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Governor's Proposed Budget **P.15**

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Chamber Luncheon Awards Honorees

With the challenges that 2020 brought everyone, you'll read in this article how a number of the Chamber's Annual Awards Luncheon honorees showed their flexibility in responding to major changes. These wonderful people add to the strength and vitality of the Salinas Valley and we know you'll agree with the wise choices of our Selection Committee.

Before we put our spotlight on these local luminaries, here's a bit more about the February 25th event (see the ad on Page 4 with details and information on registration). As with so many events at the start of 2021, we're making this a virtual event. Notwithstanding, we expect the Annual Awards Luncheon (presented by Mechanics Bank) will remain the Chamber's biggest event of the year. We have planned some special things to make the event interactive and fun. And, we've lined up the gentleman whose face is beside this article (new City Manager Steve Carrigan) to speak to us, as well as our Mayor, Kimbley Craig. As always, the heart of the program will see the Chamber honoring businesses and individuals for their accomplishments and contributions. We'll applaud them together virtually at the bring-your-own-lunch event. For now, please read about each and why they were selected.

Businesswoman of the Year: Patricia Rodriguez (*The Outdoor Market*)

Patricia Rodriguez is a local farmer in Monterey County, who grows her own organic berries. She has participated in many local farmers' markets and understands firsthand how difficult business can be for local farmers. Wanting to help others, Patricia's original idea was to form an outdoor market to help local farmers sell their products within the community. However, farmers' markets are seasonal and Patricia realized that in diversifying the types of goods offered, she could form a year-round business for many. Today, her markets include food vendors, artisans, and farmers/produce vendors.

Charging no fee to farmers, Patricia works closely to ensure all vendors have the appropriate permits, as well as the opportunity to further grow their businesses. Many are new business owners and though they may start small, Patricia is proud to say that she has seen many grow ➡

AWARDS - Continued on page 7

Construction Is Hopping in the Salinas Valley

by Chamber Staff

The Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce continues to monitor and respond to challenges faced by local businesses as coronavirus public health orders restrict their ability to serve their customers. But even as we see some retail businesses and restaurants relying on grants and loans to stay in operation, your Chamber also sees examples of economic strength and prosperity in the Salinas Valley and Monterey County. Not all is bleak.

One sector of the local economy that's thriving is construction. And this industry is achieving more than just providing employment and circulating money. Much of this construction is setting up transportation, education, and housing infrastructure that can ensure a future of economic growth and quality job creation for our region.

The State of California wants to see future population and economic growth mainly occurring within a model of "transit-oriented development" (TOD). Ideally, this will result in abundant housing at more reasonable prices, with mobility options that relieve residents from dependence on vehicle ownership to do anything or get anything. ➡

CONSTRUCTION - Continued on page 6



Two-way traffic is now moving on 200 block of Main Street as Main Street Streetscape Project continues



PATRICIA RODRIGUEZ
Businesswoman of the Year

the opportunity to further grow their businesses. Many are new business owners and though they may start small, Patricia is proud to say that she has seen many grow ➡

Chamber Honor Roll

We thank ALL of our members for enabling the Chamber to help build a stronger Salinas. Here's our "Honor Roll" for 2020, based on total annual support to the Chamber.



PLATINUM – invest more than \$10k



GOLD – invest between \$5k and \$10k

- ♦ Alvarez Technology Group
- ♦ Braga Fresh Family Farms
- ♦ California Water Service Company
- ♦ D'Arrigo Brothers of California
- ♦ Fenton & Keller
- ♦ Hastie Financial Group
- ♦ Motel 6
- ♦ Natividad Medical Foundation
- ♦ Noland, Hamerly, Etienne & Hoss - Salinas
- ♦ Orradre Ranch
- ♦ Pinnacle Bank
- ♦ RHC Management Co, dba McDonald's
- ♦ Salinas Union High School District
- ♦ Valley Farm Management

SILVER – invest between \$2,500 and \$5k

- 1st Capital Bank
- AgroThrive
- Alliant Insurance Services
- Altai Brands
- Alternative Dispute Resolutions
- American Ag Credit
- American Supply Company
- Balance Physical Therapy
- Central Coast College
- Central Coast Federal Credit Union - Seaside
- Chukchansi Gold Resort and Casino
- Credit Consulting Services
- CSUMB
- Dole Fresh Vegetables
- Graniterock
- Green Rubber - Kennedy Ag
- Haute Enchilada
- Hayashi Wayland
- Mann Packing Company
- Monterey Bay Economic Partnership
- Monterey County Bank
- Monterey County Housing Authority Development Corporation
- Monterey Hotel and Spa
- Monterey Peninsula College
- Natividad Medical Center
- Northern Salinas Valley Mosquito Abatement District
- Ocean Mist Farms
- Ocon Family Chiropractic
- Powers Association
- Pro-tec Coating
- Quintes
- Santa Cruz County Bank
- Scheid Family Wines
- Smith & Enright
- The Don Chapin Company

2021, Our Year to Recover

by Kristy Santiago, Board Chair



As the new Chair of the Salinas Valley Chamber, I am very honored to work with all of our Salinas Valley businesses and members in 2021. I want to congratulate everyone for enduring 2020; it was a challenging year to say the least for all of our members. May 2021 be filled with hope and promise. My hope is for 2021 to be a recovery year for all and my promise is that the Salinas Valley Chamber will continue to be your partner as we move forward.

The Board and I are committed to our Vision Statement: "A Thriving, Welcoming Salinas Valley Where People, Families, & Businesses SUCCEED via Economic Opportunity & Growth." I bring to the Chamber many years of business management and marketing experience, which will be put to good use as we make progress on realizing this vision.

In 2019, the Board and the Staff created a strategic plan and I am happy to report that in 2020, we had a very successful year implementing this plan.

Some highlights include restructuring our staffing to better serve our members. If you have not had the pleasure of meeting our newest hires, Lindsey Knight and Shae Scarr, I hope you get the chance to do so in 2021.

In 2021, the Board and Staff Strategic Plan goals include focusing some of our efforts on the Salinas Valley Region to include South County. In addition, we will be reaching out to our members to better

understand your interest and what value you want from your Salinas Valley Chamber membership.

