



# THE CHAMBER CONNECTION

A monthly newsletter of the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce, Visitor & Convention Bureau, and Economic Development Commission

October 2015

## Chamber introduces new Economic Development Team

The Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce this month introduced new leaders for its Economic Development Commission. The changes came in response to the resignation of long-time EDC director, Dave Cross. With growing business activity in the private sector, Dave decided to resume his land-use consulting business at Fletcher-Cross & Associates full-time.

"Dave was a passionate and effective advocate for business owners in Santa Maria as head of the Chamber's Economic Development Commission for more than six years," said Chamber President/CEO Glenn Morris. "He introduced new programs and innovative approaches to business development in the community during his tenure. His presence will be missed at the Chamber."

Dave's connection with the Chamber began in 1991, when he signed up his business, Next Day Signs, as a Chamber member. That same year he volunteered to chair our Military Affairs Committee, and held that position for many years. In 1996, Dave joined our board of directors, and served as Chairman of the Board in 2001-2002.

In addition to his work in Economic Development, Dave was involved in a number of activities related to Vandenberg Air Force Base and the broader veterans' community. In addition to serving as a liaison to VAFB on community and business issues, Dave was instrumental in the creation and ongoing efforts associated with Santa Maria's



**Pam Avila,**  
Economic Development  
Commission Director



**Tom Flavin,**  
Economic Development  
Advisor



**Dave Cross,**  
Former EDC  
Director

Freedom Monument.

Replacing Dave as Economic Development Commission director will be Pam Avila. She will be joined by Tom Flavin, who will serve as an Economic Development Advisor on a part-time contract basis.

Avila joined the Chamber Oct. 12, focusing on initiatives that will make it easier for businesses to open, build and grow in Santa Maria. Avila was previously the economic development director for the Paso Robles Chamber of Commerce.

Avila has years of experience in helping form relationships between non-profit and business leaders, as well as key community organizations and local government to build consensus on initiatives that build economic vitality. She was actively involved in the SLO County Workforce Investment Board and chair of its Business Council.

Avila will handle day-to-day operations at the EDC while consultant Tom Flavin will provide a strategic overview of long-range opportunities.

Flavin, a former mayor of Burbank, comes with years of economic development experience. For the past five years he led the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership. Prior to that he was head of the Economic Development Council of Seattle and King County, and the Southeast Business Partnership in the Denver Tech Center.

## CalChamber Stops 18 of 19 Job Killer Bills

Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. yesterday vetoed the two California Chamber of Commerce-opposed job killer bills on his desk. In 2015, CalChamber identified 19 job killer bills and successfully stopped 18 of them from becoming law.

On October 11, the last day for the Governor to act on legislation sent to his desk, the Governor vetoed AB 465 (R. Hernández; D-West Covina) which would have increased litigation and SB 406 (Jackson; D-Santa Barbara) that would have significantly expanded the California Family Rights Act.

"We appreciate the Governor's thoughtful approach and attention to the adverse consequences of overly broad legislation," said Allan Zaremberg, CalChamber President and CEO. "These vetoes will help establish the certainty that California businesses need in managing their workforce and will be a positive factor in promoting California job creation."

### AB 465, Increased Litigation

CalChamber argued that if signed into law, AB 465 would have worsened the litigation environment and hurt job creation because it precluded mandatory employment arbitration agreements, which is likely pre-empted by the Federal Arbitration Act.

Governor Brown agreed with CalChamber writing: "California courts have addressed this issue of unfairness by insisting that employment arbitration agreements must include numerous protections to be enforceable, including neutrality of the arbitrator, adequate discovery, no limitation on damages or remedies, and a written decision that permits some judicial review and limitation on the costs of arbitration."

On the issue of pre-emption, the Governor wrote that "recent decisions by both the California and United States Supreme Courts have found that state policies which

unduly impede arbitration are invalid."

### SB 406, Significant Expansion of California Family Rights Act

SB 406 (Jackson; D-Santa Barbara) was identified as a job killer because the bill would have increased costs and the risk of litigation. The bill would have created inconsistencies with federal law by expanding the family members for whom leave may be taken, which would have provided a potential 24-week protected leave of absence for employers to administer.

The Governor agreed with CalChamber's assessment of the bill, pointing out that the bill ... "could require employers to provide employees up to 24 weeks of family leave in a 12 month period."

The Governor continued that he is "open to legislation to allow workers to take leave for additional family members that does not create this anomaly."

