miles, MMHS is vital to providing quality patient care to the often-underserved.



# New Member Profiles

## Community Homeless Solutions

Celebrating 42 years of service to Monterey County in leading the effort to end the cycle of domestic violence and homelessness. We provide safe housing and compassionate support for over 300 persons each night, with opportunities for self-sufficiency in four programs that include: emergency shelters, domestic violence shelters, permanent housing and respite care, throughout Monterey County.

[www.communityhomelessolutions.org](http://www.communityhomelessolutions.org) • (831) 384-3388  
[ejohnsen@communityhomelessolutions.org](mailto:ejohnsen@communityhomelessolutions.org)



## First Tee of Monterey County

First Tee of Monterey County provides youth of all backgrounds an opportunity for a brighter future. We achieve this by putting in place a targeted curriculum of golf and character development, life skills, academic support, higher education, mentorship, and career development. *"As a First Tee participant, I learned from persevering through problems to make the right choices based on my judgment,"* said Pedro who was raised in Salinas and now works in the marketing department for the San Jose Earthquakes. Pedro joined First Tee in 4th grade and continued through high school. He learned interpersonal communication, self-management, goal setting and resilience skills.

[www.fcf-ca.org](http://www.fcf-ca.org) • (831) 800-3458 • [dgonzales@fcf-ca.org](mailto:dgonzales@fcf-ca.org)



## Gil Basketball Academy

Gil Basketball Academy's mission is to empower youth by developing their athletic skills, leadership, work ethic, world view, and enhancing their commitment to the community.

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## Health Projects Center

Health Projects Center is a non-profit that provides exceptional community-based programs that support elders to live and age with dignity at home. HPC delivers programs in both English and Spanish for older adults, family caregivers and health workers. HPC services the tri-counties with the Del Mar Caregiver Resource Center, Multipurpose Senior Services Program, and Central Coast Area Health Education Center. HPC's programs support families to age at home for a fraction of the cost of a nursing facility.

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## HomeLight

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## Panera Bread

Panera Bread is an American chain restaurant that has been active for 35 years; founded in 1987 and has over 2,000 locations all over the US and Canada. Hearing the name will make you think that they sell just bread, you will be surprised by the diversity the café menu has to offer. Their menu ranges from bread loaves, salads, soups, sandwiches, to flatbreads and more. There is something for everyone. The comfy and calm environment makes a great space for some peace and quiet to study or do office work, or if you just want to stop by for a quick bite or maybe even some coffee.

[www.panerabread.com](http://www.panerabread.com) • (831) 676-2372  
[cafe6025@panerabread.com](http://cafe6025@panerabread.com)



## Revival Ice Cream

Revival Ice Cream is more than ice cream; it's a movement. A movement to return to our roots, to uplift our community, and to create memorable moments—all through the pure joy of ice cream! We lovingly handcraft small batch ice cream, using locally harvested and sustainable ingredients and dairy...all because we know that what we choose to eat matters. It matters to our minds, bodies, hearts, and our planet.

[www.revivalicecream.com](http://www.revivalicecream.com) • (831) 747-2113  
[info@revivalicecream.com](mailto:info@revivalicecream.com)



## Tope's Trees & Sustainable Garden Center

Tope's Tree Service Inc. is a full-service tree care company serving the central coast since 1979. Nearly 10 years ago we started recycling our green waste that would end up in landfills. We repurposed this material making mulches and landscape materials. With the growing demand for these materials came Topes Sustainable Garden Center in Monterey. As the business thrived we eventually outgrew this location. We are happy to announce the acquisition of McShane's Landscape Supply on Highway 68, our new home to our tree service and garden center. We are excited to have our grand opening in the very near future!

[www.topesgardencenter.com](http://www.topesgardencenter.com)  
[www.topestreeservice.com](http://www.topestreeservice.com)  
[info@topestreeservice.com](mailto:info@topestreeservice.com)  
[info@TopesGardenCenter.com](mailto:info@TopesGardenCenter.com)



## Untamed Fire

Untamed Fire is a small business owned by life-long Salinas local Lynnette Smick, and her friend, Megan Boles. They are passionate about community involvement and providing space where individuals can be who they are, without judgment. Their offerings include crystals, journals, metaphysical supplies, books, teas, spices, and more. There are also several products that are hand-made by the owners including beaded gemstone jewelry, tea & spice blends, and cleansing sprays, among other things.

