

# www.visaliachamber.org Business Update

AWARD-WINNING MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Vol. 43, No. 1 | January 2023

## INSIDE

### California Dairies to acquire DairyAmerica

California Dairies, Inc. (CDI), the largest dairy farmer-owned cooperative in California, announced today that it has agreed to acquire DairyAmerica, effective January 1, 2023. **3**

### Cowboy Christmas 2022

The Visalia Chamber's annual fundraiser Christmas Tree Auction carried a cowboy and cow girl theme this year, and this might be how the West was won. **PHOTOS ON 4**

## EVENTS

### JANUARY 18 Visalia Chamber+Collette Vacations Travel Slideshow

Time: 1 p.m.  
 Location: Virtual/Chamber Office (limited seating)

### JANUARY 26 Ambassador Breakfast

Time: 8 a.m.  
 Location: Visalia First

### FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK FOR DATES

Coffee & Conversation with Your Chamber CEO-Facebook Live  
 Time: 8 a.m.

## TRAVEL WITH US

**APRIL 19-28, 2023**  
 Holland Windmills, Waterways & Tulips River Cruise

**MAY 2-10, 2023**  
 Athens & The Greek Islands

**JUNE 10-21, 2023**  
 Croatia & Its Islands

**JULY 19-28, 2023**  
 Iceland: Land of Fire & Ice

**OCTOBER 4-12, 2023**  
 Highlights of England, Scotland & Wales

**OCTOBER 23-28, 2023**  
 Cuba Discovery

**NOVEMBER 1-10, 2023**  
 Rome and the Country Roads of Tuscany

**DECEMBER 4-9, 2023**  
 Washington D.C. Holiday



PHOTO BY LACEY PATRICK

Component Coffee Lab co-owner Jonathan Anderson said his company is now expanding into Fresno with the recent purchase of the Revue coffee shop in the Tower District. The ownership group opened Component four years ago.

## Component Coffee brews up new location in Fresno

Component Coffee Labs purchases Revue coffee shop in Fresno, plans to give its menu a fresh twist



The Sun-Gazette

By Lacey Patrick  
 Reporter  
 The Sun-Gazette

Owners of Component Coffee Lab snatched up the Revue coffee shop in Fresno this month, and co-owner Jonathan Anderson said the team is pouring over with ideas for a refreshed drink and breakfast menu.

It's been four years since Component Coffee Lab opened its plant-loving, coffee-roasting doors. Yet, the owners of Component Coffee Lab just announced they are opening their third location, which will be nestled in Fresno's Tower District. It will take the place of Revue Coffee Bar.

"There's a long history of that coffee shop being there, and I definitely have a ton of respect for the community," Anderson said. "The biggest change that people [will] see is the addition of breakfast and food items, and some menu options that they might have really grown accustomed to."

Surrounded by his beloved plants, community and roasted coffee beans, Anderson said that Component Coffee Lab is a place where he wants people to feel they belong. He hopes to bring that same tight-knit energy to the Revue location.

"I like the idea of walking in and shaking somebody's hands, and saying hi to so many people," Anderson said. "It's as simple as a smile, or learning someone's name that you've seen for the fourth time that is brand new to you. We try to teach that to our staff that there's new people that come in every day, and everyone deserves a place to be known."

The owners of the Revue approached Anderson and the rest of

the ownership team about buying the shop during the middle of the pandemic. Anderson said that the timing just wasn't right to buy up another shop, so they declined. However, this year was different. Component Coffee Lab's owners decided to purchase the Revue and make it their very own.

Anderson said they will be changing the Revue's name to Component Coffee Lab, adding breakfast food items like avocado toast and other breakfast foods as well as tweaking the drink menu, Anderson said. However, the plants will stay.

"We know that [the Revue] is a very beloved place in the community," Anderson said. "On the other hand, we also don't want to have one foot into what used to be the Revue, and the other foot into [Component Coffee Lab]. What we want to do is change the name, and some decor items will change. I mean, the plants are wonderful, though. We'll keep the plants."