We will continue to advocate with local government on your behalf. We will be implementing regular meetings for our Government Relations Committee and welcome you to join us monthly, the second Wednesday of the month from 1130am-1pm. Participating in GRC meetings will help you stay on top of important local issues that affect your business.

Finally, we would like to welcome three new board members for 2021, Jon Ditlevsen (1st Capital Bank), Colby Pereira (Braga Fresh Family Farms) and Sara Boyns (Fenton & Keller).

We remain committed to providing our members with up-to-date and relevant information to keep your business on track in 2021. Personally, I look forward to working with everyone this year. Also, don't forget to join us for our (virtual)_Annual Awards Luncheon on February 25, 2021 11:30am-1pm. You can register on our website or contact Chamber Staff. ■

Kristy Santiago



2021 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- Chair - **Kristy Santiago** (KION TV)
- Chair-elect - **Rodney Meeks** (Credit Consulting Services)
- Past Chair - **Andrea Bailey** (Chevron)
- Vice Chair, GRC - **Jennifer Williams** (Natividad Medical Foundation)
- Vice Chair, Finance - **Bill Hastie** (Hastie Financial Group)
- Vice Chair, Events - **Amy Gibson** (Portola Hotel & Spa)
- Vice Chair, Membership - **Julie Ann Lozano** (MBS Business Systems)

2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- **John Bailey** (Alternative Dispute Resolution)
- **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)
- **John Haupt** (Haupt & Associates)
- **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)
- **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

- **Lindsey Knight**
Membership Development Director
- **Shae Scarr**
Member Services Coordinator
- **Phillip Saldaña**
Operations & Accounts Manager
- **Paul Farmer**
CEO & Chief Member Advocate

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100th Annual Awards Luncheon

Presented by



Join us virtually for our biggest event of the year
where we honor our own.

Thursday
February 25, 2021
11:30am-1pm
(Virtual Event)

This Year's Honorees:

- ◆ **Small Business of the Year**
Pizza Factory
- ◆ **Large Business of the Year**
Aera Energy
- ◆ **Businesswoman of the Year**
Patricia Rodriguez
(The Outdoor Market)
- ◆ **Citizen of the Year**
Clare Munteer
(Monterey County Rape Crisis Center)
- ◆ **Agricultural Leadership**
Norm Groot
(Farm Bureau Monterey)
- ◆ **Spirit of the Community**
Mariela Medina
(Jacob's Heart)



TICKETS: \$20 per person

To register, visit
www.SalinasChamber.com

Or call (831) 751-7725



Carrigan Named New City Manager

The Chamber would like to welcome our new City Manager, Steve Carrigan



Steve Carrigan
City Manager

Mr. Carrigan served for 4 1/2 years as the City Manager at the City of Merced. His primary focuses in Merced, home of the University of California at Merced, were on economic development, affordable housing, infrastructure, and public safety. Prior to that, Mr. Carrigan served as City Manager at the City of Los Banos. He was also Economic Development Director at the City of Stockton.

Your Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce will provide opportunities for members to meet Mr. Carrigan, hear about his plans, and make comments and ask questions.

Asked for his input for this article, Mr. Carrigan shared this:

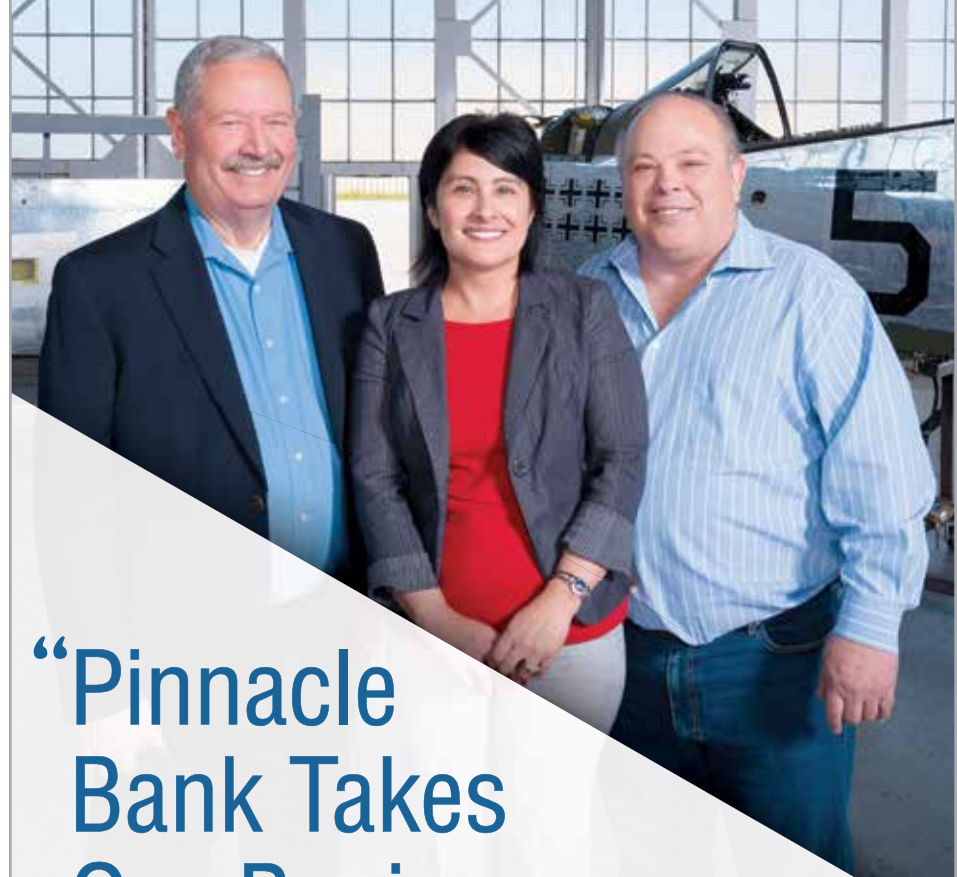
"Before my interview with the city council, I was reading the Salinas Plan and a sentence jumped out at me. It was, 'Salinas is at a crossroads.' When I read this sentence, I knew this is where I wanted to be. Salinas has big issues and a lot is at stake. A structural budget deficit, an affordable housing crisis, a homeless crisis, and a COVID-ravaged economy are just a few of the top issues facing the city. It's times like these that call for leadership and I was very impressed with the mayor and the city council during my interview. I believe that it's a new day at city hall with new leadership and with many partners like the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce, the business community, the School Districts, and most importantly, the residents. Together, we can solve these problems and make Salinas a model city." ■

The charter of the City of Salinas authorizes the City Council to appoint a chief executive called a City Manager on terms that it specifies to "serve at the pleasure of the City Council." The city charter also assigns the City Manager with power to appoint all such subordinate city employees (except lawyers and paralegals in the City Attorney's department, who are appointed by the City Attorney).