[www.untamedfire.net](http://www.untamedfire.net) • (831) 582-1724  
[sales@untamedfire.net](mailto:sales@untamedfire.net)



## Valley Health Plan (VHP)

Valley Health Plan (VHP) was licensed in 1985 to offer coverage to County of Santa Clara employees and grew to 4,500 members by 1995. We are now a health plan choice for medical care for employer groups, Covered California, and VHP's Individual & Family Plan (IFP). This Open Enrollment, VHP is proud to offer Covered California and IFP plans to residents of San Benito and Monterey Counties. VHP provides quality service and affordable health plan options to our members.

[www.valleyhealthplan.org/home](http://www.valleyhealthplan.org/home)  
408-885-5780  
[brokerrelations@vhp.sccgov.org](mailto:brokerrelations@vhp.sccgov.org)



## Working Solutions CDFI Organization

Working Solutions is the First to Believe in start-up and early-stage entrepreneurs across Northern California by providing affordable microloans of \$5,000-\$50,000 and free consulting to help small businesses thrive. As a certified, nonprofit Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), Working Solutions specializes in serving entrepreneurs with less than 5 years in business who may not have access to traditional sources of capital—particularly women, entrepreneurs of color, and lower-income individuals.

[www.workingsolutions.org](http://www.workingsolutions.org)  
(415) 780-1217  
[info@workingsolutions.org](mailto:info@workingsolutions.org)



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Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce

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Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce

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# Hartnell College Takes First Look at Student Housing

On January 11, 2022, the Hartnell Community College District Board of Trustees voted to authorize an application to the California Department of Finance Higher Education Student Housing Grant Program for a \$325,000 grant to study the feasibility of affordable student housing.

This concept is in an early stage of planning at Hartnell College, but many community colleges in California are exploring ways to provide housing for students. In September 2021, Governor Newsom enacted Senate Bill 169, a budget



"trailer bill" that included a section establishing a Higher Education Student Housing Grant Program.

This program provides one-time grants for the construction of affordable, low-cost housing - or for the acquisition and renovation of commercial properties into housing - dedicated for students enrolled in public postsecondary education in California. Community colleges will get 50% of the total amount budgeted for the grant program, which is authorized (but not guaranteed as an appropriation) for a total of \$2 billion over three years. ■

## Good for Families, Good for Business

Balancing work and family is a common concern for employees and employers alike. Show that you are a workplace that helps find balance by becoming a Family Friendly Business. It's easy!

Learn more and certify here:  
[brightbeginningsmc.org/family-friendly-business/](http://brightbeginningsmc.org/family-friendly-business/)

**COMIENZOS BRILLANTES** | **BRIGHT BEGINNINGS**  
BRILLANT BEGINNINGS FOR ALL | FAMILY FRIENDLY BUSINESS CERTIFICATION

**Family Friendly Business**

## CHAMBER LEGISLATIVE ALERT

The California Chamber of Commerce today tagged AB 1001 (Cristina Garcia; D-Bell Gardens) as a job killer.

The bill expands the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to incorporate new, highly subjective, non-quantifiable and litigation-bait standards into CEQA in an attempt to address historical discriminatory land use policies.

Your Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce, is monitoring this and other legislative actions that may have an impact on your business.



## Thank You Volunteer Drivers & Community Partners



Support our future, and our Rural Rides project. Scan code or visit [itnmontereycounty.org/donate](http://itnmontereycounty.org/donate)





## US Inflation 7%

US Inflation increase for all items for the 12 months ending December, the largest 12-month increase since the period ending June 1982.

## 5.5%

all items less food and energy index, largest 12-month change since the period ending February 1991.