The Revue already uses Component Coffee Lab's coffee beans, so Anderson said the change in drinks will be minimal, since the beans are the coffee's lifeblood. The only difference would be the appliances and techniques used to roast the coffee.

Perhaps one of the biggest differences Component Coffee Lab has, as opposed to coffee behemoth Starbucks, is the money driven corporate structure. Anderson trains his employees and managers to jump in at the cash register when the line is out the door—and it often is—but not push people through the line. Patience at the head of the line gives the coffee connoisseur time to actually talk about the product, and having astute baristas allows Component Coffee Lab to maintain their customer service standards even when people continue filing in.

Component Coffee Lab isn't just stopping in Visalia and Fresno, though. They also have a location popping up in Tulare soon, and will be serving up coffee alongside Quesadilla Gorilla. It is a brand new building off of Lealand Avenue and Hillman Street. The two shops will be closely intertwined, with coffee and donuts being served on one side, and gorilla-sized quesadillas being served

on the other. There won't be any breakfast other than donuts, though, because Anderson said he doesn't just want a "cookie-cutter" coffee shop. He wants each one to have a unique twist.

The Tulare location's main attraction will be its outdoor patio seating, a concept that is threaded throughout many of Anderson's visionary businesses. In the same nature, Anderson had his hands in the conceptualization and management of the Elderwood Rooftop Restaurant that sits atop the Darling Hotel. The outdoor seating creates a whole new atmosphere, which is even a detail that is seen at Component Coffee Lab.

Though it's no secret that Component Coffee Lab is spreading its wings throughout the Valley, Anderson said he wants to avoid becoming a typical franchise, and hopes to keep it small and semi-local. It's vital to Anderson that there is a community-driven atmosphere to his coffee shop, and fears that if the company grows too large, he could lose that. He enjoys being able to walk into the shop and recognize the customers.

"I don't want to create a system where I lose that factor of walking in and saying hi to people, and seeing a recognizable face," Anderson said. "If I don't protect that, [I lose] a key factor that keeps people coming. It's just the idea that someone's here consistently, saying hi to them, and projecting that customer service that we value so highly."

Another endeavor that Anderson and his team hope to achieve is turning their newly owned roastery building, which is just down the street from their Visalia location, into a type of grocery outlet, where businesses can subscribe and receive their roasted coffee products. It's still in its planning phases, but Anderson said he hopes that it will even be open to the public one day, too.

"If somebody's interested in having coffee that is specifically roasted for them, or even labeled specifically for them, we could do that now," Anderson said. "We're looking forward to being a big kind of one stop shop for espresso beans, we can sell equipment as well, and help people get their shop kind of up and running and spruced up."

Component Coffee Lab is owned by many partners, including Anderson, Greg Amend, Miguel and Mikayla Reyes, are also in partnership with Component Coffee Lab, and just so happen to be the owners of Quesadilla Gorilla as well. The previous owners of Revue were Bryan and Kim Feil, Amelia and Jeff Bennett, and Katie Friesen. Friesen is assuming a managerial position at Component Coffee Lab, and Feil is also in partnership with the business.

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

### You're from where?



Gail Zurek  
 President and CEO  
 Visalia Chamber

When you aren't in Visalia, and someone asks you where you're from, what do you say? When the person you are speaking with has never been to Central California before, how do you describe it? Really, think for a minute. How would you describe our region, our community, our home?

Many know I am not originally from Visalia. I grew up south of here in San Bernardino. I went to school in Thousand Oaks and spent over a decade living in the Chicagoland area. When I am new to a community, I love asking people to describe where they live. I listen as they describe their community's "best" parts, giving subtle hints about how they define their community. People tell me more than they realize about their corner of the world.

