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For more information, contact:
Paul Farmer, President and CEO
Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce
119 E Alisal St, Salinas CA 93901
Main: 831-751-7725
Email: President@SalinasChamber.com
Website: www.SalinasChamber.com

Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce Announces Endorsements

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The Salinas Valley Chamber has announced its endorsements for the June 2018 primary election.

Following its process, the Salinas Valley Chamber's Candidate Review Committee solicited information from candidates and held a series of panel interviews to discuss their ideas. The committee and Board found these individuals to be most supportive of the Salinas Valley Chamber's public policy positions and friendly to the interests of the business community and the community at large.

Supervisor, 3rd District – Chris Lopez

We believe Chris Lopez is the most capable and prepared candidate to represent District 3 on the County Board of Supervisors. Having grown up in this district, he has demonstrated his long-term commitment to serve its residents by planting many roots locally. Chris has served for ten years in the office of the soon-to-be-retired gentleman who has represented this district, the highly respected Supervisor Simon Salinas. For more than seven of those years, he has served as Simon Salinas's Chief of Staff. These years of on-the-job training mean he has already built many of the connections and an enviable base of knowledge in understanding the issues that confront the County.

When asked when and why he decided to run for this office, Lopez responded that he has always wanted to serve the community, but it was not part of his plans to work in government. After college, he came back to the area to help his family, a long-time small business in South County. He accepted a position with Supervisor Salinas and earned his respect and ever-increasing responsibility. As Supervisor Salinas considered retirement, he started planting seeds with Lopez several years ago. Supervisor Salinas decided he would retire but if and only if there were a qualified and capable person whom he could support. The Supervisor has put his full-throated support behind Lopez.

In addition to his qualifications, intelligence and concern for the community, Mr. Lopez has demonstrated his understanding and personal experience with the challenges that businesses face operating in our heavily-regulated local environment. He shares anecdotes of the red tape he has encountered in running and making improvements on his own small ranch.

Finally, the Chamber is in agreement with Mr. Lopez's assessment of critical priorities: Housing, Infrastructure and Water. Should he be elected, Mr. Lopez will have one of five votes on Council. We believe that he will do his homework and he'll become a reliable and fair voice that will support sensible policies. In his words, "[to] attract new businesses and develop our economy in an intentionally diverse way."

Supervisor, 2nd District – John Phillips

Four years ago, when Judge John Phillips was first running for this seat, the Chamber endorsed him. We cited his background in the public sector as a respected judge and non-profit experience as the driving voice behind Rancho Cielo as reasons for his understanding the needs of the community. While Rancho Cielo is technically a non-profit organization, it is run like a business. Developing the campus has required leaders at Rancho Cielo to contend with much of the bureaucracy that other businesses deal with every day. In short, the judge can “feel our pain.”

Fast forward four years: Supervisor Phillips has realized the promise we saw in him. He has become the most important and reliable representative on the Board of Supervisors when it comes to enacting policies that are supportive of smart economic development.

John Phillips is thoughtful and fair. In a world of spin, he also has the refreshing quality of being a plain-spoken politician. There are many votes on the Board of Supervisors that come down 3-to-2, with Phillips often supplying the swing vote. The Chamber believes its vitally important that we keep John Phillips in his role as Supervisor and we urge you to support him with your vote.

Member of State Assembly, District 30 **No endorsement at this time.** While the Chamber met with several candidates, we have opted not to endorse for the Primary election. We may reconsider an endorsement for the General election in November.

Sheriff: No endorsement The Chamber met with both candidates for this position who engaged in a spirited debate. In the end, when personalities are set aside, the Chamber believes voters will have trouble identifying significant differences in policies. Each of the candidates has advantages and disadvantages, but we did not find the differences compelling enough to make an endorsement of one over the other.

For more information, call (831) 751-7725 or visit www.SalinasChamber.com.

The Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce is an association of nearly 700 businesses and organizations, representing thousands of local employees and stakeholders. 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. To learn more, visit www.SalinasChamber.com or call (831) 751-7725.

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