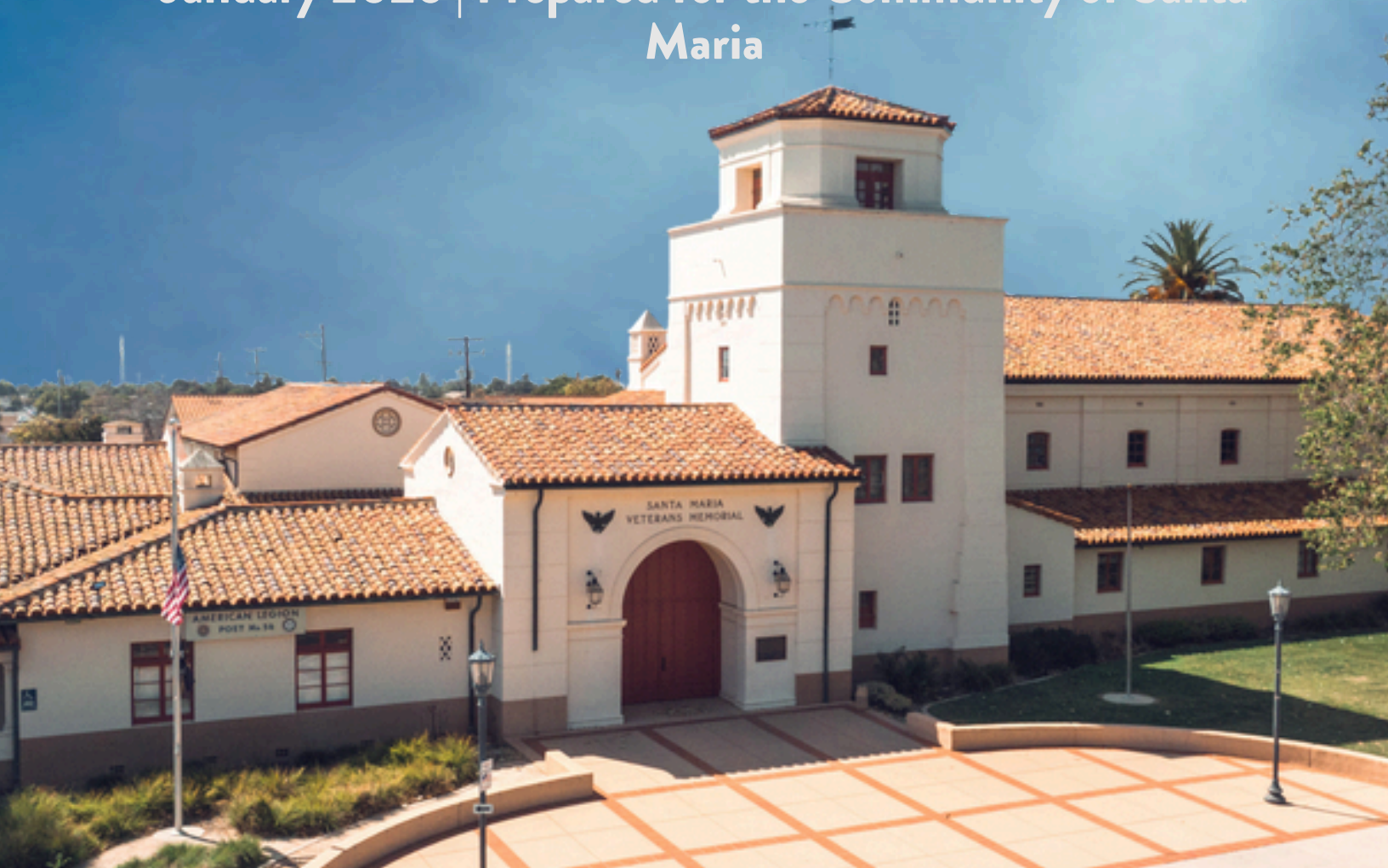




Santa Maria Valley **ECONOMIC IMPACT REPORT**

January 2026 | Prepared for the Community of Santa
Maria



Introduction

The Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce is proud to present our Monthly Economic Impact Report for January 2026, highlighting ongoing efforts to support business growth, workforce development, tourism promotion, and community engagement throughout the region. During the month, the Chamber's Economic Development team supported two potential new businesses and provided assistance to local businesses and residents through consultations and startup support.