When I arrived in Visalia nearly ten years ago (whoa! Where has the time gone?!), I repeated this process. I asked people to tell me about Visalia, the county, the region, and our part of California. The answers surprised me. They painted pictures of a community I didn't recognize. Our bustling community, to them, was a small town, sometimes without the charm I had found. Most

people talked about our challenges, and few spoke of our successes. I didn't understand it then and certainly don't understand it now. Don't get me wrong, I know we have challenges, but I couldn't understand how so many missed the beauty, wonder, success, and all our brag points.

As I travel, I am excited about the "where are you from" question. Recently I traveled with some girlfriends to Las Vegas. (Side note - I have enjoyed having Southwest Airlines fly out of Fresno. As I shared last year when they arrived, it's wonderful to be recognized as a destination by such a family travel airline.) As we piled into a car or chatted with a server, the 'where are you from' question was standard.

I always find it a tremendous honor to brag about Visalia, Tulare County, and the entire South Valley. The years of collecting brag points and "did you know" about our region allowed me to share about our beautiful community. I shared how our region represents, for so many, the hard-working pioneer spirit California once was synonymous with. The beauty found in our valleys and hills is unmatched, and our local companies make a global economic impact.

As we begin a new year, join me in discovering and sharing about the best of this community. Let us not be shy to share our home's strength, innovation, wonder, and beauty. Be proud of this place, our neighbors, and all we are doing. We certainly want to grow and continue forward but let's not let that momentum be at the cost of celebrating and sharing all we have.

## CITY UPDATE

### Economic progress in '23

The 2023 economic outlook for Visalia continues to progress as the City enters our 100th year as a Charter city. When Visalia's freeholders were elected in 1922 to draft the new charter, Visalia looked much different, but the vibrancy and value of a strong economy are still just as applicable today.

There are several development plans in Visalia that should continue to march forward into 2023, even with thoughts of an economic downturn looming.

Here are some likely occurrences for the new year in terms of development:

- The Industrial Park will grow by at least two million square feet (permitted)
- Job growth in the industrial sector will be driven mainly by e-commerce and distribution but manufacturing and associated ser-



vices should continue strong

- At least 1,000 new jobs expected
- New national brand retail offerings will come online along Mooney with concentrations

- at the Sequoia Mall and south of Visalia Parkway, including Sprouts Farmers Market, Nordstrom Rack and Barnes & Noble
- Growth will continue with national brand retail at Dinuba and Riggins, while new local offerings will pop up in downtown and east downtown as well
- Hilton Garden Inn will open, Towne Place Suites has broken ground and Home 2 Suites is expected to break ground
- Carmax and mycarpark.com by Fahrney should begin construction near Lampe Chrysler and BMW

See CITY on page 2



Travel provided by:

Collette Vacations  
 CST #2006766-20

Chamber Explorations  
 CST #2048841-40

For more information, go to  
[www.visaliachamber.org/travel](http://www.visaliachamber.org/travel)





**BOARD SPOTLIGHT**



SUBMITTED PHOTO

**Name:** Kevin McCusker  
**Company:** California Water Service  
**Title:** Manager of Community Affairs

**Why do you serve on the Chamber Board of Directors?**

I serve on the Chamber Board of Directors because healthy, vibrant, high-performing businesses are vital to a thriving community. The Visalia Chamber of Commerce supports those businesses that make Visalia thrive, and if I can assist the Chamber in that endeavor I am happy to do so. Further, Cal Water sincerely seeks to improve the quality of life in the community it serves, meaning Cal Water and the Visalia Chamber of Commerce have a lot of common ground upon which we can work together.

**What has the chamber done in the last 12 months that has helped your business?**

The Visalia Chamber of Commerce advocates for business-friendly policies and approaches in local government; the Visalia Chamber convenes interactions between local government and local business; and the Visalia Chamber curates positive working relationships between local government and local business.

**What's motivates you to work hard?**

The lessons learned from and values nurtured within me by my parents.