This kind of governance is called the "Council-Manager" system. This system of local government for cities is authorized under California law. It's the most common system used among the 482 cities in California, including the 121 cities with their own charters.

In 2020, City Manager Ray Corpuz announced his retirement, which meant the City Council needed to fill this powerful and pivotal position. The City Council hired a human resources consulting firm to prepare and conduct a national executive search for the new City Manager.

The city council received 78 applications for the position and eventually whittled the pool down to four final candidates. On December 31, Mayor Kimbley Craig announced the selection of Steven S. Carrigan as the new City Manager. His appointment was approved 7-0 by the Salinas City Council at a special meeting on January 5, 2021.



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A peek inside the Bruhn Building construction.

This future is compatible with the official vision of the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce: a thriving, welcoming Salinas Valley where people, families and businesses succeed via economic growth and opportunity.

Downtown Salinas as a Transportation Hub

On January 15, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) held

a virtual ribbon cutting event for the completion of access and circulation improvements (and blight removal) at the Salinas train station, which will eventually become the Salinas Intermodal Transportation Center. This project was the first of three construction packages for Phase 1 of the Monterey County Rail Extension Project, a phase called the “Salinas Kick Start Project.” The ultimate goal is to establish a commuter rail line that operates between Monterey County and the San Francisco Bay Area.

Construction Package 2 of the Salinas Kick Start Project will be a Salinas layover facility for trains. Construction Package 3 will be track connections in Gilroy. Currently TAMC is working on property acquisition, design, and coordination with other government agencies and Union Pacific for Packages 2 and 3.

A commuter rail between Monterey County and the San Francisco Bay Area dovetails with a “Downtown Vibrancy Plan” approved by the Salinas City Council in 2015. TAMC is one of several local governments (including Monterey County and Monterey-Salinas Transit) coordinating with the City of Salinas and the Salinas City Center community benefit district to bring this Downtown Vibrancy Plan to reality.

Ideally, Monterey County residents will walk, bicycle, take the bus, or even take light rail from the Monterey Peninsula to the Salinas Intermodal Transit Center. From there, they can travel via an inter-region commuter train (in an arrangement with the Caltrain commuter rail) to Gilroy or to Diridon Station in San Jose. From San Jose, a traveller could continue on to anywhere in the San Francisco Bay Area or to Sacramento or the San Joaquin Valley - and beyond. Meanwhile, the Gilroy station would be the transfer point to California High-Speed Rail (which is not expected to be built between Gilroy and Merced for many years).

Downtown Salinas as a Residential and Commercial Hub

For many years, large edifices of blight in Downtown Salinas have soured the morale of residents, property owners, and merchants. But after the Salinas City Council enacted a Blight Accountability Ordinance in 2019, property owners in the city were compelled to fix up their neglected buildings, sell them, or have them taken by the courts into receivership.

Only a few months ago, Taylor Fresh Foods was able to buy the deteriorating Bruhn Building (formerly the Farmers Mercantile Company Building) and the former Greyhound Building. Substantial interior cleanup has happened quickly at both buildings. Interior work is already underway to transform the Bruhn Building into a residential complex with commercial activity on the ground floor. A center atrium planned for this building is going to be a highlight. The Greyhound Building will also contain residential units.

Across the street from the Bruhn Building, work continues on transforming the former Rabobank (formerly the Salinas National Bank Building) into residential units with commercial activity on the ground floor. Other downtown housing is anticipated with conversion of surface parking into mixed-use development and the redevelopment of the Lincoln Avenue Corridor. In addition, some significant new housing is eventually expected adjacent to the Intermodal Transportation Center on Market Street (Highway 183).

The Main Street Streetscape Project continues, with two-way traffic now flowing on

the 200 block and work advancing on the 300 block. The Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce will be working to ensure that the popular outdoor dining that was permitted in Downtown Salinas during the summer and fall will continue after coronavirus public health orders are lifted. Outdoor diners were able to eat and admire the facades of the historic buildings, now revealed after the removal of overgrown trees.

Numerous other projects and plans are in the works for Downtown Salinas property parcels and the streets that lead to Downtown. The City of Salinas Community Development Department is working with the Salinas City Center Improvement Association on several exciting initiatives, including a historic sign ordinance that will help the many preserved historic buildings to evoke the art deco/art moderne heyday of Old Town Salinas from the 1920s through the 1940s.

Salinas Valley as an Educational Center

In November 2020, voters authorized the Salinas Union High School District to borrow \$140 million to continue construction projects. The district is now seeking proposals for stadium construction at its spectacular new Rancho San Juan High School, which opened in August 2019 and awaits a return of students to the classroom.

Hartnell Community College District is using proceeds from bond sales approved by voters in November 2016 to build educational facilities throughout the Salinas Valley. One prominent construction project is the Nursing and Health Sciences Building rising on the Salinas main campus, adjacent to West Alisal Street. Other projects underway in the Salinas Valley are the Soledad Education and Outreach Center in Soledad and the King City Education Center Expansion in King City. Hartnell College is also planning to build a North Monterey County Education Center in Castroville.

And for Monterey County residents who seek a local in-person educational option to complete a bachelor’s degree or graduate degree, new structures continue to rise or get renovated for use at California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB). When students return to campus, they will enjoy a new Otter Student Union building, meant to be a central hub for campus life. An existing Ford Ord building has been recently remodeled to serve as a Visual and Public Arts Building. Student housing is under construction in Marina.

The Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce is working to support more local economic opportunities for students who graduate from these schools. We want to encourage our younger generations to stick around and contribute their knowledge and work ethic toward our regional prosperity. Construction is a key piece of the plan to make this happen. ■



History at the Salinas Intermodal Transportation Center

Included as part of the Salinas Intermodal Transportation Center, the Southern Pacific Freight Depot is the oldest commercial building still in use in Salinas. This building was completed in 1873 and was recently renovated with funding from the City of Salinas. It’s now the home of the California Welcome Center, administered by the Salinas Valley Tourism & Visitors Bureau.

The California Welcome Center was previously based in a storefront location in an ordinary shopping center on Davis Road. Now it’s more appropriately serving tourists and locals in historic Downtown Salinas.

The Southern Pacific Freight Depot building is a “Regional Heritage & Cultural Center” and includes exhibits and displays of historic memorabilia related to Salinas. A centerpiece of the exhibits is a locally-created 11 x 7½ foot 3D mural based on an 1875 map of Salinas.



into well-established businesses within our community.

As a consequence of the pandemic, Patricia realized that the need for outdoor markets became even greater so she has made admission free for customers. For her contributions in helping lift others, we recognize Patricia Rodriguez as our Businesswoman of the Year.



PIZZA FACTORY
Small Business of the Year

Factory donates pizza to countless school events, nonprofits and churches. They also help sponsor local kids' sport teams and the women's shelter. A humble man, Ernie recognizes that the success of his family's businesses is only possible because the community supports them. When asked what he would like to share, he said simply, "I want to make sure the community and our customers know how much we really appreciate them."

**Small Business of the Year:
Pizza Factory**

Ernie Amorim started his first Pizza Factory business in 2005 in the city of Gustine. His penchant for hard work and contributing to the community have enabled him to grow the business markedly over the years. Now he owns the Gustine Pizza Factory, as well as another in South Salinas and one in North Salinas. Never one to rest on his laurels, Ernie and his family opened "Mia Fusion Cuisine" in 2018 in the Creekbridge shopping center. In 2020, they opened "Pasta Mia" in Northridge Mall.

Part of the recipe for their company's success has been investment in their businesses and investment in the community. The Pizza



AERA ENERGY
Large Business of the Year

**Large Business of the Year:
Aera Energy**

Since 1952, Aera Energy and its predecessor companies have helped California meet its significant energy needs – right here in Monterey County. As a top oil producer in the state, the energy Aera produces allows millions of Californians to travel to work every day and Monterey County-grown food to arrive at dinner tables.

Aera's San Ardo-based operations play an important economic role in Monterey County and its employees are known as valued community partners. Aera invests in programs that support local schools, including a pen pal program with San Ardo School students. During the pandemic, Aera was one of the first major companies to step forward with a \$50,000 donation to the Community Foundation for Monterey. These critical funds help lives that have been upended physically, socially and economically.

Aera has partnered with the Greenfield Community Science Workshop to make their new ScienceMobile and STEM programs possible for South County students. They proudly support the United Way Monterey County, Food Bank for Monterey County and have partnered with King City to redevelop a soccer field for local youth.

Aera has been recognized by Forbes as a Best Mid-Size Employer and named Business of the Year by the King City Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture.

Citizen of the Year: Clare Munteer (Monterey County Rape Crisis Center)

During her 34 years at the helm of Monterey County Rape Crisis Center, Clare Munteer's accomplishments have been many. After the closure of the Women's Crisis Center in 2007, she led the expansion of services for survivors of sexual assault, child

abuse and human trafficking throughout Monterey County. She increased the agency's budget and staff many times over. She was successful in getting the agency out of debt and built a four-month financial reserve in the event of a budget shortfall. She brought in grants that supported free counseling for abused children, having a dedicated advocate on site at CSUMB, and continuing prevention education services for youth after reductions in government funding. Clare received the Talcott Bates Award from the Child Abuse Prevention Council in 2008 and she was selected as one of the 10 Outstanding Women in Monterey County in 2017. For decades, she responded directly to hundreds of clients in crisis and provided emotional support, advocacy and information to them. She trained hundreds of volunteers at biannual sexual assault counselor trainings. She served as "race director" for over 30 years for the agency's biggest fundraiser, the Together with Love Run/Walk. And in 2020, she was able to transition all agency staff and services to remote delivery during the pandemic. Thank you, Clare, for your tremendous contributions!



CLARE MUNTEER
Citizen of the Year



NORM GROOT
Ag Leadership Award

Ag Leadership Award: Norm Groot (Farm Bureau Monterey)

Serving as Executive Director of Farm Bureau Monterey for 10 years, Norm Groot has made a career of agricultural advocacy. Norm served on the California Farm Bureau Board of Directors for 13 years, chairing the Finance Committee for three years. Locally, Norm served six years on the Board of Directors of the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce and was Chair for 2015. He participates in the Monterey Peninsula Chamber of Commerce's Government Affairs Committee, serves on the Board of Directors for the Monterey Peninsula Taxpayers Association and the Monterey County Convention and Visitors Bureau, is the current Chair of the Community Advisory Council for Central Coast Community Energy, and is active in his Parish at San Carlos Cathedral. He is a past President of the Nursery Growers Association of California, former Chair of the Pacific Horticultural Trade Show Committee, and founding Booster Club President of Santa Margarita Catholic High School's Marching Band. Norm serves as the founding President of Salinas Valley Agricultural Water Association, formed to monitor implementation of local groundwater sustainability. His recognitions include being named Credit Executive of the Year by CMA Business Services, Los Angeles, and Volunteer of the Year by the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom.