### Job Killer Signed

One job killer bill, AB 359 (Gonzalez; D-San Diego), dealing with grocery workers, was sent to the Governor in August and was signed into law.

### Other Vetoes

The Governor vetoed two additional CalChamber-opposed bills:

SB 682 by Senator Leno (D-San Francisco) would have put constraints on the courts' ability to become more efficient as they try to effectively manage reduced appropriations.

AB 1017 by Assemblymember Campos (D-San Jose) would have prohibited employers from obtaining relevant information important in the hiring process, with little benefit to the applicant and increased risk of litigation to the employer.



**Governor Jerry Brown,**  
Governor of California

## Welcome New Members!

The Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce was pleased to welcome the following businesses as new members during the month of September. We appreciate their vote of confidence in our ability to add value to their business and to create a strong local economy together!

■ Farmers Insurance  
Diana Calhoon Goodman  
331 E. Betteravia Rd., Suite A  
Santa Maria  
(805) 310-5045  
<https://www.farmersagent.com/dcalhoon1>

■ Cupcakes Fighting Cancer  
Cassandra Sigala  
522 N. Scott Dr.  
Santa Maria  
[https://www.facebook.com/pages/Cupcakes-Fighting-Cancer/370689549801677?ref=br\\_rs](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Cupcakes-Fighting-Cancer/370689549801677?ref=br_rs)

■ SOFTIN, Inc.  
Capt. Tiffany Vague  
691 Camino Campana  
Santa Barbara  
(805) 478-8402  
[www.softininc.com](http://www.softininc.com)

■ Alex Ferrel Painting  
Alex Ferrel  
1282 Via Alta  
Santa Maria  
(805) 598-4052  
[alexferrelpainting.com](http://alexferrelpainting.com)

■ The Pad Climbing Gym  
Dustin Wise  
1241 Johnson Ave. #128  
Santa Maria  
(844) 254-6287  
[www.thepadclimbing.org](http://www.thepadclimbing.org)

■ American Legion Auxiliary Unit 56  
Melanni Wiedrich  
PO Box 13  
Santa Maria  
(701) 721-5510

■ Alliance for Pharmaceutical Access, Inc.  
Claudia Lopez  
237 Town Center West #122  
Santa Maria  
(805) 614-2010  
[www.apameds.org](http://www.apameds.org)

■ Univision TV  
Ed Carcarey  
718 E. Chapel St.  
Santa Maria  
(805) 685-3800

■ Golden Gate Media Group  
David Orozco  
1729 W. Averill Park Dr.  
San Pedro  
(310) 872-7395