A desire to provide for my wife and children and to impart the same lessons and values to my children that my parents imparted to me.

The aspiration to live up to the expectations of Cal Water.

**Who would you want to play you in a movie of your life?**

I've been told I look like Ricky Schroeder, Scott Weiland and hockey HoFer Martin Brodeur. Wieland died a while ago, so I guess it'd have to be one of the other two.

**Does your family have a "motto"—spoken or unspoken?**

I have a plaque in my office that belonged to my father that reads: 'Right is right, even if nobody is right, and wrong is wrong even if everybody is wrong.' It is attributed to St Augustine, although historians dispute the veracity of the attribution. It was a credo for my father and is now the same for me.

**ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION**

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**Layout** ..... The Sun-Gazette

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**Community Loyal Members** | *A thriving community starts here!*

**NEW**

The Visalia Chamber of Commerce would like to welcome our newest members. We encourage individuals and businesses to support chamber member businesses.

**Business Builder Members:**  
 ■ Altura Centers for Health

**Business Connector Members:**  
 ■ Ace Hardware Distribution Center

**Small Business Members:**  
 ■ ClearConverse, Inc  
 ■ Sequoia Vein & Wound

**RENEWING**

The Visalia Chamber of Commerce thanks the following companies for renewing their

commitment to the community of Visalia.

**Community Investor Members:**  
 ■ Sequoia Gateway LLC

**Business Builder Members:**  
 ■ Figaro's Mexican Grill  
 ■ InSite Construction, Inc.\*  
 ■ Salsler & Dillard Funeral Chapel\*  
 ■ VWR, part of Avantor\*

**Small Connector Members:**  
 ■ BioLife Plasma Services  
 ■ Carl Nelson Insurance Agency\*  
 ■ Innovation Commercial Flooring, Inc  
 ■ Karen Gross / State Farm Insurance\*

**Small Business Members:**  
 ■ Berkshire Hathaway Home Services California Realty\*



- El Rosal Restaurant\*
- Gubler & Abbott
- Lux Dermatology\*
- Valley Expetec
- Vance Physical Therapy & Wellness

**Small Business Nonprofit Members:**  
 ■ Access Plus Capital\*

\* Indicates membership in the Visalia Chamber 110% Club.

**MEMBER SPOTLIGHT**

**Name:** Trisha Dean  
**Company:** The Good Life Photography  
**Title:** Owner/ Photographer

Our mission is to provide outstanding service to our clients. To make it an enjoyable experience in front of the camera. Natural expressions and candid moments are concentrated on. The Good Life Photography photographs weddings, families, newborns, as well as events and business headshots.

The latest accomplishment is becoming the photographer for ImagineU Children's Museum for 2022/2023. Also, becoming a member of the Visalia Chamber has really made her stand out in the crowd.

Something interesting about The Good Life Photography, is that Trisha runs the entire business on her own. From social media, marketing, events... she is a one woman show. She does hire a second photographer when needed.

Trisha loves to donate numerous times throughout the year. Fundraisers and events that support amazing causes really tugs at her heart strings. Donating her time and talent is a small sacrifice in her eyes. She has recently donated



to Hands in the Community, Helping One Woman, School fundraisers, ImagineU Gala, among others.

Owning your own business is hard! But, the best part is being your own boss. With a 6 year old boy at home, I can attend all of his functions and be a present mom. Time sure does fly by.

Being a Chamber member has helped The Good Life Photography establish a trust with-

in the community. I think that is huge! With so many "photographers" out there these days, I feel that trust is something hard to come by.

I would love people to know that I am honest. I will be your biggest cheerleader and hype girl! My goal is to make your session the most fun and entertaining experience ever! My hope is for everyone that leaves a session with me is saying "That was really fun!"

**RIBBON CUTTINGS**



To celebrate their grand opening, the Valley Eatery by Chef Tim hosted a ribbon cutting. Their food truck can be found at the weekly Downtown Visalia Farmers Market (March-Dec.). Follow them on Instagram to find their next location and menu: @valleyeatery.