**Spirit of the Community:
Mariela Medina (Jacob's Heart)**

After surviving cancer THREE times as a teenager, Mariela has dedicated her life's work to empowering teens with cancer and teens bereaved by the loss of a sibling. Mariela has single-handedly built a multi-dimensional program at Jacob's Heart which provides on-going peer mentorship to nearly 100 teens struggling with identity issues, isolation, depression, and existential questions during and after cancer. She mentors teens who have experienced similar trauma to what she endured, helping them build resilience not just in spite of, but because of cancer. Her latest project is turning post-traumatic stress into post-traumatic growth. Many local teens credit Mariela's support with saving their lives, including 16-year-old osteosarcoma survivor Andrew Perez. He said, "I had totally given up and didn't want any more treatment, but Mariela encouraged me to keep trying. I realized that she had been through worse than me, so I figured 'If she can do it, so can I.' Honestly, I owe my life to her." Having gone from being a Jacob's Heart teen to a survivor, Mariela makes a tremendous difference to Jacob's Heart families. ■



MARIELA MEDINA
Spirit of the Community

Big Changes for Small and Large Employers

by Sharilyn Payne, Fenton & Keller



A major change in California leave laws took effect January 1, 2021. Governor Newsom signed Senate Bill (SB) 1383, significantly expanding the California Family Rights Act ("CFRA") to affect almost all employers.

Currently, the CFRA allows eligible employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in any 12-month period related to the care of the employee or family members. To be eligible, employees must have worked for the employer for more than 12 months, and a minimum of 1,250 hours during the 12 months prior to the leave.

The current CFRA applies to employers with 50 or more employees within a 75-mile radius. But effective January 1, 2021, employers with 5 or more employees must provide CFRA leave. SB 1383 does not change employee eligibility requirements, but large employers already providing CFRA leave should note that the new law makes changes that also affect them.

Employers need to know the following:

- Eligible employees may take up to 12 weeks of unpaid CFRA leave
 - o To care for themselves, their parent, child, spouse, registered domestic partner, and now also their grandparent, grandchild, or sibling due to a serious health condition. "Child" now includes all children, regardless of age or dependency.
 - o Due to the birth of the employee's child, or placement with the employee of an adopted or foster care child. Under SB 1383, if both parents of a child work for the employer, each is eligible for up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave during the first year of the child's birth, adoption, or foster placement.
 - o Because of a "qualifying exigency" related to the covered active duty or call to covered active duty for an employee's spouse, registered domestic partner, child, or parent in the military.

- Employers must, upon granting the CFRA leave request, guarantee the employee the same or a comparable position upon termination of the leave.
- As before, during CFRA leave, employers that provide health care coverage must maintain for the employee the same health care coverage he or she would have received if still working.

The new CFRA law, which provides for parent leave, signifies the repeal, effective January 1, 2021, of the New Parent Leave Act requiring employers with 20 to 49 employees to provide eligible employees with leave to bond with a new child.

SB 1383 creates major challenges for employers. Small employers, that likely do not have a human resources department, must develop procedures for managing this leave.

Employers with 50 or more employees, that are subject to both the federal Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA") and the CFRA, face another challenge. Because the definition of "family members" under the new CFRA will be more expansive than under the FMLA, employees may be eligible for up to 24 weeks of leave in a 12-month period. For example, an eligible employee may take 12 weeks of CFRA leave to care for her grandparent (defined as a "family member" under the CFRA but not under the FMLA) with a serious health condition, plus another 12 weeks of FMLA leave if she subsequently has a serious health condition.

Small employers new to the CFRA, as well as large employers already subject to it, must review the new requirements, and develop or modify policies, leave request forms, and tracking methods. The bill can be accessed at the following link: <https://bit.ly/2KFthS6> ■

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

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be safe

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Accessible Agribusiness: Safety and Compliance Simplified

Safety and compliance has become more accessible with West Coast Industrial Solutions's (WCIS) quarterly trade issues, soon to be rebranded as "Planting to Processing." Their goal is to do our part to feed the world by exchanging industry safety and compliance news with professionals in Agribusiness (the Agricultural, Food Processing, Food & Beverage, and Manufacturing industries) with print, PDFs, and blog-posts.

This January-March quarter marks their third year in circulation, and many changes are being made to adapt to the pandemic. Before COVID, the publication was represented at over 20 trade shows--the California Facilities Expos, California League of Food Producer's Food Expo, and Wine Industry Network Expo to name a few--with an annual distribution of 10,000. As those information-rich events were postponed or converted to virtual formats, WCIS's Marketing Director expanded their offerings by beginning an online show, Food & Facilities, on CentralValleyTalk.com. You can view these videos on West Coast Industrial Solutions magazine's YouTube channel, or watch them live 11am-12pm PST every Saturday on CentralValleyTalk.com's website, YouTube, and Facebook. Topics in agribusiness including Safety, Ethics, Finance, Innovation, Explore, and Company Profiles were expanded on through the contribution of industry experts.

Their recently released January-March 2021 quarterly covers post-pandemic prosperity with:

- The FDA's recent updates to FSMA traceability from Safe Food Alliance



- Farming and Solar conflicts with Selna Partners LLP
- How ParityFactory is helping Food and Beverage manufacturers more efficiently automate their operations
- Revisions to the Department of Energies Regulations on Consumer Products and Commercial and Industrial Equipment
- PPP Loans and Tax Incentives with RnD Tax Incentives
- Resources available to small and medium manufacturers through California Manufacturing Technology Consulting (CMTIC). Subscribe and read the magazine on wcismag.com, and follow them on social media: West Coast Industrial Solutions Magazine on Facebook and LinkedIn; @wcismag on Twitter and Instagram; and email their Marketing Director, Tara Sweeney, at tara@wcismag.com or connect with her on LinkedIn.

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US Unemployment Rate

6.7%

US Unemployment Rate

The reported national numbers show US unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted) unchanged at 6.7%, but more likely was up to 0.6 point higher due to the ongoing misclassification issues. Employment remained essentially level with a growth of only 21,000, and unemployment edging up by only 8,000. The national labor force rose 31,000. The US numbers reflect revisions in the seasonally adjusted data from 2016 forward.

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CalChamber Calls for COVID-19 Business Relief

By Denise Davis, CalChamber

Close to 200 Groups Join CalChamber's Call for COVID-19 Business Relief, Action to Prevent California Employer Exodus

The California Chamber of Commerce and nearly 200 allied business organizations representing all sectors of the economy and employing millions of California workers today sent a letter to Governor Gavin Newsom and the Legislature calling for specific and immediate actions to curb the impact of the current pandemic-related economic crisis as well as address the underlying causes of an ongoing exodus of employers to other states.