## GROUND BREAKING • GRAND OPENING • NEW MEMBER • RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONIES



RIBBON CUTTING

### American Business Machines

373 Front St.  
Grover Beach



RIBBON CUTTING

### CenCal Web Design

2271 Santa Maria Way, Suite B  
Santa Maria



RIBBON CUTTING

### DB Computer Services

2271 Santa Maria Way, Suite B  
Santa Maria



RIBBON CUTTING

### Healthy But Good

1140 E. Clark St., Suite 180  
Orcutt



RIBBON CUTTING

### Shepard Eye Center

910 E. Stowell Rd.  
Santa Maria





### CHAMBER STAFF

#### President & CEO

Glenn Morris, ACE 925-2403 x825  
glenn@santamaria.com

#### VP, Chamber Operations

Terri Oneschuck 925-2403 x824  
terrio@santamaria.com

#### Director, Economic Development

Pam Avila 925-2403 x817  
edc@santamaria.com

#### Director, Visitor & Convention Bureau

Gina Keough 925-2403 x814  
gina@santamaria.com

#### Membership Manager

Cara Martinez 925-2403 x852  
cara@santamaria.com

#### Events & Special Projects Manager

Jennifer Harrison 925-2403 x815  
jennifer@santamaria.com

#### Group Sales & Services Coordinator

Terri Paniagua 925-2403 x851  
terri@santamaria.com

#### Administrative Support Coordinator

Patricia Horta 925-2403 x812  
patricia@santamaria.com

### 2015-2016 OFFICERS

#### Chairman of the Board

Eddie Murray  
The Murray Group - Morgan Stanley

#### Chairman Elect/Treasurer

Ed Carcarey  
Mega 97.1

#### Vice Chairman

Cameron Stephens  
SM Tire

#### Vice Chairman

Erika Weber  
VTC Enterprises

#### Past Chairman

Tim Ritchie  
Home Motors

### Board of Directors

Dr. Ray Arensdorf  
Arensdorf Chiropractic

Trent Benedetti  
Benedetti & Associates

Donna Cross  
Next Day Signs

Jean-Luc Garon  
Historic Santa Maria Inn

George Majoue  
Knights of Columbus

Dan Pankratz  
One Way Board Shop

Era Polly  
Era Polly Real Estate

Hugh Rafferty  
CoastHills Federal Credit Union

Donna Randolph  
State Farm Insurance

Tim Rooney  
Rooney's Irish Pub

Janet Silveria  
Community Bank of Santa Maria

Chris Slaughter  
Discovery Museum

John Tunnell  
Tunnell Roofing

Dr. Kevin Walthers  
Allan Hancock College

Tim Woodbury  
Woody's Butcher Block

The ChamberConnection is the official monthly publication of the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce, 614 S Broadway, Santa Maria, CA 93454-5111, (805) 925-2403. Send corrections or good news submissions to chambernews@santamaria.com

# Grant Program To Help Fund Local Events

The Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce and Visitor and Convention Bureau offers a Special Projects Grant Program for planners of events or projects marketed to attract overnight stays to Santa Maria.

Deadline: Letters to be received by 5 p.m. on the first Friday of May or November.

First-time event sponsorships can be submitted at any time. Checks are usually mailed out within 2 months, so please plan accordingly.

Formal letter of request for the sponsorship – must include pertinent details, such as:

- Date(s) of the event
- Start time/end time
- Admission cost
- Complete contact information for the event or project (will be posted publicly)

– Overview of your Promotional Plan: How will you market the event or project to boost overnight stays in Santa Maria? Which cities or areas will you be targeting? How will you spend your advertising dollars? (pricing needed for print ads, online ads, brochures, posters)

– Outline the ways the Chamber will be recognized by its sponsorship

#### Criteria

- The Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce will be named a sponsor of your event/project
- The event/project must be held in the Santa Maria Valley
- Events held in the downtown area and/or during the offseason of November-April, receive preference
- Event/project must be marketed to bring in overnight stays to the Santa Maria Valley
- Monies must be used for: marketing, graphic design, printing, radio/print/online advertising or tournament fees. Funding is not to be used for giveaways or prizes for your event

#### Requirements

- Planner must be a current Chamber member
- Must work with our Chamber Member Hotels
- Must provide a reciprocal link from your website to the Chamber's website
- Submit one request for an event or project, per application
- Post-Event, submit receipts and copies of ads, bulk mail paperwork, printing invoices/receipts, etc.

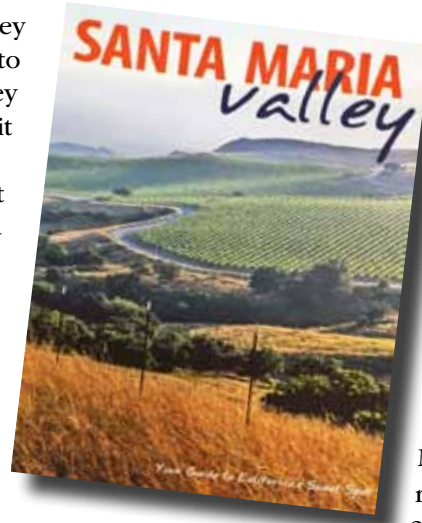
Please submit one application per event or project, electronically, to: Terri@santamaria.com. Questions: Gina@santamaria.com or call (805) 925-2403, ext. 814

# Santa Maria Valley 2016 Visitors Guide Underway

Preparations for the 2016 Santa Maria Valley Visitors Guide have begun and we are excited to bring this opportunity to our members so they can benefit from the high level of exposure it brings.

This guide will be strategically distributed at two California Welcome Centers – in Oxnard and Pismo Beach, sent in relocation packets, included in welcome bags, and taken to trade shows and events the Visitor and Convention Bureau participates in to bring overnight stays to the Santa Maria Valley.

Exciting changes for this year's guide include bringing in publisher Golden Gate Media Group. They will provide a fresh look to the guide with custom photography,



updated and unique editorial, high end printing, a reader friendly format, and a broad range of ad sizes in full color.

In addition to our printed directory, we will post the guide on our web site. The new Visitors Guide to Santa Maria Valley will be our showpiece of our community for the coming months. You won't want to miss this opportunity.