Curve Appeal Boutique hosted a ribbon cutting in celebration of their grand opening! Stop by and visit them at 2016 S Mooney Blvd.

**CITY**

Continued from page 1

of Visalia  
 ■ Several medical developments will move forward including a Kaweah Health clinic in the Industrial Park, United Health Cen-

ters on Mooney, and Family Healthcare Network expanding downtown  
 ■ Housing should continue strong given the affordability offered; both owners and renters in California, however, even if new housing permit activity slows, we will see over 500 new single-fami-

ly units and 700 new multifamily units come online given the permitting activity of 2022  
 ■ Housing will lead to a strong construction year in 2023. With development across many sectors, construction jobs should continue strong



**By Arisbet Torres-Villasenor**  
 Business Resource Specialist

On Friday, December 9th, 2022, the Leadership Visalia group was hosted at California Dairies Headquarters, facilitated by Jill Ramirez and Gabriel Macias. The morning began with greetings and breakfast pastries. The group briefly overviewed the day and started the session with the first speaker. Gary Herbst, Chief Executive officer at Kaweah Health, mentioned the hospital's successes and financial challenges. The hospital is the heart of Visalia and continues to be the primary medical care in the community. Kaweah health faces economic challenges due to COVID-19 and has created a plan that will adapt and rise to the most recent struggles the company had to endure. The company looked at its organizational structure and decided to conduct layoffs deemed necessary due to the high number of travel nurses the hospital must staff. While doing this, Kaweah Health will eliminate the demand for travel nurses and extend local nurses with the bonus incentive of an working an extra day during a two-week period.

We were introduced next to the Vice President of Sustainability and Member Relations at California Dairies INC, Darrin Monteiro. Darrin gave an overview of California Dairies and its history, current industry challenges, and the company's year expansion plan. Darrin explained his political involvement to help advocate the water issue in our community. Laura Burns, Site Director at California Dairies, gave the group an overview of the facility and explained safety protocols the company must meet. The group was divided into groups and received a tour of the California Dairies headquarters. The group witnessed state-of-the-art technology and utilized it to make tons of butter. California Dairies manufactures butter for all fifty states and has grown to become a worldwide business of producing quality butter. They witnessed that a local business in Visalia manufactures nationally and internationally was incredible. It was quite a sight to see how they manufacture and pack their products to ship to a variety of companies around the globe.

After the tour, the group had lunch sponsored by California Dairies. After lunch, we had a guest from Tulare County Economic Development Corporation, Airica de Oliveira, and Samuel Diaz. The TCEDC explained its role in the community and the importance of attracting businesses to expand and relocate into our area. The TCEDC is a nonprofit organization that relies on funding through board memberships and private investors to help assist local businesses. The next speaker was Devon Jones, Economic Development Manager City of Visalia. Devon mentioned that the Visalia industrial park is crucial for industrial and manufacturing companies. However, the city of Visalia refocused on retaining businesses rather than attracting new companies into the community. Devon Jones mentioned new development occurring in the industrial park and his collaboration with Tulare County EDC.

The last evening speaker was from the Tulare County Sheriff's Department, Lieutenant Cyrena Robles. The inmates at the Tulare County jail facilities are fed with locally grown food at a farm attended by fellow inmates. Cyrena explained how these facilities operate and are economically advanced for the department. Everything produced at the farm is used to feed inmates and staff at the county jail. Any food not eaten is then prepared to be provided to the pigs at the farm. The farm expands to about 1,100 acres and includes 400 hogs, 200 cows, and 2,400 hens that produce an average of 1,500 eggs. This project has saved the department millions of dollars and allows inmates to gain skill training that they can utilize once released into the community. This project is a rehabilitation for inmates who strive to better themselves.