"The State will need a strong business recovery to bring back jobs and stability to our communities. We cannot recover when businesses are shutting down and employers are leaving," the coalition states.

In the letter, the signatories state that many employers currently believe they could safely reopen given the extensive work they have done to create a safe environment for their employees and customers. The letter further describes how the pandemic has exacerbated the challenge of doing business in an already high-cost state and, as a result, some employers are shutting down their office/locations here completely, transferring well paying jobs elsewhere.

While the coalition praises the Governor for his proposed grants, loans and tax relief for businesses, they believe much more must be done now to alleviate pressure on business and local economies.

The coalition specifically calls on the Governor to take executive action to:

- Suspend compliance with the California Family Rights Act for small businesses;
- End enforcement of structurally infeasible components of the Cal/OSHA COVID-19 emergency regulation – specifically those dealing with mandatory testing requirements and the payment of wages for employees excluded

from the workplace due to COVID (since employees who test positive are already covered under Workers Compensation and other provisions); and

- Temporarily delay the next installment of property taxes due in April 2021.

The coalition is asking the Governor and/or the Legislature to swiftly enact policies that will:

- Expedite additional financial resources to small businesses by expanding the eligibility pool and increasing the maximum amount of grants provided as well as providing immediate financial reimbursement or quarterly tax relief for employers who are investing in state-mandated upgrades or expenses related to the pandemic; and
- Allow employers to utilize net operating loss carry forwards and business tax credits suspended in 2020.

The coalition is further asking the Legislature to consider and pass bills to:

- Eliminate disincentives for telecommuting;
- Relieve employers of abusive lawsuits under the Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA);
- Delay enforcement of new or updated regulations;
- Pay down the Unemployment Insurance (UI) Fund;
- Reject new taxes; and
- Eliminate barriers to housing by reforming CEQA and reinstating policies that encourage economic development. ■

The California Chamber of Commerce (CalChamber) is the largest broad-based business advocate to government in California. Membership represents one-quarter of the private sector jobs in California and includes firms of all sizes and companies from every industry within the state. Leveraging our front-line knowledge of laws and regulations, we provide products and services to help businesses comply with both federal and state law. CalChamber, a not-for-profit organization with roots dating to 1890, promotes international trade and investment in order to stimulate California's economy and create jobs. Please visit our website at www.calchamber.com

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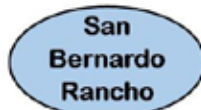
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A Case for Stocks in 2021

by Bill Hastie, MBA

2020 was an impressive year in the U.S. equity markets for several reasons. By year's end, the average investor saw the majority of their stock holdings post solid risk-adjusted, if not fabulous, gains. More impressive, however, is the path that the stock market traveled before finally achieving those gains. There were two history-making events the market experienced along that path. First, between February 19 and March 23, 2020, the market experienced the fastest correction/bear market decline – from all-times highs to more than 30% loss – in history. This was largely due to the realization of just what an overwhelming threat COVID posed to the world's health and economy. Second, from March 24 to early July, the market staged the fastest recovery from a correction/bear market decline in history.

Now its 2021 and many investors are asking, "Where does the market go from here?" Without a crystal ball, the best analysts can do is make predictions based on the financial and economic landscape. Let's break down one commonly accepted outlook for the U.S. stock market for 2021 in terms of having headwinds and tailwinds.

Headwinds

The Biden administration, along with the new Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, have made it clear that their first priority is to revive the U.S. economy. They have also indicated that tax increases, both personal and corporate, are coming later this year. Historically, such increases have weighed on the stock markets by putting a drag on corporate net income (stock prices are often a function of discounted future cash flows). The question remains if this round of proposed tax increases,

increasing the corporate income tax from 21% to 28%, will make history repeat itself, and if it does, to what extent.

Tailwinds

The U.S. economy's current stage on the economic cycle, historically, provides room for the growth of future stock prices. December 2019 was considered the top of the economic cycle making for a late-stage stock market – presumably with only one way to go. And that's exactly what happened with second quarter 2020 GDP (gross domestic product) sinking more than 30%. With the third quarter 2020 GDP also being negative, the U.S. economy was in a technical recession. Although economic growth remains sluggish, the outlook is that the economy is entering the growth stage of the cycle and stock prices tend to follow growth in GDP.

The current interest rate environment, at or near zero, also supports higher-than-normal stock valuations. With the cost of capital very low, corporations can cheaply borrow for operations and expansion – also providing for the potential higher stock prices. Low interest rates also make money market instruments, such as Certificates of Deposit and the like, relatively unattractive for investors. With few viable options, investors have sought potentially higher returns in the stock market.

Investors should be aware that although 2021 as a whole potentially looks good for stocks, volatility is also part of the normal economic cycle and should be expected sooner or later this year. ■

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



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If your facilities are high-traffic, industrial, or involve any kind of food processing, then the porous surfaces of untreated concrete flooring and walls can be a money-sink. They can deteriorate due to water damage, be scratched and worn away by industrial equipment, become home to dangerous microbes and mold, be stained, or absorb chemicals. If you want to avoid this and lengthen the life of your walls and flooring, then you need to seal them with an epoxy or urethane coating. (Concrete surfaces must be prepared through mechanical abrasion or pressurized water cleaning. Moisture testing is sometimes necessary, especially if there is a history of issues with water exposure, as installation requires a dry environment.)

What is Epoxy?

Epoxy is the main component in many flooring installations, and provides thickness and adhesion by combining resin or pigment and a hardener. Simple as the process is, it allows plenty of options for customization by adding color pigments, abrasion protection, and non-slip options to meet the aesthetic and safety requirements of your facility. Epoxy coatings are durable, cost-effective, and come in a variety of styles. They resist peeling, cracking, and stains, thus protecting your facility's flooring and preventing costly reinstallations while improving the overall appearance. Especially if you customize it with staining, stenciling, or paint flakes and chips. It can also be reinforced for heavier equipment use.

What is Urethane?

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Governor's Budget Proposes Economic Relief

by Loren Kaye, CalChamber

Governor's Budget Also Plans No New Taxes

Nobody would have been surprised if Governor Gavin Newsom had presented his new state budget wearing a neck brace. The whiplash from budget boom to bust to recovery must have been intense.

