

## **99th Annual Chamber of Commerce Luncheon**

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**Chamber Honors Local Leaders**

As a city councilmember, I get to attend a lot of civic events. Recently, that included the 98th Annual Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce Awards Luncheon. As the owner and general manager of a small business, I've always appreciated the work the Chamber does on behalf of our business here.

Attending as a government representative, this year, I appreciated the Chamber even more.

With more than 700 businesses represented, the Chamber is a who's who of community leadership and service. At Thursday's lunch, we honored six specific organizations and individuals for their contribution to our community. That included Goodwill Central Coast, an amazing organization that has contributed more than 600 jobs in the tri-county area, as well as Citizen of the Year, John D'Arrigo, the president and CEO of D'Arrigo Brothers Company, a seasoned businessman and philanthropist heavily involved with the D'Arrigo family's work to bring quality healthcare to farmworkers and their families.

We honored Sara Boyns as Businesswoman of the year, for her work with Fenton and Keller and the years of training and advice she has contributed to helping businesses stay on the right side of the law. Public Accounting Firm Ryan & McDonald was awarded Small Business of the year, in the middle of tax season no less, and Gino's Family Restaurant Group was awarded Large Business of the Year, celebrated for this incredible family's work ethic, community participation, and of course, famous blackened chicken fettuccine.

Lastly, Colby Pereira was honored for her Agricultural Leadership. Colby is an amazing leader in the Salinas Valley, serving not only as president of Monterey County Farm Bureau but also on the Board of Directors for Grower-Shipper Association of Central California and as a Director on the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency board.

Sitting in the audience was inspiring. I heard several overarching themes -- hard work, service to others, and love for this valley. Those are wonderful traits in any person, but especially powerful to see in our leaders across different industries.

Leadership inspires leadership. The Salinas Chamber has taken an active role in following and participating in local politics this year. And as a three-term city councilmember, I can say with confidence that the Salinas City Council is better for it. We recently discussed a proposal to split funding for cleaning homeless encampments on private property with business owners, 50-50.

This would be a win for business owners and the city and we hope more partnerships and discussions are ahead this year.

Thank you Paul Farmer and the whole Executive Board of the Salinas Chamber for your dedication to our business community and the Salinas Valley. As the Chamber celebrates its centennial anniversary, here is to another 100 years of partnerships, economic growth, and incredible leadership through the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce.

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