The evening was concluded with project updates and discussion. The group enjoyed the experience of learning the production process of California Dairies and knowing how economic development is a critical component that drives creating new job opportunities and facilitating an improved quality of life.

**Vasquez named CVCB vice president**



JASON VASQUEZ

James J. Kim, President and CEO of Central Valley Community Bank (CVCB), is pleased to announce Jason Vasquez, Vice President, Relationship Manager, has joined the South Valley Commercial Lending Team serving Tulare, Kings and Kern counties. He can be reached directly at (559) 730-2806 or Jason.Vasquez@cvcb.com.

Jason recently rejoined CVCB's Commercial Lending team after previously serving the Company for four years. A seasoned commercial lender with over 25 years of industry experience, Jason specializes in commercial real estate and construction lending. He is an advocate of a wide range of industries of all sizes and a skilled problem-solver, with in-depth understanding of the unique challenges of South Valley busi-

nesses and the ability to design custom-tailored financial solutions to assist his clients in effectively achieving their financial goals.

"Jason has been actively establishing new relationships and reestablishing former relationships," said Kim. "His market knowledge, specialized industry expertise and community involvement directly align with our service culture, and we are grateful for his current and future contributions to our team."





PRO YOUTH

In October, ProYouth's Sequoia XL held their biannual Career Fair. With 30 vendors, students had the opportunity to ask questions and prepare their next steps after high school.

**Central Valley Community Bank** named Jason Vasquez as Vice President, Relationships Manager. He has joined the Commercial Lending Team serving Tulare, Kings and Kern Counties. A seasoned commercial lender with over 25 years of industry experience, Jason specializes in commercial real estate and construction lending.

**Sequoia Symphony Orchestra** announced the departure of Executive Director Joshua Banda and welcomed Marina Rojas. Banda served for over five years with the symphony and will be relocating out of state with his family for a new opportunity. Rojas held roles with various local organizations and brings experience in nonprofit work, community relations, social media, marketing, and entertainment.

**Eagle Mountain Casino** welcomed



EAGLE MOUNTAIN CASINO

"Big Foot, The Hairy Man" carving by Bill Farmer, a self-employed woodworker, and Tribal Member of the Tule River Tribe. The "Big Foot, The Hairy Man" has been a tradition of the Tule River Tribe for almost 150 years. Utilizing wood from local trees on the reservation, this was one of the largest projects created

by Farmer.

Congratulations to **Valley Strong Credit Union**, who broke ground on a new 13,000 sq. ft. facility in Fairfield.

**Happy Trails Riding Academy** do-



HAPPY TRAILS RIDING ACADEMY

nated 537 pair of socks to the **Bethlehem Center**.

**Bank of the Sierra** announced in December that Ross Tenhaeff has been named Senior Vice President, Commercial Relationship Manager and Tarah Frederick has been promoted to Senior Ag Credit Assistant. Both employees are joining the Bank's Middle Market Banking team, which is focused on commercial and agricultural lending.

**Family Services of Tulare County** hosted their 24th Annual Thanks for Giving Chrysanthemum Sale from October to mid-November. More than 2,000 plants were delivered throughout Tulare County. All proceeds directly benefit Family Services' work with children and adults impacted by violence.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SUN-GAZETTE

## California Dairies to acquire DairyAmerica

California Dairies, Inc. (CDI), the largest dairy farmer-owned cooperative in California, announced today that it has agreed to acquire DairyAmerica, effective January 1, 2023.

DairyAmerica, a globally recognized supplier of quality and

sustainable dairy ingredients, is a federated cooperative currently co-owned by CDI, Agri-Mark, Inc., and O-AT-KA Milk Products. As part of the acquisition, CDI will purchase the ownership rights currently held by Agri-Mark, Inc. and O-AT-KA Milk Products, making DairyAmerica a wholly owned subsidiary of CDI.