One year ago while the country, and especially California, were flying high economically, the Governor presented a \$222 billion budget with an \$18 billion surplus. Three months later, the pandemic-fueled recession caused unemployment in California to quadruple, and retail sales cratered. The Governor and Legislature predicted a \$54 billion budget deficit and raised taxes, cut spending and borrowed from the future to cover the fiscal hole.

But the Pandemic Recession has been unlike any other economic downturn experienced in the modern era. The economic pain has been real, but it has hit hardest workers in hospitality, tourism and other public-facing businesses. Low-wage and often low-skilled workers in these industries, along with small business owners statewide, have been devastated. The social and community devastation has ravaged these communities, and continues to this day. But not the state budget.

Much of the California economy has been spared because it was able to accommodate to the pandemic's cruel dichotomy: if your business or job is not dependent on bringing people together, you were likely to remain in business or employed. Millions of Californians changed their place of work to their kitchen table, or continued on the job masked, separated and vigilant.

The California investment economy thrived. A buoyant stock market and surprisingly strong real estate market created capital gains revenues double the amount forecast in 2020.



As a consequence, rather than managing a \$54 billion deficit, the Governor is proposing a \$227 billion balanced budget with no new tax increases and \$34 billion in reserves and surpluses, which provides record levels of public school funds, increases spending on higher education without any tuition increases, and expands the social safety net.

Indeed, the uncredited engine of the budget recovery are California's employers and taxpayers, who emptied their pockets of more than \$70 billion in taxes (over three years) above what state policy makers anticipated just six months ago.

Governor's Proposals

Top of the Governor's to-do list is addressing the pandemic and its economic consequences. He will ask the Legislature to urgently approve this month spending authority to provide immediate relief for struggling individuals, businesses and students, including:

- A \$600 stimulus payment to two million low-income workers (\$2.4 billion).
- Another \$575 million in grants to small businesses and nonprofits, on top of an earlier-approved \$500 million small business grant program.
- Relief from state fees for businesses affected by shutdowns, such as restaurants and public-facing services (\$70 million). ➡

BUDGET - Continued on page 19

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A ZOO FOR YOU

Monterey County's very first zoological experience was once the dream of Monterey Zoo founder, Charlie Sammut, just seven short years ago. Thanks to the generous donations of many in our community and the hard physical work of Charlie and his wife Lisa, his staff and his family, that dream is now a reality. Formerly known to our community as Wild Things, the Monterey Zoo is proud to now offer this brand-new zoological facility. Guests can enjoy the beauty and wonder of over 100 wild and exotic animals from around the world in their beautiful new spacious habitats. In July of 2020, Monterey Zoo received its accreditation by the Zoological Association of America, a milestone Charlie and Lisa could not be more proud of.

Under current Monterey County guidelines, the zoo is open as it offers very wide open spaces, affording guests the ability to be as socially distant as they wish, far beyond the required limits. It is also implementing very strict mask and disinfecting protocols to make your visit as safe and healthy as possible. All exhibits are open with the exception of the zoo's new reptile/rainforest exhibit which will remain closed until indoor exhibition restrictions are lifted. Also available upon the lifting of restrictions will be the ability for guests and families to complement their experience with an overnight stay in the authentic African bungalows of Vision Quest Ranch B&B, also located on the property.



So for anyone looking for a place to walk, stretch your body, while also entertaining your mind or the bodies and minds of your loved ones, there's simply no better way to do so than being entertained along the way by the lions, tigers, bears, monkeys, alligators, kangaroos, hawks, eagles and much more at Monterey Zoo.

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the design of their signs. Some design suggestions for outdoor signs include: legibility, **keep it brief, the bigger the better, and to be hands on.**

Legibility: It is important to choose a font that is readable from a distance and on the move. There are innumerable fonts out there to choose

from; so be sure you are using a large, bolded sans serif font that contrasts against its background.



Keep It Brief: Short, sweet messages are more attention-grabbing and easier to understand, especially when your viewers are in motion.

The Bigger the Better: The larger your font, the easier it is to read, and the longer viewers have to understand what you've written.

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If your business is still open, you can capitalize on drive-by traffic by using signage. Roughly 35% of passersby wouldn't know your business was there without a sign. That is why well placed, well designed signage outside your business is so important. 60% of businesses reported an average increase of 10% on sales simply by enhancing the visibility or changing



In December, the Chamber's non-profit Foundation conducted a socially-distanced Children's Shopping Tour. We raised over \$20k and invited nearly 150 kids to shop for needed school clothes.

www.SalinasChamber.com/Childrens-Shopping-Tour



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New Employment Laws Affecting Businesses in 2021

by *Ana C. Toledo, Attorney*
Noland, Hamerly, Etienne & Hoss

Whether you are a large or small corporation, new laws and notable changes to existing labor regulations effective January 1, 2021 may affect your business. This year, employers should be aware of the following changes:

Attorney's Fees for Whistleblower Retaliation and Extended Filing Period for DLSE Retaliation Claim (AB 1947)

This legislation amends Section 98.7 of the Labor Code, outlining the period of time employees have to file a complaint with the California Division of Labor Standards Enforcement (DLSE) alleging retaliation (e.g. discharge, discrimination) in violation of law enforced by the Labor Commissioner. Employees will now have one year, instead of six months, to file a complaint but the DLSE may extend this period for good cause. The new legislation also amends Section 1102.5 of the Labor Code, explicitly authorizing a court to award reasonable attorney's fees to a plaintiff who prevails in a "whistleblower" action for violations of Labor Code Section 1102.5. With attorney fees now clearly available, there will likely be an increase in whistleblower claims against employers.

Best Practice Is To Wash Your Hands (AB 1867)

Existing law requires food employees to wash their hands, and keep their hands as well as exposed areas of the arms clean. AB 1867 added Section 113963 to the Health and Safety Code, mandating all food employees working in any food facility be permitted to wash their hands every 30 minutes and additionally as needed. "Food employee" and "food facility" are used as defined in Section 113789 of the Health and Safety Code. Food facility includes, but is not limited to, permanent and nonpermanent food facilities such as cafeterias, restaurants and mobile food facilities.