## 6.3%

**Food Index Increase**  
US Bureau of Labor Statistics

# You're not hiring an advisor, you're hiring a team...

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Hastie Financial Group is more than just financial advisors. We are an experienced advisory team supported by Commonwealth Financial Network's investment research, advanced financial planning and retirement plan consultants assisting us in the delivery of the highest quality advisory services. **Learn more about our team at [hastiefinancialgroup.com](https://hastiefinancialgroup.com)**

### HFG Hastie Financial Group

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307 Main Street, Ste. 300, Salinas  
[hastiefinancialgroup.com](https://hastiefinancialgroup.com) | (831) 422-4910

For confidence in your future. 

## SANTA CRUZ COUNTY BANK

“

*We moved all our banking to Santa Cruz County Bank. It was a smooth transition thanks to the Monterey branch team. They are easy to work with and really understand local businesses.*

*Thank you for seeing the big picture and having faith in us!*

”

~ Shawn & Anjanette Adams, Owners, Monterey Signs



### Community Banking

As a community bank, our objective is to help local businesses thrive, even as economic seasons change.

We're a community bank, staffed with local market experts and decision makers. So we can dig into your business and create a plan that works to your advantage. No waiting for approvals from "the folks at HQ."

If you'd like some fresh ideas on how to grow your business, call us or stop by. Our team is ready to serve you with resourceful, relationship-based expertise.

**Celebrating one year serving Monterey!**

584 MUNRAS AVENUE, MONTEREY ■ [SCCOUNTYBANK.COM](https://SCCOUNTYBANK.COM) ■ 831.242.8361

# YOUTH OUTPATIENT TREATMENT PROGRAM

The first Youth Outpatient Treatment Program for Salinas.



## ABOUT

Treatment starts with Valley Health Associates. Valley Health Associates offers Treatment and Relapse prevention services, counseling, opioid use disorder, and stimulant use disorder treatment plans, and more. Valley Health Associates uses a whole person approach creating plans that will benefit each individual, whether it is using Medication-Assisted Treatment or another evidence-based treatment plan. Learn more today!

## Contact us

831-424-6655 ext 11

bluquin-diaz@valleyhealthassociates.com

This service is supported by a federal grant under the State Opioid Response program, with funding provided by the California Department of Health Care Services.



## WHY DOES IT WORK?

What makes Valley Health Associates so successful? It's the whole-person approach that allows for treatments that work. Such as the use of Medicated Assisted Treatment( MAT). MAT is a physician and patient driven program that includes opioid therapy, a medical examination by a physician, individual counseling, and drug screenings. Community referrals include the following: 12-step meetings, vocational and/or educational training, and job placement.

## TESTIMONIAL

"We learned more about my child's addiction within our first two hours of program time at Valley Health Associates than we had in two years of attempting other strategies."

ANONYMOUS PARENT  
North Monterey County



### Treatment and Relapse Prevention

An individualized treatment plan that fits the needs of the client and relapse prevention programs that support the clients in and out of Valley Health Associates.



### Counseling & Recovery Services

Counseling is conducted by our licensed clinical staff as individual, group or family session.



### & More

Valley Health Associates also provides Substance Use Disorder Education, providing clients with the knowledge to make healthier choices, and more.

# we Stop Crime and trespassing

A unique property monitoring service that actually **PREVENTS** crime

**Bandit Systems** eliminates crime and trespassing on commercial properties through its **RealTime Property Monitoring Service** - a proactive crime prevention solution. **It reduces trespassing by 99% in the first 3 months.** The service uses

- security cameras
- a powerful PA system
- highly-trained operators



STOPS  
CRIME



STOPS  
TRESPASSING



REDUCES  
OPERATING  
COSTS



IMPROVES  
TENANT &  
EMPLOYEE  
SAFETY

Don't wait for the next incident - contact Bandit Systems today for a **COMPLIMENTARY CONSULTATION**



**831.325.0513 • info@banditsystems.com  
realtime.banditsystems.com**



# Ribbon Cuttings • Chamber Events



Happy Salads celebrates the grand opening of their brand new, locally owned, fresh salads and wraps shop in N. Salinas.