We are pleased to welcome our ad sales representative, David Carrillo, to assist you in promoting your business in the 2016 Santa Maria Valley Visitors Guide. David can be reached at davidcarrillo@verizon.net or 909-224-8167.



Dave Kilby, President/CEO of the Western Association of Chamber Executives, provides training to Central Coast chamber executives and board members Friday at the Historic Santa Maria Inn. The Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce hosted the daylong seminar for Chamber leaders from Santa Barbara, Buellton, Lompoc, Morro Bay, Atascadero, Templeton, Paso Robles and Fresno.

# Leadership Santa Maria Valley Celebrates 20 Years

For two decades, Leadership Santa Maria Valley has helped educate, develop, and equip local residents to become leaders in the community.

LSMV was formed in 1995 with a class of 24 people. Today, the group boasts 340 graduates, many of which fill key roles in government, business, non-profit and community organizations throughout northern Santa Barbara County.

LSMV will celebrate its 20th anniversary on Saturday, October 24th at 5 p.m. at the Radisson Hotel. The cost to attend is \$25 per-person, \$40 per-couple.

The Class of 2015, which graduated in June, is the 20th class in the Leadership Santa Maria Valley program.

The program was the vision Cary Gray and Jim Simmons.

The pair wanted to give interested citizens from all walks of life and professions the opportunity to immerse themselves in the community and become more knowledgeable about the inner workings.

LSMV gives participants the opportunity to meet the decision makers and key leaders in various areas of the Valley industries, including healthcare, government, education, agriculture, culture and the arts, business, public safety and law enforcement, media and the aerospace and military complex at Vandenberg AFB.

Every class has been tasked with creating a legacy project that has been affecting change in the community in dozens of ways.

For more information, please contact Judi Kincaid (805) 260-2943, or Donna Polizzi (805) 895-1060.

# Targeting Your Ideal Customer

No matter what your hobby, there are tools of the trade. If you fish, you match the type of bait you use to the kind of fish you want to land. For knitters, there are specific needles to use for different kinds of stitches and patterns. Golfers employ clubs specific to the kind of shot they want to make.

The same is true of your business marketing.

Strengthening Your Sales through Targeted Marketing

The most common marketing mistake a business makes is trying to sell to everyone. It makes the copy difficult to write; the decision of which social media sites to participate on time consuming; and the content just doesn't resonate.

When you try to appeal to everyone, you impress no one.

Narrowing down your target audience, allows you to speak only to them. They will respond because you're talking to their specific challenges, in a language they understand, and a format they appreciate.

You cannot create a content strategy without knowing your target market. Trying to do so is like your boss handing you her credit card and telling you to go out and buy a gift without knowing who it's for or how much she wants you to spend.

Vagueness doesn't sell in today's business climate. If your customer has to wonder if you are the perfect solution for them, you've just missed the sale. They're over at your competitor's website because she made it quite clear she was ideal for their needs.

Building a Buyer Persona

You don't have to be a CMO to know who buys from you most often. Take a moment to think about her age, family status, income, desires, and challenges. Write it out like a story. Give her a name. When you're trying to decide how to market a new product or service, ask yourself what would appeal to her.

You may have multiple buyer personas but avoid the temptation

of saying anyone can use our product. It suits everybody. While it may be true that anyone can wear a man's white t-shirt, it will look very different on an infant and a high school quarterback.

If you're not feeling imaginative, ask a question on your Facebook page about your new product or service and see who answers. Pay close attention to those people who answer in your target customer range. Social media can be an effective R&D platform for you if you know your ideal customer.

Put Your Knowledge to Use

If you understand who your ideal customer is, you'll know where to find him. You'll know where he gets his info and how to appeal to him. Does he research every purchase extensively? If so, are you providing the tools he needs? Does he buy impulsively? Maybe he likes established buying patterns. Knowing who he is will help you be where he is, when he is ready to buy. This intelligence will bring you more sales.

It's impossible to know how to speak to someone you haven't defined. If your business sales are not what you hoped, take some time to identify who you are trying to reach. Once you have that figured out, you can speak to them in a way that frames your product or service in a light they will be drawn to. You can also be assured if you're solving their problems, they'll keep coming back and they'll bring their friends.

Christina R. Green teaches small businesses, chambers and associations how to connect through content. Her articles have appeared in the Midwest Society of Association Executives' Magazine, NTEN.org, AssociationTech, and Socialfish. She is a regular blogger at Frankjkenny.com and Memberclicks.

She's just a bookish writer on a quest to bring great storytelling to organizations everywhere.