"This investment in DairyAmerica provides the opportunity for CDI to unlock



significant synergies and represents another step towards improving efficiencies in providing world markets with high quality dairy ingredients," said Brad Anderson, presi-

dent and chief executive officer of California Dairies, Inc.

Under the new structure, DairyAmerica will continue to market milk powders produced by Agri-Mark, Inc. and O-AT-KA Milk Products. These marketing agreements will allow

for the continued multi-origin and sustainable supply benefits currently enjoyed by DairyAmerica.

"We continue to support the Dairy America vision," said William Schreiber, chief executive officer of O-AT-KA Milk Products.

"We are pleased to be a part of this transition and have seen the benefits of DairyAmerica's transformation under its new leadership the past two years," said David Lynn, interim chief executive officer at Agri-Mark, Inc.

DairyAmerica will remain under the leadership of Patti Smith, chief executive officer, and the DairyAmerica office will remain in Fresno.

"As we continue to transform our business, this investment by CDI provides the framework to focus on our people and processes while strengthening our global competitiveness," said Patti Smith, chief executive officer of DairyAmerica.

## SoCalGas provides resources to help customers save money ahead of winter

In anticipation of cooler winter temperatures, Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas) is preparing customers with energy-saving tips, customer assistance programs and additional resources to help manage energy usage and utility costs.



"Having access to valuable educational resources and tools provides our community an opportunity to learn how to manage their energy usage and lower monthly costs," said City of Bell Mayor Monica Arroyo. "It's wonderful to see organizations take the lead towards a more sustainable future."

With the support of Southeast Community Development Corporation's (SCDC) Mobile Technology Center, SoCalGas helped seniors sign up for SoCalGas' Ways to Save Tool. The partnership focused on ensuring customers are better equipped to effectively manage their energy usage and harness cost-savings measures as winter approaches.

The Ways to Save Tool provides customers with:

- Personalized recommendations with individual customers' unique energy-saving opportunities,
- Rebate and incentive information,
- Bill comparisons to allow customers to analyze their gas usage over time, and
- Energy comparisons to determine how customers' energy use compares to that of homes in similar neighborhoods.

With the support of SCDC's Mobile Technology Center, a traveling mobile lab that features multimedia laptops and technology resources, SoCalGas staff was able to offer in-person step-by-step training for participating individuals to guide them through user-friendly online tools and resources like the Ways to Save Tool.

"SoCalGas is committed to helping customers prepare for and navigate the upcoming colder weather and the increasing cost of energy," said Don Widjaja, vice president of customer solutions. "It's important to make energy and cost savings easily accessible to everyone and our Ways to Save Tool is a free service designed to provide tips on how our customers can make minor behavioral adjustments, as well as maintain or upgrade equipment like install-

ing a smart thermostat, that will equate to both energy and money savings."

As part of an ongoing commitment to sustainable and affordable energy, SoCalGas partnered with Google Nest to donate 500 ENERGY STAR® certified smart thermostats to families and individuals served by SCDC, Alma Family Services, and All Peoples Community Center. Smart thermostats are one

of the simplest, most affordable ways to reduce energy consumption. Nest Thermostats are easy to use and have proven energy-saving features, like helping you create an energy-efficient temperature schedule.

"Our commitment towards sustainability can be seen throughout our operations and across our products and services. We are focused on implementing innovative features into our products to provide our customers with easy and accessible sustainable choices in their daily lives," said Aaron Berndt, head of energy industry partnerships at Google. "We are happy to partner with SoCalGas and local non-profit organizations to make sure individuals in need are provided with an easy and accessible choice to conserve energy."

While savings may vary depending on climate and personal preferences, among other factors, on average Google Nest thermostats can reduce an average of 10% to 12% on heating and 15% on cooling bills.

"Many individuals and families within our community struggle with enormous educational and financial barriers," said Emma Hernandez, executive director at SCDC. "I'm grateful to partner with organizations like SoCalGas and Google who have provided us with resources and materials to help overcome those barriers."