Throughout January, the Chamber engaged in a wide range of programs and outreach efforts. Membership remained strong with 816 members, while the Hispanic Business Group continued to support local entrepreneurs with startup and licensing assistance. Tourism remained a key focus, with "Dine Out Santa Maria Style" advertising reaching over 12,000 users and website engagement driving 927 hotel referrals. Workforce development efforts advanced through "Digital Futures" teacher tours and the launch of the Women in STEM program.

The Chamber remains closely connected to local government and regional partners through 42 events and meetings, including advocacy for housing projects like Blosser Ranch. This report highlights the Chamber's continued role in supporting local industries, strengthening workforce pipelines, and advancing the economic vitality of the Santa Maria Valley.

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Economic Development



Business Attraction

The Chamber's Economic Development department provided direct support to 2 businesses thinking of starting a business or moving their business to Santa Maria.

Business Type/Idea	Support Provided
Transportation business	General start up info
TBD	Business license help

Business Retention & Assistance

The Chamber's Economic Development department provided business assistance services to 1 local businesses and residents.

Business Type	Support Provided
Tile company	General information



Providing Business Support

Chamber Membership



Networking Opportunities



200+

Networking Event Participants

This includes the Chamber’s weekly Build Your Business networking events and Chamber committee meetings.

“Joining the Santa Maria Chamber of Commerce was a natural decision for CADA. As we continue to expand our services in Santa Maria, we wanted to connect more deeply with the local community and be part of a network that prioritizes collaboration, support, and shared growth. The Chamber has already provided meaningful opportunities for us to engage with local leaders, raise awareness about our mission, and strengthen our presence in Santa Maria. We are grateful to be part of a community that values connection and is invested in the well-being of its residents, something that aligns closely with the work we do every day.”

-Luna Shalabi,
Development Manager, Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

Event Updates

Santa Maria Valley Young Professionals Group held a program launch event. Over 30 young professionals came together at Naughty Oak Brewing Company to share what they’d like to see out of a program geared towards young professionals in the Santa Maria Valley. Their feedback will help shape the structure and priorities of the new Young Professionals Group run by the Chamber, which will officially launch in February.



Providing Business Support

Military Affairs Committee

The members of the 2026 military affairs committee met and discussed potential topics for the upcoming year.



Ambassador Committee

Our 2026 Ambassador Committee Orientation was held at the Chamber office which included 10 returning and 9 new Ambassadors.

Business & Government Roundtable

This month's roundtable included a presentation given by Solomon Hills.



Economic Development Commission

City of Santa Maria spoke on the General Plan, Zoning & LAFCO process

Providing Business Support

Hispanic Business Support

The Chamber’s Economic Development department helps support Hispanic business outreach efforts through the Hispanic Business Group, which organizes educational and networking events.



Business Outreach & Assistance was provided to the following Hispanic businesses:

Business Type/Name	Support Provided
New Food Business	Start up assistance
Children’s Daycare Business	Helped obtain Business License
3D Printing Business	Start up assistance