# I Googled your business and it didn't look good.

In preparation for our upcoming Google workshop "Let's Put Santa Maria on the Map," I took the time recently to search a variety of local businesses, both large and small.

As part of the workshop, Google has set up a specific search site that shows businesses, essentially, what Google sees when a place of business is searched.

I was surprised to see the number of businesses whose search results came up lacking – at least from Google's perspective. I won't embarrass anyone by naming names here, but the list is extensive and includes well-known establishments and community organizations.

To be fair, it's not the business' fault. Google has not done a good job – until now – of making it easy for business owners and organizations to navigate their system. You shouldn't have to be a techno-geek to have a decent listing.

Now that they've established a simple process to update a Google listing, business owners are encouraged to take the time to make the most of their search engine results.

This upcoming workshop is an important first step in that direction. In just a short amount of time business owners will be able to correct, update and enhance their Google search results.

Why is this so important? Research show that 97% of consumers search the web to find local goods and services, but only 37% of businesses have claimed a local business listing on



**Justin Stoner**  
Marketing Manager

a search engine.

The Oct. 21 session by the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce will help businesses claim their local listing through Google My Business.

When you are accurately recognized by Google, it's easier for potential customers to find important information, including hours, contact information and directions.

You can help Google understand information about your business, and potentially display it to searchers.

Note that setting up Google My Business won't guarantee that your business will appear in Google's search results, but it will help Google show it consistently across Search and Maps.

Google My Business doesn't replace your business website; it complements it by giving your business

a public identity and presence on Google.

Break out box:  
 What: Business Development Forum: "Let's Put Santa Maria on the Map" Google workshop  
 When: 11:30 check-in; Noon-1 p.m. program, Wednesday, Oct. 21  
 Where: Fairpark Fountain Pavilion  
 RSVP: (805) 925-2403  
 Cost: Free but lunch can be provided ~ \$17 for members; \$22 for non-members  
 Please bring a laptop or tablet computer for the hands-on workshop.

## New IRS Resource Helps Employers Understand Health Care Law



The new ACA Information Center for Applicable Large Employers (ALE) page on IRS.gov features information and resources for employers of all sizes on how the health care law may affect them if they fit the definition of an applicable large employer.

The web page includes the following sections:

- What's Trending for ALEs;
- How to Determine If You Are an ALE;
- Resources for Applicable Large Employers; and
- Outreach Materials.

Visitors to the new page will find links to:

- Detailed information about tax provisions, including information reporting requirements for employers;
- Questions and answers; and
- Forms, instructions, publications, health care tax tips, flyers and videos.

Although the vast majority of employers will not be affected, the IRS advises employers to determine now if they are an applicable large employer. According to the IRS, if a business averaged at least 50 full-time employees, including full-time equivalent employees, during 2014, it is most likely an ALE for 2015.

If there are fewer than 50 full-time employees, the business may be considered an applicable large employer if it shares a common ownership with other employers. As an applicable large employer, the IRS says the business should be taking steps now to prepare for the coming filing season.

In 2016, applicable large employers must file an annual information return – and provide a statement to each full-time employee – reporting whether they offered health insurance, and if so, what insurance they offered their employees.

If a business is filing 250 or more information returns for 2015, it must file the returns electronically through the ACA Information Reports system. According to the IRS, businesses should review draft Publication 5165, Guide for Electronically Filing Affordable Care Act (ACA) Information Returns, now for information on the communication procedures, transmission formats, business rules and validation procedures for returns that must be transmitted in 2016. ~ CalChamber

### IS YOUR BUSINESS INFO COMPLETE?



## Governor Signs CalChamber-Supported Gender Equity Pay Bill

A California Chamber of Commerce-supported bill that seeks to eliminate pay disparity based on gender was signed by Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. yesterday.

SB 358 (Jackson; D-Santa Barbara) which received overwhelming support in both houses as it moved through the legislature, will ensure that women are paid equally for work that is substantially similar to the work of their male colleagues, and are not retaliated against if they discuss or ask how much their male colleagues are paid.

"Equal pay for equal work, regardless of gender, shouldn't be an issue in California," said CalChamber President and CEO Allan Zaremberg. "We applaud the Governor and a bipartisan vote in the legislature for establishing this fundamental tenet in statute and providing guidance to employers to determine appropriate wages for non-gender related reasons that allow employers to effectively manage their workforce."

According to a CalChamber analysis, SB 358 will strengthen California Labor Code Section 1197.5, which precludes an employer from discriminating against an employee in pay on the basis of gender.