COVID-19 Workplace Exposure Reporting (AB 685)

Effective January 1, 2021, public and private employers are required to notify employees, and the employers of subcontracted employees who were at the same worksite as an individual with a positive confirmed case of COVID-19 of their potential exposure. Union representatives of the employees must also receive notice. The written notice must be provided within one business day and include 1) notice of potential exposure to COVID-19; 2) information about COVID-19-related benefits that may be available to applicable employees (e.g. workers' compensation, paid sick leave); 3) information about anti-retaliation and anti-discrimination protections to employees; and 4) the disinfection and safety plan that the employer will implement per the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines. The notice must be in English as well as any other language understood by the majority of the employees. The written notices must be kept for three years.

In the event a COVID-19 "outbreak" occurs within a 14-day period in the same worksite as the initial positive confirmed case, AB 685 mandates employers report the outbreak to their local public health department within 48 hours of the outbreak. The term COVID-19 "outbreak" is defined by the California Department of Public Health as a non-healthcare or non-residential congregate setting workplace with three or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 among workers who live in different households within a two week period. The California Department of Industrial Relations issued FAQs on AB 685, which may be found at <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/coronavirus/AB6852020FAQs.html>.

Expansion of Paid Family Leave (AB 2399)

California Paid Family Leave (PFL) provides eligible employees with up to eight weeks of partial wage replacement benefits for employees who take time off work to care for a seriously ill family member (child, spouse, parent, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, domestic partner), or to bond with a minor child within one year of their birth or placement in connection with foster care or adoption. AB 2399 expands PFL to employees who take time off to participate in a "qualifying exigency" related to covered active duty or call to covered active duty of the employee's spouse, domestic partner, child or parent in the Armed Forces of the United States. ■

This article is intended to address topics of general interest and should not be construed as legal advice. © 2021 Noland, Hamerly, Etienne & Hoss

Ms. Toledo's practice focuses on labor and employment law, representing employers in a variety of workplace issues including wages, discrimination, harassment, unfair labor practices, and government agency investigations and citations. She was assisted with this article by NHEH intern Kimberly Perez.



Member News

SCC Bank Opens in Monterey

Santa Cruz County Bank announced the opening of a new full-service branch at 584 Munras Street, Monterey. The 584 Munras Street building, built in 1984, was purchased by the Bank in April 2020 and has undergone an extensive



remodel over the past several months and is now open for business.

In 2019, the Bank announced its plan to open its first branch in the Salinas / Monterey region and hired Rich Aiello, SVP, Relationship Manager, to lead the effort.

Berg-James Named NHEH Shareholder

Salinas native Lindsey Berg-James is now a Shareholder at the firm where she interned as a law student. After graduating from the University of California Hastings College of the Law, she practiced in San Francisco before joining Noland Hamerly in 2016. Ms. Berg-James' practice focuses on general civil litigation, labor and employment, personal injury/property damage, and construction law. She is a Board member and past President of the Monterey County Women Lawyers Association (MCWLA), and previously served on the Boards of IMPOWER and the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce.



Lindsey Berg-James

In 2019 and 2020, Ms. Berg-James was named to Northern California *Super Lawyers* magazine's *Rising Stars* lists.

WeatherTech Promotions

WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca today announced the promotion of two executive committee members to new positions that will help guide the business of Laguna Seca Recreation Area through 2021. Jeanie Summers will be promoted to Director of Marketing, and Barry Toepke will be appointed to a new position of Director of Heritage Events and Public Relations.



- Safe reopening of elementary schools, beginning in February (\$2 billion).

Earlier, the Governor announced his intention to provide additional support and incentives for business retention and relief to accelerate economic recovery and job creation, including:

- Adding \$180 million over two years to the California Competes economic development tax credit, plus another one-time \$250 million for special economic development grants under this program.
- Extending Main Street Small Business Tax Credit (\$100 million).
- Mitigating the state and local tax (SALT) deduction limitation for S-corporation shareholders.
- The California Dream Fund to seed entrepreneurship and small business creation in underserved communities (\$35 million).
- Additional funds to provide small business and disaster loan guarantees (\$50 million to be leveraged to provide \$250 million in loans), the Small Business Finance Center of the Infrastructure Bank (\$50 million) and for the California Rebuilding Fund (\$12.5 million).
- Expanded sales tax exclusions to promote innovation and meet the state's climate goals (\$100 million).

CalChamber President and CEO Allan Zarembeg welcomed the Governor's announcement on help for small businesses. "CalChamber looks forward to working with the Governor, the administration and the Legislature to get much-needed relief to California's beleaguered small businesses, as soon as possible," he said.

The application for the California Small Business COVID-19 Relief Grant can be found at CAReliefGrant.com.

The budget proposal also includes money to improve vaccine distribution, and expand testing and tracing, among other activities.

The Governor proposes record spending for public schools, more than \$89 billion, which includes \$4.6 billion for summer school and extra learning time, \$500 million for teacher career development and \$700 million to support student mental health. California's four-year colleges and universities also received increases in the proposed budget, totaling nearly \$800 million. The Governor anticipates no tuition increases at the University of California or California State University this year.

The Governor's emphasis on housing policy this year will focus primarily on continuing his initiatives on homelessness and continuing to support below-market rate housing. The budget proposes an additional \$500 million for low-income housing tax credits to support low-income housing development. The budget also proposes \$500 million for "infill infrastructure," which are subsidies for site remediation or other infrastructure to enable housing construction in urban areas. Further fleshing out his commitment to ban the sale of internal combustion automobiles in the state by 2035, the Governor proposed \$1.5 billion to achieve the state's zero-emission vehicle goals, including securitizing up to \$1 billion to accelerate the pace and scale of the infrastructure needed to support zero-emission vehicles. These funds will be generated from future cap-and-trade revenues.

The budget also includes \$1 billion for forest management and fire prevention strategies, to further address California's notorious vulnerability to catastrophic wildfires. Elements of this plan will include better forest management to improve forest health, more fire breaks and home hardening, and increasing the number of fire suppression crews and aircraft. ■

Ribbon Cutting



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