Bay Federal Credit Union celebrates the grand opening of their new location at 1524 N Main St. They are pleased to now offer expanded services to their customers.



Salinas Valley Chamber staff, ambassadors, and members enjoyed a delicious lunch at The Steinbeck House during our December Connect at Lunch. Our monthly Connect at Lunches are a great opportunity to network and promote your business.



Salinas Valley Chamber staff, ambassadors, and members enjoyed a delicious lunch at the brand new Tacos Don Beto restaurant during our January Connect at Lunch. Go to [www.business.salinascchamber.com/chamber-event-calendar](http://www.business.salinascchamber.com/chamber-event-calendar) to register for our upcoming February Connect at Lunch.



Insurance Agent Cecilia Kennedy celebrates her new office and expanded insurance offerings as her company expanded in late 2021 to become Cecilia Kennedy Insurance - A Farmers & Independent Agency.

# 101<sup>st</sup> Annual Awards Luncheon

Join us for our biggest annual event where nearly 500 local businesspeople get together for lunch and to honor our own.



*Everybody comes because everybody goes!*

**Thursday  
April 14, 2022  
11am-1pm  
Sherwood Hall, Salinas**

## This Year's Honorees:

- Small Business of the Year:**  
Ocon Family Chiropractic
- Large Business of the Year:**  
JM Electric
- Businesswoman of the Year:**  
Andrea Bailey (Chevron)
- Citizen of the Year:**  
Victor Rey (SVMHS)
- Agricultural Leadership:**  
Kim Stemler (MCVGA)
- Spirit of the Community:**  
Meals on Wheels of the Salinas Valley



**TICKETS: \$55/members  
\$95/non-members**

Register online  
[www.SalinasChamber.com](http://www.SalinasChamber.com)  
Or (831) 751-7725



# ROL&M

## INJURY ATTORNEYS



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# Member News

## Santa Cruz County Bank Celebrates

Santa Cruz County Bank (OTCQX: SCZC), with assets over \$1.7 billion announced its first anniversary of the opening of its full-service branch at 584 Munras Avenue, Monterey. Since the opening, the Bank's Monterey banking team has welcomed new clients and formed community partnerships. The Bank's expansion into Monterey County has allowed for serving long-established business relationships in the area as well as attracting new business. To further support the development of relationships and expansion of existing relationships, the Bank announced its second Monterey County branch on South Main Street in Salinas will open at the end of 2022. The Bank's Monterey region is led by veteran banker Rich Aiello.



## New Development Manager and Name Change

Due to the change in corporation status, Express Private Security will now operate as Silver Point Protection Inc. With this change we also welcome a new member to our team, Adriana Duarte, who will be our Development Manager. As always, we will continue servicing the Monterey County, San Benito County and Santa Clara County Areas 408-912-4464 PPO LIC 121199.



Adriana Duarte

## Tope's Tree Service Acquires McShane's

Welcome Tope's Tree Service & Sustainable Garden Center to the Salinas Valley in their new location, 115 Monterey-Salinas Highway (Highway 68), as they acquired McShane's Nursery & Landscape Supply at the close of 2021. Tope's plans on opening at their new location later in 2022.



## 2021 All-Star Football Benefits Children's Shopping Tour

High school football players from around Monterey, Santa Cruz, Santa Benito and South Santa Clara Counties formed two teams representing two non-profit teams. The All-Star High School football game. North Monterey County Coach Juan Cuevas, had his team, represent Children's Shopping Tour, and Salinas High Coach Steven Zenk, chose Tatum's Treehouse.



(PHOTO CREDIT: PROPIX MEDIA)

Team Children's Shopping Tour outscored Tatum's Treehouse 20 to 19 for the win. A portion of the event proceeds were donated to the Children's Shopping Tour.