#### More Clarity

Equal pay for equal work has been the law in California for decades. While SB 358 certainly strengthens this law, it also provides clarity on ambiguous provisions that will help California employers avoid costly litigation.

First, the term "equal" has proven too rigid and in limited



CalChamber Policy Advocate Jennifer Barrera and Senator Hannah Beth Jackson (D-Santa Barbara) flex their muscle in a show of support of SB 358 at the bill signing ceremony.

cases, created absurd results that have provided a false sense of security for employers to justify a wage differential. Some employers have actually interpreted the term "equal" to mean absolutely identical job duties and title, and pay men a higher wage than women on minor variations. This was never the intent of the law and certainly is not how the federal counterpart, Equal Pay Act, or similar anti-discrimination laws have been interpreted with regard to wage discrimination. SB 358 modifies the term "equal" to

"substantially similar" in order to emphasize the intent and application of the law.

Second, SB 358 defines the term "bona fide factor" to provide further guidance to employers regarding the bases that can legitimately justify a wage differential such as education, training, and experience. While some have commented that SB 358 removed work performed on different shifts or in different establishments as a justification for a difference in pay, it did not. As specifically set forth in Senator Jackson's letter to the Senate Daily Journal on May 26, 2015.

Overall, SB 358 creates a fair balance between ensuring employees receive the same wages for the same work regardless of their gender, while also allowing an employer to continue to manage its workforce and determine appropriate wages for non-gender related reasons.

The law will go into effect on January 1, 2016.

## Governor Signs CalChamber Supported Education Bill

A California Chamber of Commerce-supported bill that creates a comprehensive framework to allow more high school students to concurrently enroll in community college courses offered at a nearby community college campus or at their high school was signed by Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. yesterday.

AB 288 (Holden; D-Pasadena) provides high school students with increased access to college-level CTE coursework, gives them a head-start on transferring to a four-year institution, improves high school graduation rates and helps high school students achieve college and career readiness by authorizing high school districts and community college districts to partner and offer dual enrollment programs that further these purposes.

#### Expands College and Career Pathways

Improving educational attainment rates is arguably one of the most important things policy makers can do to ensure the long-term health of our economy, and to improve the lives of future generations of

Californians. While the percentage of Californians who have attended at least some college has grown in recent years, educational attainment rates are increasing far too slowly to keep pace with the growing needs of California's economy.

The state Employment Development Department (EDD) estimates that there will be an additional 2.6 million new jobs by 2020, 64% of which will require at least some college training. If current college participation rates continue, however, the state will be short at least 1 million workers with bachelor's degrees, and short an additional 1 million to 1.5 million workers with some college training by 2025.

To meet these needs, the state education system needs to become more flexible, and create clearer pathways between high school and the workforce. Expanding concurrent enrollment programs for high school students, as AB 288 does, creates an important pathway that will benefit many students, regardless of their goals.

AB 288 allows students to participate in concurrent enrollment programs for remediation, and will give at-risk students exposure to coursework that relates to career opportunities in key industry sectors, increasing their engagement and encouraging them to complete high school and possibly pursue post-secondary training. The measure also gives high-achieving students opportunities to take college-level coursework that counts toward their high school graduation requirements and an associate's degree, saving them money and time as they work toward transferring to a four-year college or university.

All students will benefit from increased access to career technical education aligned to local workforce needs, which many high schools currently do not have the capacity or faculty to provide. In this way, AB 288 helps students who need extra support, encourages more students who might otherwise opt out of post-secondary education to enroll, and provides new challenges for students who already are excelling in high school.



## Renewing Members

### 67 Years

- Engel & Gray, Inc.

### 45 Years

- Pacific Gas & Electric Company

### 35 Years

- Health Sanitation Service

### 33 Years

- SBB College

### 32 Years

- Central Coast Urgentcare Center

### 29 Years

- PRP Companies

### 28 Years

- Eric D. Kirk, DDS, Inc.

### 25 Years

- Boomer's

### 22 Years

- Abbey Carpet

### 21 Years

- Hacienda Oaks Property Management

- Michael W. Moats, MD

### 20 Years

- Manzanita Berry Farms

- Quality Inn & Suites Santa Maria

### 19 Years

- Central Coast Investments

### 18 Years

- Babe Farms

- Farm Credit West

- No. Santa Barbara Cty Special Olympics

### 16 Years

- American Assoc. of University Women

- Local Copies Etc

- Economy Inn

- Expo Decor

### 15 Years

- California Teachers Assoc

- County of Santa Barbara-Purchasing Div.