SoCalGas encourages customers to take advantage of energy-saving tips, customer assistance programs and additional resources, such as rebates and no-cost energy efficiency kits, to help manage utility costs this winter.



JENNIFER MAZON

The Visalia Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce the arrival of a new member of the team: Jennifer Mazon as a Support Specialist. Jennifer brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the Chamber and will be a valuable addition to the organization.

Jennifer comes to the Visalia Chamber of Commerce with a background in office management and hospitality. With over twenty years of experience, she is passionate about helping businesses and organizations succeed and will be a great asset to the Visalia Chamber of Commerce.

As a Support Specialist, Jennifer will be critical in supporting event details & logistics, membership resource implementation, and office details. In addition, Jennifer is excited to connect with the Visalia business community.

The Visalia Chamber of Commerce is proud to welcome Jennifer Mazon to the team and is confident that her skills and expertise will help the organization continue to serve the Visalia business community.

The Visalia Chamber of Commerce is to be a Champion of Local Business, Convener of Leaders, and Catalyst of Change.

# Ask Jena

**How can I join the Chamber?**  
You can apply for membership online, call the office, or best yet, stop by our office! We would love to meet you, learn more about your needs, and match your business up with the right level.

**How do I become a Chamber Ambassador?**  
Ambassadors are champions of the Chamber and our community. We would love to have your involvement. Please contact Charlie Saponara to learn more!

**Have a question about the Chamber?**  
Send me a message:  
Jena@visaliachamber.org



## Eagle Mountain gives \$97K to local orgs

Monday afternoon, Eagle Mountain Casino presented donation checks totaling \$97,000 from the 21st Annual Eagle Mountain Casino Charity Golf Tournament that was held on September 29, 2022, at the Ridge Creek Golf Club in Dinuba, CA.

The organizations that received donations included Valley Adult Day Services, Visalia Emergency Aid Council, Porterville Area Coordinating Council, and Golden Empire Gleaners. Each organization received a check for \$24,250 at the awards presentation held at Eagle Mountain Casino.

Porterville Area Coordinating Council provides Tulare County with emergency shelter, utilities, clothing, transportation, and gas vouchers.

"Our organization started on an answering machine, and I feel a lot of symbolization when I come up here to the Tule River reservation and Eagle Mountain Casino as they started on two trailers back in 1996. This check will give a huge hand up and lift spirits for people in need. I greatly appreciate Eagle Mountain Casino and the team for all they do, and I congratulate all the other organizations," said Ryan Land, Executive Director at Porterville Area Coordinating Council.



Matthew Mingrone, the General Manager at Eagle Mountain Casino, said the goal is to surpass the \$97,000 donated at the 22nd Annual Charity Golf Tournament in 2023.

Golden Empire Gleaners has a private food bank in Bakersfield, CA providing meals to families in need.

"We can do what we do because of the support of businesses like Eagle Mountain Casino. The need right now is greater than ever. We are finding at our private food bank in Bakersfield that we are filling more baskets of food to take home to their families, so it means so much to have this support," said Debbie Powers, Executive Director at Golden Empire Gleaners.

Visalia Emergency Aid Council service Tulare County and assist with food-insecure homes and senior housing.

"Thank you to the Tribal Council and to Eagle Mountain

Casino and the hard work and effort that goes into putting together a golf tournament. Going into 2023, we wish you so much love moving into your building, good luck to you, and many more years of success and not only in the casino but in the work that you do to support your community," said Mary Jennings, Executive Director at Visalia Emergency Aid Council.

Valley Adult Day Services is an adult day care that provides respite to the caregivers of Tulare County.

"The number goes up yearly from the charity golf tournaments, so you are all doing something right. Really happy that you are all moving closer to the city, and we are looking forward to it. Thank you very much for all you do for us," said Laura Kaylor, Executive Director at Valley Adult Day Services.



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# COWBOY CHRISTMAS

Friday, December 2, 2022



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