Tourism

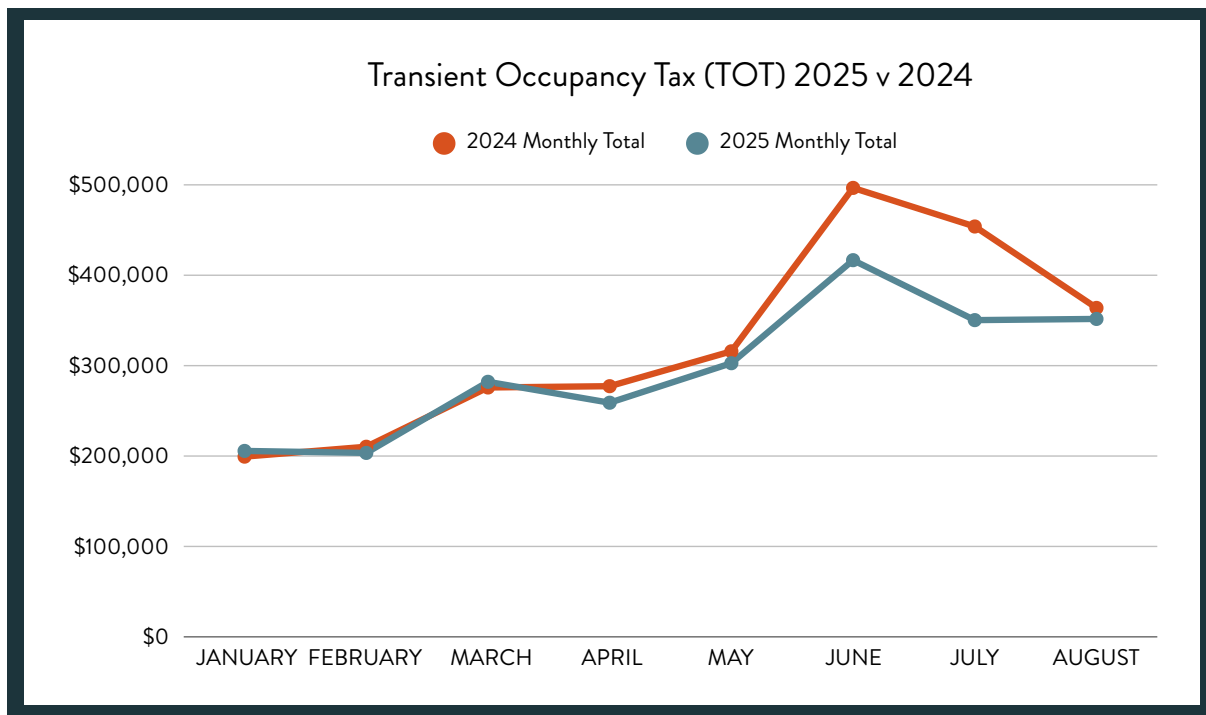
Transient Occupancy Tax Data

Despite the well-documented headwinds facing the tourism sector across the country, driven by consumer economic concerns and the current political climate, our Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) revenue is demonstrating promising signs of stabilization as we head into the last quarter of the year.

The latest report, covering data through August, shows a monthly year-over-year decrease of 3.35%. This monthly result indicates a strong deceleration of the negative trend when compared to the average monthly year-over-year decline of 6.35% that the area has experienced so far this fiscal year.

While our year-to-date (YTD) revenue for the January-August period remains in deficit, showing an 8.54% decrease compared to the same period in the prior year, the most recent monthly performance highlights our destination's enduring appeal and the resilience of our local tourism market. We remain strategically focused on leveraging this recent momentum to close the gap and secure the strongest possible fiscal finish.

Month	2025 Monthly Totals	2024 Monthly Totals	Monthly Percentage Change
January	\$205,657.77	\$199,345.75	+3.17%
February	\$203,468.55	\$210,286.10	-3.24%
March	\$282,109.55	\$275,837.25	+2.27%
April	\$258,990.80	\$277,268.38	-6.59%
May	\$302,702.66	\$315,838.18	-4.16%
June	\$416,673.19	\$496,629.02	-16.10%
July	\$350,359.24	\$453,920.91	-22.81%
August	\$351,666.37	\$363,851.23	-3.35%



Tourism

Paid Advertising

Dine Out Santa Maria Style: The 2026 Restaurant Month's boosted ad on Facebook and Instagram reached 12,077 users and was viewed 27,848 times, primarily among the age group of 35-44.



Website Traffic

Our tourism website (santamariavalley.com) remains a strong driver for hotel referrals.

53,595 Website Visits

927 Website Hotel Referrals



Tourism Celebration 2026

We hosted our first Tourism Celebration this month, celebrating the achievements and future of tourism in Santa Maria Valley. Find the [presentation slides here](#).



Energy Initiatives

Santa Barbara Regional Recycling Market Development Zone

The Santa Barbara Regional Recycling Market Development Zone is a program administered by the Chamber for CalRecycle, the Chamber continued to assist Enevi, LLC, a local plastics recycling company, for permitting and securing an RMDZ operation loan. Also, the RMDZ program secured funding for an upcoming Backyard Composting Workshop in coordination with the City of Santa Maria, County of Santa Barbara, the RMDZ program, and funding for a Marborg Orange Tag program with the goal of greater participation from residences to set out the organics cart for food scraps and yard waste.



Energy Efficiency Outreach and Regional Partnerships

In January, the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce hosted two energy efficiency webinars as part of the Public Sector Regional Energy Pathways Program with SoCalGas. The first webinar included 11 registered school districts, and the second included 10 cities, all within San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura Counties. The Chamber also provided additional outreach with the purpose of connecting public sector jurisdictions with SoCalGas for rebates, resources, and other assistance.