- Norcast Communications

### 14 Years

- Town & Country Inn

### 13 Years

- Halsell Builders

- Golden State Water Co.

### 12 Years

- Family Care Network, Inc.

### 10 Years

- The Mortgage House

### 9 Years

- Pacific Coast Energy Co.

- Visionary Insurance & Financial Services

### 8 Years

- Old Town Shirt Factory

- Fighting Back Santa Maria Valley

- Mission Paving, Inc

### 7 Years

- Fund for Santa Barbara

- Family Service Agency

- Heritage Evangelical Presbyterian Church

- Achievement House Inc.

### 6 Years

- Altrusa International of the Central Coast

### 5 Years

- Del Taco

### 4 Years

- The Towbes Group, Inc.

### 2 Years

- Operation COY (Coaching Our Youth)

- G&S Carpet Co.

### 1 Years

- REI Wealth Academy

- Figueroa Mountain Brewing Co.

- First Bank

- Oxford Suites Pismo Beach

# CLASS Act – Attendance Matters

California Attorney General Kamala Harris's 2015 report on truancy and absenteeism, In School + On Track, states that 83% of students chronically absent in kindergarten and first grade are unable to read on-level by third grade. Even more staggering, the report adds, is the fact that students who cannot read on-level in third grade are 400% more likely to drop out than kids who can.

This September marks the third annual School Attendance Awareness Month campaign. Its goal is to remind educational communities, advocates, policymakers, and families about the importance of attendance and its role in academic achievement.

The Attorney General estimates that nearly 8% of elementary school students in California are chronically absent. Nearly a quarter million California school children are currently at risk of falling seriously behind in their studies.

All In. The good news is chronic absence and truancy are problems we are tackling head-on here in Santa Barbara County.

Local efforts to fight chronic absenteeism date back to the late 1990s, when the district attorney's office, in conjunction with several county school districts and other county departments, instituted the Truancy Intervention and Parent Accountability Program (TIPAP).

The program had a successful 11-year run, but in 2008, TIPAP was eliminated due to budget cuts. The ensuing effect on truancy—defined as a student having three or more unexcused absences—was as unfortunate as it was predictable: a jump from 21% in 2008 to 31% in 2009.

It was the dramatic jump in truancy rates, coupled with the knowledge that those rates can lead to dimmer prospects for students' futures that led to the 2011 Grand Jury Report, "Where is the Truancy Program in Santa Barbara County?"

The reality is that poor attendance track records bode poorly for students' futures and their ability to be contributing citizens. According to studies, 70% of prison inmates are high school dropouts. A 2012 PBS Frontline documentary offers additional troubling facts: over 30% of 18- to 24-year old high school dropouts live in poverty. And 16- to 24-year old high school dropouts experience incarceration rates 63 times greater than those of college graduates.

The Grand Jury report was a watershed moment. That jump in truancy rates from 21% to 31% in a single school year was a clarion call for us as a community to do something.

And that's precisely what happened.

The Board of Supervisors asked us what we needed. Supervisors

## GUEST COMMENTARY

Bill Cirone

Santa Barbara County Superintendent of Schools

Joyce Dudley

District Attorney, County of Santa Barbara

Salud Carbajal and Steve Lavagnino in particular provided both strong advocacy and leadership. We put together a budget proposal of about 1/3 the cost of the previous program, with the understanding that this incarnation needed very broad buy-in from local school districts and other government and community organizations.

Faced with the statistics, the buy-in came rather readily. Assistant Chief District Attorney Gordon Auchincloss tells people, "It's easier to build strong children than to repair broken adults." It's an effective pitch, because it's true. School districts, the sheriff's office, probation officers, and other community organizations were all in.

Numbers Don't Lie. While the numbers that inspired the initial Grand Jury report were deeply troubling, the data chronicling the success of the newly-revamped program is considerably more heartening. "For three years running," says Deputy District Attorney Adam Howland, "Santa Barbara County truancy rates have been significantly below the state average." The numbers for the 2013-14 school year—the most recent available data—are the lowest registered in Santa Barbara County in six years.

But the real success is captured in the data behind the Community Leadership in Achieving Student Success (CLASS) Program. "We sent over 18,000 letters last year to students throughout Santa Barbara County the first time they were truant," says Truancy Program Coordinator Corina Trevino. "Of that number, less than 2% had to be referred to a school attendance review board, or SARB." A SARB is convened when a student has 14 or more days of unexcused absences.