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**COATINGS INC.**  
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### AVAILABLE SYSTEMS

- 1/4" Urethane Cements
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- MMA 1 Hour Cure
- Polished Concrete
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- Retail
- Warehousing
- Schools
- Medical



Quartz



Slate Grey



Polished Concrete

**ProTecCoatings.com**

**559-323-8147**







# Support our Chamber Members

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

## Stakeholder Members

Aera Energy

## Executive Members

Kings Oil Tools

Dole Fresh Vegetables

The Don Chapin Company, Inc

Central Coast College

Scheid Family Wines

## Premium Members

Leavitt Central Coast Insurance

The Nunes Company Inc / Foxy

El Camino Machine & Welding

Green Rubber - Kennedy Ag

KION TV

D'Arrigo Bros Co of California

Salinas Valley Recycles

Motel 6

## Marketing

Associated Services Heating Solar & Air

Credit Consulting Services, Inc

Swenson & Silacci Flowers Inc

Trio Petroleum

Coldwell Banker Gay Dales Inc REALTORS

Sambraio Packaging

Ottone Leach & Ray LLP

Alvarado Street Brewery & Tasting Room

Discovery Luxury Motorcoach Charter

Black Bear Diner - Salinas

Axiom Engineers

American AgCredit

## Marketing Cont.

EMC Planning Group Inc.

Kasavan Architects

Belli Architectural Group Inc

Ivy Park at Salinas

Alco Water Service

Residence Inn by Marriott - Salinas

Moss Adams

JM Electric

Employnet

Kysmet Security & Patrol

## Business

Engie Services

Hitchcock Farms

Dorothy's Place/Franciscan Workers of

Junipero Serra

Gateway Center of Monterey County

Loaves, Fishes and Computers Inc

Bobcat Bicycles

Aldina Real Estate

Bay Property Management Inc

Salinas City Elementary School District

ZenBusiness

The Salvation Army

Monterey Regional Airport

California Rodeo Inc

Palm Court Apartments

Central Coast VNA

Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST)

United Way Monterey County

Salinas Valley Ford Lincoln

K. Craig Media

Ruggiero Law Office - RLO Attorney

## Business Cont.

Robert Kasavan Marketing

Plumbers & Steamfitters Local Union #062

Primerica Financial Services

Girl Scouts of California's Central Coast

C4 Consulting

Foundation for Monterey County

Free Libraries

Brandon & Tibbs Accountants

Precision Nails

Ingraham & Associates CPA's

Backus Property Management Inc

AllSafe Systems Inc

Bolour/Carl Immigration Group

Flow Cryotherapy

Struve & Laporte Funeral Home

Hartnell College Foundation

U-Haul Incorporated

Kirkwood Plaza

Monterey Bay Aquarium

Pure Water Bottling Company

Monterey County Herald

Rancho Cielo Youth Campus

McSherry & Hudson

Coastal Kids Home Care

Monterey County Pops!

Contreras Insurance Agency

Wells Fargo Advisors- Brian Allen

Salinas Mattress Company

Salinas Police Activities League (PAL)

TriCord Tradeshow Services

Food Bank for Monterey County

TTC Bookkeeping & Tax Preparation

Historic Harvey House

## A Special Thanks to Our Strategic Partners and Stakeholder Members



# Do You Have an Employee Who Has Tested Positive for COVID?

## What is the Safest, Fastest Way to Get Them Back to Work?

**CALL NOW!**

The answer, as you might expect, is not so simple and depends on a myriad of factors, including what kind of test was administered by the employee or lab.

ARCpoint Labs of Monterey Bay provides the most comprehensive menu of laboratory testing and screening services in Monterey County, including a variety of COVID-19 testing that can help your employees get back to work in a safe and timely manner.

In fact, if you or your employees have any question about COVID testing procedures or CDC testing and quarantine guidelines, our experts can answer all your questions with a simple phone call. An appointment for a more-accurate PCR test is also available by calling us.

### ARCPOINT LABS OF MONTEREY BAY

📍 24560 Silver Cloud Court, #103, Monterey, CA 93940  
📞 (831) 324-0772  
@ [www.arcpointlabs.com/monterey-bay/](http://www.arcpointlabs.com/monterey-bay/)

### ARCPOINT LABS OF SALINAS

📍 635 Sanborn Place, Suite 24, Salinas, CA 93901  
📞 (831) 975-4313  
@ [www.labtestsalinas.com](http://www.labtestsalinas.com)