Attached is a photo from the webinars featuring recent presentations to the City of Santa Maria, Lompoc Unified School District, and Lucia Mar Unified School District.



Workforce Development

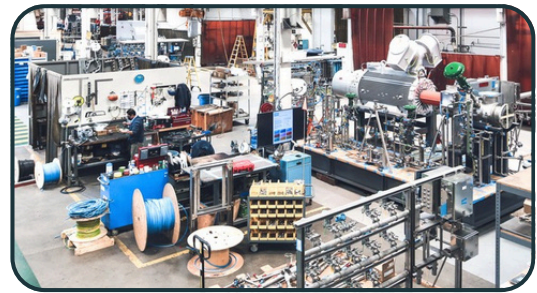
Teacher Tours

Our local educators found out firsthand how technology is reshaping the Santa Maria Valley. In partnership with the Santa Barbara County Education Office, the Santa Maria Valley Chamber recently hosted the "Digital Futures" Teacher Tour. We took local high school CTE teachers behind the scenes of our region's most innovative sectors to see the cybersecurity, software, and IT systems driving our modern economy. By connecting teachers directly with industry leaders, we're ensuring that the lessons taught today match the high-tech careers of tomorrow.



Women in STEM

In partnership with Santa Barbara County Workforce Development Board and Local STEM Employers in the Santa Maria Valley, we have launched our Women in STEM program. With the goal of building foundational awareness of STEM career pathways for women by showcasing local role models, employers, and accessible opportunities in the Santa Maria Valley.



Leadership Santa Maria Valley

The January topic day was Business & Economics. We heard from a business panel of how business is going in the Santa Maria area. We then toured Hardy Diagnostics and Aircraft Paint. We heard how each of these very different businesses started and grew to what they are today. We also visited the Airport and learned what is going on there and about the new American Airline flights to Phoenix. The following week the LSMV board had their regular and then their strategic planning meetings.

At the end of the month LSMV hosted a Lunch & Learn featuring Michael Boyer as the speaker.



Workforce Development Board

We continue to work with the Workforce Development Board, our education partners and BW Research on the strategic plan for the [workSBC ecosystem mapping project](#).

We have finalized our "Women in STEM" marketing campaign which will highlight local STEM careers in the Santa Maria Valley, and will kick off in February.

We continue to host Industry Tours to connect Workforce Development Board program operators to different local businesses. Our next tour will be in February at Flying Goat Cellars.



COUNTY of SANTA BARBARA
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Advocacy and Addressing Housing Needs

Advocacy and Support Letters

- Building an Affordable California BACA

Housing Project	Support Provided
Blosser Ranch	Starting to grade and work through city negotiations

Community Involvement

Local Meetings & Events

The Chamber’s Economic Development department stays actively involved in the community to build relationships and understand the needs of local businesses and the community.

Economic & Community Development

- Santa Barbara Foundation Community Info Session
- Civics Bee presentation at St. Louis de Montfort
- Teacher Tour - Digital Futures (Community Bank of Santa Maria, Space Information Labs, Santa Maria Police Department)

Business Support & Meetings

- United Way Board Meeting
- Build Your Business (BYB) weekly networking meetings
- Santa Maria Valley Chamber Board Meeting
- Workforce Development Board Adult & Special Projects Committee Meeting
- Western Association of Chamber Executives Board Meeting
- Leadership Santa Maria Valley board meeting & strategic planning session
- Business Advocacy Roundtable strategy meeting
- Economic Development Commission planning meeting
- Housing Summit Planning meeting
- Economic Forecast planning meeting
- Tri County Chamber Board meeting
- Tri County Chamber event planning meeting
- REACH Practitioner Meeting



Community Events

- Santa Maria Valley Tourism Celebration
- Santa Maria Valley Young Professionals Group Kickoff Event
- Leadership Santa Maria Valley Lunch & Learn
- Jim Glines Sign dedication
- EconAlliance Future Forum dinner

Chamber Media Mentions

Topic	Publication
Santa Maria Tourism Celebration	KEYT KSBY TTW

Tourism Media Mentions

Topic	Publication
Wine	Resident CBS42
Travel	Noozhawk Sunset Flight Simulator
Santa Maria Style Barbecue	Islands Patch AOL
Restaurant Month	Noozhawk Santa Maria Times Santa Maria Times KEYT





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