Even more impressive, however, is the community intervention efforts that address the issues of that 2%. "We had 342 students meet a SARB last year," says Howland. "But the SARB recognizes that a student's failure to go to school is usually symptomatic of other issues. We take the approach that this program is about fostering student success—even in challenging circumstances—and not about merely enforcing compulsory educational laws. Of those 342 students we met," he concludes, "only 10 were placed on informal probation. Those are astonishing results."

Indeed they are. It is precisely for this reason that Attorney General Kamala Harris has commended the Santa Barbara County program as an example for the entire state as to how to achieve the goal of returning students to school without necessitating criminal intervention.

Now that's a CLASS act. Attendance truly does work.

## Office Depot Discount Program

Get custom-discounted pricing on office supplies, thanks to a new partnership between the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce and Office Depot®.

Chamber members are eligible to sign up for the Store Purchasing Card Program to get valuable deals on some of the most commonly purchased items.

"This new partnership demonstrates the benefit of Chamber membership through the power of group buying programs," said Glenn Morris, President and CEO of the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce. "We appreciate Office Depot's efforts to help us ensure local businesses preserve a bigger bottom line."

To join the Store Purchasing Card Program, contact Office Depot® Account Manager Jennifer Alvarado at (559) 430-4154 or jennifer.alvarado@officedepot.com.

### Sign up today for:

Discounts up to 60% from a list of commonly purchased items ~ and 5% OFF most other items (excluding furniture and technology).

Copy and Print discounts  
 Black and white copies - 2.5 cents each  
 Color copies - 29 cents each  
 Binding, folding, cutting - 40% OFF retail price

Meet your GREEN business goals with thousands of environmentally preferable products.

Member businesses can buy online and get FREE delivery in most cases if ordered by 5 p.m.

## OCTOBER 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2 Build Your Business Breakfast VTC Enterprises The A Street Café 8:00 am	3
4	5	6 VCB Marketing Series Cara Martinez - Membership Benefits Moxie Café 9:00 am	7	8	9 Build Your Business Breakfast VTC Enterprises The A Street Café 8:00 am	10
11	12 Transportation Committee Veteran's Memorial Hall 12:00 pm	13	14 Business/Education Partnership Luncheon Santa Marka Elk's Lodge 12:00 pm	15 Santa Maria Merchants Committee MIYB Spaces 7:30 am Chamber Mixer Community Bank of Santa Maria 2739 Santa Maria Way 5:00 pm	16 Build Your Business Breakfast VTC Enterprises The A Street Café 8:00 am	17
18	19	20 EDD Job Fair Santa Maria Fairpark 2:00 pm	21 Executive Committee Meeting Chamber Office 7:30 am Business Development Forum Google City Rollout Santa Maria Fairpark - Fountain Pavilion Building 11:30 am	22	23 Build Your Business Breakfast VTC Enterprises The A Street Café 8:00 am	24
25	26 Board of Director's Meeting Radisson Hotel 11:30 am	27 Ambassador's Meeting VTC Enterprises The A Street Café 12:00 pm	28	29	30 Build Your Business Breakfast VTC Enterprises The A Street Café 8:00 am	31

## NOVEMBER 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3 VCB Marketing Series Brian Tucker, Visit California Far Western Tavern 9:00 am	4	5	6 Build Your Business Breakfast VTC Enterprises The A Street Café 11:30 am	7
8	9 Transportation Committee Veteran's Memorial Hall 12:00 pm	10 Salute to Veterans Luncheon Radisson Hotel 12:00 pm	11 VETERANS DAY HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSED	12	13 Build Your Business Breakfast VTC Enterprises The A Street Café 8:00 am	14
15	16	17	18 Executive Committee Meeting Chamber Office - 7:30 am Business Development Forum 2016 Business Forecast Santa Maria Fairpark - Fountain Pavilion Building 11:30 am	19 Santa Maria Merchants Committee MIYB Spaces 7:30 am Mixer - Altrusa Festival of Trees 1447 S. Broadway JC Penney Shopping Center 5:00 pm	20 Build Your Business Breakfast VTC Enterprises The A Street Café 8:00 am	21
22	23 Board of Director's Meeting Chamber Office 11:30 am	24 Ambassador's Meeting North China 12:00 pm	25	26 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSED	27 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSED	28
29	30					